

St. James Lutheran Church
Fishersville, VA
December 31, 2023

**First Sunday of
Christmas**

**BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION
AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
the Word made flesh,
our life and our salvation.

Amen.

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of life,
**you promise good news of great joy for all people,
and call us to be messengers of your peace.**
**We confess that too often we hoard our joy,
our resources, and our security.**
We nurture conflict and build barriers.
**We neglect the needs of our neighbors
and ignore the groaning of creation.**
Have mercy on us.
Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.
Where we are reluctant, give us courage.
Where we are cynical, restore our trust.
**Renew us with your grace
and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**
Amen.

INTRODUCTION

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Hear the good news:
We are children of God and heirs of God's promises
through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In + Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed.
Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth
shall know the salvation of God.

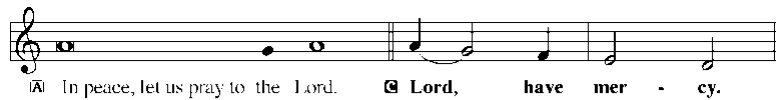
Amen.

ENTRANCE HYMN: "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" (LBW 55)

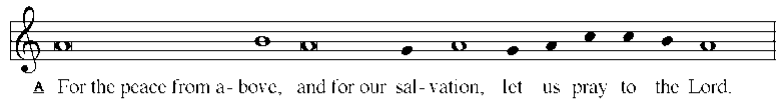
GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.


KYRIE



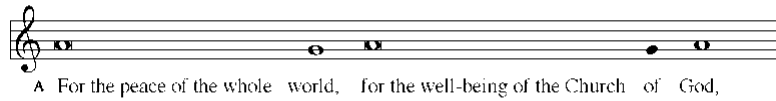
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.



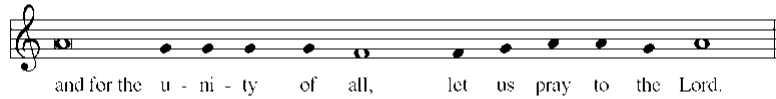
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mercy.



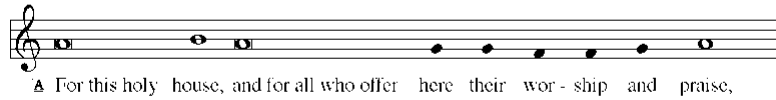
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



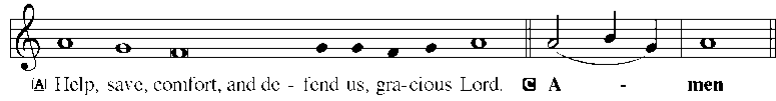
Lord, have mercy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE



1 This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING:

To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

- ¹⁰I 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.
- ¹¹For 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.
- ^{62:1}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.
- ²The 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.
- ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Here ends the reading.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 148

- ¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD¹ from the heavens;
praise God¹ in the heights.
- ²**Praise the LORD,¹ all you angels;
sing praise, all you¹ hosts of heaven.**
- ³Praise the LORD,¹ sun and moon;
sing praise, all you¹ shining stars.
- ⁴**Praise the LORD, heav-¹ en of heavens,
and you waters a-¹ bove the heavens.**
- ⁵Let them praise the name¹ of the LORD,
who commanded, and they¹ were created,
- ⁶**who made them stand fast forev-¹ er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not¹ pass away.**
- ⁷Praise the LORD¹ from the earth,
you sea monsters¹ and all deeps;
- ⁸**fire and hail,¹ snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do-¹ ing God's will;**
- ⁹mountains¹ and all hills,
fruit trees¹ and all cedars;
- ¹⁰**wild beasts¹ and all cattle,
creeping things and¹ flying birds;**
- ¹¹sovereigns of the earth¹ and all peoples,
princes and all rulers¹ of the world;



¹²young | men and maidens,
old and | young together.

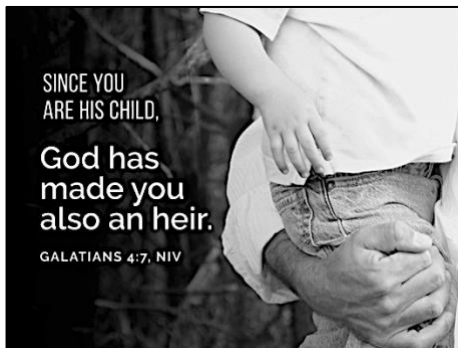
¹³Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.

¹⁴The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah!

SECOND READING:

Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.

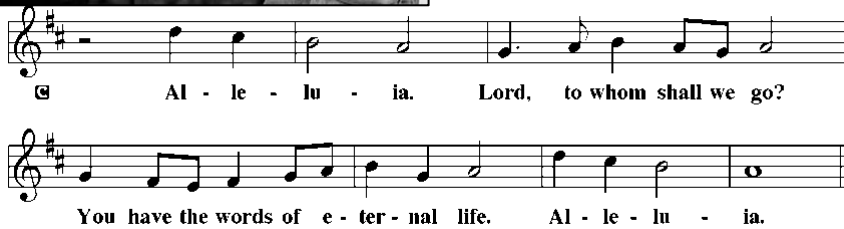
Galatians 4:4-7



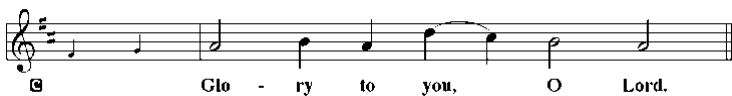
⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Here ends the reading.

