

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Christmas 1 - December 27, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Hymn #78 - "*O Light of Gentile Nations*"**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.”**

**Confession of Sins:**

**P:** Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C:** **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

**P:** Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**First Lesson: Isaiah 45:20-25**

Gather! 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. Make 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. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, because I am God, and there is no other. I 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. “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. In the Lord, all the descendants of Israel will be justified. They will be praised by him. (EHV)

**Psalm 111:**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

**Great are the works 'of the LORD;  
They are pondered by all who de'light in them.**

**Glorious and majestic 'are his deeds,  
And his righteousness endures for'ever.**

**He has caused his wonders to be re'membered;  
The LORD is gracious and com'passionate.**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

**The works of his hands are faith'ful and just;  
All his precepts are trust'worthy.**

**He provided redemption for his 'people;  
He ordained his covenant for'ever.**

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of 'wisdom;  
All who follow his precepts have good under'standing.**

**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.**

**Refrain: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

**Second Lesson: Colossians 3:12-17**

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

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Alleluia.

**The Gospel: Luke 2:25-40**

Now 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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved 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, Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said, Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. Joseph and the child's mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. Then 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, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." Anna, 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, and 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. Standing 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. When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him. (EHV)

**The 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.**

**Hymn #269 - *“In Peace and Joy I Now Depart”***

**In peace and joy I now depart  
As my Lord wills it;  
Serene and quiet is my heart;  
Gladness fills it.  
This the Lord has promised me,  
That death is but a slumber.**

**Christ Jesus brought this gift to me,  
My faithful Savior,  
Whom you allowed my eyes to see  
By your favor.  
Now I know he is my life,  
My friend when I am dying.**

**You sent the people of the earth  
Their great salvation;  
Your invitation summons forth  
Ev’ry nation  
By your holy, precious Word,  
In ev’ry place resounding.**

**Christ is the hope and saving light  
Of those in blindness;  
He guides and comforts those in night  
By his kindness.  
He is Israel’s righteousness,  
Their joy, reward, and glory.**

**The Sermon:      Luke 2:25-40  
                          “Simeon’s Carol To The Christ Child”**

Those of you who were present at our worship service on Christmas Day had the opportunity to sing a variety of different **Christmas carols**. Christmas is the

one time of year when songs like “Angels From The Realms of Glory,” “O Come All Ye Faithful,” “O Little Town Of Bethlehem,” “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” and others actually **fit in** with the texts and theme of our worship. Today we’re going to be looking at **another** carol - however, this one is suitable for use not only at **Christmas** time, but **all year long**. It’s **Simeon’s Carol To The Christ Child**. Today we’ll be looking more deeply at the **significance** of this carol for us. And in order to do that, we need to examine two questions: First of all, **who** was **Simeon**, and secondly, **what** was his **carol**?

Who was **Simeon**? I’m sure that as you think about the Bible stories which you learned in Sunday School or Lutheran Elementary School concerning the circumcision of Jesus and His presentation in the temple, that you probably have some sort of a visual picture of Simeon in your mind’s eye. I know **I** do. But, before we investigate the **accuracy** of those pictures, I should probably clear up any false ideas which you may have regarding **when** the events of our text took place.

We know that Jesus was **circumcised** when He was **eight** days old, in keeping with God’s Old Testament law. Since the events of our text are found in the verses of Luke 2 which immediately **follow** Jesus’ circumcision, that might lead us to believe that all these things also took place when Jesus was only eight days old. But they **didn’t**. In Leviticus Chapter 12, God informs us of His ceremonial laws concerning the time of purification for a **mother** after child-birth, as well as the presentation of her **child** in the temple. In the case of a **son**, these both took place when the child was **40 days old**. So, that’s when our text takes place.

Now, getting back to **Simeon**, how had you pictured him? I always thought of Simeon as being like someone’s **great-grandfather** - a very **old** man with a long white **beard** - maybe he was even the **priest** to whom Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to present Him to the LORD. Traditionally, we think of Simeon as being **old** - maybe in part because our text also tells us that the prophetess **Anna**, who was **also** there, was **very** old. As a child, I also thought of Simeon and Anna as a **couple** - but they weren’t even necessarily together. They were just both at the temple at the same time. So many of those **traditional** thoughts about Simeon are based only on **assumptions**. Listen closely to what the Bible actually **tells** us about Simeon. *“Now 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. 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

that's **all** it says. It **doesn't** say that he was **old**, nor does it say that he was a **priest**. It doesn't say he was married to **Anna**. Simeon could easily have been just an average, everyday, ordinary guy - maybe like your next door **neighbor** at home. Yet, God had a special **task** for him to carry out.

