

- [Hebrews 2:14-18](#)
- [Luke 2:22-40](#)
- [Psalm 24:7-10](#)

Almighty and ever living God, we humbly pray that, as your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Light from Light  
A light to the Nations  
Blinded by the light

It is the season of Epiphany- the in between time where we find ourselves waiting-  
Waiting with fear?  
With hope?  
Waiting with the need for light.

A mere 40 days ago, we gathered in this space to light the candles of Christmas Eve as we sang “Silent Night” sharing the light from the Advent Wreath one by one into the congregation, from candle to candle. It’s the favorite part of the service for many...the beauty of the simple flame lighting this space as dim the lights. “Will we light candles as this service?” a young child asked me as they entered the

space at the service. There was a joy in her expectant face—the glee about the chance to hold that small candle with fire- a holy amazement, joy and mischief was on their face.

They knew..... something would be trusted to them that night as we told the story one more time.....

A small little light.....

Thinking forward, we know that on Holy Saturday, the eve before Easter Day, we will light the candles again, this time starting from the newly kindled fire on the west porch- to the the paschal candle, the light of Christ which illuminates the story of God’s salvific nature will be shared from one person to the next until the whole space is awash with the light of Christ’s resurrection. Listening intently from story to song, from Genesis to the Gospel....lights of hope burning brightly...

An ordinary little candle which gives light to such a large space, yielding a thin whisp of light that together with those around us assists in our seeing more clearly the words, the way, the hope.

Today we find ourselves in a special space,

Today is February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Every 5-6 years February 2<sup>nd</sup> occurs on a Sunday which means that rather than reading “the rest of the story” from last week- we instead “interrupt this lectionary course” to celebrate the Feast of the

Presentation, sometimes called Candlemas, we hear of the ordinary tradition of a couple presenting their first born male child at the temple.

Mary and Joseph, the travelers, 40 days after being in Bethlehem, return to Jerusalem as the law of their faith commanded them so to do. Returning to Jerusalem from Nazareth, they come to give thanks to God for the birth of their first-born child. This rite was twofold. Jesus was presented and Mary was allowed to return to the worshipping fully post birth. Mother and child, fully welcomed into the faith community.

Birth, naming ceremonies 7 days after birth, and now the presentation..... normal, standard, similar to the well baby check ins that are scheduled before you leave the hospital with your newborn child- the community checking in with you and caring for you, supporting you in prayer and in presence.

And yet, in this journey  
This travel.  
Something else happens.

Mary and Joseph arrive with their 40day old child and are greeted by Simeon, the respected and wise old priest who upon encountering the baby begins to sing and dance with joy.

Simeon KNOWS immediately that this is something more.  
This is the light to the Gentiles and to your people Israel.  
In one fell swoop Simeon declares this child is hope to all people.

A 40day old child

will be so much.

A child who will cause the falling and rising of many in Israel

A sign that will be opposed

And

a sword will pierce Mary's soul, too.

And if that weren't enough, we hear of Anna also.

Anna, the widow.

Anna, the prayerful one

Anna, the one present everyday –

there to pray, there to care, also begins to sing and praise God.

She, too, sees this child as so much more

and shines more light upon what is to come.

The Feast of the Presentation is full of juxtapositions:

Keeping the law is both ordinary and can be incredibly transforming-  
while obligation and duty might bring us to a space, the Holy Spirit has  
this funny way of showing up and knocking the socks off of us  
sometimes.

Like Kit said last week- the divine is always present within and around us. I am pretty sure it took the divine to get Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem and it was the Holy Spirit that opened the eyes and awareness of Simeon and Anna.

We encounter the young couple with their first born who are greeted by the wise and respected, establish priest Simeon- who sees the light of hope in this newborn child and this young couple that will care for this child until he is able to begin his ministry.

And with Simeon we see Anna, the woman without a family nor children, who also announces and celebrates the presence of the Holy Family in their midst.

In this young child

an established people and empire will be challenged and transformed.

In this new beginning, death will also occur.

The Song of Simeon that we hear today is read or sung in every evening prayer, evensong, and compline service. The song reminds us at the close of the day that we let go of the day,  
The hurt, the disappointment, the suffering  
And at the same time, we like Simeon,  
give thanks for the light we have seen in our day

and we know that God will provide.

We close the day, as Simeon did at the end of his life-  
with hope, gratitude and grace.

Praising God for each moment,

even, as I am sure,

that Simeon still had to live through temple politics, hurt and threats to  
his own safety.

The joy of that moment reminded him that even in those dark days,  
God was there,

in this baby,

This tiny light

in the life to come,

in the space where they stood, prayed and did even the ordinary  
prayers at 40 days of life.

We go about the ordinary every day.

We get up, we go about our business, we encounter the good, the bad,  
and the godly.....

In this “in between time” where the world holds its breath in fear,  
there is also hope.

I hold up for you the example of Mary and Joseph with Simeon and  
Anna:

In the midst of the routine a new beginning can occur in the most unexpected of ways.

Not matter how old or young you might be,

there is a new beginning about to happen

An invitation to join the story

A reminder that sometimes you need to let go for a new beginning to occur.

There is a light to the nations,  
to all of God's people

As a people of faith, we know God's endurance to be true through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and in all of his life, teachings, and love.

As we continue to mark time in the ordinary, and in the "in between" be reminded of the amazement of Mary and Joseph and the fullness of joy of Simeon and Anna...

The holy wonder of the unexpected transforming of the whole World.

May God shine the light of love in our own lives,  
illuminating our paths to awash our world with hope in our midst.

May the light of the faithful light our own hearts with the fire of God's  
love

A love that endures through suffering, through hardship,  
through the challenging times

And is a light for others.

Lighting the path forward – one step at a time.

One light of hope, sharing the story, shedding a little light

A light for you and me

A light unto to the nations

When the world seems dark and dim,

look for the light

and see the reminder of God's faithfulness in the darkest of times.

A baby, a man, a savior for this world.