

PRAYER: *The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us. Alleluia! We have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Alleluia! No one has ever seen God; Save He Who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. Alleluia!*

Possible Prayer of Church ✧ 1st Sunday after Christmas December 28th, 2025

The fullness of time has come, God has sent forth His Son to redeem us. Therefore, with confidence that He will hear us, let us pray to the LORD.

Gracious LORD, You sent forth Your Son as a shoot from the stump of Jesse to bear godly fruit. Grant that we who have been grafted into Christ would bear the same sevenfold fruit of the Spirit. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, in the depth of love for Your creation, You brought Your Son to the Temple and placed Him in the hands of blessed St. Simeon. Abide with those You place in the Office of the Holy Ministry, that their hands would be ever ready to deliver Your gifts to Your people and their lips bold to speak Your Gospel. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our ...*

O LORD, our LORD, how excellent is Your Name in all the earth! Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have perfected Your praise. Silence the enemy and the avenger. Turn the hearts of all who, like Herod, would despise children or destroy the unborn for selfish gain. Show Your forgiveness to those who are penitent. Give Your comfort to all women who mourn the loss of infants, and fix our eyes on Christ, who for a time was spared but has shed His blood for our salvation. *LORD in Your mercy hear..*

O God, Your own Son became incarnate for us and grew from childhood into maturity filled with wisdom, and Your favor was upon Him. Grant to parents and children the wisdom and courage to know You as Savior and Redeemer and to gather at Your bidding around Your Word and table. Help us form within our children the knowledge of what is right and good according to Your Word, as well as the will to do it. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Righteous LORD, graciously preserve our nation and cause our leaders to serve faithfully and wisely, making God-pleasing decisions and walking in integrity. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have declared us to be Your children and fellow heirs with Christ. Trusting that You delight to hear the prayers of Your children, we commend to You all who need deliverance from affliction, grief and suffering [*especially **Faith & Our Savior Prayers.*** Give them relief according to Your will, and work all things for their comfort and faith. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Merciful God, let all who come to the Sacrament of the Altar this day see their salvation in the very body and blood of Christ given them to eat and to drink. Let all return home like blessed Simeon, well prepared to depart in peace. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**

PRESENTATION/CHRISTMAS-1C Luke 2:22-40 PRESENTATION 12.28.25 F.OS.L

TEXT: Luke 2:22-32 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the LORD ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the LORD, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ So he came by 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, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ²⁹ "LORD, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your Word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

TEMPLE APPEARANCES It's been just a couple of days since we celebrated Jesus' Birth and now the Sunday readings ratchet forward **forty days** to His **Presentation** in the Temple. This is the first of many appearances Jesus would make in the temple, culminating with Holy Week. But this one is His first and it is filled with prophetic fulfillment and significance. The entire OT had come to its focal point in this little Child. **This was the One!**

MALACHI PROPHESED The prophet **Malachi** had written: "*Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to **His** Temple, the Messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come,*" says the LORD Almighty. I don't think anyone expected the LORD to be carried to the Temple by His parents, but then no one expected God to become Man either. And so the mystery of the manger continues here in the Temple, as the Infant "Priest of humanity" makes His first appearance. Humbly, hiddenly. God in the Flesh had come to His Temple.

PLACE OF SACRIFICE The Temple was **the place of sacrifice**, the place where **lambs** were brought as sacrifice for sin or as Passover lambs to be slaughtered. Here **God's tender Lamb** appears, promised from eternal years, 40 days old to be redeemed as the first born **in accordance with the Law of Moses**. They came to offer the prescribed sacrifice – a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons – the **poor man's sacrifice** of redemption. "*Every male who first opens the womb shall be called **holy to the Lord.***" Every first born son anticipated God's Son. And now God's Son fulfils the sacrifice. The **Redeemer** is **redeemed** by the blood of two turtledoves under the Law.

EVERY STROKE OF PEN Christ came to **fulfil the Law to the last little stroke of the pen**. At eight days He was circumcised according to the Law of Moses. At forty days He was "redeemed" or bought back by a humble sacrifice. It was also, as Luke tells us, the period of purification for

His mother. And yet, she comes to the temple **for her purification, like every (good) Israelite mother.**

VICAR, VICTIM, VITOR Here we see Christ's work for our Redemption. He is the **Substitute**, the **Sin-bearer**, the **Sacrifice**. Though He is sinless, yet for our sakes, **He became our sin**. He is the Sinner in place of sinful humanity. He joined the human race, not only in sharing our flesh, blood, and bone, but also **in taking up our burden under the Law**. And so it is fitting and proper, that Jesus be redeemed at the temple and His mother purified. He is the sinless Sinner, the One who takes our place in perfection under the Law. The Redeemer is "redeemed" ... even though He doesn't need **[ANY]** redeeming.

