

Worship Program
December 30th & 31st, 2023

Introduction

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

A: Amen.

P: Trusting the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

A: God of life, you promise good news of great joy for all people and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.

P: Hear the good news:

We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In ✠ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **A: Amen.**

Greeting

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

Gathering Hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory" (ELW 275)

Angels, from the Realms of Glory



- 1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
- 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
- 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;
- 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

Prayer of the Day

P: 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.

A: Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10—62:3

(To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.)

I 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.

For 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. 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.

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

The word of the Lord, **A: Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody: Psalm 148

L: Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens. Praise God in the heights.

A: Praise the LORD, all you angels. Sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

L: Praise the LORD, sun and moon. Sing praise, all you shining stars.

A: Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

L: Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created.

A: Who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.

L: Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps.

A: Fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will.

L: Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars.

A: Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds.

L: Sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes, and all rulers of the world.

A: Young men and maidens, old and young together.

L: Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

A: The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!

Second Reading: Galatians 4:47

(Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.)

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

The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation Saturday

"Alleluia" (Setting 1, ELW pg. 102)

Alleluia, Alleluia,

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, Alleluia,

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation Sunday "Sing, O Sing this Blessed Morn" (Choir)

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

(Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.)

When 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 *(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord")*, and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

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

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, 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.

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

The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (ELW272)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



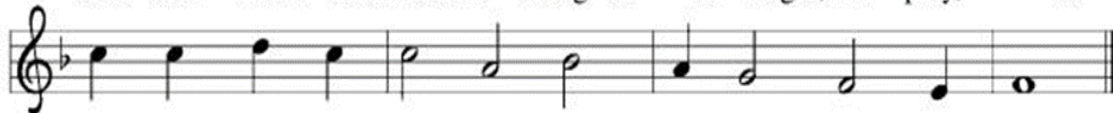
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Apostles' Creed

A: 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 power of 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 Intercession

L: Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

L: You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.
A: Your mercy is great.

L: Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness (*especially*).

L: We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

A: Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also, with you.**

Offertory Song “What Child is This” (ELW 296) v.1

1 **What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping.
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

Offering Prayer

P: God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **A: Amen.**

The Dialogue

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also, with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. **A: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God through our Savior Jesus Christ.

P: You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

P: And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy” (Setting 2, ELW pg. 108)

Thanksgiving at the Table

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat, this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. **A: Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

A: 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.

Invitation to Communion

P: Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

A: Amen

“O Lamb of God” (Setting 1, ELW pg. 112)

Special Music

"Manger Throne" Performed by Phil Wickman

Prayer after Communion

P: God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A: Amen.

Blessing

P: God bless you and keep you, ✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Sending Hymn

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" (ELW 288)



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Dismissal

P: Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news. **A: Thanks be to God.**

December/ January Readers/ Communion Assist

Dec 30	Joan Bunell
Dec 31	Ray Leverknight
Jan 6	Jack Weisbrodt
Jan 7	**HELP NEEDED**

December/January Ushers/ Greeters

Dec 30	**HELP NEEDED**
Dec 31	Todd Moss
Jan 6	**HELP NEEDED**
Jan 7	**HELP NEEDED**



January Calendar of Events

January 06	Evangelism	6:00pm
January 09	Property	6:00pm
January 16	Church Council	6:30pm
January 18	Social Ministry	6:30pm
January 18	Visitation Group	2:00pm