Dear friends
Apologies for sending out the virtual service a little early, but it gives an opportunity to publicise our Benefice Christingle service at All Saints' on Sunday. Pastries will be provided (for those who can't join us we'll have to work out a way of sending them virtually).

Some sad news. Chris Knight died yesterday. He was a friend of many, particularly at All Saints and made a huge musical contribution to our worship over many years.

Many thanks to Martin for this week's service sheet on the theme of Candlemas and also for his musical recommendations. The Arvo Part is a particular personal favourite of mine, particularly the descending "Amen" phrases - enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFBIJgkj_-g

Handel -Messiah oratorio, HWV 56 “For unto us a Child is Born”

“The voices are absolutely the best in the world. The choir is so well trained and makes the piece sound easy to sing. One expects the orchestra to be good which it was, perfect blend of all parts.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBFUW16V5wk

Arvo Pärt: Nunc dimittis | SWR Vokalensemble

Altogether different mood in this meditative setting of the Nunc dimittis. Prepare to drift.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yRZK43gfyE

Gregory Porter – Thank You (Lyric Video)

Let’s liven it up with a bit of Gospel. Yes, we’ve had it before; Let’s thank the Lord for all his blessings and jump around while doing it!

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

Paul Baloche - Glorious

The next song is an Easter song, but one can imagine Simeon and Anna singing this when they see the infant Jesus. You are Glorious!

And finally, a traditional hymn…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spE-BE23qxA

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise at Songs of Praise at Halifax Minster

Sing along to this hymn of praise written by Scottish Free Church minister Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908), based on 1 Timothy.

Thanks, Martin.
May we sense the light of God's glory and reflect something of it in our lives.
Chris

SERVICE for Sunday 30th January 2022
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.

GOSPEL READING: 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 with the COVID-Omicron pandemic). Simeon, who saw Jesus in the temple, had one thing he wanted to accomplish before his death and that was to see the Messiah - which he had been promised 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.

The same can be said of Anna. Not many women are named in the Bible, therefore she must have been a significant member of the temple. She was a prophetess; widowed after seven years of marriage; a devout Asherite Hebrew who regularly practiced prayer and fasting. Luke describes Anna as "very old"; some commentaries state that she was 84 years old. She too, saw something of the wonder of the infant Jesus that satisfied her many years' service to God.

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.