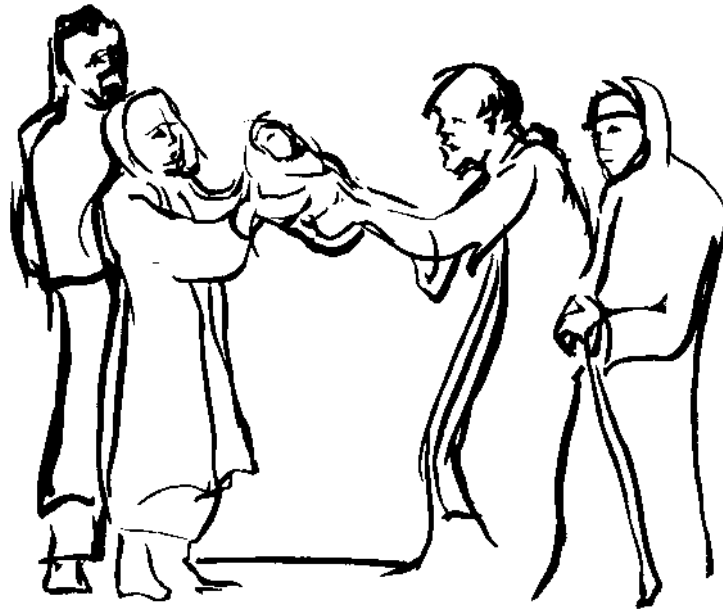


1st Sunday of Christmas
Adaptive Worship Service
December 27, 2020



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026
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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

GREETING

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

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Galatians 4:4-7

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: 4 But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, 5 to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's children.

6 To show that you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries out, "Father, my Father." 7 So then, you are no longer a slave but a child. And since you are his child, God will give you all that he has for his children.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:22-40

Introduction to the Gospel: *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.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 22 The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, 23 as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord." 24 They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

25 At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him 26 and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. 27 Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, 28 Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

29 "Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,

and you may let your servant go in peace.

30 With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,

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

32 A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles

and bring glory to your people Israel."

33 The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. 34 Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against 35 and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart."

36-37 There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old.[a] She never left the Temple; day and night she worshiped God, fasting and praying. 38 That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

The Return to Nazareth

39 When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown of Nazareth in Galilee. 40 The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

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!

SERMON

Bishop Pedro Suarez

HYMN OF THE DAY

What Child Is This vs. 1 & 2



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
- 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898
Music: GREENSLIEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: 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 (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle,

Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, the family and friends of of Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19 and other natural disasters], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 280,000+ people in the US & the 1.5 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Reveal your power to heal and to save. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

BLESSING

Worship Leader: 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 .

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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