

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 2:22-40

This is a message of God Who keeps His promises to those who are still living in darkness and have rejected the fulfilment of God's promise of deliverance and forgiveness. It is also a message of comfort in that those who by grace, through faith in the promised One have been declared righteous, can rejoice in the God Who also keeps His promises made for them. Thus, Simeon can go on to prophesy that this child is destined to cause the rising and falling of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is spoken against.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

⑨ O Lord God, Our Father in Heaven, hear us as we pray. In the sending of Your Son Jesus Christ You did in a wonderful manner give Your Love to us and show Your great kindness. We thank You for this marvelous Christmas gift and for the promise that through His name whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We ask You to give us the fullness of His grace, that we may understand Your glory and truth. Help us to receive Him into our hearts in faith, so that, believing in Him as Your perfect Revelation, and trusting Him as our only and perfect Savior, we may have power to become Your eternal sons and heirs according to the expectation of eternal life. Grant us the work of Your Holy Spirit that we may be guided by the light of Jesus Christ in all wisdom, counsel, and understanding, that our path may be clear, and that we may walk in obedience to His commandments, teachings, and example.

Extend Your dominion over all lands and nations, and give righteous wisdom to all who rule, so that people everywhere may be governed in peace, justice, and mercy. In all homes, give parents grace and wisdom to bring up their children in the knowledge of their Lord, which is the beginning of all wisdom. In all schools, grant teachers such knowledge as will direct them to the truth as it is in Christ our Lord. Teach us that we may serve You wherever we are employed.

Be with all who travel during these days of Christmas. Keep all the travelers, the truckers the pilots safe and secure that they may return to Your house.

Abide with all in peril of body or soul, with all who are imprisoned, with all who face temptation, and grant them a sure sense of Your presence.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

In these and all other things of which we are in need, give Your help and mercy, O Father. This we pray in the name of Your beloved Son Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

CHRISTMAS ONE

Chant Tone



Introit

The Lord has bared His holy arm
before the eyes of all the —nations,*
and all the ends of the Earth shall
see the salvation | of our God.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for He
has done | marvelous things!*
His right hand and His holy arm
have worked salva | tion for Him.
The Lord has made known His
| salvation;*
He has revealed His righteousness
in the sight of the —nations.

He has remembered His steadfast love
and faithfulness to the house of | Israel.*

All the ends of the Earth have seen
the salvation | of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, | all the
Earth;*
break forth into joyous song and
sing — praises!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy —Spirit;
as it was in the be —ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

The Lord has bared His holy arm
before the eyes of all the —nations,*
and all the ends of the Earth shall
see the salvation | of our God.

(Antiphon, *Isaiah 52:10;*
Psalm 98:1-4)

Collect of the Day

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

To us a Child is born, to us a Son is — given;*
and the government shall be upon His —shoulder,
And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, | Mighty God,*
Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.
Sing to the Lord a — new song,*
for He has done — marvelous things!

(*Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a*)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: We give thanks to You, O Lord, for having sent redemption to Your people. We praise You for keeping Your covenant established with our forefathers and proclaimed by Your prophets. We give thanks to You with our whole heart and praise You for sending us salvation in the Babe of Bethlehem. We kneel before His manger, for in it You have revealed Your honor and majesty. Grant us strength and courage to acknowledge Jesus, increase our faith and bless our Church that we may bring others to the Light of their salvation. This we ask in the name of and for the sake of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE FACT THAT CHRISTMAS IS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY SEEMS TO BRING CONFUSION TO THE EVENT. In most places, garbage collection is only moved for two holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas. It detracts from the unique nature of Christmas (as the birthday celebration of Christ) to lump it in as just another holiday. In His lifetime, many people came to see Jesus. They came to be in the wonder of His presence, and they came to hear the wonder of His Word. Our Savior was born among us. We join Simeon and Anna as they came to be in His presence, we join the Apostles, the Evangelists and common people as they came to be with Him. As a church we are several days into the 12 days of Christmas, with several to go. Let the world be confused, we will worship.

THEME OF THE DAY:

God In Human Flesh

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Isaiah 52:10;) Psalm 98:1-4

In Isaiah 52:10 God describes the salvation that will come to all people. God makes a point to promise that even as we see death and destruction all around us, He is in control and will (did) send His (Son to bring) salvation. Psalm 98 agrees in content to Psalms 92, 95 and 96. Psalm 92 states that it was written, "For the Sabbath," which means it was most likely written by the Sons of Korah, but, they are written in a similar style to David's Psalm, that some attribute it to him. We expand the verses of our Gradual, and enter in the wonder of the birth of our Savior.

COLLECT

We are in the second best part of the Church Calendar. We acknowledge that our desire is to be one with God in all things (especially so that the work of Christ is alive in our hearts.) We pray that God would therefore, guide us in all things and through His work, bring us to eternal life.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 61:10–62:3

The name, Isaiah, means "The Lord Saves." We use Isaiah's readings quite a lot during the Advent and Christmas seasons. It is the heart of the Christmas message. Today we are clothed in garments of salvation. God will not be a hidden God. At the birth of the Holy Child, the God of the universe will burst forth to the ends of the Earth. God is not silent but He speaks out. He spoke out and the world was created. He spoke and our salvation was ensured. We are the new planting, we are the new Jerusalem. We are the people called by a new name. We the New Testament Church are the Christians clothed in the garments of salvation.

GRADUAL—Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 98:1a

We sing verse 6 of Isaiah because it is a statement of victory. God won a victory in the birth of our Savior. Psalm 98 is a prophecy of the Messiah. Jesus is our king. In His birth He came to His throne which causes us to rejoice in a new song. We use the first half of verse 1 to express our wonder over the birth of God in human flesh. This is the theme of our Christmas worship, God's Son was born and we were granted a victory.

EPISTLE LESSON—Galatians 4:4-7

Two themes are presented: redemption and adoption. God wants us to realize that he has given us a new identity by making us a son with property right inheritance in Heaven. God's work of adoption has already been accomplished for His people. (Because we are a son, we are allowed to call God, "Abba," which essentially translates as, "Daddy." No other God would allow Himself to be called by such a familiar term, only the God of our Brother Jesus allows us to call Him, "Daddy."