



Sunday, December 27th, 2020 Service At-Home Liturgy

Faith Presbyterian Church

First Sunday after Christmas

Those Who Dream...Will Not Keep Silent



PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP (suggested)

- *A candle and a means to light it.*
- *A small notepad or post-its and something to write with for each person.*
- *A cordless or cell phone*

CALL TO WORSHIP

You are invited to light a candle and then speak/read these words.

Here on the heels of Christmas,

We speak of love.

We speak of joy.

We speak of candle light and fireside.

We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

We speak of “glorias” and angel choruses.

We speak the words, “Do not be afraid.”

Here on the heels of Christmas,

We are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.

A TIME FOR CONFESSION

One person reads:

When I was in seventh grade, my youth pastor asked the group the question, “Where have you seen God today?” Thinking that this must be a trick question, I began mentally racing through my day, trying to imagine what he could possibly mean. Where had I seen God today? We had spent the day on a hiking trail! All I had seen were people and nature.

As my panic settled into my gut and I was unable to answer the question, one of my peers began speaking. She spoke of the beauty of the sunrise and how the gift of another day felt holy. Then another friend spoke of the little girl we passed on the trail who had given her a wildflower—an act of random kindness to a complete stranger.

Another peer mentioned David, who had helped pick Josh up when he slipped in the mud, showing only genuine concern. And on and on they went, until I began to see that God was everywhere, and it was not enough to keep it inside. Seeing God in your midst is one thing. Speaking it out loud for all to hear, that’s entirely different. The world needs this good news. We are not called to be silent.

Let Us Pray:

**God of today and tomorrow,
We know
That your fingerprints are all over this world.
And we know
That those who dream cannot keep silent.
So today we pray,
Give us eyes to see you.
Give us courage to trust you.
And give us lips to speak of you in our midst.
Gratefully we pray,
Amen.**

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:22-40

Today we read about Simeon and Anna—two figures who could not keep silent about the dream unfolding in front of their eyes. Let us listen for God speaking to us through these ancient words.

²² 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 ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon;^[a] this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.^[a] ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon^[a] came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon^[a] took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant^[a] in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon^[a] 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 ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna^[a] 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, ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child^[a] to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

REFLECT ON THE WORD

You are invited to reflect on the scripture using the following prompts.

Reflection Prompts for Luke 2:22-40

1. Notice the characters in this story. For each character, imagine what emotions they might be feeling. Which character(s) do you relate to most—Mary, Joseph, Simeon, or Anna?
 2. The text says that Simeon was “moved by the Spirit” (v. 27). Have you ever felt “moved by the Spirit?” What does that look like for you?
 3. Both Anna and Simeon publicly display their faith, telling all who will listen about Jesus and their dreams for Jerusalem’s future. What things do you speak up about? What are things you have remained silent about? What prevents you from speaking?
 4. Who in your life has been an Anna and Simeon for you? What did they speak about, and how did their profession change you?
1. Read the poem, “Swell” printed below.
 2. Underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.
 3. What topics of conversation create a swell of emotions for you?
 4. What things are you so passionate about that you cannot help but speak them out loud?

POEM “Swell” based on Luke 2:22-40

You know that feeling when you fall in love?
Time-stands-still *and* moves too fast.
You’d give up sleep just to talk all night,
Because there’s so much to say and not enough time.
It’s that full to the brim,
Over the stars,
Living is dreaming,
Too-good-to-be-true
Kind of feeling?
I imagine that’s how Simeon and Anna felt
When they saw Jesus that day.
I imagine it was that full to the brim,
Over the stars,
Living is dreaming,
Too-good-to-be-true
Good news kind of feeling.
I imagine it was love.
And I imagine that that good, good news
Swelled to the tip of their tongues
Until they could not keep silent.
So may we know what Simeon and Anna knew,
Which is that some dreams we hold close to our chest,
For ourselves to cherish and never forget.

But other dreams must be spoken out loud—
Dreams of justice and love and hope, here and now.
So today my prayer is to know that swell,
For there is good, good news
That we must tell.

—by Sarah Are

JOIN THE CONVERSATION -| Reflective Prayer

Supplies: Post-It Notes (3 per person), pens/pencils.

There are some dreams that we keep to ourselves, but there are others that must be spoken out loud. Anna and Simeon speak about their dreams for Jerusalem. They speak of their dreams for the Messiah. They could not keep silent.

To practice speaking aloud our dreams for this world, we invite you to write three things on Post-It Notes, following these prompts:

1. Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God.
Write something that you are grateful for—a piece of good news worthy of praise.
2. Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world.
Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about.
3. Anna and Simeon speak and are heard, but not all people are listened to with the same equality in our world.
Think of one person or group of people that are speaking, but are not being heard. May this be a reminder that we can use our voices for and alongside others.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy Dreamer,

When they saw Jesus, Anna and Simeon spoke your praise. In this time, we now lift our own prayers of gratitude and praise:

Offer your prayer of praise

Holy Dreamer,

Anna and Simeon had dreams for a better world. We, too, have these dreams—and we won't keep silent about them. We now offer our dreams to you:

Offer your dream.

Holy Dreamer,

When Anna and Simeon speak, their voices are heard and what they say is received with reverence. Yet, we live in a world where not all voices are heard—instead, many are silenced. We now lift our prayers for those whose voices are silenced or muted:

Pray for the one(s) whose voices are not being heard.

Holy God,

We lift all these prayers, written and unwritten, spoken and unspoken, to you. Hold them with care. Give them life. Breathe your grace into them and make all things new. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on 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 Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

AFFIRMING OUR FAITH – THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

In conclusion, pray the following prayer. When you finish, blow out your candles, and know that God is with you always.

Divine Voice,

In the beginning,

It was you who spoke over the water and brought forth creation.

And then it was you who asked, "Cain, where is your brother?"

It was you who spoke to Elijah in a still, small, voice.

And it was you, through angels,

Who spoke to Mary and Joseph and the shepherds.

You have always been speaking—

**In words, in memories, in songs, and in dreams.
We come to you today, asking for the strength to join our voices to yours.
Open our ears to hear the voices of those crying out.
Open our mouths to speak aloud your dream for this world.
We are listening. We are grateful. Amen.**

Worship liturgy is adapted from prayers by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org