



Messiah Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Liturgy for Candlemas

What is Candlemas?

On the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, also known as Candlemas, we remember Jesus' presentation in the temple forty days after his birth in accordance with Jewish law. According to Saint Luke, the Holy Family was greeted at the temple by Anna, a prophet of great age, who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem and Simeon, another devout person of great age who sang of seeing God's salvation in the Christ child.

Candlemas speaks to a wide variety of important liturgical and especially pastoral concerns. During a bitterly cold, dark time of the year in Upstate New York, as we turn from the manger of Advent and Christmas and journey through the cross to the empty tomb of Good Friday and Easter, we also give thanks for earliest stirrings of the returning sun and remember that in Christ, new life and new light is possible. Continuing the work of our ancestors in faith, we bless our sanctuary lamps for the upcoming year and bless votives for our members to take home and burn through the darkness of Lent.

Candlemas is celebrated at Messiah Lutheran Church on the Sunday closest to February 2nd, unless that Sunday is Transfiguration Sunday. In those cases, Candlemas is celebrated one week before Transfiguration Sunday. This feast day is not meant simply for mere ornamentation but rather to speak to contemporary issues such as seasonal depression and anxiety, finding hope and remembering that the youngest and most senior members of our community need one another.

The Liturgy

PRELUDE

Ushers hand out votives to everyone as they enter the sanctuary. Children gather in the back of the sanctuary with lit pillar candles. Acolyte lights altar candles, side sconces and the Christ Candle, stores the taper and sits down on the worship assistant's bench.

GATHERING & PROCESSION*

Presider begins from the back of the sanctuary.

- P. God gives us the gift of the incarnation. With one voice, let all people...
- A. Praise God!**
- P. Today, the Christ Child is presented in the Temple. With one voice, let all people...
- A. Praise God!**
- P. Today, Anna and Simeon and all see God in Christ Jesus. With one voice, let all people...
- A. Praise God!**

Crucifer picks up the processional cross and slowly walks forward once singing begins. Children with lit pillar candles follow with the Presider and Deacon following the children. The Crucifer arrives at the altar, turns holds up the cross. Children bow to the cross, place the pillar candles on the altar and return to their seats. The

Presider and the Deacon bow. The cross is then put in its holder and all worship assistants stand in front of the bench.

PRAYER OF THE DAY*

Presider and Deacon walk in front of altar and face the assembly while inviting them to pray. The Deacon holds the leader's guide open.

P. The Lord be with you.

A. And also with you.

P. Let us pray.

Pause. The Presider prays using the orans posture.

P. Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A. Amen.

The service continues as normal with the following Scripture readings: Malachi 3:1–4, Psalm 84, Hebrews 2:14–18, Luke 2:22–40 until after the Prayer After Communion.

BLESSING OF THE CANDLES*

All people hold their unlit votives high as one senior member of the congregation and a child comes forward.

WA1. Siblings in Christ, today we give thanks to God and we seek God's blessing as we set apart our sanctuary lamps and candles for our homes as a sign of Christ's liberating love.

WA2. Let us pray. We give You thanks, O God, creator of the universe, for You have enriched our lives with every good and perfect gift; You have commanded us to show Your splendor to our children; and You have invited us to praise You with lives of love, justice, and joy. Send Your blessing on these sanctuary lamps and candles for our homes which we set apart today; may they be to us a sign of Christ, the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

WA1. To you, O God, be all glory and honor through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

A. Amen.

The senior member and child proceeds down the center aisle lighting votives and the flame is passed while "This Little Light of Mine" (ELW 677) is sung.

BLESSING*

Presider continues.

P. This Candlemas, may you know God, source of light eternal. May the light of Christ shine within you. May the power of the Holy Spirit dispel all your sorrows, renew your every hope, and give you the strength to serve a needy world. And may almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

A. Amen.

The services continues as normal until the dismissal.

DISMISSAL*

The Presider continues along with the children, following the Song of Simeon, the Nunc Dimittis.

P. Now, Lord,

A. You let Your servant go in peace.

P. Now, Lord,

A. My own eyes have seen Your salvation.

P. Now, Lord,

A. You are in the sight of every people.

P. Now, Lord,

A. A light to reveal You to the nations.

P. Now Lord,

A. The glory of Your people, Israel.

P. Gathered in the waters of baptism, we end the celebration of the birth of the Christ-child.

A. God, born in us, grace us with life that has no end.

P. Gathered round God's table, we have cradled the Christ-child in our hands.

A. God, born in us, make us bread for the hungry.

P. Gathered in sanctuary with faithful Simeon and Anna, we have sung praises to the Christ-child.

A. God, born in us, inspire us to trust Your eternal promises.

P. Gathered in light, we have seen the Christ-child.

A. God, born in us, make us always bear You, the light of the world.

All extinguish their candles.

P. We are reborn in the waters of baptism and marked with the sign of the cross.

A. God is for us, and promises life everlasting.

P. We bend down to serve and love one another as Christ first loved us.

A. God is for us, and we are God's people now and forever.

P. We now turn from the manger to journey through Christ's passion to the empty tomb.

A. God is for us, in the resurrection dawn and in the mysteries of Easter.

C. The mass is ended. Go in the light and peace of Christ!

A. Thanks be to God!

The people of Messiah Lutheran Church are deeply indebted to the people of Saint Peter's Church in Manhattan for sharing their Candlemas liturgy with us, of which this is an adapted form.