

## Order of Worship for December 29, 2024

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

### Opening Carol – “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” – Hymn #378

#### Confession of Sin:

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

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

C: **Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.**

P: In his name let us make confession of our sins. For his sake let us seek forgiveness. Father in heaven,

C: **we do not deserve to be called your children, for we have disobeyed. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We deserve your wrath and punishment.**

P: "His name shall be called JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

C: **It is in the name of Jesus that we come before you, heavenly Father, pleading the merits of his holy life, his innocent suffering and death.**

P: Good news! Great joy! A Child is born to us, a Son to us is given, a Savior, Christ the Lord!

C: **"He shall save his people from their sins."**

P: All who receive Him, who believe in his name, are given power to become the children of God.

C: **Glory to God in the highest! And peace to God's people on earth. Amen.**

### Gloria in Excelsis – “Angels We Have Heard on High” – Hymn #368 (vs. 1)

#### Prayer of the Day

P: 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.

C: **Amen.**

#### Old Testament Lesson – Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15

P: The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is Mine.”

Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place... “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD's. Every firstborn

of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle Lesson – Colossians 3:12-17**

P: Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Preparation for Gospel – “Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn” – Hymn #391**

### **Holy Gospel – Luke 2:22-40**

P: And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, Simeon took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.” And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a

virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when Mary and Joseph had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Catechism Reading** – The Second Article of the Creed – pg. 322

**Sermon Hymn** – “*Once in Royal David’s City*” - **Hymn #376**

**Sermon** – *Growing Up With Jesus* – **Luke 2:22-40**

One of the most interesting things about what we know of the life of Jesus is what we don’t know. As we’ve just spent the last few weeks celebrating, we know the angel Gabriel appears to Mary to announce to her that she will be the mother of the Son of God. We know the story of his birth, with shepherds and angels in the little town of Bethlehem. We get a few stories of him as a young child, as we hear this morning. We hear how his family flees to Egypt to escape the wrath of an angry king, and then return to Nazareth. We know his parents take him to the temple repeatedly, even if we only hear about the one time he gets lost, deep in discussion with the temple leaders. Yet we really don’t know much about the rest of his life. We know the beginning of his life. We know the end of his life, his active ministry that lasts about 3 years. But there’s so much we don’t know.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and so stories have been made up about Jesus’ childhood. Some fanciful stories tell of Jesus traveling to India to meet with Buddha and other spiritual leaders there, gaining spiritual insights there. Others involve stories of Jesus making clay birds come to life after being scolded for making things on the Sabbath, or raising a friend from the dead after he fell off of a roof. Others just speculate that Jesus was an apprentice to his father Joseph, working as a tekton, a carpenter or other skilled laborer, on the great Roman building project of Sepphoris near Nazareth.

What we do know about Jesus life, though, points us not to a life of great deeds and regular miraculous occurrences, but instead point to a more ordinary life. We learn his parents are devout, following the traditions and commandments. They take him to the temple to fulfill God’s commands. They teach him about God, and teach him what he’s supposed to do.

That’s what we just sang about. “For He is our childhood’s pattern, Day by day like us He grew; He was little, weak, and helpless, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He feels for all our sadness, And He shares in all our gladness.” That’s the 3rd verse of *Once in Royal David’s City*, a mid-19th Century Irish Christmas hymn from 1848, written by “Fanny” Alexander an Anglican minister’s wife and mother from Dublin in the nineteenth century. Just like with our children, Anglicans in Dublin had to learn their Bible and their catechism, and Ms. Alexander’s

godchildren would complain about how boring that was, so she started writing poems to retell the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed in a more memorable, maybe even fun, way.

She wrote All Things Bright and Beautiful, to illustrate the first article: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

And to teach her young students about the beginning of the second article—"I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"—she wrote "Once in Royal David's City." That's what this Christmas carol is: complicated theology distilled to its simple essence for young minds.

"Jesus is our childhood's pattern," she wrote. What does that mean? Maybe we should think of Carpenter Apprentice Jesus, with his calloused carpenter hands, and his dusty, sandaled feet, with wood shavings dusting his raven hair, and a carpenter's pencil perched above his ear, and a hammer and awl jammed into his tool belt, showing us what divinity looks like and what humanity is supposed to look like.