Believe it or not, even today God uses average, everyday, ordinary people like Simeon - and as He did with Simeon, He uses them for **outstanding** purposes. God uses children and adults, professionals and day laborers, businessmen and homemakers - but He doesn't use them all in the **same** way. God, in His great **wisdom**, has given to each of us our own **special** way or ways to serve Him. And in His great **power**, God has also provided us with the **desire** and the **talents** we need, in order to **complete** our service to Him.

Just look at Simeon. How could he be so **patient** to wait for the consolation of Israel? How would he know when the time was **just right** for its arrival? How would he know **where to go** to find the **comfort** he was seeking? And how would he know **what to say** when he did find it? Simeon was confident that God would **provide** him with all the answers he needed. And what about you? What difficult things is God asking **you** to deal with? Do any of **these** seem fitting? - How will you ever learn to **share**? - How will you ever make it through the **5th grade**? - How will you ever go on living after being **dumped** by a boyfriend or girlfriend? - How will you be able to make ends meet after being laid off from your job? - How will you be able to **patch up** your rapidly deteriorating **marriage**? - How will you handle a **midlife crisis**? - How will you deal with the **loneliness** of growing **old**? My dear friends, as your lives go on, there will **always** be problems. Over the years, our problems will certainly **change** - but the **solution** to those problems continues to remain the **same**. Turn to **God** and His **Word**, and He will **provide** all the answers we need.

Simeon is described as being **righteous** and **devout**. That means that whether he was young or old, he was about as fine a man as you could ever hope to meet. And what was this godly man **doing**? He was **waiting** - just **waiting** - **waiting** for the comfort of Israel, because that's what the Holy Spirit had **told** him to do. You know, when you stop to **think** about it, **comfort** only becomes important when times are **bad** - and the times surrounding the birth of Jesus were **very** bad indeed. There was the political suppression of the **Romans**, there was cruel **King Herod**, and there were the legalistic **scribes** and **Pharisees**. Besides all that, God's people hadn't heard from one of His **prophets** in over 400 years! We all **hate** to **wait** - and Simeon could easily have **complained** about how God had made him **wait** for the coming of that comfort. But instead, he drew **strength** -

strength from **God**, and strength from His **Word**. Simeon waited **patiently**. And the comfort which he found was definitely **worth** the wait.

Well, that was **Simeon** - a man who was highly **honored** by God, and a man who was highly **blessed** by God. But what was the **carol** which he offered to the Christ Child? Certainly we could look at his exemplary **life**, and the way he used his **talents** to carry out the responsibilities which God had given to him. We could say that his entire **life** was a song of joy and praise to the Lord - and we would be **right** in doing so. But in Simeon's case there is even **more**. Simeon told us about the value and importance of the **comfort of Israel** with the words of his Song. Perhaps you didn't recognize it in the Evangelical Heritage Version of the Bible, but today when you get home, if you open your hymnals to the liturgy on **page 24**, you will find it in its more familiar form: *"Lord, now you let Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."* Another less used version can also be found on **page 61** of Christian Worship. Since we sing this Song of Simeon in many of our **communion** services after we have received the **Lord's Supper**, we don't usually think of it as a **carol** to the Christ Child, but it **is**. It is **Simeon's Carol To The Christ Child** - a song of **joy** and a song of **praise**.

Through his words, Simeon showed that he knew what Christmas is all about. It's about a **promise** - and how God **fulfilled** that promise by sending His **Son**. When Simeon took Jesus into his arms and saw that God had **kept** His promise - whether he was a **young** man, or whether he was an **old** man - he was ready to **die**! There was nothing else **missing** in his life. There was nothing else for which to **wait**.

Year after year, so many people are anxiously **waiting** for **Christmas** to arrive - because Christmas is viewed as a "magical" time of year - a time when everyone is **happy**, and when things are just as they **should** be. That is, unless Christmas time has brought **tragedy** into their lives, as it often **does**. Think about those families who have experienced a disastrous **house fire**, or a **car accident** or an **airplane crash** which took the life of a close **friend** or **relative**. Think about those families who went to church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, only to come home and find that their house had been **ransacked**, and all their presents had been **stolen**. Think about those people whose spouse was **cheating** on them, whose bills were **too big** to be covered by their paychecks, or who received a **pink slip** from their boss instead of a Christmas **bonus**. Think about those people who



are currently suffering with **COVID-19**. For them, Christmas is **not** very magical - at least not in the **short** term.

And yet, in the **long-range** scheme of things, the **true** meaning and magic of Christmas still comes through. After all, what is it that **causes** disastrous fires, and car accidents, plane crashes, and viruses? What is it that **causes** the breakup of marriages, and all kinds of other family crises? What is it that **causes** the wars, and murders, and terrorism throughout the world? It's **sin**, isn't it! If we didn't have any **sin** in the world, we wouldn't have **those** or any **other** problems. And isn't that **exactly** why we have Christmas? Isn't that what Christmas is **really** all about? God sent His **Son** into this world to carry out His plan to **remove** the punishment of **sin** from our lives. That is our **true** comfort - the **real** comfort which we receive from the Babe of Bethlehem. That's what we **wait** so anxiously to hear **every year** at Christmas time.

