

Worship Guide for December 27, 2020

The First Sunday After Christmas

PREPARING FOR GOD'S WORD

PRELUDE

This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Rev. David Jones

Angel's House Gift Cards

We are excited to announce we collected close to \$3,000 worth of gift cards for the residents of Angel's House. Thank you for your generosity!

Bridging the Gap | One Roof Item of the Month

Starting in January, we will be collecting canned protein. Please bring your items to the Church Office. We are collecting cans of tuna, chili, chicken, Spam, etc. One Roof and Bridging the Gap tell us that they are short of these items post-Christmas.

Thanksgiving

God blesses us generously and it is out of this abundance that we are able to give to the operation and mission of the church. As we gather for our last service in the year 2020, we give thanks to all the faithful who have endured this tumultuous year. Our NPC family has stayed faithful in attending both in-person and virtual worship, has continued to contribute financially, and has been willing to actively engage in the mission of our church. We thank each of you who remain committed to both the church and Christ's work in the world.

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN 133 O Come All Ye Faithful, vv. 1 & 4

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Jesus our Lord came into an indifferent world, yet his life revealed the inner thoughts of many. Let us confess our sins before God and one another that we may receive release from our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Merciful God, we confess that we have not lived as your faithful children.
We have kept silent in midst of prejudice and hatred.
We have been idle in the face of violence and injustice.
We have not been a light to the nations, and our lives have not revealed your glory.
Forgive us, Merciful God. Repair the ugliness of our sin
and restore in us your beautiful grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord...**
We keep a moment of silence for personal confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved of God, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, God covers us with the robe of righteousness. Know that you are forgiven in Jesus Christ and live as God's beloved. **Thanks be to God: we are forgiven!**

RECEIVING THE PEACE

As Christians, we are taught that peace is the opposite of fear. Fear is the basis of all that is being used to divide and limit us in today's world; the fear we are different and separate and not good enough or the fear that nothing is certain and we will not be okay. God's love shows us that we are more than good enough, for we are the fully loved children of God. We are assured that our needs are, and always will be, met by the One who is capable of more than we can imagine. We are not separate; we are one with God, and vitally connected to one another.

May Christ's peace which conquers fear be with you. **And also with you!**

A TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Rev. Darcie Jones

GLORIA 113 Angels We Have Heard on High, refrain only

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Rev. Tyler Brock

As you led Simeon to embrace the infant Jesus, guide us, Holy Spirit, by your gracious light that we may welcome your saving Word. **Amen.**

THE GOSPEL READING | Luke 2:22-40 | Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him 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"), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ Now 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. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Guided 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, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

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

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then 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 ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There 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, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night

and day. ³⁸ At 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.

⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Cliffhanger

In Luke's gospel, there is a lot of talk of being amazed. Simeon meets Mary and Joseph in the temple and hold Jesus in his arms, telling those gathered what they are witnessing. Simeon is praying the words aloud to God, thanking God for allowing him to behold Jesus before he dies. These words of Simeon's prayer cause the parents to be amazed. Luke tells us that many individuals come to Mary and Joseph with visions and knowledge of what Jesus will do. They are not the only two who are aware of Jesus's messianic nature, and they seem to regularly encounter people that know who Jesus is. I imagine that it is quite an odd phenomenon, people who are proclaiming the salvation of Jesus, though he is a baby. People often remark to me about how they have enjoyed meeting my wife or are impressed with her after speaking with her. These talks do not surprise me because those people have been given some proof through speaking with her. On the other hand, Mary and Joseph are being met with all manner of people who cannot know what Jesus will do by his own words or deeds. These people have been assured through the promise of scripture or a revelation from divine sources. While raising children is already a huge burden, we can only imagine the difficulty that would rest upon their shoulders to raise and guide the Messiah.

And the things that Mary and Joseph are hearing about the baby Jesus are not always the easiest things to comprehend. Simeon assures Mary that Jesus will be responsible for the rising and falling of people in Israel. He tells her that Jesus will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of others will become known. He warns Mary that a sword will pierce her own soul as well. As the faithful who know the crucifixion and the resurrection, we know the pain that Mary will endure seeing her son clash with religious leaders and being put to death on the cross. She will not only worry about how Jesus learns and grows but must also bear the burden of what being a Messiah for the people means for him. I suspect that she spent a good deal of her life wondering what lay ahead of Jesus.

Simeon's prophetic words regarding Jesus assure Mary of the tumult of Jesus's ministry. Certainly, we are reminded that religious leaders and Pharisees will stand in opposition of Jesus and combat him with theology and judgment. Though his words promise contention, they are words that hold a great deal of promise. Jesus will stand in opposition of injustice that is occurring among the people of Israel. Jesus calls out the ways in which the religious leaders have misguided the people and mistreated them. Jesus will flip the tables in the temple and drive out those money changers who are trying to usurp temple worship for their own gain. Simeon's words to Mary are cryptic, though they represent the promise that Jesus will bring in standing up and naming the oppression within Israelite society and Roman rule.

