



SOTC Worship
December 27, 2020
First Sunday after Christmas

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Per directions of Pastor Aleese, light your advent candles.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Here on the heels of Christmas,

We speak of love.

We speak of joy.

We speak of candle light and fireside.

We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

We speak of “glorias” and angel choruses.

We speak the words, “Do not be afraid.”

Here on the heels of Christmas, We are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.

BE THE CHURCH

Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” As we’ll hear in our scripture passage for today, young Jesus will be blessed in the temple by his community of faith. Two prophets, Anna and Simeon, proclaim praise and blessings for Jesus.

The church is the people, and we cannot do faith without one another. Knowing that, take a moment to text or email someone from our faith community. Think of the people who have served as Anna and Simeon in your life—pointing out good news and Jesus – and being an inspiration of faith to you. Send that person a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them. Not a tech-y person? Take out a piece of paper and jot a few notes down right now of who you would like to thank, or send a greeting to and what you’d like to say. Later, transfer that message to a card and send it in the mail.

A TIME FOR CONFESSION

Following invitation to confession, congregation is invited to join in the following prayer:

God of today and tomorrow, we know that your fingerprints are all over this world. Forgive us when we fail to see you among us; forgive us when we fail to point to your presence; and forgive us when we fail to speak the good news of your light bursting into our midst. Today, we confess that, all too often, we have remained silent rather than pointing to your truth. In your abundant mercy, forgive us, renew us, and lead us. Give us eyes to see you, courage to trust you, and lips to speak your name. Amen.

People of God, even when we fail to speak of God's love, God is ever-present with us. By grace, you are forgiven in the name of + Jesus Christ. Go forth, boldly proclaiming the news of Jesus Christ to the world.

Amen.

————— WORD —————

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:22-40

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 2nd chapter.

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.

The Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ

REFLECTION

For our time of reflection, we will be utilizing breakout rooms to foster discussion. Each breakout room will have a leader to help facilitate discussion. Utilize the questions below to dive deeper into God's Word.

1. Notice the characters in this story. For each character, imagine what emotions they might be feeling. Which character(s) do you relate to most—Mary, Joseph, Simeon, or Anna?
2. The text says that Simeon was “moved by the Spirit” (v. 27). Have you ever felt “moved by the Spirit?” What does that look like for you?
3. Both Anna and Simeon publicly display their faith, telling all who will listen about Jesus and their dreams for Jerusalem’s future. What things do you speak up about? What are things you have remained silent about? What prevents you from speaking?
4. Who in your life has been an Anna and Simeon for you? What did they speak about, and how did their profession change you?
5. The text today speaks of Jesus being presented in the temple. In many ways, this mirrors the ritual of baptizing babies at a young age in worship. Share a meaningful baptism memory with the group, either from your community of faith or from your family.
6. Finally, focus on the “now what”? What is your takeaway from the story? What are you charged to do, think, or feel?

REFLECTIVE PRAYER

There are some dreams that we keep to ourselves, but there are others that must be spoken out loud. Anna and Simeon speak about their dreams for Jerusalem. They speak of their dreams for the Messiah. They could not keep silent.

To practice speaking aloud our dreams for this world, write three things on paper, following each prompt below. Then, after some time to consider each prompt, we’ll invite you to share your response in the chat window as we offer our prayers of intercession.

1. Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God. Write something that you are grateful for—a piece of good news worthy of praise.
2. Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world. Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about.

3. Anna and Simeon speak and are heard, but not all people are listened to with the same equality in our world. Think of one person or group of people that are speaking, but are not being heard. May this be a reminder that we can use our voices for and alongside others.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Having reflected on our own prayers, we join our prayers together with one another. Following the prompt of our leader, type your response to your first prayer petition into the chat window. After all have had a chance to offer their first prayer petition, we close with the words “Lord in your mercy,” **“hear our prayer.”** We continue in the same pattern for our second prayer petition, and third.

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

We believe in telling the story—
**The story of a loving and merciful God,
who will not let God’s people go;
the story of a baby who grew up and changed the world;
the story of our faith.**

We believe in speaking up—
**for our neighbors,
for the oppressed,
for the overlooked
and marginalized.**

We believe in speaking out—
**against violence,
greed,
abuse,
fear,
scarcity mindset,
and bigotry.**

We believe in passing the mic—
**so that we are not the only ones speaking,
so that we can lift up the voices of those around us,
so that we too might listen and learn.**

We believe in the good news of the gospel.
**We believe that this good news is too good to keep to ourselves.
We believe that those who dream cannot keep silent.**
Speak to us, Holy God.
Speak through us, Holy God. May it be so, amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

Depart now in peace,
for your eyes have seen the salvation which God has prepared for all people.
Grow in strength and wisdom,
and bring forth a harvest of righteousness and praise.

And may God smile upon you and make you strong and wise;
may Jesus Christ share his inheritance with you freely;
and may the Holy Spirit open your eyes to the presence of God's Messiah.

Go in peace, with the blessing of almighty God,
the + Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you!

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