



*... for my
eyes have
seen your
salvation,...*
Luke 2:30, NRSV

Sunday, December 31, 2023
1st Sunday after Christmas / New Year's Eve

Service Theme

PEACE ON EARTH

On Christmas Eve, a choir of angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." So, where is this peace on earth? Between nations? There are always wars going on somewhere. In our country? Disagreements have only grown more contentious, one group screaming angrily at another group. We might not even have perfect peace in our homes! So, what were the angels singing about? They were singing about peace between a holy God who hates sin and human beings who sin every day. Because of what Christ did as our Saviour, there is no hostility between us and God, only peace and love. We have the peace of salvation in our hearts. Like Simeon or Anna in our Gospel lesson, we have the peace of knowing of the glorious eternal life that is to come. As this peace with God fills our hearts, it moves us to live in peace with each other too.

Hymn

CW 41 "Let All Together Praise Our God"

1 Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,
And gives us his own Son.

2 He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,
Lies in a humble stall.

3 He veils in flesh his pow'r divine A servant's form to take;
In want and lowliness must die Who heav'n and earth did make,
Who heav'n and earth did make.

4 A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood,
And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God,
His majesty as God.

5 He serves that I a lord may be—A great exchange indeed!
Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need,
To help me in my need?

6 For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.
The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,
To God our thanks we pay.

Order of Service:

Service of the Word (p.38)

M: The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give us strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

Prayer and Praise

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

C: *(Sing)* **Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Blessed are they who take refuge in him.
Your Word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.
Your faithfulness continues forever.
Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Blessed are they who take refuge in him.**

Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming, deliver us from the corruption of our sin, and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(sing)* **Amen.**

First Lesson

Isaiah 45:20–25 (EHV)

The LORD is the only true God. He promises to reveal himself to the nations that don't know Him. The LORD reveals both himself and his saving love to the world in Jesus. Only through Him are we at peace with God.

²⁰Gather! Come! Draw near together,
you survivors from the nations.
They have no knowledge—
those who are lifting up their idols of
wood
and praying to a god that cannot save.

²¹Make an announcement and come
close.

Let them consult together.

Who made this known ahead of time?

From time past who announced it?

Was it not I, the LORD?

There is no god except me,
a righteous God and Savior.

There is no one except me.

²²Turn to me and be saved, all you ends
of the earth,

because I am God,
and there is no other.

²³I have sworn by myself.

From my mouth a righteous word has
gone out,
and it will not return unfulfilled.

Indeed, to me every knee will bow,
and every tongue will swear
allegiance.

²⁴“Only in the LORD,” they will say of me,
“Only in the LORD is there true
righteousness and strength.”

To him they will come and be ashamed—
all those who are angry at him.

²⁵In the LORD, all the descendants of
Israel will be justified.

They will be praised by him.

Psalm 111

(p.106)

Refrain



Sing to the Lord a new song, for



he has done mar - vel - ous things.

Psalm tone



Great are the works of the LORD;*
they are pondered by all who delight
in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds,*
and his righteousness endures
forever.

He has caused his wonders to be
remembered;

the LORD is gracious and
compassionate.

Refrain

The works of his hands are faithful and
just;

all his precepts are trustworthy.

He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
wisdom;

all who follow his precepts have good
understanding.

**Glory be to the Father and to the
Son***

and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

Second Lesson

Colossians 3:12-17 (EHV)

As the peace of Christ rules our hearts, we are moved to live in peace.

¹²Therefore, as God's elect, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint against anyone else. Forgive, just as Christ forgave you. ¹⁴And, in addition to all these things, put on love, which ties things together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, to which you were also called, in one body. And be thankful.

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And everything you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. Alleluia. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. Alleluia. (Luke 2:30,31)

C: (sing) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel

Luke 2:22-40 (EHV)

*God allows Simeon and Anna to see their Savior with their own eyes.
This fills them with peace.*

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. ²³(As it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be called holy to the Lord.") ²⁴And they came to offer a sacrifice according to what was said 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, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was 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 Christ. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, ²⁸Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word,

³⁰because my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared before the face of all people,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

³³Joseph and the child's mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Listen carefully, this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there. She was a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then she was a widow of eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple complex, since she was worshipping with fasting and prayers night and day. ³⁸Standing nearby at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord. She kept speaking about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

C: (sing) Praise be to you, O Christ!