I love Ms. Alexander's central metaphor: Jesus is our childhood's pattern. Because patterns help the end product turn out like it's supposed to turn out. With a clothing pattern, you have the see-through paper with the right dimensions you lay over your cloth before you cut and sew. From our childhood, Jesus is our pattern, the architect's blueprint, the mariner's sextant, the surgeon's MRI.

Jesus has in fact been our childhood's pattern from his earliest moments in this life because day by day like us He grew; because He was little, weak, and helpless as we have all been, because He knew tears and smiles like us; and, because he experienced a human life as we have, Jesus then does in fact feel all our sadness, And He truly shares in all our gladness.

What did Simeon say? He said that this Jesus would be a light for revelation to the Gentiles for the whole world, and for glory to God's people Israel.

So this Jesus would grow and He, although He was both God and Man, would live His life in obedience to His mother Mary and to Joseph her husband His adoptive father, perfectly fulfilling the fourth commandment by honoring them, serving and obeying them, loving and cherishing them, never angering or despising them or any authority. He is our childhood's pattern.

As just one child amongst many in those days Jesus even then fulfilled every aspect of the Law of God without failure in your place. We however do not follow the pattern perfectly as Jesus did. There are times in our life where we have not honored our parents as he honored his, there are times when we have sinned and caused our parents to become angry, and there are times when we have despised our mother or father or sometimes both our mother and father. There are times we as parents have failed to follow God's command, as well, failed to see Jesus as the pattern to follow with our children.

Jesus is our pattern. We follow Him. God has chosen you to walk as a child of the Light, to follow Jesus. When you sin and break the pattern prepared for you by God, we can be relieved that Christ Jesus has kept the pattern without breaking it. He is the new Adam; He is Israel the Children of Israel reduced to one, fulfilling what they were unable to fulfill. He did what we could not.

Jesus didn't start being our Savior in the waters of the Jordan River at His baptism and public Anointing by John the Baptizer. No, Jesus was our Savior from before the foundations of Creation, from before His incarnation, His conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, from before his birth which we celebrated at Christmas and continue to celebrate today.

Now here is an important thing for you today. You know who Jesus is. It is easy to think that everyone in the world knows who Jesus is and what He has done, especially after we just celebrated Christmas, a holiday celebrated all over the world. With that, you might think everyone would be able to pick out this baby in the arms of the Virgin Mary and Joseph and Simeon and Anna from this Biblical account as the fulfilment of the promise of salvation. This however is not the case. The Holy Spirit tipped off Simeon whose words, which we sing in the song of Simeon the Nunc Dimittis, have in turn proclaimed this Jesus for centuries. And in addition to this the Holy Spirit has employed people in your life, mothers and fathers, family and friends, pastors and church workers to share with you who this Jesus is so that you would know Him, so that you can strive to steadfastly follow in His footsteps and trust in Him for the forgiveness that you need in this life.

Is the Holy Spirit at work using you to point out Jesus to others? This is not for us alone, this Christ Child; this Jesus is for everyone not only for those as near to us as family and friends but also for those peoples from afar.

We may not know everything about Jesus' childhood. We will not be perfect parents or perfect children, following in on that pattern Jesus gave us. But thanks be to God that Jesus did all that we could not throughout His earthly life, so that we could grow up to be like Him.

### **Prayers**

P: Lord, in Your mercy...

**C: hear our prayer.**

**Hymn before Communion:** – *“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”* – **Hymn #386**

**Call to Communion:** Christ Jesus, who fully grew up as a human like you and me calls us to the supper of His true body and blood so we can experience the miracle of God becoming human just as Mary and Joseph and Simeon and Anna did so long ago. Jesus comes to us as He did then—to take away our sins and restore us to His Father. We hear His invitation and join in the Holy Communion.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

**The Words of Our Lord:**

**Distribution:**

**Hymns** – “*O Little Town of Bethlehem*” – **Hymn #361**

“*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*” – **Hymn #366**

**Song after Communion** – “*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*” – **Hymn #388**

**Prayer after Communion**

~ P: Almighty God, You wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In your mercy let us share the divine life of Jesus Christ, who came to share our humanity and who now lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing** (Pastor)

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn** – “*Let Us All with Gladsome Voice*” - **Hymn #390**

**Postlude** –