

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso, Indiana 46385 • (219) 462-6660 clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



First Sunday of Christmas DECEMBER 31, 2023

We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

* The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."

ABOUT WORSHP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110.**

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all -gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

As on the first day of creation, on this First Sunday of Christmas the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

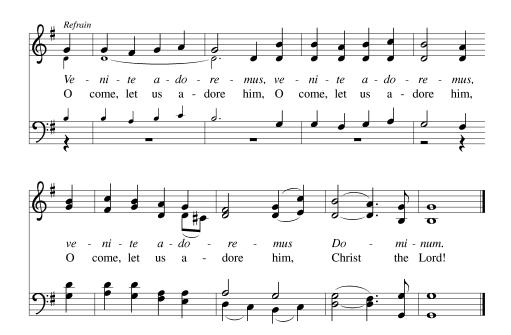
From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Pachelbel

WELCOME

GATHERING CAROL ELW #283 O Come, All Ye Faithful





Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

GREETING

Peace to you and welcome, from the God who has always known you, the Savior who is already born, the Spirit who listens before you ask. Amen.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children come forward for a time together.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness —

on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁶For a child has been born for us,

a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;

and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,

and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it

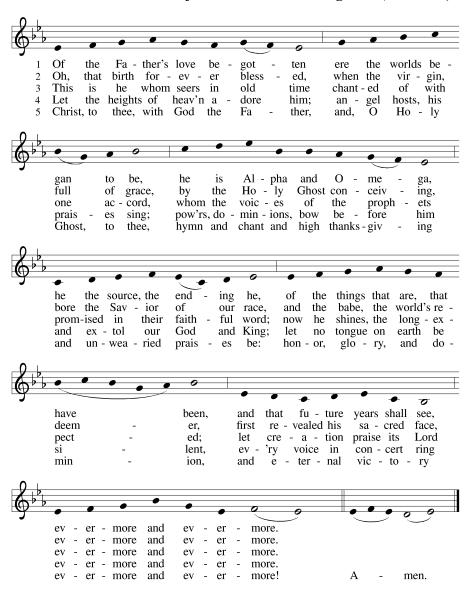
with justice and with righteousness

from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

FIRST CAROL ELW #295

Of the Father's Love Begotten (vs. 1, 2, 5)



Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–413; tr. composite Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

SECOND READING: MICAH 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

SECOND CAROL ELW #272 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (vs. 1-3)



THIRD READING: LUKE 2:1-16

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he

favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

THIRD CAROL ELW #275

Angels, from the Realms of Glory



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

FOURTH READING: LUKE 2:21–38

²¹After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²²When 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"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

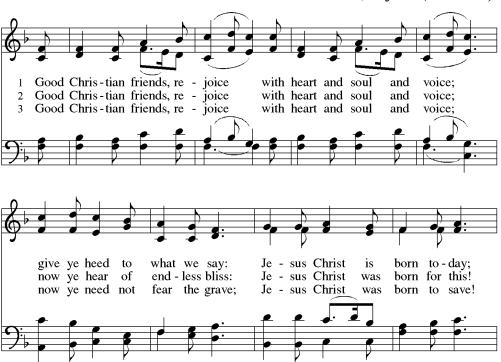
²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was

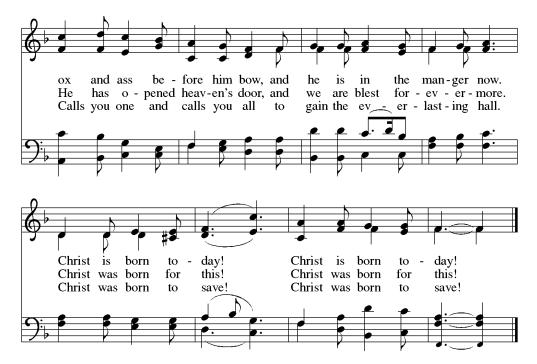
righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought 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.







Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

FIFTH READING: MATTHEW 2:13-18

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." ¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

Lul-lay, thou little tiny Child, By, by, lully, lul-lay; Lul-lay, thou little tiny Child, By, by, lully, lul-lay.

