



The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

1st February 2026

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

HYMN

1 The church of God a kingdom is,
where Christ in power doth reign;
where spirits yearn till, seen in bliss,
their Lord shall come again

2 Glad companies of saints possess
this church below, above;
and God's perpetual calm doth bless
their paradise of love

3 An altar stands within the shrine
whereon, once sacrificed,
is set, immaculate, divine,
the Lamb of God, the Christ.

4 There rich and poor, from countless lands,
praise God on mystic rood;
there nations reach forth holy hands
to take God's holy food.

5 There pure life-giving streams o'erflow
the sower's garden-ground;
and faith and hope fair blossoms show,
and fruits of love abound.

6 O King, O Christ, this endless grace
to us and all men bring,
to see the vision of thy face
in joy, O Christ, our King.

Introduction to confession

By the mercies of God,
let us confess our sins and present our bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to him,
which is our spiritual worship.

Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness in our hearts:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, unstop our ears to hear your living word:

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins, +
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Gloria

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee,
we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory:
O Lord God, heavenly King;

God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father:
That takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy;
Thou only art the Lord;
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art the most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect for the Presentation of Christ

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First scripture reading Malachi 3. 1-4

3 “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. ⁵ “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurors, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 24

¹ The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;

² for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.

³ Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?

⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.

⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Saviour.
⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.



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Second scripture reading Hebrews 2 14-end

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and
love.

To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth
Thee.

Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render, O help us to see:
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations
and believed in throughout the world. (1Tim 3.16)
Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (2.22-40)

Glory be to thee O Lord

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word;

30 for my eyes have seen your salvation,

31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.”

33 And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Reflection

Simeon is led by the Spirit of God on this day to this child. To this faithful Jewish believer comes the revelation that this child is not just a political Messiah expected by the Jewish people a light to the whole world. He is a light for ‘revelation to the gentiles...’.

The image of light is powerful. What does a light do? Simply it enables us to see. Jesus will use this image of himself – “I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have

the light of life". Here he is using light as an image of inward illumination. What it simply says is that Jesus brings us enlightenment.

You may recall the words of C S Lewis "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else."

When we become Christians, we become disciples of Jesus. Disciple means learner, follower. A bit like an apprentice, we join knowing nothing and we are trained, we learn, we become proficient. We learn not only by experiment for we have a mentor, a teacher, a guide. God's Spirit alongside.

All analogies are imperfect, but I hope you can see that this is a pattern for the Christian life. For us the Holy Spirit the Word of God and the fellowship of the church, are our teachers.

We have thought about light, let's think about its opposite, darkness.

The scripture tells us that our state outside of Christ is a world of darkness. It is the entrance of God's word, read, heard, or preached, that brings us light. When we put our faith in Jesus and ask him into our lives, we are transferred from a dominion of darkness into a kingdom of light.

We have a new identity. We are loved of God, created by God. When we by our belief and faith, receive his son Jesus into our lives, he begins a work within us to which we must give our cooperation. We come to God as we are, but he loves us too much to leave us there. The Spirit of Jesus will shed light into the dark recesses of our lives to expose and dispel darkness.

Don't think of darkness just with ideas of sin, however you define that. Darkness is simply a condition where the love of God is absent. It may be obvious sin, but also anxiousness, dishonesty, deep trauma, fear, anger and on and on.

If we allow the light of Jesus to work in us that darkness will go because it cannot exist where the light of Jesus has come. Where there was darkness now there is light.

Hear Jesus' words again. "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life." The light and life of Christ. This is the gospel. The gospel is not a message, it is a person, Jesus.

This is an inner work. It is not something we do to fix ourselves like going to the gym, it is something that is done in us by the goodness of God. It is always ongoing as we grow within it. This light dispels fear and guilt, how many of us live with these two terrors? But the same truth applies, allowing the light of Jesus into that darkness, overcomes it with truth and healing.

This is how the light of Jesus works in our lives. Jesus said his Spirit would lead us into all truth and teach us. I wonder if some area of darkness has come to mind. Has the light of Jesus shone in some hidden crevice or darkened room in you? This is not to be feared but to be welcomed. If you will stay with that insight and invite Jesus to dispel that darkness he will. It may take moments it may take some time, but it will happen for that is his word and his promise. He will bring a wholeness and healing as the light acts like a spring clean, a recreation.

Why does this matter, what is the reason and purpose? Paul tells us that it is God's purpose that we become increasingly like Christ. He writes ... 'till Christ be formed in you.'

If that sounds a 'way off goal', do not despair for God as the scripture tells us, is at work in you both to help you want to change and to do it, to bring it increasingly into a lived experience. All we have to do is to co-operate, yield, obey and we will see the fruit in our lives. Jesus said, "If you love me you will obey me".

Something is required from us. This is the proof of our commitment to him, not warm feelings but obedience. We are disciple, learners, but on our way. We will falter and fail along the path and will often have to renew and refresh our commitment. But we are no longer alone in darkness, but in the kingdom of light, children of God and greatly beloved. "He who has begun a good work in your will bring it to completion on the Day of Jesus Christ."

Intercessions

Let us pray to the Father through Christ our light and life.

Father, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel:
look in mercy on your Church, sharing his light ...
Lord, have mercy.

your Christ in the Temple brings judgement on the world:
look in mercy on the nations who long for his justice ...
Lord, have mercy.

your Christ, who was rich, for our sake became poor:
look in mercy on all who are in need
and those who suffer with him ...
Lord, have mercy.

your Christ is the one in whom faithful servants find their peace:
look in mercy on the whole Church,
which glories in your salvation ...
Lord, have mercy.

your Christ is the one destined for rejection:
look in mercy on us as we turn towards his passion.
Lord, have mercy.

Almighty Father,
you kept faith with Simeon and Anna,
and showed them the infant King.
Give us grace to trust your promises,
and patience to wait for their fulfilment.
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

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.

And the blessing of God almighty, +
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen

HYMN

Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue;
thee, only thee, resolved to know
in all I think or speak or do.

The task thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes mine inmost substance see,
and labour on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.

Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
and every moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look,
and hasten to thy glorious day.

For thee delightfully employ
whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given;
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heaven.

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