

Worship Guide for January 3, 2021

The Second 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

Bridging the Gap | One Roof Food Item of the Month

This month we are collecting cans of tuna, chili, chicken, Spam, etc. You are welcome to drop off items to the Church Office during normal business hours. We are accepting financial donations for this project as well. We will be happy to shop for you! Make checks payable to NPC and designate them "January Canned Meat Project."

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 begin the new year, we celebrate with those Deacons and Elders who have served their respective ministries faithfully. They have contributed to the mission and life of NPC. The incoming Deacons and Elders have all shown passion and vision that they will bring to the ministry. We are blessed to have such amazing leaders, both those who are beginning and those who are "retiring." Thank you for your continued support of our Deacons and Elders.

Stewardship Moment

Dr. Tom Moynahan

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN 119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, vv. 1 & 3

Lalla McGee, Cantor

*Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king.
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"*

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Darcie Jones

Because we have passed through the waters of baptism, we dare to bare our souls before God and reveal the bitterness that dwells in our hearts. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of wonder, you surround us with signs of your glory and surprise us with your presence, yet we often miss the marvels you place before us. Forgive our dullness and make us alert to the ways you make yourself known, that we might be witnesses to your good news and proclaim your extravagant love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior...

We keep a moment of silence for personal confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In Jesus Christ, God saved us, not because of any good works that we have done, but according to God's mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. People of God, rejoice! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

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

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

By the breath of your Spirit inspire us, that in the hearing of your Word we may be filled with new understanding and fresh desire to please you in all we do, for the sake of your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

THE GOSPEL READING Luke 2:41-52 | The Boy Jesus in the Temple

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

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

SERMON

"Boy Jesus in the Temple"

How many adults just felt their stomach do a backflip as they heard this scripture read? How many immediately flashed back to the moment when your child or a child that you knew became lost? That moment when it dawns on you that this small child is truly missing is a powerfully scary moment. It takes a lot of willpower not to panic, to retrace steps, to think through a child's likely wandering path. And then the moment when that child is found,

recovered, reunited. I've seen in the handful of times this has happened to me, both as a parent and as a youth leader taking 25 middle schoolers to Six Flags and trusting them to meet back at the fountain at a specific time...I've found that I'm rarely interested in what they did in between being lost and found. I don't want the story until much later when all parties involved have calmed down.

I can still remember my mother's face when we would come bounding to the front of Kmart after hearing over the intercom: David Jones, your party is waiting for you at the front of the store. We used to work hard to get lost from my mom and dad in the Kmart - although looking back, I think she was glad to have some time to herself, and risking our being kidnapped was worth it for her :)

For Jesus, his parents, Mary and Joseph, have lost him during Passover, the busiest week for Jewish pilgrims headed to and from Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday. It would be like losing a child during Mardi Gras or on the way home from Six Flags on a youth trip. But to their great astonishment, they find him in the temple engaged in an impromptu confirmation class with the rabbis. Our scripture tells us that his parents react in a reasonably predictable way. "Why did you wander off?" "We've been worried sick!" "Just wait until we get home; you're grounded for a month!" But in a surprising answer, Jesus, seemingly a precocious boy, gets right to it. "Didn't you know I would be at my father's house." This is the godly equivalent of me saying to my mother: "I told you I was going to be in the toy aisle."

Joseph and Mary are understandably frustrated at Jesus' disappearance; a budding young man, Jesus seems equally frustrated at his lack of independence. But I'll tell you what interests me the most - the Rabbis at the temple. Yes, they were astonished at some of the questions this boy was asking, and they were engaged with him on matters of biblical tradition and faith. But more importantly, they were looking out for him.

I was talking with a church member the other day about her children, and she mentioned one of the former deacons of the church. She said that she was so glad that Larry Harkleroad was helping out with the youth group because she thought Larry was a cool person for her young son to get to know in the church. How appreciative must Mary and Joseph had been when they got the full story from the rabbis. Yes, Jesus wandered off, but he used all of his manners and held the door for the ladies as they came in for Bible study. Our passage even tells us that Mary treasured all of this in her heart.