Hymn

CW 78 "O Light of Gentile Nations"

**1 O Light of Gentile nations, O Savior from above,
Drawn by your Spirit's leading, We come with joy and love
Into your holy temple And wait with rev'rent mind
As Simeon once had waited His God and Lord to find.**

**2 Dear Lord, your servants meet you In ev'ry holy place
Where your true Word has promised That we should see your
face.**

**Today you still allow us Who gather round you here
In arms of faith to hold you As did that aged seer.**

**3 Lord, when life's troubles touch us, You seem to hide your
face,
And through our tears we often Can scarcely sense your grace.
Then be our joy and brightness, Our cheer in pain and loss,
Our sun in darkest terror, The glory round our cross.**

**4 Let us, O Lord, be faithful Like Simeon to the end
So that his prayer exultant May from our hearts ascend:
"O Lord, now let your servant Depart in peace, I pray,
Since I have seen my Savior And here beheld his day."**

Sermon

Luke 2:25-32 - **May the Holy Spirit . . .**

- 1) Keep leading you to Christ,
- 2) That he always remains close to your heart.

Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**
**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.**
From there he will come 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.**

Offertory Prayer

Prayer of the Church

M: I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

C: Every day I will praise you and extol your name.

M: It is fitting, O Lord, in the final hours of this year, to express our gratitude for the countless gifts of grace we have received from you.

C: You have been faithful to your promises and loving toward all you have made.

M: You clothe your creation with beauty; you feed even the birds and tell us that we are much more valuable than they.

C: You know what we need, and you give us all good things.

M: Clothing and food, safety and health, possessions and money, even life itself—all these come to us from your generous hand.

C: We thank you for these blessings, and we ask that you continue to grant them to us.

M: We thank you especially for your Word and Holy Supper, which strengthen our faith, shield us from temptation, and equip us for service.

C: **Increase our commitments to these precious gifts, so that we may continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Almighty and eternal God, you have been gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in love. As you led your people Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so lead us by the light of your Word that we may live our lives to your glory and be prepared to die in your peace.

C: **We ask these things in the name of Jesus. In his name we began this year; in his name we bring it to a close. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(sing)* **Amen.**

The Blessing

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: *(sing)* Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hymn

CW 70 "Help Us, O Lord, for Now We Enter"

- 1 Help us, O Lord, for now we enter Upon another year today.
In you our hopes and thoughts now center; Renew our courage for the way.
New life, new strength, new happiness We ask of you—oh, hear and bless.
- 2 May ev'ry plan and undertaking Begin this year, O Lord, with you;
When I am sleeping or am waking, Help me, dear Lord, your will to do.
In you alone, my God, I live; You only can my sins forgive.
- 3 And may this year to me be holy; Your grace so fill my ev'ry thought
That all my life be pure and lowly And truthful, as a Christian's ought.
So make me while I'm living here Your faithful servant through the year.
- 4 Jesus, be with me and direct me; Jesus, my plans and hopes inspire;
Jesus, from tempting thoughts protect me; Jesus, be all my heart's desire;
Jesus, be in my thoughts all day And never let me fall away.
- 5 And grant, Lord, when the year is over, That it for me in peace may close.
In all things care for me and cover My head in time of fear and woes.
So may I, when my life is done, Appear with joy before your throne.

Announcements

Church Cleaners:

January 7 - Timothy // January 14 - Mark

DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

Su (31)	10:30 am	Worship
Th (4)	10:30 am	Devotion at Longfield Manor
Su (7)	9:00 am	Sunday School & Confirmation
	10:30 am	Worship, Confirmation & Communion
	11:30 am	First Fellowship
We (10)	6:30 pm	"Test the Spirits" Bible Information Class.
Th (11)	6:00 pm	Illuminé (at St. Paul's)
	6:30 pm	Youth Confirmation (W)
Fr (12)	4:30 pm	Youth Confirmation (D)
	6:30 pm	Friday Fellowship
Su (14)	9:00 am	Sunday School and Bible Class
	10:30 am	Worship & Communion
	12:00 pm	Divine Sisters
	3:00 pm	Worship in Poltimore



Divine Word

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