



*"For my eyes have
seen your salvation
that you have
prepared
in the presence
of all peoples."*

LUKE 2:30-31



Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

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January 3, 2021

The Family of God Gathers

Prelude

“The Bells of Christmas”

Please let the prelude be a signal to prepare for worship.

Call to Worship †§

L: Sing praise to God, who gathers us here;

P: **from the ends of the earth we come.**

L: With a word of promise, a spring of water, a loaf of bread, and a cup of wine,

P: **God turns our mourning into dancing, our sorrow into joy.**

Prayer of Confession †§

Holy God, you have given us everything, and we have failed to respond with gratitude. In Jesus Christ, you have given us your Word; we answer with empty promises and lies. In Jesus Christ, you have given us your light, yet we try to hide ourselves from your glory. Have mercy on us, O God; forgive us. In Jesus Christ, give us the faith to become what you created us to be: beloved children, full of grace and truth. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon §

L: Believe and trust the good news of Christmas: through Jesus' love, you are forgiven!

The Sign of Peace

Now please take a moment and share the peace with those in your household and/or offer a moment to send prayers of peace to those you love who are not with you.

Centering Music

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

The Service of the Word

Psalm 147:12–20

L: Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!

P: **Praise your God, O Zion!**

L: For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.

P: **He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat.**

L: He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.

P: **He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.**

L: He hurls down hail like crumbs—who can stand before his cold?

P: **He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.**

L: He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

P: **He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances.**

All: Praise the Lord!

Gospel

Luke 2:22–40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

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

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

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

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, 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. 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.

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.

Sermon

Musical Offering “Joy to the World”

John Stecher

Please mail your offerings to the church or drop them off at the office.

Communion ‡§

Prayer

L: May the God of Christmas Joy be with you.

P: **And also with you.**

L: Children of God, lift up your hearts.

P: **We lift them to the One who came to us in Bethlehem.**

L: Children of Hope, give thanks to God.

P: **We sing our songs of joy to the One who became one of us.**

L: God of creation, you spoke and stars danced in the sky; you whispered, and snow fell gently in the night; you sang, and the Spirit breathed life into us.

P: Yet, we allowed ourselves to be led by temptation into ways that are not your ways. So you sent your Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us, showing us your love and calling us to follow your way of grace.

L: Guiding Spirit, as you moved over creation, come to bless this bread and cup, and your children gathering around this Table, wherever they are. As we eat of the Bread of angels, may we be nourished by your justice to bring hope to all people. As we are filled with the Cup of grace, may the seeds of righteousness bloom within us that all creation can be made whole.

P: Then, when the time comes, and we are all gathered in heaven, we will join hands and dance around your Table, singing our praises to you. Amen.

The Story

Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Distribution “Still, Still, Still”

Hannah Zehms, Lynn McFadyen

Prayer of Thanksgiving §

Lord of Life, we give you thanks that you created us out of your love to be your children, and that you call us to your table to be your family, nourished and fed by your bread of life and cup of salvation. Amen.

Closing Music

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”

Benediction †§

L: The God of creation goes with you now.

P: As we go to care for all that has been given to us.

L: The Child of Bethlehem goes with you now.

P: As we seek to serve with humility and hope.

L: The Spirit of Abba goes with you.

P: As we would show others how to find peace and new life. Amen.

Postlude “Angels We Have Heard on High”

John Stecher, Lynn McFadyen

† *Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion, Year B, Vol. 1 ©2014 Westminster John Knox Press. Used with permission.

‡ <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>

§ Modified/written by Rev. David Huber

Worship Leaders

Pastor: Rev. David Huber • Ministers: All the people of Plymouth • Pianist: Lynn McFadyen • Liturgist: George Stecher

We of Plymouth extend to you our hand of fellowship and an invitation to become a member. If you are interested, or have any questions, please speak with or send a note to Pastor David or our Moderator, Barb Kleist. Our table always has room for more.

This Week at Plymouth

Sunday, January 3

Community Table offering

Tuesday, January 5

9:00 A.M. Coffee & Conversation

Thursday, January 7

3:30 P.M. Coffee & Conversation

Sunday, January 10

Prayers for the People

Cross illumination for January is sponsored by Mike & Marybeth Tschumperlin.

We pray for:

- The leadership and staff of Plymouth United Church of Christ

Coffee and Conversation is a virtual gathering via Zoom for folks who miss the Sunday morning coffee time at church. There is no set topic of conversation, and it's a nice way to keep in touch while we have to maintain social distance. Pastor David hosts the gatherings and posts the link on the church Facebook page. Check it out!

<https://tinyurl.com/y2e87nrm>

Who we are...

Plymouth UCC is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, since we are all created in God's image. We welcome into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, ethnic background, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic background, marital status and background. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, humor, and blessings of participation in our congregation.

Spiritual Care Package

Questions for Reflection

The theme of “fullness” runs through all the lectionary readings for this day. God satisfies the people with bounty (Jer. 31:14) and fills them with finest wheat (Ps. 147:14). Jesus, God's Word made flesh, reveals the fullness of God's grace and truth (John 1:14), a fullness from which we all receive grace upon grace (John 1:16). The apostle says that in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:10; cf. Gal. 4:4) all things will be gathered into God. Where is there fullness in your life? Where is there emptiness? How have you experienced the fullness of God's grace?

Household Prayer: Morning

At the beginning of this day, O God, you are with me, like light scattering darkness. Be with me to the end—and to the beginning of the life that even death cannot destroy; through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

God of all glory, I give you thanks for the fullness of this day and the grace upon grace you have given me. Now hold me close to your heart and let me rest in the grace of Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

God is still speaking,