O sisters, too, how may we do, For to preserve this day; This poor Youngling for whom we sing, By, by, lully, lul-lay.

Herod the King, in his raging, Charg-ed he hath this day; His men of might, in his own sight, All children young, to slay.

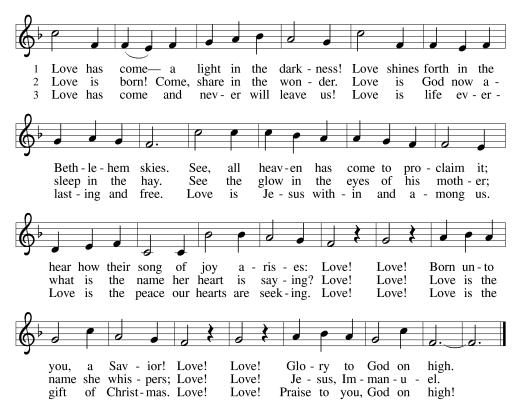
Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee, And ever mourn and say: For Thy parting nor say nor sing, By, by, lully, lul-lay

SIXTH READING: JOHN 1:1-14

The assembly stands.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

SIXTH CAROL ELW #292 Love Has Come



Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale, 1856 Text © 1996 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP), c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS

Glory to God in the highest,

and peace to God's people on earth.

You are called the Prince of Peace -

may your rule of peace come to all nations of the world.

You uphold your kingdom with justice and righteousness -

may the powers of this world be shamed by the power of your love.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light -

shine with healing and hope shine for all who are sick or suffering.

O newborn King, reign with love in the lives of those we name before you now...

In the silence, we lift up all in need, and join the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle in lifting up the lands, people, and churches of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine.

Lord Jesus, you are good news of great joy to all the world.

Fill us with your good news, so that like the shepherds we go glorifying and praising God! Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

We invite those worshiping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Bethel Lutheran Church**, a diverse, urban ELCA congregation in the Miller neighborhood of Gary, Indiana (part of NW Indiana Conference of I-K Synod) http://bethelmiller.org and https://bethelmiller.org and https://bethelmiller.org

If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use our CLC app (download at clcvalpo.org/app).

OFFERTORY

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Pachelbel

OFFERTORY PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

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. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:

SANCTUS ELW #289 Angels We Have Heard on High (v. 3)

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

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

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace. Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated.

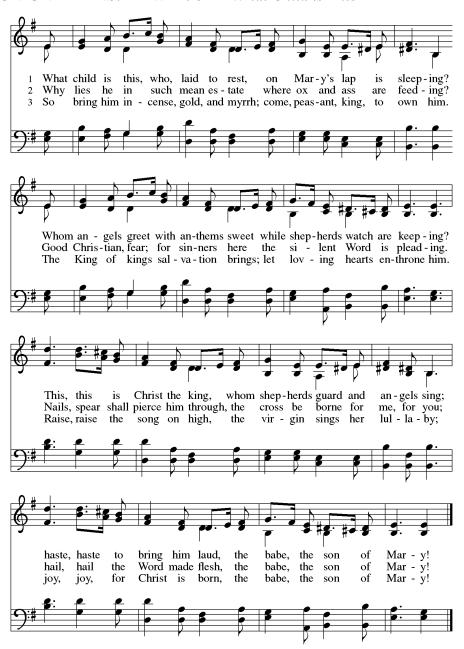
The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen** (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen** *(receive the cup)*

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. Wine is lighter-colored and Grape Juice is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. Used Glasses are placed in the basket located near the ramp. Gluten-Free Bread is Available, please indicate to the server that you require this.

COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #296 What Child is This



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

ELW #287 Let All Together Praise Our God



- 5 A wonderful exchange you make: you take our flesh and blood, and in return give us to share the shining realm of God, the shining realm of God.
- 6 Unlock the door again today that leads to paradise; the angel bars the way no more. To God let praises rise, to God let praises rise!

