



First Sunday After Christmas

December 27, 2020

AS WE GATHER...Hindsight may be 20/20, but it's often difficult to recognize what is right in front of us. How, then, do we recognize what God is doing in our midst? Within the temple courts, Simeon beholds the long-awaited Messiah and rejoices that righteousness has come to him. Not only has this gift come to Simeon, but it has also come to us! Jesus is here with us today. This cheers us heading into a New Year!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING BLESSING

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

C: **and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Silence for reflection

P: Before we join in our Christmas celebration, we clear the way by confessing our sins and hearing once again God's gracious words of forgiveness.....

C: **We admit that we are sinners. Lord, we sin in our thoughts, words and actions, by things we have done and left undone. We especially recognize our fear of the future...wanting to know and control our future...rather than trusting You for what is to come. Forgive us when we forget Your promises for our future...and make clear to the eyes of our hearts that our future is in Your loving hands.**

SONG OF CONFESSION: “White As Snow” *(twice through)*

White as snow, white as snow,
Though my sins were as scarlet
Lord, I know, Lord I know
That I’m clean and forgiven,
Through the power of your blood,
Through the wonder of your love,
Through faith in you, I know that I can be
White as snow.

Prayer

P: God knows our fears, our failures to trust him for the future, and in Christ assures us of his forgiveness. I therefore in Christ’s stead announce the free and full forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen!

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Epistle Lesson: *Galatians 4:4-7*

God sent forth His Son to redeem us.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Holy Gospel: *Luke 1:5 - 28*

Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was

barren, and both were advanced in years. Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

SERMON - "Family Life"

CONFESSING OUR FAITH

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

And born of the virgin Mary.
He 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,
 And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy Christian Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body
And the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

P: Gathered as God's people and as heirs of an eternal inheritance, let us pray for the whole Church and for all who bear the name of Jesus, who is our Light and our Salvation. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Lord of all, watch over our nation and grant Your divine favor to all who bear office in our land, especially the president, the president-elect and all who make, administer and judge our laws. Help them to serve all those in their care according to Your holy will, that we may live in peace and safety. Save us from pestilence and plague, for unseasonable weather, and the dangers that are ever-present in our lives. Grant us Your blessing as one calendar year closes and another begins. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Give a special measure of blessing to those with special needs. Especially we remember the sick, the shut-in, those dealing with depression, those who sorrow, and other known to us who at this time are in need of prayer. Help us to be people who bless, encourage, and strengthen all those in our circles of relationship and beyond. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

C: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG: "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful"

Author (attributed to): John F. Wade, c. 1711-1786 **Tune:** ADESTE FIDELES **Composer (attributed to):** John F. Wade, c. 1711-1786

Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him Born the king of angels;
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come let us adore him,
Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come let us adore him,
Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God. In the highest:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come let us adore him,
Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing:
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come let us adore him,
Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!