

Stay Connected – 1st February 2026

Presentation of Christ

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: Luke 2: 22-40

Peter's Blurb

"Come to St. Mark's – not just a church but a family!"

And the beat goes on as members of the Church family gather together once again in work-parties to ensure that our Rectory will be a worthy new home for our soon to be new "first family".



Dudley: "Can I do anything to help?"



Jeannie: "Do you want me to paint over this hole?"



Sally: "I think this cabinet is fine as it is!"



Pansy: "Rustico? – can I order 6 pizzas for take-out please?"



LD: "Sure I can't point up your beard again Bob?"



And lurking in the DR – our soon-to-be "First Family" hard at work already.

The family is at it again – we are so grateful and, indeed thankful, for the efforts of so many members of the church family who pitched in again this weekend to update our Rectory. And special thanks to Rev. Terry and Nicole who also pitched in to help get the job done. We are so blessed.

Thanks also to Archdeacon John who looked after both of our services today and gave us the benefit of his thoughts on the theme of the day – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple – frequently called Candlemas being a celebration of the traditional consecration of all the candles to be used during the year. I had not previously known of that as being the origin of the term Candlemas – thanks to Archdeacon John for explaining that today 😊

The weather forecast for today was for a high-intensity gale to prevail with high winds, high seas and heavy rains. The undoubtedly explains why attendance was lower than usual today although, as I write this, late afternoon it has not yet been as bad as we might have expected based upon that forecast. Yes it is windy and rainy but not yet at the intensity we were led to anticipate. Maybe that is still yet to come – so stay indoors and stay safe for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

Tomorrow is Ground Hog Day so we'll see what is predicted. Groundhog Day, celebrated on February 2nd in the U.S. and Canada, is a fun tradition where people watch a groundhog emerge from its burrow to predict the arrival of spring, with the folklore stating a shadow means six more weeks of winter, while no shadow signals an early spring, stemming from German Candlemas traditions, though its accuracy is low. And as, to a large extent, Bermuda's weather is a reflection of North American weather we can only hope for an early spring.

SAVE THE DATE! As previously advised, the **Licensing & Installation Service** for Rev. Terry Hassell will take place on **Saturday, 28th February at 4 pm**. Rev. Terry's first service as our new Priest-in-Charge will be the following day – Sunday, 1st March. He has completed his preparation at Holy Trinity and is now to planning and preparing for his assumption of the position at St. Mark's which will be the culmination, for Terry, of several long years of discernment and prayer to finally be able to fulfil God's plan. We are all excited by it and keep Fr. Terry and Nicole in our thoughts and prayers during this time.

Looking forward to an exciting time at St. Mark's 😊

Guild News

The Guild are planning for their annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper which will be held on **17th February** in the Parish Hall. See details opposite and get your tickets (available from Barbara) now!

This event will be preceded a few days earlier by the Guild's Valentine Bingo Evening and Spaghetti Supper. So, **SAVE THE DATE** – Saturday, 14th February at 6 pm. Tickets also available from Barbara NOW!



St. Mark's Church Guild
Bingo Supper
Saturday, 14th February

Tickets: \$20 (includes one Bingo card)
Extra cards \$5.00



Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper
Tuesday February 17th 2026
6.00 pm
St. Mark's Parish Hall
Please come join us and enjoy
Pancakes, Sausages, Bacon, etc.
Games and Fun
Tickets: \$15.00
Available from guild members in advance
Hosted by St. Mark's Guild

For More info call: Pansy 332-2074 or Barbara 747-8893

And that's it for this week. Stay safe.

Peter

Archdeacon's Notes

[**Note:** Anticipating a presentation from Warden Nicki at 9.30 service, Archdeacon submitted a short version and a long version of his Talk today. Here is the longer of the two 😊]

Presentation of Christ: 'Growth'

Three lots of '40 days' in the first half of this year!

- *Forty* days of Lent – as is well known – Ash Wednesday [*Feb. 18th*] to Easter Day (excluding the Sundays).
- Less well known, *forty* days also from Easter Day to Ascension Day, called the 'Great Forty Days'.
- Even less well known, the Feast we keep at the start of February called Candlemas, is just *forty* days since Christmas (counting inclusively as in Biblical times). Forty days is laid down in the Jewish Law, as the time after a baby's birth for the purification of mother and child.

This gives also another name for Candlemas, The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

If those questions come up in the next Quiz Night at the Swizzle Inn – you'll do well!

Just to make things more complicated, now we use *another* name for this feast day – Presentation of Christ in the Temple!

For that, actually, is what's at the heart of the story.

Each of the Gospels has its own way of showing how Jesus was first revealed as the Christ: Mark and John with his Baptism as an adult – 'behold my Son, in whom I am well pleased'; Matthew and Luke with his birth, adored by the shepherds; Matthew adding the homage of the Wise Men; Luke adds this beautiful story of forty-day-old Jesus presented in the temple.

Wonderful how it's not just an account of what was necessary to do - the sacrifice of the birds – but the glimpse of the characters involved. Mary (with Joseph), Simeon and Anna.

Remarkable - think about this - how each of these characters *grew*. Lent, soon about our spiritual *growth*, individually and as a church.

