

Order of Worship for January 2, 2022

Pre-Service Music:

P: The Lord be with you,
C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn: *"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"* - Hymn #358 vs. 1-3, 13-15

Confession and Forgiveness

P. "Christ is born"

C. "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth."

P. Almighty God, before whom angels veil their faces and in whose presence they delight, with reverence and joy we acknowledge Your glory and worship You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C. Amen.

P. The Lord has come! Prepare to welcome Him with the open arms of faith.

C. We are not worthy to receive the gifts You give, for we have sinned.

P. The Lord has come! Prepare to welcome Him with the open arms of faith.

C. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P. The Lord has come! Our eyes have seen His salvation. For the sake of Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven.

C. Lord, let Your servants go in peace; Your Word has been fulfilled.

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Great is our LORD, and abundant in power;

C: His understanding is beyond measure.

P: But the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,

C: in those who hope in His steadfast love.

P: Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

C: Praise your God, O Zion!

ALL: 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.

P: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

C: and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, our Maker and Redeemer, who wonderfully created us and in the coming of Your Son into our world as a human You yet more wondrously restored us, grant that we may

ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us, through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *“Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising”* - **Hymn #375**

Old Testament Lesson: 1 Kings 3:4-15

R: And King Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward You. And You have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give Your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern Your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this Your great people?”

It pleased the LORD that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

C: and the government shall be upon His shoulder,

P: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

C: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P: Sing to the LORD a new song,

C: For He has done marvelous things.

Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 1:3-14

R: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,

according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.

In Christ we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

ALL: Alleluia, Alleluia. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Alleluia!

Holy Gospel: Luke 2:40-52

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter:

C: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: And Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for Him. After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when His parents saw Him, they were astonished. And His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been searching for You in great distress." And He said to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house? And they did not understand the saying that He spoke to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon Hymn: "Within the Father's House" - Hymn #410

Sermon: "Filled with Wisdom" – Luke 2:40-52

We live in the so called Information age. If we don't know something, we can look it up almost instantaneously. If you forget a recipe, you can search and find it, or another one that may be even better, though you may have to scroll through a long story before you get to the actual recipe. If you don't know how to do a home repair task, you can search for tutorials on YouTube.

But because we have so much access to so much knowledge, we need wisdom even more. In fact, there are some who say we need to move away from the sage on a stage style of education, with a lecturer imparting knowledge, and move into more guiding, focusing on teaching how to learn instead of teaching facts and figures. We see this as debates about the pandemic and how to respond to it continue, with calls to "follow the science" being met by skepticism as the science changes with more information and research. We need wisdom to help us sort all of the knowledge available to us.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not using one in a fruit salad. Philosophy, the love of wisdom or the study of wisdom, makes us then ask questions like, is ketchup a smoothie? Knowledge can be good or bad. Wisdom helps use knowledge for good. Knowledge without wisdom can lead to disaster. As Dr. Ian Malcom, Jeff Goldblum's character in the original Jurassic Park says, "Your scientists were so preoccupied

with whether or not they could that they didn't stop to think if they should." We are surrounded by knowledge, and need wisdom to be able to sort through all of the information available to us.

Wisdom helps us use our knowledge well. In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." Knowledge by itself can lead to pride and thinking higher of yourself than you ought to. What should determine the behavior of a baptized child of God is not "knowledge about" something, but "love for" someone: If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God." Knowledge can be used wisely or foolishly, as can everything else in our lives.

Today we're reminded of the importance of wisdom. Our Old Testament lesson gives the story of King Solomon being given wisdom by God. Given the opportunity to ask God for anything, Solomon chooses wisely and asks for wisdom. Yet Solomon's wisdom would eventually fail him. He'd forget that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and would stray away to worship the other gods of his many wives from other lands, marriages used to create alliances and peace between different peoples. His wisdom wouldn't last.

The Hebrew word for wisdom is Chokmah. As theologian Chad Bird describes it, "Chokmah is not merely IQ, bookish knowledge, or street smarts; it's all these and much more. Biblical wisdom is holistic: wise hands to engage in good; a wise mind in love with God's Word and world; a wise mouth to echo divine wisdom; a wise listening heart that heeds the divine voice. Chokmah is the gift to mirror—in speech, thought, will, and action—the wise God in whose image we are fashioned."

Jesus lives out that definition of wisdom, showing us in speech, thought, will and action, the wise God who created us in His image. But we're especially reminded of this as we read the one story we have of Jesus as a child, when Jesus is in the temple. Both at the beginning and end of this passage, we're reminded that Jesus increased in wisdom. These words suggest that Jesus did not come into this world as a super-genius with all the answers to life's questions. They instead remind us of Jesus' human nature. The One who is the Word of God learns how to read and write. The one whose mighty arm saved his people has strengthened his arms working with his father. The one who cares for us all was cared for by his human parents.

