

**YOUR PRAYERS PLEASE... for PEACE in Palestine and Israel, Ukraine, Sudan, Haiti, Yemen, Ecuador, the Sahel region.**

..... for all refugees and asylum seekers, and those kidnapped or taken hostage.

...Thank God for diplomats and peace-keepers

...**for the sick and struggling**: Chris and Pam, Sean, Lesley, Tina, Beryl, Mair, Marion, Philippa, Pauline

.....**for the family and friends of** Laura, Nicolas, Sue, Hugh, Dennis, Colin, Gail.

.....for Longney's re-ordering, Hardwicke's plans, Elmore's organ replacement.

..... For staff and pupils at Longney, Hardwicke and Hunts Grove schools

.....*for Jane Edwards in Mozambique. Her latest prayer letter is here:*

[1223-Edwards.pdf \(bmsworldmission.org\)](#)

.....for Tim Fletcher Pioneer "Sportily" Minister, working on Hunts Grove.

**Please use the Benefice Prayer diary. It is on our website**

### **Prayers of Love & Faith: Conversation in the middle ground**

Since 17th December 2023, the Prayers of Love and Faith (PLF) have been commended for use in regular scheduled services. For some this has been received with joy, and others have not welcomed this, and a range of strong views have been expressed. In the Diocese of Gloucester, the Bishops have made a commitment to treat all theological views and life experiences with care and respect. For those yet to come to a settled view, or who want to keep asking questions, there has not been much opportunity for an open conversation space.

This evening gathering – Prayers of Love and Faith: Conversation in the middle ground – is for those (clergy & lay) who would identify as occupying middle ground and would appreciate a safe space to ask questions, express their hopes and fears, and grow in confidence in articulating their own convictions. It will be held under Chatham House rules ('What is said in the room stays in the room') and give an opportunity to hear from Bishop Rachel and Bishop Robert, as well as small group conversation.

When: Tuesday 30th January 2024 from 7-8.30pm

Where: St Catharine's Church, London Road, Gloucester GL2 0RR

Main aims: To give those who are holding genuine questions about where they stand on PLF: • a place to know they are not alone, • that their voices are important in the process, • and to give confidence in articulating their perspective.

No booking required. For practical questions about the evening, please email: Su Chard (Deanery Administrator) [gloscitydeanery@gmail.com](mailto:gloscitydeanery@gmail.com)

## **Benefice of Hardwicke and Elmore with Longney**

[www.hardwicke-elmore-longney.church](http://www.hardwicke-elmore-longney.church)

**Priest-in-Charge** Rev Richard Martin 01452 720015

[vicar@hardwicke-elmore-longney.church](mailto:vicar@hardwicke-elmore-longney.church)

**Assistant Priest** Revd George Parfitt

**Licenced Readers** Pat Buckland, Judy Cheshire and Mike Williams

**Authorised Leaders of Worship**: Neil Hollis and Doff Stone.

### **Today Sunday 28 January (Epiphany 4, kept as Candlemas)**

9.30am Longney: Storyteller Holy Communion

11am Hardwicke: Holy Communion

4pm Elmore: Evening Worship

Readings: Malachi 3: 1-5, Luke 2: 22-40

### **Week beginning 28 January**

Wed 31st 9.30am Hardwicke: Holy Communion

5pm Elmore@ Wedding rehearsal

Thurs 1 Feb: 12noon Elmore: Wedding

1.30pm Hardwicke: Yr 3 visit to Church

### **Next Sunday 4 February (2<sup>nd</sup> before Lent)**

9.30am Elmore Holy Communion

11am Hardwicke: Holy Communion

4pm Hunts Grove school: Messy/Active Church

Readings: Proverbs 8: 1. 22-31, John 1: 1-14

### **Refugees and Asylum seekers**

Many of these folk are being granted leave to remain and are leaving hotels. They often have nowhere to go. **You can help** by offering a spare room in your home on a short-term basis (say 3 months). You will receive payment from Gloucestershire CC. For more details please email [hfr@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hfr@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

### Collect for Candlemas

Lord Jesus Christ,  
light of the nations and glory of Israel:  
make your home among us,  
and present us pure and holy  
to your heavenly Father,  
your God, and our God.

### Readings for Candlemas

#### Malachi 3: 1-5

'I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,' says the LORD Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. <sup>3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, <sup>4</sup> and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

<sup>5</sup> 'So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,' says the LORD Almighty.

#### Luke 2: 22-40

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male is to be

consecrated to the Lord'<sup>[a]</sup>), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: 'a pair of doves or two young pigeons'.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

<sup>29</sup> 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss<sup>[c]</sup> your servant in peace.

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel.'

<sup>33</sup> The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: 'This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.<sup>[d]</sup> She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. <sup>38</sup> Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.