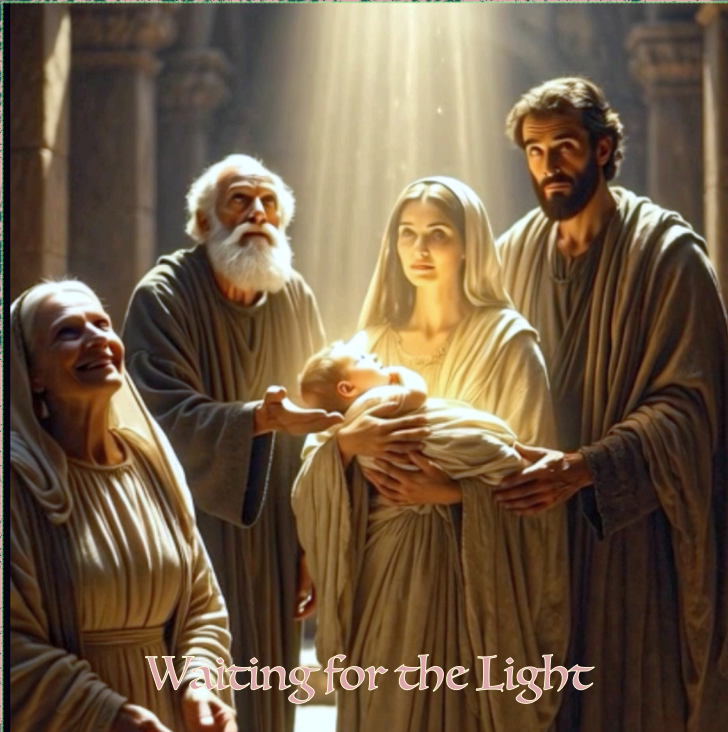




BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study



Waiting for the Light

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

1st February 2026

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A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

Revised Common Lectionary Related
Presentation of Christ in the Temple

(Candlemas)

Malachi 3.1-5

Psalms 24.[1-6] 7-end

Hebrews 2.14-end

Luke 2.22-40



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Almighty and everliving God,
we humbly beseech
thy Majesty, that,
as thy only-begotten Son was this day
presented in the temple
in substance of our flesh,
so we may be presented unto thee
with pure and clean hearts,
by the same thy Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

Waiting for the Light

What does it mean to truly wait in faith?

This week, as we explore this theme through the profound story of the Presentation of Jesus at the temple, we see two elderly, faithful servants, Simeon and Anna, embody the sacred art of holy anticipation.

Through their example, we witness how patient waiting isn't passive but transformative – like a refining fire that quietly shapes and purifies.

Drawing parallels between their ancient witness and our modern struggles with uncertainty, particularly amid environmental challenges, the journey illuminates how wisdom often belongs to those who have waited longest.

Beautifully weaving together the imagery of light entering the temple quietly through gentle acts of faith, we are shown how some journeys end in peaceful closure like Simeon's, while others, like Anna's, turn outward with renewed purpose.

The message resonates deeply with our own experiences of carrying promises longer than we thought possible, inviting us to consider what waiting has shaped us and what promises we're now called to entrust to others.

As we stand between "light revealed and light yet to be tested," we're challenged to embrace our own season of waiting with the same faithful patience that transformed ordinary moments into holy encounters.

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As we walk lightly on sacred ground,
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

Waiting for the Light

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

The wisdom of elders is sometimes berated
yet Anna and Simeon saw what was true:
persistence rewarded, their waiting accomplished,
their journey of faithfulness starting anew.

A new light was shining, a new day was dawning,
the hope of all nations in one baby's birth;
and now they departed, in peace they went homeward,
the promise fulfilled, Christ had come upon earth.

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Today's feast, known as the Presentation of Christ in the Temple,
Candlemas, or the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a
threshold.

One foot rests in the past, the other steps toward what is coming.

Christmas lingers behind us, yet the road to the cross has not quite
begun. Today is not an ending, but a gentle handing on—a promise
long awaited, now entrusted to us.

The prophet Malachi speaks of a messenger who will come
suddenly to the temple, and of a refining fire that does not destroy,
but purifies.

This refining fire is quiet.
It does not shout or dazzle.

Instead, it is like the subtle smell of smouldering wood, a scent that
gently lingers and transforms. It moves with the slow glow of
molten metal, shaping and purifying without demand, leaving a
lasting mark of transformation.

It works slowly, shaping what is strong enough to endure.

Mary and Joseph arrive carrying that quiet work in their arms.
They bring the offering of the poor.
Nothing impressive.
Nothing more than enough—
Only what the law asks, and what love allows.

Light enters the temple quietly.

It comes in gentle acts of faith and trust.

Simeon and Anna recognise what others miss.
They have waited too long to be fooled by appearances.
Their faith has been shaped by years of prayer, by disappointment,
by hope carried with open hands.

