



St Paul's Church



Dear all

This Sunday at St. Paul's, we will be celebrating the festival of Candlemas (and I get to indulge my love of candles in church, hurray!). Once again we will read the story of Simeon and Anna who encounter Jesus in the temple on the day of his presentation (Luke 2:22-40). The lectionary pairs that gospel reading with Malachi 3 where we read that 'the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple'. This ancient promise is fulfilled as Mary presents Jesus for his naming and circumcision, as well as her own purification after childbirth. I'll say more about the Gospel reading on Sunday but for now, let's take a look at Malachi as he is a prophet we hear little from in the lectionary.

Malachi belongs to the group of 'minor prophets' in the Old Testament and the book is set in the period after the people of God had returned from their exile in Babylon and had begun to rebuild their lives, their city and their temple. Understandably, the people are asking themselves whether they were still God's chosen people after the traumatic events of the exile.

Malachi reminds them that their story has yet to reach its conclusion. The Lord, he says, will come 'like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap' to change them, to help them to conform more closely to God's imagination of them. In particular, says Malachi, God will judge those who oppress the hired workers do not defend the widow and the orphan, and thrust aside the alien (as per the Deuteronomic laws laid down generations before). This theme, that God's love is for everyone regardless of status or heritage, runs through our Bibles from the very start and reaches its conclusion in Jesus. On Sunday, we will have a chance to reflect on what this means for us as Christians in today's world. Do come along, light a candle, be surrounded by the beautiful Candlemas liturgy, and prepare yourself to turn from the crib towards the cross as we lay aside Christmas and Epiphany and begin our journey towards Lent.

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 28th JANUARY – Epiphany 4

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 4th FEBRUARY – 2nd Sunday before Lent

10 am Café Worship – Gwyn

SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY – Sunday before Lent

10 am All-Age Worship – Rev Anthea

WEDNESDAY 14th FEBRUARY – Ash Wednesday

7.30 pm – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 18th FEBRUARY – Lent

10 am Experimental Sunday and Bubble Church (for congregation) – Rev Anthea/Gwyn

EVENTS

SATURDAY 27th JANUARY @ 6 pm for 6.30 pm

1960s-1980s Disco (a variety of delicious homemade desserts will be available - *bring your own drinks*)

FRIDAY 2nd FEBRUARY @ 9.30 am

Baby & Toddler Group

MONDAY 12th FEBRUARY @ 7.30 pm (St Paul's Church)

Prayer Evening - Beyond the Interregnum - St Paul's & St Nicholas'

THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY @ 2.30 pm

Fellowship: Beetle Drive

FRIDAY 23rd FEBRUARY @ 7 pm

Church Crafts

NOTICES

With effect from 3rd March our Sunday Services will commence at 10.30 am.

FOOD BANK

The next food bank delivery is Friday 9th February.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 28th January 2024

'Father God, thank you for the examples you have given in your word to help us pray.'

This week we give thanks for:

- Moments to relax, to briefly forget the cares of the world, the demands and duties that cling so closely, and to be at peace in God's presence; give thanks too for those special people with whom we can relax.

Please pray for:

- A peaceful and long-lasting solution to the unrest and cross-border tensions in the Middle East, and an end to the Israel-Gaza conflict.
- All who are involved in the long-running Post Office investigations; pray that all victims will be swiftly exonerated and compensated.
- Vulnerable people living on disadvantaged housing estates or in poor rented accommodation across the British Isles; and for the lonely, isolated and housebound, unable to get the help they need.
- Help to be faithful stewards of God's creation, and to continually give thanks for all that is beyond our understanding.
- Our Church family: especially Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen and Meaghan.
- God's comfort, love and hope to fill the hearts of all who are struggling at this time.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

God of peace, may I rejoice in you always. Make me gentle to everyone, keep me from being anxious about anything; help me to ask you for what I need with thanksgiving; and let your peace guard my heart and mind in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.