

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas – December 27, 2020  
Indiana-Kentucky Synod

**Welcome and Invocation**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who was in the beginning,  
who makes a dwelling among us,  
who covers us with justice and mercy.  
**Amen.**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,  
**All: God is there.**

Leader: When Jesus is presented at the temple,  
**All: God is there.**

Leader: When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,  
**All: God is there.**

Leader: When Anna recognizes Jesus in the temple,  
**All: God is there.**

Leader: This very day,  
**All: God is here.**

Leader: In the future we cannot see,  
**All: God is there. Let us worship God!**

**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.**

**Hymn – Away in a Manger, led by Bishop Bill Gafkjen**

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky

and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Galatians 4:4-7**

*A reading from Galatians, the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter.*

<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>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. Thanks be to God.*

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40**

*The holy gospel according to Luke, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. Glory to you, O Lord.*

<sup>22</sup>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 <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>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. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>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, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>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 <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>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, <sup>37</sup>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. <sup>38</sup>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.

<sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

*The gospel of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*

Sermon

**Hymn – O Come, All Ye Faithful, verses 1 and 2, led by Rev. Jerry O’Neal, IK Synod Stewardship Director and Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran, Muncie, IN**

1 O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the king of angels:

*Refrain*

O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy,  
light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

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

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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 those we pray for today (*pause*). Reveal your power to heal and to save. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.  
**Amen.**

### **Christmas Benediction and Dismissal**

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that created humanity  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that forgives and renews  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation  
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings the blessing of peace  
dwell within us this Christmas.

And may we share that peace  
with all people near and far. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn – Go Tell It on the Mountain, led by Rachel Kurtz, used with permission**

*Refrain*

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when, lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
- 3 Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born;  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

Call to worship was written by Rev. Robert George, Karen George, Judy Colby-George, in Past Meets Future: A Blessing for Today, posted on the [United Church of Christ](#) website. Used with permission.

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