

Candlemas is a Christian festival celebrated on February 2nd that commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple, 40 days after his birth.

It also marks the purification of the Virgin Mary and is traditionally known as a Festival of Lights because church candles are blessed on this day.

The festival traditionally ends the Christmas season.



Prayer for Candlemas and the Coming of Spring – “Gift”

God of light and renewal, we give thanks for the gift of your presence among us — the light that came into us. In the lengthening days, the returning birds, and the quiet hope that rises after winter. May the candles we light remind us that your light is not for hoarding, but for sharing — a gift given to be given again.

As we turn toward spring, we give thanks for the gift of new beginnings. The earth stirs beneath us, bulbs press through soil, and your Spirit breathes life into what seemed dormant. Teach us to receive this season with openness and gratitude — to see growth where we least expect it and to nurture the fragile shoots of hope within ourselves and our communities. Help us trust that your gifts are always unfolding, even in small and hidden ways.

Gracious Giver, may we carry the light of Candlemas into our living — as people who know that everything we have and are is a gift from you. Inspire us to offer our time, our compassion, our creativity, and our courage for the flourishing of others. Let this season of lengthening light be a reminder that your generosity is endless, and that we are invited to join in the giving.

Through Christ, the gift and giver of life. Amen.



Berkshire & Hampshire Borders Methodist Circuit

December 2025 to February 2026



*God of gifts,
thank you for the love you've planted in each of us.
Help us to live each day awake and ready –
ready to notice, ready to care, ready to shine.
May we be your gifts in our families, our communities and
this world.
Amen.*

www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources



The Gift

Grace and Truth, Life and Light,
Outpouring from the Father's heart,
Reveal in vulnerability, in fragile flesh,
The Nature of God.

God comes to us, lives with us,
Stays with us in the dark times.
Light still shines giving us life,
Inviting us to receive the Gift,
Inviting us to become who we already are,
Children of God, reflecting
The Love, Light and Life of God.

The Shepherds and the Angels *In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,*
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'
Luke 2 vv 8-14 (NRSVA)

Extracts from *Walking Backwards to Christmas* by Stephen Cottrell
 (Chapter 5 p46-47)
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We rushed into Bethlehem. We wanted to see what had happened. We had to find this child. So we abandoned our few sheep. We arrived at the outhouse behind the pub laughing and panting. ... What a noise those angels had made. How come the whole town hadn't heard it? But what a silence in that stable. The silence of loving and of being loved; of knowing and being known.
 We went into the stable then. The door wasn't barred. It was open to us – and, I suppose, to the whole waiting world.
 We went in and knelt down. That's all we did. Fools and idiots, who for no reason of personal merit or insight had just received the richest fortune. We knew this. And we didn't need to say anything. We saw the child, and the child's mother. We saw her husband. He stood between us and the child for a few moments ... then he smiled and beckoned us forward.
 We shuffled across the floor on our knees. It must have been comical to watch. We must have looked a real sorry sight. But it felt right. This was not a place to stand; this felt a holy place – like when Moses saw that burning bush and took his shoes off. This was not a time to speak. Whatever it was that God wanted to say to us that night, he was saying it in the silence of a child born. All the noise and rejoicing of the angels was to lead us here, deep into the silence of God's presence.

Prayer for Epiphany

"On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."
 Matthew 2: 11 (NRSVA)

What strange gifts for a baby boy!
 They brought the gift of gold, Jesus.
 Your parents must have been grateful for that precious gift.
 We, too, have been blessed with the gift of material wealth –
 - money to buy the necessities of life, and more.
 Money can be squandered or gambled, and wasted.
 But wealth can also be shared with those who don't have enough.
 Forgive us when we hug our possessions and money to ourselves.
 Grant us the gift of generosity, that we may share freely and willingly,
 with others in need, the resources we have received.
 We pray for those who have money, those who misuse it, and those without it.
 Gold is also the gift of kingship and power.
 We pray for all those who hold power in our nation and our world.
 Give to the powerful wisdom, compassion and the desire for peace.
 They brought you the gift of frankincense, Jesus -
 fragrant incense of prayer and worship.
 We have the gift of freedom to worship you,
 and to offer prayer and praise with our hearts and our lives.
 You have given us each other, the people of God.
 Forgive us when we neglect prayer and when our worship is half-hearted.
 May our worship be as sweet-smelling incense,
 and may we, your people, be a fragrant, living sacrifice,
 that our praise may spill over into joyful witness and service in your world.
 We pray for our churches, for our circuit, and our shared vision.
 They brought the gift of myrrh to you, Jesus.
 This was the strangest gift of all – a reminder of suffering and death.
 Is it a gift?
 Can our own suffering be a gift – for ourselves and for others?
 Maybe our response to the suffering of the world can be a gift?
 We pray for the suffering, the dying, and those who care for them.
 May we become a gift in the way we respond to those who suffer from pain, sorrow, hunger, poverty, war and disaster. Amen.