

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 1 February 2026
Candlemas**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. Epiphany is drawing to a glorious close. Forty days ago, we celebrated the birth of Jesus. In line with the Law of Moses, today, we find Mary and Joseph in the temple, presenting the baby Jesus and giving thanks for his birth. Once more, we have come to immerse ourselves in this sacred scene, and to celebrate with the elderly Simeon and Anna that our Saviour has come. God keeps his promises!

Today, we are focusing on two key words in Simeon's song of joy and parting: Light and Peace.

May the light of our Lord's love shine in your eyes. May his peace be in your heart.

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to enter the story of Candlemas and gaze into our Lord's face, turn back the clock forty days and return to the stable in Bethlehem.



Light of the world, true light divine,
in glory break and splendour shine
upon our nature's night!
The darkness dies before the morn
and God himself a child is born,
the long-awaited Light.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)
CCLI reported

Prayers and Reflections for use at home for Candlemas Light and Peace

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

Lord Jesus, like Simeon and Anna,
I accept your invitation
to come into your presence
and bask in the light of your love.
Pour out your Spirit upon me,
open my heart to your love
and my soul to your words to me.
Speak, Lord, for I am listening. **Amen.**

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, when you are ready, reflect on the light of salvation that comes through the cross.

Life of the world, a life laid down,
who chose the cross before the crown
and opened heaven's door:
he broke the chains of death and hell,
our Saviour Christ, Emmanuel,
who lives for evermore.

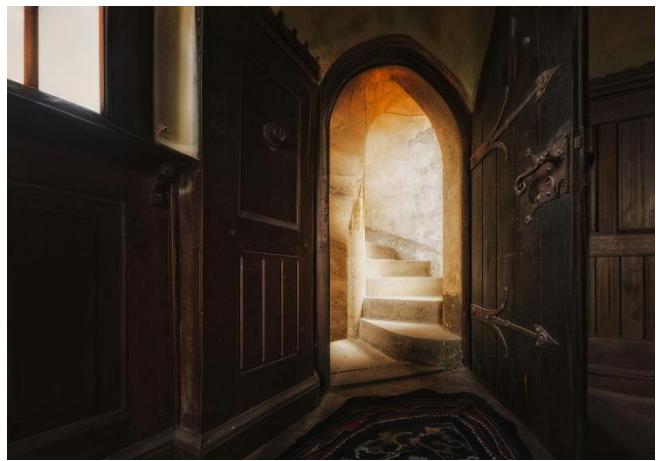
Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)
CCLI reported



If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.

Our second verse points us to the costly nature of the light Jesus shines in the world's and in our own personal darkness. Light dispels darkness. Where there is light, there is no darkness or shadows. It is a powerful way of describing the cleansing of the cross. Nothing can stand between us and God's love and gift of eternal life if we turn to our Lord in humble remorse for our sins. We will receive God's gracious forgiveness.

*It reminds me of this verse from Charles Wesley's glorious hymn of salvation – **And can it be.***



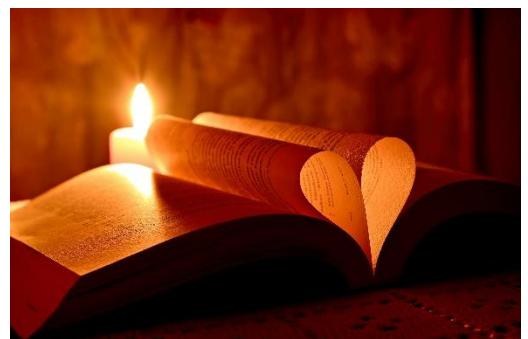
Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
*My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

This verse paints a picture of being set free from our burdens – be it sin, failures or fears. When Jesus takes this weighty backpack off our back, we feel free – lighter – able to face life with renewed hope. We can begin again. Live in the light of our Lord's grace and love.

Ponder the burdens that you would like to place into our Lord's hands, hands scarred by the cross.

May our Lord lighten your load and brighten your spirit.



PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across our villages and the worldwide Church. Add your voice to the earthly circle of prayer to the one who lights up our lives with his love.

Lord Jesus Christ,
light of the nations and glory of Israel:
make your home among us,
and present us pure and holy
to your heavenly Father,
your God, and our God. **Amen.**

Our prayer for Candlemas quotes directly from the Song of Simeon – the Nunc Dimitis. It reminds us that our Lord came to lighten the lives of people across the globe. All nations – all suffering – is on his heart. He came to bring peace and hope to troubled hearts and homes, to war-torn countries and communities. He is like a light that brings into the open what lies hidden in the dark recesses of a room. Or, in the case of human hearts, the parts of our nature that cause us to inflict pain on others.

Think of a world issue that is on your heart. Who is causing this pain? Why is this? Invite our Lord to shine his light on this heart of darkness so that the leader or person sees themselves – their actions – as God sees and judges them. May his light purify their intentions.



Lord of all worlds, a manger bed
was room enough to lay your head
when, from your throne above,
you came to set a lost world right,
immortal Life, unfading Light,
and all-prevailing Love;
immortal Life, unfading Light,
and all-prevailing Love.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)

CCLI reported

Jesus is presented in the Temple

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord’), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: ‘a pair of doves or two young pigeons’.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

‘Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.’

The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and

spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Luke 2:22-40

Light of Peace...

We have thought about how the light of Jesus can cause suffering to stop across the globe. All it requires is for the leaders and perpetrators to see their actions through God's eyes and feel deep remorse. This is the light of hope that we see in elderly Simeon's eyes.

We also see a light of peace. God has kept his promise to his faithful one. Simeon has held the baby Jesus in his arms and recognised him as God's long-promised Messiah. God's salvation is here. His life is complete. He can let go and die in peace. For Simeon knows that God will be with him as he takes his final breath. It is a beautiful feeling.

Sense how Simeon was feeling as he said these moving words:

*'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.'*

*How do these words speak to your heart? Do they fill you with peace?
Offer your prayers and praise. Give thanks that God keeps his promises.*



No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.
*Bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, at Candlemas, we see your light shining upon Simeon as he held you in his elderly arms. Your presence – your love lit up his heart. You light up mine. Accept, Lord, my love and praise.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, at Candlemas, you were revealed as our world's salvation, our light of love and hope. You came to dispel the darkness in hearts, to heal divisions. Lord, shine your spotlight on those who oppress...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, at Candlemas, you gazed up into the elderly eyes of Simeon and saw his deep faith and all his life experiences – all the love and loss. You filled him with peace. Lord, fill with peace those who are anxious...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**