

1st Sunday after Christmas
Sunday, December 27, 2020



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Today we continue to celebrate Christmas — and God's lavish gift of love, Jesus. Welcome!



GATHERING

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P: Lord God, may your Word become flesh through our lives so that we may see him in the fullness of his glory

C: **Amen.**

PASTORAL GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C; **And also with you**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray.... Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen**

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 61:10--62:3

L: The First Lesson is from Isaiah the 61st chapter, beginning at the 10th verse:

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: GALATIANS 4:4-7

L: The Second Lesson is from Galatians the 4th chapter, beginning at the 4th verse:

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that
we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God
has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you
are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:22-40

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd chapter, beginning at the 22nd verse:

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

APOSTLE'S CREED

A: God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity. Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness. Reveal your power to heal and to save. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Gracious God, watch over and care for all persons who serve in the military. Today we especially rememberHear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care. Connect young and old across generations. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

The congregation is invited to greet one another with a gesture of peace (hand shake or hug) using these or similar words – God's peace be with you.

OFFERING

SOLO

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior

C: **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

C: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION

We welcome you to the Lord's Table to share the Sacrament of Holy Communion with us. Holy Communion is served with both red wine and white grape juice. It is your choice to receive either one.

Empty cups may be placed in the bowl to the left or right as you return to your seat.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: **Amen**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

A: We give thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C: **Amen**

BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C: **Amen**

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

SENDING HYMN

POSTLUDE

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Share the good news.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

These Old, Tired Eyes

After hours of watching the news on television or scrolling through social media posts on screens big or small, your eyes can get tired. They get worn out not only from staring at the blue light of screens, but also from the unending stream of bad news. You might go to the newspaper, your favorite news channel, or Twitter with hopes of finding something good happening. Too often, you find the overwhelming problems of the world. It gets old. Your eyes get tired of seeing it all.

Two wise, faithful elders were in the temple praying and eagerly awaiting the good news that God had always promised to bring. They were filled with expectation and hope. But they were getting quite old, and after a long time of hoping, hopes can diminish. Faith can dwindle; eyes can get tired. Yet somehow, Simeon and Anna kept coming to the temple each day to pray and to wait.

Then the day came. The Spirit had guided Simeon. Anna had been sustained by her faith. Their old, tired eyes stayed open to see God's saving acts in plain sight: Jesus was born to be the Savior and Messiah. Simeon says: "My eyes have seen your salvation!" (Luke 2:30). Anna gives thanks and prophesies about the redemption Jesus brings (Luke 2:38). In seeing God's faithfulness, their hope is affirmed and renewed.

Many faithful people wait a long, long time to see what God will do to continue the story of salvation. Many elders among us have lived through trying times, never giving up hope, never ceasing to pray, always expecting that God will be faithful. In Christ, our old, tired eyes have been refreshed. All the bad news that wears us out and ages our bodies and minds is met with the good news of Jesus: God brings healing and forgiveness to all. Our eyes have seen God's salvation!