



Praying Together



*Candlemas
January 2021*

Dear Friends,

As I walked along the lane the other day, I noticed the first snowdrops peeping out from under a hawthorn hedge. The wind was gently catching the little drops and as they moved in the breeze they looked like they were shivering from the cold. I did not realise until last week, that Snowdrops are also known as Candlemas bells because of the time of year they start to appear.

I love the word Candlemas, not one we hear very often these days, but for me, it brings to mind images of an old church, full of the warmth of candlelight and that wonderful cosy glow on a frosty evening. However, that is not what it is about at all, so what is it? Well, Candlemas marks the end of the Season of Ephiphany on February 2nd and was traditionally the time when all the candles bought for the coming years services, were brought into the church and blessed. It marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox. From Candlemas we move towards the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on February 17th. See how much we are all learning from these prayer letters!

The celebration of Candlemas is also shared with the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. This was the time Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple according to the custom. The account of this can be found in Luke's Gospel Chapter 2:22-25

"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 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons'.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon...."

I'm going to stop there because I would like us to look a little closer at the story of Simeon next week. If you read further on in Luke from the above passage, you can read his story and I'm sure many of you will recognise the Song of Simeon which we read in our Evening Prayer Service. Anyway, more next week. Could this be the first prayer letter cliff-hanger?

'People believed that Candlemas day predicted the weather for the rest of the winter. This weather proverb tells us that a fine bright sunny Candlemas day means that there is more winter to come, whereas a cloudy wet stormy Candlemas day means that the worst of winter is over'.

(projectbritain.com)

If Candlemas day be fair and bright

Winter will have another fight.

If Candlemas day brings cloud and rain,

Winter won't come again.

It would be interesting to see how accurate this weather proverb is, I will make a conscious effort to watch what the weather is doing on the 2nd of February! And don't forget to tune in next week for the story of Simeon.

I know this has been a difficult week for all of us. Many are struggling in so many ways and we continue to pray for all those who need our prayers at this time.

Let us Pray:

A prayer in time of darkness

All that I love into Your keeping.

All that I care for into Your care.

Be with us by day,

be with us by night;

and as dark closes the eyelids with sleep,

may I waken

to the peace of a new day.

Amen

God of compassion,

be close to those who are ill, afraid, or in isolation

In their loneliness, be their consolation;

in their anxiety, be their hope;

in their darkness, be their light;

through him who suffered alone on the cross,

but reigns with you in glory,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A Blessing:

Go with confidence into the days ahead, trusting in God's unfailing love and faithfulness.

God will not abandon you, for you are the work of His hands – His own creation – and His love endures forever.

Ali, on behalf of St Michael's Church, Marbury