

**THE
LIGHT
HAS COME**



CHURCH OF THE
SAVIOR

Epiphany Retreat

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 2022

MORNING PRAYER

OPENING SENTENCE

ISAIAH 60:3

Leader: Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness
of your rising..

Leader: Lord, open our lips:

All: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Leader: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:

All: Come, let us adore him.

JUBILATE

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, *
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, *
and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

PSALM 112 & 113

- ¹ Hallelujah!
Happy are they who fear the Lord
and have great delight in his commandments!
- ² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
- ³ Wealth and riches will be in their house,
and their righteousness will last for ever.
- ⁴ Light shines in the darkness for the upright;
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.
- ⁵ It is good for them to be generous in lending
and to manage their affairs with justice.
- ⁶ For they will never be shaken;
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.
- ⁷ They will not be afraid of any evil rumors;
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.
- ⁸ Their heart is established and will not shrink,
until they see their desire upon their enemies.
- ⁹ They have given freely to the poor,
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.
- ¹⁰ The wicked will see it and be angry;
they will gnash their teeth and pine away;
the desires of the wicked will perish.

¹ Hallelujah!

Give praise, you servants of the LORD;
praise the Name of the LORD.

² Let the Name of the LORD be blessed,
from this time forth for evermore.

³ From the rising of the sun to its going down
let the Name of the LORD be praised.

⁴ The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens.

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God, who sits enthroned on high,
but stoops to behold the heavens and the earth?

⁶ He takes up the weak out of the dust
and lifts up the poor from the ashes.

⁷ He sets them with the princes,
with the princes of his people.

⁸ He makes the woman of a childless house
to be a joyful mother of children.

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 for ever. Amen.

LESSON

LUKE 2:22-40

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy

Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

COLLECT

Leader: O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the Peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

GENERAL THANKSGIVING

All:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

GRACE

ROMANS 15:13

Leader: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in
believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

INTRODUCTION

We're entering into my least favorite season of the year: the weather is cold, the nights are long, and here in Chicagoland we won't see the sun for days at a time. The excitement of Christmas has ended and we have months to go until Easter and springtime. I deeply feel the words of Bill Murray's character in the movie *Groundhog Day*, when he proclaims of winter: "It's going to be cold, it's going to be dark and it's going to last you for the rest of your lives!"

But during this time of long nights and grey days, the church calendar places us in the season of Epiphany, where we remember that the Light of the World has been revealed to us. Epiphanies are flashes of insight, moments of revelation, and during this season we return to those moments when Jesus was revealed. We remember the Magi, who followed the light of a star to find the child born King of the Jews. We hear the story of Jesus' baptism and how the voice of God spoke. We celebrate Jesus' presentation in the temple and the moment when the prophets Simeon and Anna recognize this infant as the promised savior.

During this retreat, I invite you to meditate on Jesus as the Light and the ways in which that light continues to be revealed in our lives. I have chosen the Song of Simeon as the focal point for today as we notice where God is leading and where we see God revealed. The visual images, music, and passages of scripture connect to the presentation of Jesus in the temple, and Simeon's prayer in response to seeing the infant Messiah. I hope that Jesus becomes revealed to you anew as you contemplate this story in scripture, art, and song. But the following exercises are suggestions, not mandates; you may use all or none of them as you spend time with God today.

Sarah Lindsay
Pastor of Adult Formation

Canticle 17: The Song of Simeon

Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

ENTERING THE SILENCE

As you begin your retreat, the following prayer and practices may help you to enter into the presence of God and into the practice of silence.

