

““Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation....”  
- Luke 2:29-30



## **Service of the Word**

**Prepared for the Synod of the Covenant  
by the Presbytery of Lake Huron  
December 27, 2020**

# Assemble in God's Name

## PRELUDE

*Joy to the World*

Clayton Stoker, saxophone

## CALL TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah and Yaw

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

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of God's only Son, full of grace and truth.**

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

Let us worship God.

## HYMN *Glory to God, #143*

*Angels, From the Realms of Glory*

REGENT SQUARE

1. *Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth:  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:*

### Refrain:

*Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

3. *Sages leave your contemplations,  
Brighter visions beam afar.  
Seek the great desire of nations,  
You have seen his natal star. [Refrain]*

2. *Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
Yonder shines the Infant Light: [Refrain]*

4. *All creation, join in praising  
God the Father, Spirit, Son.  
Evermore your voices raising  
To the eternal Three in One: [Refrain]*

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Rev. Cathy Chang, Juan Lopez, and Aurélie

God our Maker, you sent your Son full of grace and truth: forgive our failure to receive him.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus our Savior, you were born in poverty and laid in a manger: forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of Love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call: forgive the hardness of our hearts.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Triune God, our Judge and our Redeemer: forgive us our sins and fill us with the light and life of Christ. **Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news! God so loved the world that God sent God's only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world not to condemn the world, but to save sinners. To all who trust in him, God declares their sins are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen.

## RESPONSE *Glory to God, #137*

*He Came Down*

HE CAME DOWN

1. *He came down that we may have love (3x)  
Hallelujah, forevermore!*

2. *He came down that we may have peace...*

3. *He came down that we may have joy...*

4. *He came down that we may have light...*

# Proclaim God's Word

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Elder Linda Langrill

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 2:22-38

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 <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 turtle-doves 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 for seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped 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.

#### SERMON

*A Visit from St. Simeon*

The Rev. Dr. Dan Saperstein

## Give Thanks to God

#### HYMN Glory to God #110

*Love Has Come*

BRING A TORCH

*1. Love has come: a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.*

*2. Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;  
what is the name her heart is saying?  
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.  
Love, Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

*3. Love has come and never will leave us! / Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us. / Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. / Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!*

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Galatians 4:4-7 (alt.)

Elder Linda Kennan

**We believe that when the fullness of time had come,  
God sent the Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
to redeem those who were under the law,  
so that we might receive adoption as children.  
And because we are children,  
God has sent the Spirit of the Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'  
So, we are no longer slaves but children,  
and if children then also heirs, through God.**

#### OFFERING

*Please use this time to make an offering to your local congregation*

The Rev. Glenn Grant

#### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

#### OFFERTORY

*God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*

Memorial Presbyterian Church Choir

## A CHRISTMAS LITANY OF INTERCESSION

The Rev. Ted McCulloch & Collin Whitfield

We were heavy with sorrow, but joy interrupted.

We were deep in the night, but a star appeared.

We were silent with sadness, but the heavens rang.

**And the splendor shone around them / When the time had fully come.**

For those hardened by conflict, may your love intervene.

For those frightened by shadows, may your light take them away.

For those haunted by fears, may your child bring them hope.

**And she laid him in a manger / When the time had fully come.**

For those dismal and defeated, may your faith set them on fire.

For those weary and complaining, may their hearts discovered praise.

For those doubtful and confused, may the door to life be opened.

**And the guiding star went before them / When the time had fully come.**

For those arrogant and angry, may his innocence disarm them.

For those cruel, crude, and clumsy, may his grace make all things new.

For those selfish, narrow, greedy, may the joy of his birth inspire them to share.

**And they offered him their treasured gifts / When the time had fully come.**

We were sheep who had lost our way, but the shepherd knew our names.

We were strangers without a country, but God's reign has come among us.

We were children far from home, but God sent the Son to guide us.

**And the Word was made flesh among us / When the time had fully come.**

May the hopes and fears of this year and all our years, which we lift before you now,

Find their joyful fulfillment in Christ, born to us and for all the world.

**For the time has fully come. Amen.**

And now let us pray as our Savior has taught us, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven..."

## Go in God's Name

**ANTHEM**

*For Unto Us a Child Is Born*

The Alma College Choir

**CHARGE AND BLESSING**

The Rev. Dr. Dan Saperstein

**POSTLUDE**

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

Collin Whitfield, organ

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*Call to Worship:* Thomas L. Weitzel, "A Liturgy of Carols for the First Sunday after Christmas," *Liturgy by TLW*, <http://www.liturgybytlw.com/AdvXmas/Xmas1NC.html>; *Prayer of Confession:* © The Archbishops' Council 2006. <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-0#mmm28>; *Litany of Intercession:* Adapted from Kenneth I. Morse, from "In Straw and Story," p.80, Brethren Press, 1977. <http://re-worship.blogspot.com>. *Benediction:* "Christmas Benediction" by Roddy Hamilton <http://re-worship.blogspot.com>. *He Came Down:* © WGRG, The Iona Community. Reprinted under OneLicense #A722-355. *Love Has Come:* © LNWhymns.com (Admin: Music Services). Reprinted under OneLicense #A722-355; all other hymns in the public domain.

### Leading in Worship

**The Rev. Dr. Dan Saperstein**, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Lake Huron

**The Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah and Yaw**, Moderator, Presbytery of Lake Huron

**The Rev. Cathy Chang, Juan Lopez and Aurélie**, Mission Co-workers to the Philippines

**The Rev. Michael Ludwig, Rachel & family**, Mission Co-workers to Niger

**Elder Linda Langrill**, Moderator-elect Presbytery of Lake Huron

**The Rev. Glenn Grant**, Vice Moderator, Presbytery of Lake Huron

**Elder Linda Kennan**, Memorial Presbyterian Church, Midland, MI

**The Rev. Ted McCulloch**, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Lake Huron

**Collin Whitfield**, Director of Music Ministries, First Presbyterian Church, Saginaw, MI

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