When Jesus goes to the temple, he begins his time as a teacher. The scribes and teachers there are amazed and astounded by Jesus' knowledge of the Scriptures, but they shouldn't be surprised that the Word of God knows the word of God. Mary and Joseph are surprised and amazed and probably a bit angry that Jesus was there and not with them. But we see here that the only thing Jesus seems not to understand is how his parents could not understand where he was, where he was supposed to be.

Jesus and his wisdom would continue to confound his family. Later, his family would think he was crazy. If we weren't hearing these readings for the 2nd Sunday after Christmas, we could be observing Epiphany, the coming of the wise men. Their wisdom helped them to see the sign of the star and that it pointed to the birth of a king, but their knowledge of how the world worked sent them to Herod's palace to look for the king, instead of to the little town of Bethlehem and the humble home of Mary and Joseph.

God frustrated the wisdom of the world when he came to earth as Jesus. He caused the wisdom of the world to perish when he came and told the Pharisees that they'd missed God's wisdom by focusing on the minutiae of the laws instead of on the God who loved them. Jesus turned the wisdom of the world upside down when he showed that he came not to be served but to serve. He caused the wisdom of the world to perish by ending all of our attempts at justifying ourselves when he took all of the sin of the world on himself on the cross, taking the punishment that he didn't deserve, but we did and do. He overcame the wisdom of the world when he didn't stay dead and rose from the dead that first Easter morning.

Our sinful nature keeps pulling us to choose poorly. But that's why Jesus came. Jesus, the personified wisdom of God, came down into all of this world's full of folly and foolishness. He took all of our unwise decisions, foolish actions, and took them to the cross, which seems like foolishness to those who don't believe. But that foolish act, Jesus dying on the cross, is what began to restore God's creation to the way it should be. Wisdom dying on the cross lead to the restoration of wisdom and the beginning of the end of our foolishness.

God's wisdom comes to us as a gift. God causes the wisdom of the world to perish so that we look to him, even when it seems foolish. C.S. Lewis, in his book *Mere Christianity*, writes "Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed. If it offered us just the kind of universe we had always expected, I should feel we were making it up. But, in fact, it is not the sort of thing anyone would have made up. It has just that [strange] twist about it that real things have." Remaining faithful to God may seem foolish in the face of the wisdom of the world, but its foolishness is what shows us its truth.

We believe some things that sound ridiculous. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, even in the face of claims of science that God isn't needed. We believe that God came to earth as a baby. We teach that Jesus was raised from the dead, even though our senses and experiences tell us that resurrections don't happen. We teach that the splashing of a little water on a baby's head plants the seed of faith. We teach that we are joined with God and each other by eating bread and drinking wine. The way that God works often seems foolish to us.

But a fool's God is the only God that would send his Son to die and save us from our sins. That's why we preach Christ crucified. That's why we believe in God's only-begotten Son. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Jesus came into the world to make us wise. He personified God's wisdom. He showed God's wisdom to all he met. He continues to point us to realize that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. He continues to give us wonderful gifts, and helps us use them wisely. That's a wonderful gift.

Statement of Faith: Second and Third Petitions of the Lord's Prayer

Prayer of the Church

P: Christ Jesus, we thank You for Your "musts" that Luke recorded in his Gospel. We hear You say as a boy in the temple who recognized Your special mission in life.

C: "Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house." (Luke 2:41)

P: We thank You that Your mission was to all people:

C: "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." (Luke 4:43)

P: We praise You because You did not back down from the "must" of going to the cross for us.

C: "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." (Luke 9:22)

P: We thank You for pressing on to Your appointment with death in Jerusalem.

C: "In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!" (Luke 13:33)

P: We awe that You went to Your death knowing that all of us by our sin rejected You.

C: "But first the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." (Luke 16:25)

P: We are joyful because Your "must" included even going to people who were considered lost causes.

C: "When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.'" (Luke 19:5)

P: We listen to You as You warn us of what must happen until You come again.

C: “When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” (Luke 21:9)

P: We wonder at how You carefully did all that You had to do to achieve our salvation.

C: “It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in Me. Yes, what is written about Me is reaching its fulfillment.” (Luke 22:37)

P: We rejoice that Your greatest “must” was rising from the dead on Easter.

C: “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.” (Luke 24:7)

P: We glorify You for being the fulfillment of all that was written of You.

C: “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)

(other concerns)

P: All this we pray in Your name.

C: Amen.

Communion Prayer: We praise You almighty God for Your great glory, for You created this world and all in it and made humankind the crown of it all. Yet, in our sin we polluted ourselves and the world with our sin. But in Your great mercy You sent Your Son, Christ Jesus, who was born on Christmas to take away our sin. Bless us as we come to His altar trusting that as we receive His true body and blood given to us on the cross our guilt is taken away and we are restored to You. Through this may we also be bound closer to one another as Christ’s body, the Church. Amen.

Words of our Lord:

Lord’s Prayer:

Distribution of Holy Communion:

Communion Hymn: “O Sing of Christ” - Hymn #362

Dismissal:

Hymn after Communion: “Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace” Hymn #937

Closing Prayer:

P: Almighty God, You have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all that we do, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Our Father, By Whose Name” – Hymn #863

Postlude: