

Pathways Retreat Candlemas Service

February 2, 2026, 7pm

Welcome and Introduction

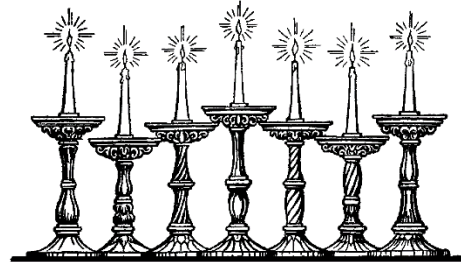
Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: We gather in celebration
of Christ our Light,

A: the light without,

B: the light within,

ALL: THE LIGHT THAT ILLUMINES CREATION.



Prayer Song *Come and Fill our Hearts with your Light* (Voices Together, 52)

(During the prayer you are invited to light a tea light and place it around the candles.)

Scripture Luke 2:22-40 (The Inclusive Bible)

Silence

World-wide Responses

Through the years, responses to this scripture and the celebration of Candlemas have taken different forms.

In *France*, Candlemas is considered the day of crepes. Their round shape and golden color, like the sun, represent the promise of the return of spring after the dark and cold of winter. A tradition when preparing the crepes is to flip them in the air with the right hand while holding a coin in the left hand. If the crepe lands properly back in the pan, you will have prosperity throughout the year.

In *Hungary* children dress up as bears, light candles, and eat honey. Folklore has it that on Candlemas day, bears come out of their dens and if they see their shadows (because it's sunny), they get scared of it and go back to sleep, which is thought to mean that it will be cold again. If, on the other hand, there is no shadow, they stay outside, knowing that this is the last attempt of winter and that the cold weather will soon ease. This is similar to our Groundhog Day tradition.

in *Puerto Rico*, Candlemas festivities include a procession where the statue of Our Lady of the Light is carried with people following with lit candles until they reach the church. In the evening, the festivities may continue with a giant bonfire and singing. Some families in the countryside burn their dried Christmas trees on this date as a culmination of the holiday season.

In *Mexico*, dressing and adoration of the Christ Child and eating tamales are an important Candlemas tradition. The whole family is invited to this meal, highlighting the values of family and sharing.

In *Ireland*, a delightful Candlemas legend tells us that St. Brigid, whose feast day was yesterday, walked before Mary, Joseph and Jesus with a lighted candle in each hand, as they went up to the temple. This would be a chronological stretch since Brigid was born in 454! However, legend says that the winds were strong on the temple heights, and the tapers in Brigid's hands were unprotected, yet the flames did not flicker nor fail. St Brigid came to be associated with candles, fire, and specifically the perpetual flame, tending the inextinguishable fire within all of life.

Candle Blessing

A: God of night and of day, God of darkness and of light,

B: we praise you!

A: For the brightness of our sun,

B: for the softer light of the moon and the splendor of the stars,

A: By the great and small lights,

B: we mark our days and seasons.

A: Bless these candles

B: and all who will use them.

A: May the light of these candles

B: invite presence, awareness, and contemplation.

A: May the warmth of these candles

B: offer welcome, compassion and care.

A: May the radiance of these candles

B: expand gratitude, awe, and wholeness.

A: Let the flickering light of these candles remind us of your Divine Flame,

B: with all life, and within each life.

ALL: May it be so!

Song of Intention *Between Darkness and Light* (Voices Together, 808)

Sending

The light and peace of Christ be with us all!

THE LIGHT AND PEACE OF CHRIST BE WITH US ALL!