

## Celebration of Lay Ministries - Candlemas, Sunday 1 February 2026

### Sermon suggestions

#### Readings:

Malachi 3: 1-5, Hebrews 2: 14-end, Luke 2: 22-40

#### Suggestions of themes:

- **All are called.** Mary was very young. Simeon and Anna were very old. Mary and Joseph's offering of two turtledoves indicates they were too poor to afford a lamb (Leviticus 12:8). All of us are called to offer our best in the service of God - whether we are young or old, rich or poor, male or female... God calls *everyone*. How is God calling you?

It might be that you are having an All Age Service for Candlemas. If so, try to involve the young people in the story too. It might be that they could be encouraged to act the story out Or that they could bring up the offertory. It is important to emphasise that young people have a part to play in the worship and the life of church, and community. Celebrate the older folk in the congregation and the roles that they undertake too.

- **Faithful service in the temple.** Anna never ceased to pray night and day in the temple. Celebrate those who faithfully lead the intercessions, who set up for daily prayers, who prepare the altar, who serve, who read, who lead Sunday school, who lead music, who welcome visitors into church, who help prepare the liturgy and service booklets, who run events, who lead home groups, etc. Those faithful (and often unsung) acts of service keep the parish going and today is a good day to encourage and thank those who perform them.
- **Baptismal covenant.** Just as Christ is presented in the temple, we too were presented at our Baptisms and called to "Shine as a light in the world". Jesus told his followers to be "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-16). Candlemas is traditionally a time when candles were blessed for use in the church and in people's homes throughout the year. This day encourages us to fulfil our baptismal promises to bring the Light of Christ out into the world by sharing the Good News. How are we doing this?
- **Hope and Light.** What signs of hope and light can you see in your congregation or community? What hope for the future is there to see in new vocations, new faith to grow be nurtured, new lives together? How can we be **Christ Centred - Outward focused** in all that we do?

Simeon describes Christ as a light for the revelation the gentiles as well as the Jews. The babe came for all people. How do we show this in our congregations?

Remind people that It is often in little daily tasks that we can see signs of light and hope. These can lead us into prayer and help us to be beacons of light in our communities.

#### Reminder of the CofE aspiration for Lay Ministry

"The whole people of God, by baptism, share in bearing Christian presence through worship, witness and service, being the Body of Christ in every and any place and context. [...] Ordained and lay ministers teach and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life in ways that show the difference the Gospel makes. They recognise

that all are baptised into Christ, complementary in gifts and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship, and equal partners in mission.”

**Prayer**

God of faith, deepen our faith  
so we may bear witness to Christ in the world;  
God of hope, strengthen our hope  
so we may be signposts to your transforming presence;  
God of love, kindle our love  
so that, in a fragile and divided world,  
we may be signs of the faith, hope and love  
which we share in Jesus Christ.

Amen.