The very nature of Jesus in the temple causes great celebration. Simeon is able to hold the Messiah and has the promise that he would not die before he was able to see that salvation was coming to Israel. Anna, the widowed prophetess, comes out to praise God and tell all who are gathered what Jesus represents. Jesus causes such commotion in the temple on this day because there is a finality to the waiting that the Israelites have endured. They are basking in the presence of what is to come now that Jesus has been born to them. He will guide them. They might not know the extent to which he will lead them or how their belief in a Messiah will manifest through him. They do know that he has come. Much like our Advent season, their waiting and watching has ended. Here is the savior, come to them.

Except, their waiting must go on. Jesus has come, but he is still a baby. After viewing him that day in the temple, the people have no idea how long it will be before they will see their deliverance. Luke concludes our passage today with a brief description that Jesus will grow strong and wise and was favored by the Lord.

We might understand how waiting for Jesus is similar to our own development and aging. When I was a student in school, I counted the years until I would no longer be a student. I longed to become an adult and no longer be committed to waking up for school each day of the week. Each year was one step closer to that goal. When I was a senior, the prospect of college loomed. As college rolled on, I dreamed of working in the world and finding my way. Upon graduation, I suddenly had to find a job, a place to live, and the responsibilities that came with being an adult. At 33, I occasionally find myself wondering if I'll ever feel like I've arrived at whatever destination I want to achieve. Maturity? Career ambitions? Personal hobbies? Maybe I am not the only one who has felt this way in my life.

Today's passage is not unlike these feelings. The people of the temple have seen the fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Messiah. And yet, this Messiah is a baby. There is still significant time before Jesus will fulfill his place as savior and redeemer. But on this day, Simeon and Anna find it fitting to rejoice in the coming of the Messiah. They do not fret over what is yet to come. They do not concern themselves with the days, weeks, months, and years ahead. They simply rejoice that Emmanuel, God is with us, has come.

May we also recognize what it means to rejoice that salvation, deliverance, and the promise has been fulfilled for us. There are still futures lying in wait and kingdom building to be done, but on this day, we see that Jesus has come. May we all be dismissed in peace, according to the word of God, content that the promise is fulfilled, that we have arrived, and that we have greater work ahead.

A moment of silent reflection follows the sermon.

SERMON HYMN 545 Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace

*Lord, bid your servant go in peace; your word is now fulfilled.
These eyes have seen salvation's dawn, this child so long foretold.*

*This is the Savior of the world, the Gentiles' promised light,
God's glory dwelling in our midst, the joy of Israel.*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.27

**The one sufficient revelation of God
is Jesus Christ,
the Word of God incarnate,
to whom the Holy Spirit
bears unique and authoritative witness
through the Holy Scriptures,
which are received and obeyed
as the word of God written.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Away in a Manger

Music by Cliff Brock, Lyrics are by William J. Kirkpatrick
duet: Kristine Pike, Jennifer Pike

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and take us to heaven to live with thee there.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Mary Weddington's sister, Martha, recuperating from a broken hip.

As children of God and heirs of the promise, let us pray to the Lord, saying, Loving God, hear our prayer.

For the holy church of God, that all who have been baptized into Christ may shine like the dawn, bear witness to the Good News of Jesus, and light the way of salvation in Jesus' name, let us pray to the Lord:

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations of the earth, that governments and those in authority may protect the vulnerable, shelter the oppressed, and pursue the way of peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

For our city of Newnan and for all places of human interaction and livelihood, that kindness may abound, compassion prevail, and harmony endure, let us pray to the Lord:

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

For the planet earth, our home, that we may honor her gifts, respect her limitations, and protect her resources, let us pray to the Lord:

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

For those troubled with illness, hardship, or conflict, that they may receive healing for their bodies, release from their burdens, and mending of their brokenness, let us pray to the Lord:

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

Hear us, O God, for our eyes have seen your salvation. Let your light shine through us and fill the world with the radiance of your love revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns in glory, and who taught us to pray, saying...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN 136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain, vv. 1 & 3

Refrain: *Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

*While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.* (Refrain)

*Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.* (Refrain)

BENEDICTION

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you along the way.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart cause your heart to love.
May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet,
and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Worship Participants
Rev. David Jones, Pastor
Rev. Tyler Brock, Associate Pastor
Cliff Brock, Choirmaster
Rev. Darcie Jones, Children's Coordinator
Jennifer Pike, Cantor
Worship A/V Support Team

GIVING REPORT

| | <u>Giving 2020</u> | <u>Giving 2019</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pledged | \$391,952.60 | \$383,085.23 |
| Unpledged | \$29,944.00 | \$65,467.49 |
| Total | \$421,896.60 | \$448,552.72 |

Members and visitors alike, please plan to give today in whatever way you are able, either online through Realm, through your bank account, using the QR code below, or by mailing a check to the church. Thank you for your generosity.



Holiday Office Hours

Closed | Dec 28,
Dec 29 and Dec 30 | 8:00 am-3:00 pm
Dec 31 | 8:00 am-Noon
Closed New Year's Day