So, whether you spent the holidays with your **relatives**, or close **friends**, or all **alone** - whether your Christmas **turkey** was roasted to perfection, or you had to eat **burnt offerings** - whether you received all the presents which you **hoped** for and **asked** for, or there was **little** or **nothing** at all under your Christmas tree - in fact, even if you just experienced some major **difficulty** or **tragedy** in your life - as **Christians**, your Christmas was a very **blessed** one. After all, **Jesus** was **born** on Christmas Day - born to bring us deliverance from **sin** and all its **effects** - a gift for which we owe God our undying **praise** and **glory**. As Simeon said in our text, He is "*A Light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory to Your people Israel.*"

Mary and Joseph **marveled** at those words when they were spoken, and **we** should too - because they are truly **marvelous** words. They are words which enable us to look **past** the tragedies, the disappointments, and the setbacks of **this** life - and to look **forward**, as Simeon did, to **leaving** this life for a **better** one in **heaven**. May God grant that our Christmas celebrations are always **far-sighted**, rather than **short-sighted**. May our holidays always go **beyond** the outward happy faces, **beyond** the family gatherings, **beyond** the gift giving. May our Christmases always center around that 40-day old **Child** whom Simeon saw - because He is **Jesus**, the **fulfillment** of God's promise to provide eternal **salvation** - for **us**, and for the whole **world**. Amen.

### **Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that Your coming as our Savior was **foretold** by men of old. We believe that in Your lowly **birth** of the Virgin Mary, the Scriptures have been **fulfilled**; and that **You**, the very Son of **God** through whom

all things were **created**, assumed a **human** form. We believe that You came here in **lowliness** as the Paschal Lamb of God, to bear our **sins** in Your own body on the **cross**, and to **suffer** and **die** for us there.

When **Simeon** held You in his arms, he **recognized** You with great **joy** as the long-awaited **Savior**, the Light of the **Gentiles**, and the Glory of **Israel**. Filled with peace and joy, he was ready to **depart** from this life as an heir of **heaven**, saved by **grace** through **faith**. Like Simeon, we **too** rejoice to know You as our Savior from sin. Establish in our hearts **forever** the truth, that Your perfect sacrifice has purchased **pardon** and **peace** from God for us. Keep us ready at all times to **depart** from this life with **joy**, confident in the assurance that You have **redeemed** us with Your blood.

We ask You to send the bright rays of Your **Gospel** into the hearts of people **everywhere**, and by Your Holy Spirit, **quicken** them with a living faith in **You** as their Savior. Move the **governments** of the world to allow people everywhere to **worship** and **serve** You without fear of **persecution**. And grant that those who have been brought to faith will remain **constant** in their faith, and receive everlasting life.

Watch over **all** our footsteps during the coming year, and **guide** us by Your Holy Word. Help us to lead lives which conform to **Your** holy will. Hear us and answer us today and always. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer (sung to "Away in a Manger")**

**Our Father in heaven all praise to Your name!  
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same  
By mortals and angels. Come, Lord reign alone;  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In times of temptation, to lead us; be near.  
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You reign.  
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.  
To You be the glory, resounding again  
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

**Hymn #77 - *“In His Temple Now Behold Him”***

**In his temple now behold him;  
See the long-expected Lord.  
Ancient prophets had foretold him;  
God has now fulfilled his Word.  
Now to praise him, his redeemed  
Shall break forth with one accord.**

**In the arms of her who bore him,  
Virgin pure, behold him lie,  
While his aged saints adore him  
Ere in faith and hope they die.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
See th’ incarnate God most high!**

**Jesus, by your presentation,  
You who did for us endure,  
Let us see your great salvation,  
Seal us with your promise sure,  
And present us in your glory  
To your Father, cleansed and pure.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

**The Blessing:**

P: 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: **Amen.**

**Hymn #329 - *“Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing”***

**Lord, dismiss us with your blessing;  
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.  
Let us each, your love possessing,**

**Triumph in redeeming grace.  
Oh, refresh us, oh, refresh us,  
Trav'ling through this wilderness.**

**Thanks we give and adoration  
For the gospel's joyful sound;  
May the fruits of your salvation  
In our hearts and lives abound!  
Ever faithful, ever faithful  
To your truth may we be found.**

**So whene'er the signal's given  
Us from earth to call away,  
Borne on angels' wings to heaven,  
Glad the summons to obey,  
May we ever, may we ever  
Reign with Christ in endless day.**