

THE GRACEVINE

Grace Presbyterian Church
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FEBRUARY 2021

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Candlemas, Feb. 2, officially ends the season of Christmas

February 2, 2021

Feast day honors Simeon, baby Jesus — and blesses the candles

By Scott Szabo | *Presbyterians Today*

Photo by Nicola Fioravanti/Unsplash

Early in my ministry I learned that there were worship traditions foreign to the congregation I served and, while I yearned to stretch my “liturgical wings,” I contented myself by researching feast days instead — imagining how they might someday find expression in my pastorate. This is how I discovered Candlemas.

Observed on Feb. 2, Candlemas was traditionally the end of the Christmas season. Today, Epiphany, Jan. 6, is the commonly viewed end of Christmastide. But Candlemas is more than an end mark to Christmas. Simeon’s double-edged oracle of blessing and admonition, which stands at the center of the feast day’s reading from Luke 2:22–40, reminds us that the babe in the manger and the suffering servant are one and the same. Thus, Candlemas is a hinge between the Church’s celebration of Christmas and Easter.



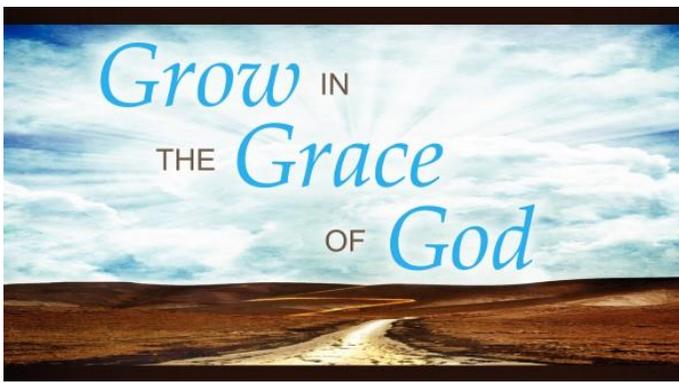
For centuries, Candlemas was the day the Church emphasized Mary’s purification during its commemoration of the Holy Family’s visit to the Temple (Luke 2:22–40). More recently, the focus has shifted away from Mary’s purification to the presentation of the Christ child as told in Luke.

And then there are the candles that are reflected in the feast day’s name, recalling the long-standing presence of candles used on the day. Since at least the fifth century, processions by lamp or candlelight have been part of worship. Centuries later, parishioners would bring candles to church to have them blessed....

The feast’s namesake symbol also highlights the day as a unifying agent for the poles of the Christian year. As candles are carried in procession, we are reminded of the light of the world dawning at Christmas, and the new fire of the resurrection burning brightly on Easter. In this way, Candlemas presents itself as a microcosm of the Christian call, one that surveys the journey of life, death and new life that all undertake. For congregations that use a Paschal candle, the previous year’s candle can be lit on Candlemas, perhaps for the last time. Similarly, it would be appropriate to bless the new candle that will be put into service on Easter. Whatever the means of observance, the flames of Candlemas will burn brightest in communities that prayerfully discern how the feast can best illumine their shared life.

Scott Szabo is the pastor of Oxford Presbyterian Church in Oxford, Pennsylvania. He is pursuing his Doctor of Ministry degree at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

(This article has been edited for length.)



Worship Schedule

10:30 a.m. Worship

Church Office Hours

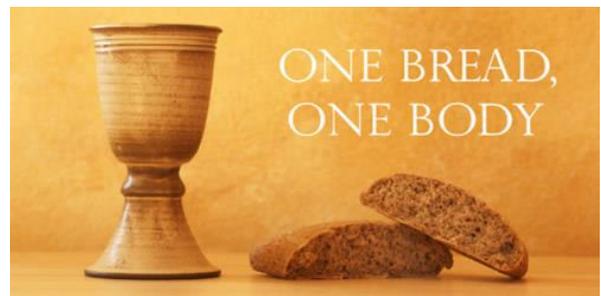
M-Thur. 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

A Nursery is available every Sunday during Worship in Room 4.

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

We remind you that the increasing distribution of COVID vaccines does NOT change in any way the restrictions we are following to limit the spread of the virus! We will continue to require masks and social distancing on church premises, as before. This is required by the proliferation of new virus strains, which are reported to be more contagious and/or lethal. We also remind you that we practice these measures **at least** as much for the sake of each other as for ourselves. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!



COMMUNION - will be celebrated during worship on **Sunday, February 7th**. As usual, we invite those who watch our worship stream to gather your communion elements ahead of time so you can take communion with us.



Sunday, Feb 7th

"Souper Bowl of Caring"

Please bring your non-perishable foods on **Sunday, February 7th**. Also you can place a monetary donation in either the "Kansas City Chiefs" kettle or the "Tampa Bay Buccaneers" kettle for which team you would like to win the super bowl. All proceeds from Souper Bowl of Caring will be given to United Christian Outreach. www.souperbowl.org

**UCO is also in need of Paper Towels, Toilet Paper & Facial Tissue.

Committee Meetings

SESSION – our next meeting will be on **Tuesday, February 23rd** at **6pm**. Please let Lynne Castle know if you cannot attend this meeting.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Catherine Sarwar**
- 5 Wayne Elmore**
- 5 Danny Jones**
- 6 Joe Hunter**
- 13 Denny Gaspard**
- 22 William Burch, Jr.**
- 26 Robert Kennedy**
- 27 Elizabeth Conner Balapitiya**
- 27 Elisabeth Faust**

If we do not have your birthday on our list, please let us know and make sure all your family members are included. Birthdays can be emailed to gracpreb@lusfiber.net or you can call the office at (337) 984-6400.



Grace Presbyterian Church is grateful for the help from the Presbytery of South Louisiana. Rev. Pat applied to PSL on behalf of Grace Church for a Small Church Grant which was approved by the PSL Council for \$5,000 to be used for hurricane relief. As most of you already know, our church was damaged in Hurricane Delta resulting in our slate roof needing to be replaced. The work will take months but will begin soon.

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession. Acknowledging that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we repent and return to our loving creator. Acutely aware of our failure and frailty, we express our utter reliance on God's saving grace.

Ash Wednesday developed in the medieval period as a time when penitent sinners were presented for church discipline during the season of Lent, to be reconciled with the community of faith on Maundy Thursday. Ash Wednesday also came to be the occasion for new believers to enroll in the catechumenate, a period of preparation for baptism at Easter. For those who undertake spiritual disciplines, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten fast.

Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, sorrow, and sacrifice. Traditionally, the ashes for this service are made from the palm branches of the previous year; thus the ashes and palms together frame the season of Lent.

Grace Presbyterian Church will have a brief Ash Wednesday Services at Noon on Wednesday, February 17th. We will not have ashes this year due to social distancing, but we hope that you can join us for the start of the Lenten Season.

GET INVOLVED!



We have decided to keep our Elders and Deacons that were to rotate off after 2020 on for another year due to the pandemic. Our committee chairs will remain the same for 2021.

Committee Chairs

Christian Education and Fellowship –
Co-Chairs, Lynne Castle & Betty Adams
Missions/Outreach – Paul Guillot
Property/Landscape – Terry Wolford
Personnel – Danny Jones
Stewardship/Finance – David Jones
Worship – Margaret Boone



Church Committees

Church “Ministry Teams” to consider serving on:

Spiritual Development Committee
Worship Committee
Outreach/Publicity/Public Relations Committee
Fellowship Committee
Mother’s Day Out Board
Personnel Committee
Stewardship & Finance Committee
Building and Grounds Committee
Nursery Helper

We call the above “ministry teams” because they help us fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.



2021 Phone Directory

We are in the final stages of making our 2021 directory which includes Grace Members, Non-Members & Regular Visitors. If you have any corrections to make from last year or were not included in our 2020 phone directory and have not contacted the church office yet, please email our church secretary at gracpreb@lusfiber.net or call 337-984-6400 with any updates or additions by February 12th. Items that may have changed could be your name, phone #, Address, Email, etc.

MOTHER'S DAY OUT



MDO REGISTRATION – Grace Mother’s Day Out has begun taking registrations for our upcoming Summer 2021 and Fall 2021-2022 Semesters. Spots were offered to our current families first, but have now opened up to any new families that would like to join the program. For more information, please email mdoatgrace@gmail.com or call MDO at (337) 993-1231.

MARDI GRAS FLOATS – normally MDO has their annual Mardi Gras Parade on the Grace Tennis Court, but due to COVID-19, the parade will not take place this year. However, the children are still getting to make their own float using shoe boxes, beads, etc. and will be able to take their float home with them.



FEBRUARY

10:30 am - Worship	6:30pm - Al-anon	9am-2pm MDO	9am-2pm MDO 9am - UL Writing Class 6pm - Co-Dependence	9am-2pm MDO 5-6:45pm - AA 7-8pm - Al-anon	1:30pm - Al-anon	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <i>Communion</i> <i>Souper Bowl of Caring</i>	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> 	15	16 <i>Office Closed (Mardi Gras)</i> <i>MDO Closed</i>	17 <i>Ash Wednesday Service (Noon)</i> <i>MDO Closed</i>	18 <i>MDO Closed</i>	19	20
21	22	23 <i>Session Meeting 6pm</i>	24	25	26	27
28						

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