Text: Nikolaus Herman, 1480–1561; tr. hymnal version Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

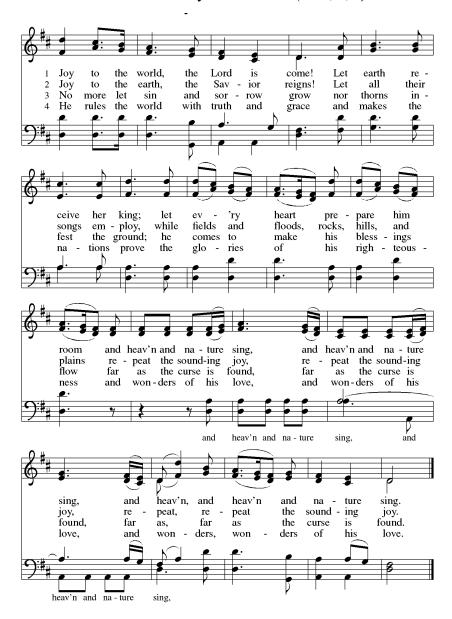
BLESSING

God bless you and keep you,

H Jesus grant you grace and truth,
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING CAROL ELW #267 Joy to the World (vs. 1, 2, 4)



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE Joy to the World

Held

Worship Leaders

8:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.

Acolyte

Lector Dave Keammerer Doug Schmidt

Darla Hernandez Grace Safrin

Communion Assistants Phyllis Schroeder

Darla Hernandez

Ushers Reagan Jackson

Irene Adams

Sound/Light Tony Reinhold

Video/Livestream -----

Pastors Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr.

Rev. Erica Gibson-Even

Director of Music Ministries Brian Bartusch

Communion Baker Marilyn McGawn

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Egypt**, **Israel**, **Jordan**, **Lebanon**, **Palestine**.

We are thankful for:

- lands and monuments sacred in the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- those who unceasingly work for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land
- the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
- those who continue to welcome the multitudes of refugees in their lands

We pray for:

- ending the violence racking this region, that the people might live together in peace, security and respect for each other
- those who have grown weary and disillusioned in searching for solutions
- an end to religious differences being exploited to perpetuate conflict and further displacement of people
- political leaders who will courageously bring about justice and reconciliation for the sake of all

Stewardship Snippet

"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." --Luke 2:39-40

Stewardship of faith involves showing up, doing the right thing, and taking care of responsibilities. Joseph and Mary practiced this by fulfilling God's law for their son Jesus. Why not make 2024 a year to develop good, consistent stewardship practices all year long?

Affirmation and Expectation

Imagine the baptism of an infant on a winter Sunday morning. Imagine the baby, dressed in a fragile heirloom, and family members and sponsors crowded around the font. Imagine the richness of the ritual—the pronouncement of ancient promises, wet hands and hair, an oily cross on soft skin, a freshly lit candle, laughter and applause.

Now, imagine that an elder in the congregation rises and, unprompted, takes the baby in his arms. As the people look on in stunned silence, he sings a hymn of heartfelt gratitude and wonder. Then another elder stands, turns to face the assembly, and testifies to God's goodness on account of this child. Imagine the surprise. Imagine the indelible memory.

Something similar happens when Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord. Once they have done their part to mark Jesus as a member of God's people, two strangers unexpectedly acknowledge him too. Simeon and Anna have each spent a lifetime on the lookout for a sign of God's promised redemption. And stumbling upon him in the temple, they do not hesitate to say so: "My eyes have seen your salvation," Simeon sings, "which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples."

But it isn't all good news. Peering into Mary's eyes, the prophet also foresees that Jesus will uncover the thoughts of many a heart, and that the end result will feel like a blade to her soul. As if she did not already have plenty to ponder (Luke 2:19)!

There is perhaps nothing like the arrival of a child to inspire our hopes and fears for the future. And spoken words of affirmation and expectation have the power to illuminate the possibilities. Jesus is the child in whom God makes the greatest promises. So rejoice with prophets like Simeon and Anna, those who see him for who he is. And, come what may, hold tight to their testimony until God's promises are fulfilled.