

First Sunday of Christmas, December 27, 2020

Southwest California Synod

Gathering Hymn: “Little Drummer Boy” – Christina Bristow, Christ, West Covina (instrumental)

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10--62:3

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
 to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1}For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,
 and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
 and her salvation like a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your vindication,
 and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
 that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
 and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Second Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Brenda Bos

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God’s people on earth.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

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.

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” – Caroling with Camp – LRCC (lyric on screen)

Children’s Chat – Anthony Eder, LRCC

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

²²When 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 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.

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

Hymn of the Day: “Joy to the World” – Christ, West Covina (lyric on screen)

Prayers of God’s People

On this first Sunday after Christmas Day, let us pray for all who are in need, responding to each petition with the words “In mercy, redeem the world.”

A brief silence.

O God, Abba-Father, Son, and Spirit: bless your church throughout the world with the joy of your salvation and with perseverance through this time of limited assembly worship. Make our homes like temples filled with your praise.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church, gracious God:

In mercy, redeem the world.

In the cold north, keep safe your whole creation until springtime arrives. In the parched west, send rain in a manner which refresh the earth but keep fire-ravaged areas safe from mudslide. Protect the underground seeds and the hibernating animals. Provide for your living creatures.

A brief silence.

We pray for the earth, gracious God:

In mercy, redeem the world.

Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth in every land. Inspire leaders to serve with compassion and integrity, caring for the common good. Bring peace within and between the nations. Accompany the United Kingdom as it finds its new way forward, and this nation as it moves nearer to a presidential transition.

A brief silence.

We pray for the nations, gracious God:

In mercy, redeem the world.

As 2020 comes to its end, we ask you to help us overcome its heartaches and to welcome 2021 with hope. Comfort those who spent the holidays alone and keep those who are travelling safe from contagion. In the New Year, give all peoples an increase of health and harmony.

A brief silence.

We pray for 2021, gracious God:

In mercy, redeem the world.

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, or health

care. Embrace those isolated by dementia, and connect young and old across generations. Bring speedy delivery of the vaccine to those who need it most, and bring wisdom to those who must wait months for the vaccine.

A brief silence.

We pray for elders, gracious God:
In mercy, redeem the world.

This week we remember before you the infants of Bethlehem slain by King Herod. Protect all children around the world from abuse, hunger, and abandonment. Give to all children a loving home and stable education, that they may grow strong and live filled with wisdom. Strengthen families who have lived in close quarters, those who have shared internet and office space, children who have been educated at home and the adults who love them.

A brief silence.

We pray for children, gracious God:
In mercy, redeem the world.

We praise you for the faithful who follow you even in these confusing times. Bless pastors and deacons, church musicians and lay leaders. Inspire those who long to worship together, remind them the church has never closed. Bless our bishops, Elizabeth and Murray and encourage the bishop you will bring to Southwest California Synod in 2021. We pray for the dozens of leaders we will elect next year in this synod and throughout our church.

A brief silence.

We pray for those whom you call, gracious God:
In mercy, redeem the world.

Come to all who are in need, the hungry, the homeless, the war-torn. Guide us in and through this fearsome pandemic. Visit those sick with COVID-19. Comfort all who live with depression or fear. Abide with all for whom the holiday season is overwhelmed by sorrow.

A brief silence.

We pray for all in need, gracious God:
In mercy, redeem the world.

As Simeon held the infant Jesus in his arms, we now ask you to hold us in your care, O loving God. Adopt us as your own, and listen to our silent prayers.

A longer period of silence.

We pray for ourselves, gracious God:
In mercy, redeem the world.

O God, Abba-Father, Son, and Spirit: as you received the sacrifices of Mary and Joseph, receive now our prayers, now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: “Angels We Have Heard on High” – Association of Lutheran Musicians (lyric on screen)

Blessing:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude: “Deck the Halls” – Christ, West Covina