

Sunday 1st February
4th Sunday of Epiphany

Today's Collect

God of heaven, you send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation: send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next Week Services: Sunday 8th February

9:30am	Harvington	Holy Communion
10:00am	Norton & Lenchwick	Holy Communion
11:00am	Abbots Morton	Morning Prayer
11:00am	Church Lench	Morning Service

Notices

- Shaun Hornsby will be speaking at a RELENTLESS youth event on 6th Feb from 7-9pm at TheBarn, Bidford.
- Confirmation Preparation – held at Church House, Evesham and led by Rev'd Kathryn and Rev'd Chris together with others. This will be over a duration of 10 weekly 1-hour sessions from 7-8pm.
Dates: 20th, 27th April, 11th, 18th May (missing bank holidays) 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th June, 6th July.
If your wanting to be confirmed or do the course as a refresher, email Chris at chris@archbenefice.org.uk or Kathryn at klbteam@gmail.com .
- Don't forget to help donate to Caring Hands Food Bank – toilet rolls, tinned and dried goods..etc Items can be left in the donation boxes in our parish churches.

This Week's First Reading: *Malachi 3.1-5.*

3 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.²

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.⁵ Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

This Week's Second Reading: *Hebrews 2.14-end,*

14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, likewise he himself shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.¹⁸ As he himself was tested by what he had suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 2.22-40.*

22 When the time came for the purification according to the law of Moses, they brought every firstborn male up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord²³ (as 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 statement in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ There was now 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 was 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 glory to your people of 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 Israelites, and to be a sign that will be opposed³⁵ 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 for seven years after her marriage,³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped 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 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.

Next Weeks Readings: *Genesis 1.1-2.3, Psalm 136, Romans 8.18-25, Matthew 6.25-end.*

Prayer of Intercession

Almighty and ever-living God, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple. Grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray your church may be a light to those living in the darkness of unbelief and a witness to Christ's love.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for World Peace that the Light of Christ may dispel the darkness of conflict and bring peace and hope to those living in fear in troubled nations. We pray for wisdom in leadership and justice in our communities.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for the vulnerable and anxious. We remember those struggling with pain, loneliness, or fear, praying they may find comfort, hope, and the assurance of God's presence. We pray for our families facing strain, illness, or financial hardship, that they may experience the comfort of the Holy Family and find strength to endure. We pray for all who mourn and that all who have passed away may know the eternal light and joy of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for Personal Transformation. As Simeon and Anna welcomed the Light, we pray for the grace to recognize where our lives need changing and to reflect God's love to those around us.

We pray for the Church, that, like Simeon and Anna, the Church may recognize and proclaim Christ as the light to the nations and the glory of God's people.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for obedience and faith, that, following the example of Mary and Joseph's obedience in the Temple, all may submit their lives to God's will with humility. For all who, like Simeon and Anna, have waited long for the Lord, that they may find comfort, strength, and joy in God's presence.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Lord, you have sent us a light to enlighten the nations; help us to shine as lights in the world, to your praise and glory. Amen.

Help us, who now go in peace, to shine with your light in the world.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen