

## Candlemas Bells

Snowdrops are appearing in great numbers all around us, in our churchyards and gardens. They are a flower that always gives hope that spring is coming after a long, cold winter.

In the past they were also called Candlemas Bells, partly because of their shape but mainly because it is at the beginning of February that we celebrate Candlemas. It marks the end of the Christmas season. A festival that reminds us of the story when Mary and Joseph take their newborn son, Jesus, to the Temple where the priest Simeon blesses him. A time when we rejoice and celebrate with Simeon that Jesus has come to be the light of the world, so that we can know more of the love of Jesus.

It may be a tiny flower, but the snowdrop symbolises a magnificent, glorious and wonderful hope that the death of winter is broken, and new life is here. A hope that is not just for us and the world in which we live but for the whole of creation.

When you next see snowdrops, may they be a symbol of hope for you: of the wonderful love and faithfulness of our God 'who works for the good of those who love him'.