COLLECT FOR THE GOOD USE OF LEISURE

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

QUIETING OUR HEARTS

The next few hours are a gift, an opportunity for your soul to meet with God and a space for you to experience rest. At the beginning of today's retreat, you may want to start with a simple quieting practice; even when we long for silence, it can take time and intentionality to enter into it. Here are some simple suggestions to begin:

- Find a place to sit where you can be alert and comfortable; you might light a candle to symbolize God's presence with you. Or, if moving your body helps silence your heart and mind, go outdoors and take a walk.
- Take some deep breaths, noticing tension or anxiety in your mind and body and beginning to release it.
- Ask God to give you a brief prayer or phrase to express your intention, desire or need for this time. It can be as simple as, "Help, Lord," or "Peace," or "Here I am."



Severino Blanco, *Simeon Blessing the Christ Child*, 1980s.

EXAMEN

The examen is one of the key practices developed by Ignatius of Loyola, whose spiritual exercises have helped many people grow closer to God over the last 500 years. This practice invites us to examine our days for those places where we see God and where we need to see God; the steps below come from Fr. Kevin Miller's version of the examen.

PRAYING THE EXAMEN

- **Gratitude:** think back over the last day or week. Where do you notice God's presence? You may have had a significant moment when you noticed God, but are there small ways in which, as you look back, you can see God in your day? Give thanks for these moments, big and small.
- **Confession:** think again over the last day or week. Are there actions or attitudes that you need to bring into the light of God's mercy and forgiveness? Spend time bringing these things to God.
- **Help:** now, think about your day or week to come. Where do you need the light and presence of God most especially? Ask for God to be with you in these moments.

MUSIC

[Steve Thorngate, "You send your servant forth in peace"](#)



Giotto, *Presentation of Christ at the Temple* (Scrovegni Chapel, 1304-6).

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

The practice of praying scripture invites us to speak to God through the words of the bible. We might pray the prayers written by the psalmists, or we might imaginatively place ourselves within stories and speak to God through them. As you pray scripture, notice what resonates or stands out to you and bring those things to God.

GUIDE TO PRAYING SCRIPTURE

- Read one or both of the passages below. Read them slowly, as prayers; use the passages to shape your own prayer as you talk and listen to God.

Luke 2:22-40

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

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³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

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Isaiah 40:1-5

- ¹ Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
- ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.
- ³ A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
- ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
- ⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

MUSIC

[Katie Melua & Gori Women's Choir, "Nunc Dimittis" by Rachmaninoff.](#)



Sadao Watanabe, *The Presentation at the Temple*, 1982.

THANKSGIVING

The practice of gratitude asks us to pay attention: where do we see God at work? Sometimes an epiphany is hard to miss, but other times it requires us to pay careful attention. Think of the Magi, noticing the one star among thousands. Or of Simeon and Anna, who had seen so many infants brought to the temple – but who still paid attention and thus recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Likewise, this practice asks us to slow down and pay attention to God’s gifts and presence.

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

- Take a few minutes to make a list of the things you are grateful for. These may come quickly and abundantly, or you may struggle to make a small list. Notice how writing out your thanksgivings makes you feel, and bring those feelings to God.
- If you are in the midst of a difficult time, take time to reflect on where you have seen or sensed God. Give thanks that God, in the person of Jesus, became a human being and experienced sorrow and hardship along with us.
- If you have been busy and distracted, reflect on where you might slow down and notice God. How is God inviting you to notice his presence in your life and in the lives of those around you?
- Read the poem by Mary Oliver on the next page. How might practicing gratitude create a space for God to speak to you?

MARY OLIVER, "PRAYING" (FROM THIRST)

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

MUSIC

[Koine, "Nunc Dimittis - Song of Simeon"](#)

MIDDAY PRAYER

OPENING SENTENCES

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

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 for ever. Amen.

PSALM 126

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?

² My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

⁴ Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

⁵ The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

⁶ So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.

⁷ The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.

⁸ The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

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 for ever. Amen.

Leader: The love of God has been poured into our hearts through
the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. Romans 5:5

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

All:

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your Name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and for ever. Amen.

Leader: Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, to
direct and rule us according to your will, to comfort us in all
our afflictions, to defend us from all error, and to lead us into
all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GRACE

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.