Simeon's waiting ends, but not with relief.
It ends in release—a letting go.
“Lord, lettest now thy servant depart in peace.”

Anna's waiting turns outward, opening toward others.

She speaks, not to the powerful, but to those who are longing.
Tradition says she watched the temple rise again, stone by stone.

She has known loss.
She has lived through change.
Patience was not given to her;
she learned it slowly.

For Anna, the pilgrimage does not end.
It turns, quietly, in a new direction.

The psalm calls for gates to be lifted—not only doors of stone, but
hearts ready to receive what is holy.

The letter to the Hebrews tells us this child enters not above
suffering, but into it.

He shares our flesh, our fear.
He breaks death from within.

Perhaps that matters most this week.

Across our state, people braced themselves
for heat that overwhelms,
for land that dries and cracks,
for the quiet worry that comes when the weather reminds us we
are fragile.

We may not feel the worst of it here, but we know the anxiety that
settles in our bones when control slips away, and waiting is all we
can do.

In a shared silence, let us pause to name the moments when we've
felt control slip from our grasp, transforming our personal anxieties
into a communal prayer.

Luke tells us something quietly radical for such moments:
that wisdom does not always belong to the young,
and faithfulness is not measured by how quickly we move.

Sometimes the truest sight belongs to those who have waited
longest. Throughout the wait there is no panic when the future
presses close. Trust is a light that comes slowly, not all at once.

The verses we heard at the beginning of this reflection began as a
lament. Having been patient, there is no panic when the future
presses close.

A new light shines.
A new day dawns.
The past is not erased, but fulfilled.

Today's feast asks us where we are standing. It invites us into a
time of reflection, to consider: What waiting has shaped us? It begs
us to carry this question into our week, revisiting it nightly as a
guiding examen, a question that shapes our contemplation into
ongoing formation.

What promise have we carried longer than we thought we could?

What promise are we being asked to entrust to others?

Like Simeon, some journeys come to a peaceful close.
Like Anna, others turn outward, gathering new strength.
Like Mary, we may still be learning what the slow, refining fire asks
of us—not to harden, but to become clear enough to carry light
within.

The Presentation does not rush us forward.
It honours what has been.
It places what is to come gently in our hands.
One pilgrimage ends.
Another begins.

And the light that entered the temple that day
still meets us,
still fills us,
still guides us in heat and in waiting,
in fear
and in faithfulness,
patient, steady, and quietly complete.

Not all journeys end in answers.

Some end in readiness.

Simeon goes in peace.

Anna turns outward.

Mary keeps what she does not yet understand.

We stand between light revealed
and light yet to be tested.

In the days ahead, we will climb the mountain of Transfiguration,
and soon after, we will be marked with ash.

Glory will be glimpsed.
Fragility will be named.

For now, we wait—
not empty-handed,
but holding what has been entrusted to us.

Questions for Reflection and/or Group Discussion

The sermon mentions Simeon and Anna's long period of waiting and how their faith was shaped by years of prayer and hope. How does waiting strengthen or challenge our faith?

- The sermon states: 'Their faith has been shaped by years of prayer, by disappointment, by hope carried with open hands.'
- What are you currently waiting for in your spiritual journey, and how is this period of waiting affecting your relationship with God?

The sermon describes light entering the temple 'quietly' and through 'gentle acts of faith and trust.' Why do you think significant spiritual moments often come in quiet ways rather than dramatic events?

- The sermon notes: 'It does not shout or dazzle. Instead, it is like the subtle smell of smouldering wood, a scent that gently lingers and transforms.'
- Can you recall a time when God worked in your life through subtle, quiet ways rather than dramatic events?

According to Malachi's prophecy mentioned in the sermon, the messenger comes with a refining fire that purifies rather than destroys. What does this tell us about how God works in our lives?

- The sermon describes it as 'shaping and purifying without demand, leaving a lasting mark of transformation.'
- In what areas of your life do you feel God might be working as a refining fire, gradually transforming you?

The sermon contrasts Simeon's ending (release and letting go) with Anna's new beginning (turning outward to others). How do these different responses to encountering Jesus challenge us?

- The sermon states: 'Simeon goes in peace. Anna turns outward. Mary keeps what she does not yet understand.'
- Are you in a season of letting go like Simeon, or turning outward like Anna? How is God leading you in this season?

How does the image of standing 'between light revealed and light yet to be tested' relate to our journey of faith?

- The sermon concludes with the idea that we stand 'between light revealed and light yet to be tested' as we approach both Transfiguration and Ash Wednesday.
- What revealed truths about God are you confident in, and what aspects of your faith are you still testing and exploring?

This five-day devotional will cast a strong light into the shadows as we reflect on Jesus' presentation in the Temple. It will explore themes of waiting, faithfulness, and the gentle unfolding of promises that shape our spiritual journey.



