

## Stewards of God's Grace: February 2021

### *Taking the long view*

Coming at the beginning of February, Candlemas is among the oldest of Christian feasts and marks the final installment of the story of Christ's birth. Based on Luke 2:22-40, it commemorates the presentation of Jesus in the Temple; according to Jewish law parents were to present their first-born son to the Lord 40 days after his birth. Mary and Joseph are met in the Temple by Simeon, a righteous man who had been



waiting faithfully to see the Lord's Messiah. It is he who takes Jesus in his arms and prays in the words we know as the Nunc Dimittis, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Simeon is joined in thanksgiving by Anna, an eighty-four year old widow who has herself been faithful in prayer and fasting for decades. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> we light blessed candles to remember Jesus' presentation to the Lord and Simeon and Anna's witness to that moment.

Simeon and Anna can be our teachers. Their faithful attentiveness to what God was doing is at the heart of who they were. Simeon rejoiced that he had seen God's salvation when he looked at a child less than two months old. It would be decades before Jesus began his ministry and called disciples yet Simeon looked beyond the moment and saw what would be. He took the long view. When we consider the issues important to us as disciples of Christ, do we do so in ways that honour the long view? In building the church how do we put the engagement of children and young people at the center of our worship, education and evangelism? As stewards of creation what changes are we making that will sustain the earth for generations yet to come? As peacemakers how are we engaging in reconciliation with indigenous people in ways that will strengthen the society in which our great-grandchildren will live? As stewards of our financial resources what plans are in place to insure our estate includes giving to the institutions and organizations that we want to continue beyond our lifetime? Simeon's view is not unlike the Seventh Generation Principle of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people which says that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. We need to take the long view to think and act beyond what can be realized in our lifetime. When we do so we can rejoice like Anna and say with Simeon,

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*Written by the Ven. Cheryl Toth, Stewardship Officer, Diocese of Qu'Appelle*