

CANDLEMAS NEWSLETTER

2nd – 8th February 2025

Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46)

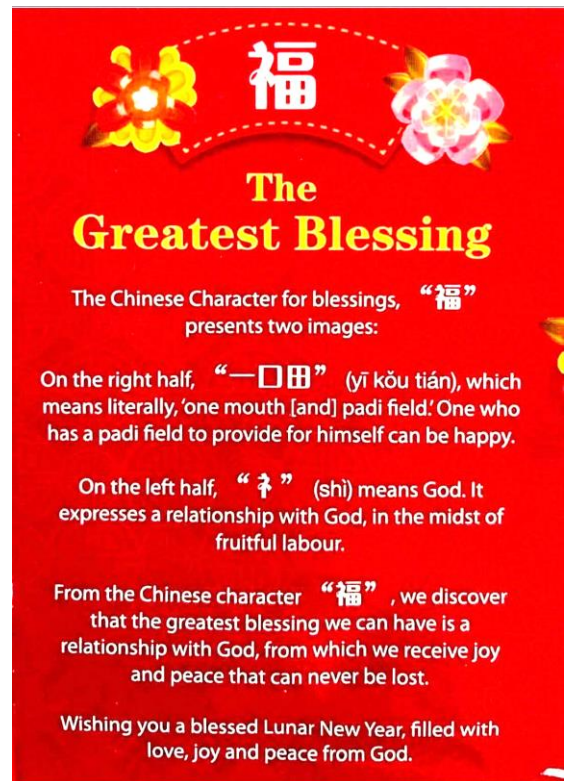
This week chaos, crying, and celebration have come together. I have met my cultural new year with respect and muted celebration. At a time intended for gathered families, feasting and joyful greetings, we shall gather on heaven and earth. And we have held these events too. The Holocaust Memorial Day on the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau; hostages freed and a semblance of peace in the Holy Land; and the tragic air crash in Washington, USA.

Meanwhile, the Church into which God has called and anointed me to serve is beset with confusion and chaos. Today, the Psalm (65) from the Church of England's Service of Morning Prayer says:

Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there.

We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house, even of your holy temple.

You will call your walls, Salvation, and your gates, Praise.



Yet sitting alongside the Psalmist's declaration, is the reading from I Corinthians 11

Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you... When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper... Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves...

I thank God for Rudyard Kipling's familiar poem 'If', a helpful stream of reflective thought.

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs...

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, or being lied about, don't deal in lies, or being hated don't give way to hating...

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken, twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, and stoop and build them up with worn-out tools.

CANDLEMAS Communions & Services

9.15 Staindrop St Mary Rev'd Moji Jaiyesimi

9.30 Winston St Andrew Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

10.45 Gainford St Mary Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop with Claire Mead preaching at Winston and Gainford

God of Jacob, when the earth shakes and the nations are in uproar, speak, and let the storm be still; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

NOTICES

We pray for families recently bereaved and give thanks for the life of

† The Late Mrs Joyce Mary White, whose funeral at Wear Valley Crematorium and Thanksgiving Service at Winston St Andrew's have taken place on Friday 31st January 2025

FROM OUR PARISHES

Invitations

† To join our Parochial Church Councils (PCCs)

All our churches are lovingly cared for by parishioners who step forward to serve on our PCCs. We have vacancies in Ingleton, Staindrop, and Winston, also for churchwardens. All interest welcome!

Do you know someone who would love to help plan and organise social events or who enjoys all things admin? Church attendance not essential. Do encourage them to get in touch.

† A New After-School Club for 'Big Questions' has begun in Staindrop Academy!

Gather Church Missioner Sarah Fells and Lead Sheila Jones have been invited to start an after-school club at Staindrop Academy on Thursday afternoons. This is **open to year 7 pupils** to start with, some of whom have had previous links from our churches' sponsored primary after-school clubs in Gainford, Ingleton, and Staindrop. **During the hour, they would chat about 'Big Questions' of life and faith**, over drinks and snacks followed by fun activities. Do you know any year 7's at Staindrop Academy? Pray for them and encourage them to come along. **Pray for a good response, to be open to God in the hearts, transforming lives of these young people.** For more information contact Sarah Fells or Sheila Jones stmarys@gainfordwinston.church and info@gatherchurchteesdale.com

† BELL RINGING

BREAKING NEWS: 2025 is STAINDROP ST MARY'S BELLS RESTORATION CENTENARY! Plans have begun for a Festival of Bells. Get in touch with Tower Captain Mark Palmer if you'd like to know more and how you can help: mark@palmerfrost.plus.com

COLLECT for CANDLEMAS – The Presentation of Christ at the Temple

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 for ever. Amen

Post-Communion 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 for ever. Amen

Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise 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 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Gospel according to Luke (2:22-40)

¹⁴ When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is 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 what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ Now there was 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 had been 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 for glory to your people 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 in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ 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 who were 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.