Day 1: Luke 2:29-32

In this passage, Simeon, a devout and righteous man, meets the child Jesus at the temple. His long-awaited moment arrives with peace as he recognises the fulfilment of God's promise. This encounter teaches us about the power of patience and the peace that comes with trusting the divine plan. Simeon had been waiting for many years, his faith shaped by patience and trust in God's promises. As he holds Jesus, he acknowledges the light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

This reminds us that even in our waiting, God's plan is unfolding. We are invited to trust and to see the light of Christ in unexpected places. As we reflect on Simeon's response, we can find solace in the quiet assurance that God's promises are realised in their perfect time. Let us embrace the peace that comes from releasing our expectations and welcoming God's timing.

- What have you been waiting for in your life, and how might you find peace in the waiting?
- In what ways can you see God's promises being fulfilled around you?
- How can you embrace patience and trust in God's timing?
- Pray for the ability to recognise the light of Christ in your life and the lives of others.
- Ask for peace in the waiting periods and to trust in God's unfolding plan.

Day 2 Malachi 3:1-3

Malachi speaks of a refining fire that purifies rather than destroys. This imagery invites us to consider how God's presence works within us, shaping and refining us in quiet yet profound ways. Just as metal is purified slowly with heat, so too our spirits are refined through experiences that challenge and transform us.

Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple with the humble offerings of the poor, symbols of their faith and trust. The light entering the temple

through Jesus symbolises God's gentle yet transforming power in our lives. As we reflect on this, we are invited to consider how God is silently working to transform our hearts, leading us to greater clarity and purity in carrying His light.

- Reflect on a time when you felt God refining you through difficult experiences.
- How can you be open to God's subtle transformative work in your life?
- What does it mean for you to carry the light of Christ within?
- Pray for strength and patience during times of transformation.
- Ask for clarity to recognise how God is shaping you for His purpose.

Day 3 Psalms 24:7-10

This psalm calls for the lifting of gates, inviting us to open our hearts to receive what is holy. The imagery of gates and doors reminds us that readiness to receive God often requires intentional preparation and openness. This preparation isn't merely physical but deeply spiritual, requiring a heart attuned to God's presence and movement in our lives.

Simeon and Anna recognised the holy child not because of spectacle but through spiritual insight honed by years of prayer and anticipation. This illustrates the importance of spiritual readiness, emphasising that God's presence can be quietly radical, requiring hearts open and willing to perceive His glory in the mundane and the miraculous alike.

- Reflect on ways you can prepare your heart to receive more of God's presence.
- What does it mean for you to open the 'gates' of your life to God's transformative power?
- In what subtle ways is God inviting you to perceive His presence today?
- Pray for a heart that is perennially open and ready to welcome the divine.
- Seek God's guidance in removing barriers that hinder spiritual perception.

Day 4 Hebrews 2:14-17

Through Jesus, God enters into our human condition, sharing in our flesh and fear, ultimately overcoming death from within. This scripture underscores the profound mystery of the incarnation, where God's glory is intertwined with human suffering. It reminds us that Jesus' experience

affirms our own, transforming our vulnerabilities into avenues for divine grace.

As we reflect on this passage, we are encouraged to acknowledge the fragility within ourselves and others. The power of Christ's entrance into human suffering can transform our fears into faith. Embracing our vulnerabilities as spaces for divine presence allows us to witness and experience the glory of God in our lives, especially during difficult times.

- In what areas of your life do you feel vulnerable, and how can these become spaces for God's grace?
- How does knowing that Jesus shares in our human experience impact your faith?
- Reflect on a time when divine strength was evident in your weakness.
- Seek God's presence in moments of fear and vulnerability, asking for transformation and peace.
- Pray for the strength to embrace your humanity as a vessel for divine grace.

Day 5 Luke 2:36-38

Anna teaches us about enduring faith. Despite her advanced age, she spent her days in prayer and fasting, eagerly anticipating God's promises. Her moment of recognition at seeing Jesus was not merely personal but an outpouring towards others. Anna's story highlights how faith is not only personal but communal, impacting those around us.

Her life exemplifies the journey from waiting to witnessing, where the promises carried are not for individual fulfilment alone but to be shared and passed on. As Anna turns outward, her faith becomes a beacon for others, encouraging us to see beyond individual journeys towards the larger, unfolding story of God's faithfulness.

- In what ways can you share your faith journey with others, as Anna did?
- Reflect on the communal aspects of faith—how does your faith journey impact those around you?
- What promises, like Anna's, are you invited to witness and share with your community?
- Pray for the ability to be a source of encouragement and hope to others in your community.
- Ask God to reveal ways you can witness His faithfulness in your life and share it with others.

End notes and further reading

End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew
Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John
Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke
Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians
Andrew McGowan substack.com/@abmcg
N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A
Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer (twelvebaskets.co.uk)

**Let your faith and relationships
be shaped by love and patience
for God's love is
*revealed in lives, not letters.***



Brabarlung Totem

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