OLD "GREETERS" Waiting to greet Him are two very old people – **Simeon and Anna**. Together they represent the **OT prophet and priest** waiting to see their fulfilment. Although Simeon was very old, and had been told that he would not die until he had seen the Christ with his own eyes. That's the opposite of the way things usually work. Usually we're **told we have only so long to live**. But Simeon was told he would not die until He saw the Lord's Anointed One, the Christ, for Himself.

WATCHING & WAITING You can only imagine what it was like for old Simeon to walk about the Temple day after day, wondering if this was the day, waiting and watching. He's like the whole OT embodied in one old man, watching for the fulfilment of Israel. How his heart must have skipped a beat that day Mary and Joseph came to the temple carrying their **40 day old Son**, and the Holy Spirit whispered to his spirit (or in his ear), "*PSST. Simeon. This is the One you are waiting for.*" And Simeon gathers the little Child into his old, tired arms, and lifts His eyes to heaven, and sings out this song: **Master, now you let your servant depart in peace. = The Nunc Dimittis.**

SIIIIIIIIIGH! I'M DONE His time of service had **come to its end**. You can almost hear the relief in his voice. His tired old eyes had seen the Lord's Salvation. His arms had embraced Him and lifted Him up. This tiny Child was the **Redemption of Israel** and the **Salvation of the Gentiles** – the world's Redeemer. Only **faith** could perceive this, faith worked by the Spirit through the Word. Only faith could see through the humility, the weakness, the poverty ...and gaze upon **the Face of God**.

NUNC DIMITTIS We sing Simeon's hymn too. It's actually a Lutheran innovation to sing it at the **close of the liturgy of the Lord's Supper**. The traditional place for this hymn is at the close of each day. It's the Christian's "*Now I lay me down to sleep*" prayer. But if you stop and think for a moment, it's a perfectly appropriate hymn to **sing as we depart from Communion**. We have also beheld the Salvation of our LORD. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. We have heard His words addressed to us personally – **My Body given for you; My Blood shed for you**. The Body and Blood born of Mary, laid in a manger, nailed to a Cross, Raised from the dead, glorified now at the Right Hand of God - He gives us

this food and drink - and we, like Simeon sing our **song of release, of freedom**. We can truly depart in peace.

READY TO DIE... Make no mistake, Simeon is saying **he's now FREE TO DIE**. Not leave the Temple, but **die**. "*Lord, now let Your servant [me], depart in peace.*" He was released from his life's sentence and free to die, because really, for the Christian, that's the start of **real life!** AND WE TOO [READY 2 DIE] And so **WE are free too. YOU and I**. We've worshipped the Child of the manger, the Man of the Cross. **We** have beheld His glory, hidden beneath **Word** and **water, bread** and **wine**. We can truly depart in peace, according to God's Word.

TRANSITION TO CROSS [And yet] The **CROSS hangs over this 'joyous' scene like a cloud**. Simeon tells Mary, "*Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed.*" There is **no neutral position** with respect to this Child. **No middle ground** when it comes to Jesus. You either trust Him with your life and salvation or you do not. You can't **RE-shape** Him, or **RE-invent** Him, or **RE-vise** Him. You can only receive Him as He is for you – your Savior, your LORD, your Christ, your Redeemer. You either rise with Him or you fall without Him. There is **no** neutral place.

LAMB IS REDEEMED!!! **Imagine that**. The Redeemer of mankind, Whose blood cleanses us from our sins, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, is Himself "**redeemed by the blood of two pigeons.**" Such sublime and deep humility! [and irony!] The **LORD** of all becomes **the Servant of all**. And His servants - Anna and Simeon - **rejoice**.

CUTE, GLITTER, GLORIOUS There is a temptation at Christmas time to dwell on the **cute** and the **glorious** and the **glittery**. The **manger**, the **swaddled** newborn, the adoring **shepherds**, the bright **angels**. He takes our place under the Law, and by **His Blood He frees us** from our slavery to sin, to death, to the power of the Law to condemn.

XMAS/NY ,, FADES Christmas joy inevitably gives way to the **reality of the New Year**. The wrapped presents have now been open and revealed their mysteries. Maybe there are a few left for the next six days. The lights will grow dim, and will be taken down. The trees will dry out, at least the real ones. [School] Holidays will be over – We'll go back to the realities of our vocations with all the **uncertainties, griefs, sins**. That's right, we **are still in this fallen world**. We will feel the burden of **our** sins and the sins of **others**.

WE CAN DEPART IN PEACE But **like old Anna and Simeon** in the Temple, we have, by the grace of God, been given to embrace this Child of Bethlehem in Word and Sacrament, and having embraced Him in the open, empty, receiving arms of faith, we too are prepared to depart in peace. **We have seen His glory, ... glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Alleluia! IJ'N, Amen. SDG**