I can imagine Jesus' parents getting home, baking a cake, and making Jesus write a thank you note to the rabbis for being kind to him. When I read this story, I'm not astonished at Jesus' running off, and I'm not astonished at his advanced reading levels. What I'm astonished by and remain astonished by day after day as a part of a church family is that there are adults who take their baptismal vows seriously. For, in the end, this is what the rabbis are doing. They are helping to raise this young man to contribute to the world through a deeper understanding of his faith. They have no idea that he is the young Messiah, only that he is a child in need of a little supervision until his stressed-out parents return.

Today is the first Sunday of our January stewardship season. Just as the magi brought gifts to the baby Jesus, these temple rabbis provided an offering of sorts to aid members of their extended community. Not all of our gifts are expensive, but all of our gifts can be valuable. Whether we give of our financial resources, our unique talents, and abilities, or our time, which could be easily spent elsewhere, our gifts are a welcome and necessary part of the fabric of a community. What I see in this story is the faithful commitment to offer what we have to those around us for the good of everyone. Without the body of faith surrounding us, vowing to help raise our children, how would those children come to know so much more than mere parents have to offer? In this stewardship season, alongside your financial gifts, consider the gifts of your time, your patience, and your experience to the generations coming along behind you. Just as you were once the future leaders of the church, so now, are they.

A moment of silent reflection follows the sermon.

SERMON HYMN 126 Jesus, Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

Jesus, Jesus, O what a wonderful child. Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek and mild; new life, new hope the child will bring. Listen to the angels sing: "Glory, glory, glory!" Let the heavens ring.

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

Gesu Bambino
Martin Rudy, recorder

Martens/Yon

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sisters and brothers, in Jesus, God's Word became flesh to birth love in our hearts and peace in our world. As we celebrate this gift of life in Christ, let us pray for the church and the world saying,

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

Your messenger announces peace in shouts of breathless joy; drive out the warring ways of our world and protect all who face danger this day as you guide our feet to travel with the One who is your peace.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

Your Word comes with justice to rule the earth with fairness; inspire the leaders of all nations and citizens of the world to order our economic lives to promote dignity and equality for all in your global household.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

Mountains and rivers clap and sing as your Word makes all things new; awaken us to the damage we do to your world and mend our ways, that all creation might breathe again the liveliness of your blessing.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

When shepherds met your newborn Christ, they eagerly ran to tell the news; make us joyful messengers of your good news who freely share your love in the world.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

In Jesus, your love takes on human form to seek us out and guide us home; may Christ be born in us today to lead us into the lives for which we were made.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

From your majesty on high to the lowliness of the stable, your Word has power to sustain all things, and through him we become your precious children; comfort those who are hungry, sick, or suffering, and in all our afflictions anoint us with the oil of gladness as you visit us with your salvation.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

Unto us a child is born this day, to live and die and rise again; bless all who are born today and all who will die, that your will for them may be fulfilled in the one who is the way, truth, and life.

O God of Love, **draw us together in peace.**

O God, receive our prayers through Christ who is our glorious light.

May we, like him, shine forth like the sun in bodies, breath, and beating hearts to sing your praise forevermore, and as holy partners in a heavenly calling, praying together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray...

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 134 Joy to the Word, vv. 1 & 4

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Worship Participants

Rev. David Jones, Pastor
Cliff Brock, Choirmaster
Lalla McGee, Cantor
Rev. Darcie Jones, Children's Coordinator
Dr. Tom Moynahan, Elder, Worship Ministry
Worship A/V Support Team

~Rev. Brock is absent today recuperating from eye surgery.~

GIVING REPORT

	Giving 2020	Giving 2019
Pledged	\$396,351.08	\$388,776.56
Unpledged	\$29,944.00	\$66,876.49
Total	\$426,295.08	\$455,653.05

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.