Taking central place in the cast of characters in this story: Mary and Joseph. Bringing up baby, they knew he was a special child - angels appearing when he was born, and that gold, frankincense and myrrh (I wonder where in the house they kept those!)

Must have wondered, how exactly will he be special?

Here, as they listened to Simeon, they had a glimpse of what he would be - 'a light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel' – and they marveled at what was being said about their son.

Light dawning on the world – slowly dawning on them too!

And that private word to Mary about how Jesus would cause division and be rejected – 'and a sword would pierce her heart also' – so poignant.

How often she would have pondered that prophecy, as she *grew* in wonder at her son's emerging divinity – and his destiny to suffer and die as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

This is our journey of faith too, experienced afresh today and at every eucharist – as we do this not only in *remembrance* of him – but in expectation, of the *discovery* of God's grace, which nurtures and sustains our growth in the Lord - our daily bread.

Here in the Eucharist, we are at the creative edge, where the fulfillment of the Law of Israel meets the foretaste of the Life of the Spirit, and the worshipping people of God reach out in prayer to the whole created world that is so dearly in need of salvation.

And then there's Simeon, waiting all his life for the coming of the Lord's anointed one, the messiah, the consolation of Israel.

Odd that the job of the Messiah to 'console'? Word used in Greek is 'paraklesis', used of the Spirit of God, the Holy Paraclete (no, not parakeet!) – the promised Comforter or, better, *Advocate*, sent by the Father in response to the prayer of Jesus.

Simeon was blessed by that Spirit – three times it's mentioned (did you notice?) in as many verses:

- 'Holy *Spirit* was upon him',
- 'told by the Holy *Spirit* he would not die until seen Messiah',
- 'moved by the *Spirit* he went to the temple'.

Triple blessing of the Spirit.

Simeon found what he was looking for – sublime fulfilment, at journey's end – but only after yearning for it all his long life.

Something for us all to devoutly wish for – un-earned it is true, but *yearned for* as a must. How can we grow if we don't desire to?

And Anna! Jane and I knew an "Anna" - a great joy and privilege. Her name was Ilsette.

Like Anna, Ilsette had been married for only a few years, as a young woman. Her husband was a fighter pilot in the Allied air forces, killed early days of WW2.

Ilsette was an artist. Most days, she painted a fresh watercolor picture on her little notepad – the flowers on her table in the nursing home, the blossom seen from the window, the trees over the rooftops.

This vocation of painting was Ilsette's version of Anna's sojourn every day in the temple, fasting and praying.

And, as a good Catholic, Ilsette always shared her faith, simply and with well-chosen words, just as Anna shared *her* faith, as we are told by Luke, with others who like her were looking forward to their redemption.

It's that looking forward which is so marvelous, don't you think?

This is the gift that I hope and pray will grow within each one of us...

- within me (to be sure)
- and in you (I want that dearly)
- and for the people whom you encourage

Yes, your reaching out to others, through your prayers and with little acts of kindnesses is such a great gift, especially when for all we know, those others have got stuck and growth seems to elude them.

So today, when we have done our religious duty here in church, as not the Law but the Love of our Lord requires of us, may we return to our homes and daily lives, as did the Joseph and Mary, going back from the temple to Nazareth - to *grow* into our maturity in Christ, that with him we may become strong, filled with the knowledge of God, with his grace upon us.

Pray...

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: reign in our church and in our homes as Lord and King; give us grace to grow in faith and to minister to others as you have ministered to us. Grant that by deed and word we may be witnesses of your saving love to those among whom we live; for the sake of your holy name. Amen

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta, David, and for Valerie Johnstone and Hilda Warner. We pray for Carys and Glenn and family sojourning in the UK. Also, for all and any others known to us.



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or
<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **8th February** – services will be as usual – Peaceful Worship at 8 am led by Archdeacon John and Contemporary Worship at 9.30 am led by Rev. Jennie.

Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups have resumed but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Cathy or Stephen West if you would like to know more: cathjwest@gmail.com or cswestmd@logic.bm.
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 8th February 2026** in the Parish Hall. Date Correction
- **Supper and Bingo** – St. Mark's Guild will be holding a **Valentine's Supper and Bingo** evening on **Saturday, 14th February at 6 pm** in the Parish Hall.
- **HOLY SPOKES!** – Holy Trinity's "Holy Spokes" Team will be hosting a **Fun Bowling afternoon**. Come bowl with the Trinity Strikers at STRYKZ bowling alley, St David's, on **Sunday February 15th at 2:00 p.m.** The cost is \$20.00 per person which includes bowling shoes. Open to all - and *gutter balls don't count!*
- **Pancake Supper** – St. Mark's Guild will be holding their Annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** on **Tuesday, 17th February** at 6.00 p.m.
- **Joint Ash Wednesday Service** – will be celebrated at St. Mark' Church on **Wednesday 18th February at 7.00 p.m.** together with members of Holy Trinity Church (alternating each year).
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be on **Saturday, 21st February 2026** (I think).
- **Installation of Priest-in-charge** – St. Mark's Church will hold a special service of **Licensing & Installation of Rev. Terry Hassell as Priest-in-charge** on **Saturday, 28th February at 4.00 p.m.**

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here's a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our

in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. “Grave 273 Peter Nash” in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and “Donation” e.g. “Nash Donation” in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the “Beneficiary” space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.

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