**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**First Sunday After Christmas**

**December 27, 2020**



*“Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’” (Luke 2:28-32)*

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*The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.*

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: Rejoice in God who is our life and salvation

**P: We celebrate the birth of God as a child**

L: Christ has come to make us heirs of God’s promises

**P: Praise God our eyes have seen God’s salvation**

L: God brings salvation and righteousness

**P: We will rejoice and not keep silent**

L: Blessed are you who experience God’s vindication

**P: We will be a light of revelation for the world**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Near to the Heart of God” #621 (v.3)

**There is a place of full release**

**Nearer to the heart of God**

**A place where all is joy and peace**

**Nearer to the heart of God**

**O Jesus blest Redeemer**

**Sent from the heart of God**

**Hold us, who wait before Thee**

**Nearer to the heart of God**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: O Holy One, heavenly angels spoke to earthly shepherds and eternity entered time in the child of Bethlehem. Through the telling of the Christmas story, let our temporal lives be caught up in the eternal in that same child, that we might join shepherds and all the heavenly host in praising the coming of Jesus Christ. May our hearts feel your salvation, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be**

**World without end**

**Amen. Amen**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Isaiah 61:10-62:3

 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: As we wait for the second coming of Christ in the flesh, we become slaves to our own passions. All get bound to habits that destroy. Let us confess to be reminded that in God’s presence, lives are transformed…

**P: God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem, where the Light of the world is humbly born into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world, so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice, and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Grant that we may hear together the song of joy, and find our home in the garden of justice and hope. Teach us so that we may experience the fullness of life. Forgive us when we go astray. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 148

**P: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights! Praise God, all God’s angels; praise God, all God’s host! Praise God, sun and moon; praise God, all you shining stars! Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for God commanded and they were created. God established them forever and ever; God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for God’s name alone is exalted; God’s glory is above earth and heaven. God has raised up a horn for God’s people, praise for all God’s faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to God. Praise the LORD!**

**\*Hymn of Affirmation:** “What Child Is This?” #179 (v.1)

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest**

**On Mary's lap is sleeping?**

**Whom angels greet with anthems sweet**

**While shepherds watch are keeping**

**This, this is Christ, the King**

**Whom shepherds guard and angels sing**

**Haste, haste to bring Him laud**

**The Babe, the Son of Mary**

**Second Scripture Lesson:** Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

 So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated 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; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested 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 Messiah.

 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed--and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**\*Hymn of Response:** “I Love to Tell the Story” #696 (v.1)

**I love to tell the story, of unseen things above**

**Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love**

**I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true**

**It satisfies my longings, as nothing else could do**

**I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory**

**To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:As we wait faithfully on God, let us sow seeds that bring righteousness and salvation to our world. Let our lives be a witness of our love for the world. Support God’s mission with praise, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Him, all creatures here below**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host**

**Praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**Amen.**

**\*Prayer**

**\*Hymn**: “Hark! The Heralds Angels Sing” #191 (v.3)

**Hark! The herald angels sing**

**“Glory to the newborn King”**

**Peace on earth and mercy mild**

**God and sinners reconciled**

**Joyful all ye nations rise**

**Join the triumph of the skies**

**With th’angelic host proclaim**

**“Christ is born in Bethlehem”**

**Hark! The herald angels sing**

**“Glory to the newborn King”**

**\*Benediction**

L: God of glory has given us a new name and robed us in salvation. May we like Anna find our peace in God’s presence. Let us recognize God’s image in all people, so that, in joy and thanksgiving we will serve them as God’s children. Sing praise, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.