Dear Friend

Very many thanks to Martin, who has prepared this week's service; he has also selected the following excellent musical accompaniments.

Here is a nice retelling of Simeon's story with folk song explanation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBZiPRPogn0

Rachmaninov's Nunc Dimittis is considered to be the finest setting of Simeon's famous words. Here is a fine version in Russian

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygOuyV8C1r8

Judith's choice is the hymn, King of glory, King of Peace - Sung by the boys' choir of Bovenkerk Kampen in Holland.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fn0VzGKr8zw

Paul Baloche's – Glorious, is a paean of praise to the Lord similar to Simeon's, which is why I share it now as our contemporary worship song for this week.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idDKcG2d4lA

All good wishes
Chris

SERVICE for Sunday 31st January 2021
Epiphany 4. Candlemas
The Feast of Presentation of Christ in the Temple



Alvaro Pirez, altarpiece for a church in Pisa, c.1410

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel. *Nunc dimittis, or the Song of Simeon.*

CONFESSION Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *cf Hosea 6*

COLLECT 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 forever. Amen.

READINGS Malachi 3.1-5, Psalm 24 [1-6] 7-end, Hebrews 2.14-end, Luke 2.22-40

REFLECTION Do you have a bucket list? That is a list of places to visit and things that you want to do before you die? Sometimes it is not possible for us to fulfil all we want to accomplish in this short, mortal life (and this is particularly so at the moment when the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging). Simeon, who saw Jesus in the temple, had one thing he wanted to accomplish before his death and that was to see the Messiah - and he had been promised this by an Angel. It is a strange wish for some - it's not the same as climbing Mount Everest, visiting the Taj Mahal or having a honeymoon in Paris -but for Simeon it was the simple pleasure of meeting his Lord, his saviour. Maybe that is what we need more of - simple pleasures through which we can come face to face with God. For Simeon it was an awe-inspiring moment. We don't know for how long he had been waiting, how many other young families he had seen and interviewed, but on that day, he knew the moment he saw Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, that this was going to be a momentous day. So, he took Jesus in his arms and immediately he was filled with a sense of wonder and awe, all his waiting had not been in vain, because he held the Saviour of the World in his arms and consequently, he could die a happy man.

We do not have to be worried about death because Jesus came that we should have eternal life - he did the dying for us so that we don't have to worry about anything in the future - all we have to do is to try to live a righteous life, following the teachings of Jesus. His promise will be fulfilled. We will never be able to do what Simeon did and to hold the baby Jesus in our arms, but one day we will come face to face with God, our loving father, and we can be hopeful, faithful, and patient, just as Simeon was. So, who needs a bucket list in this life, when we have much more amazing experiences to look forward to in the next life!

PRAYERS Simeon and Anna were filled with hope when they recognised the presence of Jesus; God had fulfilled their promise. So dear Lord, we pray that we too would have lives open to the awareness of your presence.

Lord Jesus Christ,
For our sake you became poor,
You suffered and endured pain in human flesh.
Look with pity on our sufferings,
Be merciful to our needs.
We pray for the broken-hearted
That you would bind up our sorrows
We pray for the sick, that you would heal our infirmities.
We pray for the lonely, that in you we would discover the perfect friend.
We pray for the bereaved
That in the midst of unfathomable loss
We would know the depths of your love.
Amen. *cf. Thisischurch.com*

We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and forever.