Thanks be to God.



Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

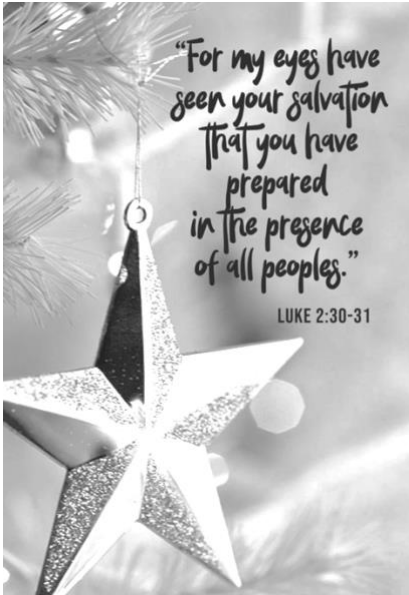


Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] 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”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided 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, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,



according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

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

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

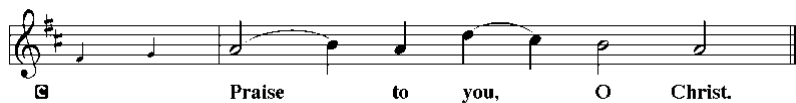
³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

³⁸At 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.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord,

they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.



SERMON: Rev. Carl Trost

HYMN OF THE DAY: “Of the Father's Love Begotten” (LBW 42)

APOSTLE’S CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith by using the words of the Apostle’s Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born
of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

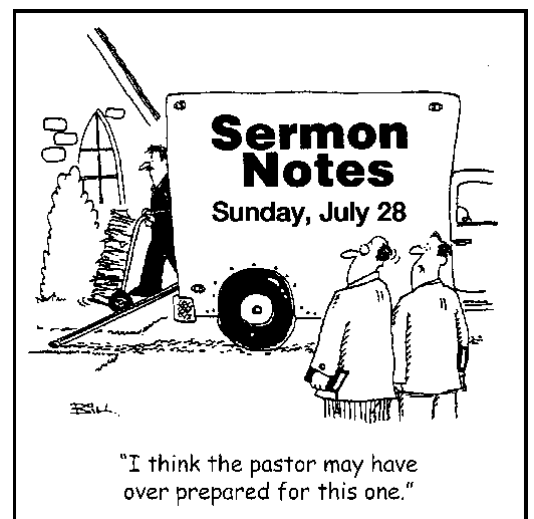
the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.



THE PRAYERS

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who struggle with mental illness, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Today we especially pray for Norma, Gillian, Cecilia, Jean, Betty, Inez, Charlotte, Zeby, Susan, Claire, Charles, Ellen, Pastor Stewart and Loretta. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

(For whom else and what else shall we pray...)

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

(Greet each other in the peace of the Lord.)

**ANTHEM: "Sing We Now Of Christmas" Composer, Johann Ebeling;
Text, Paul Gerhardt, Traditional French carol**

OFFERING



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance,
receive and bless these gifts we have offered.
Join our hearts with the song of the angels,
and gather us at your table of celebration.
Strengthen us to share with all the world
the abundance of your grace upon grace,
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

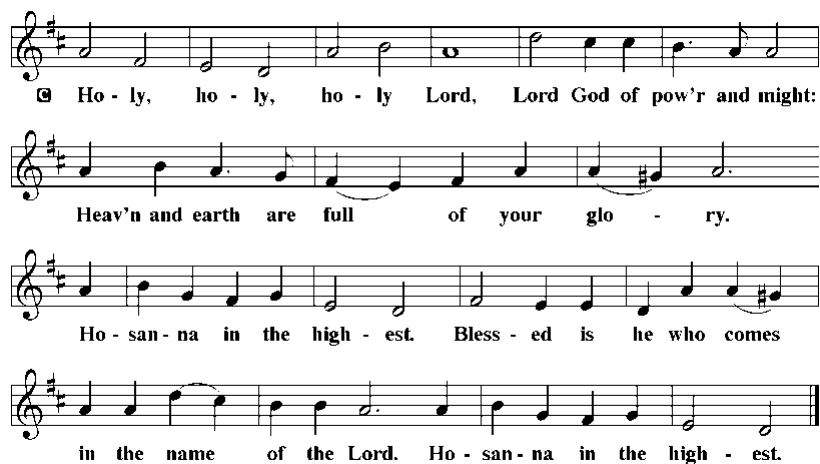
DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God,
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together.
Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: “Joy to the World” (LBW 39)

BLESSING


The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit ✚ remain upon
you
now and forever.

Amen.


Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.



December
31st Debbie Snyder
January
7th Ellie Sander
14th Multiple readers
21st Flora Williams
28th Danny Snyder



JANUARY
BIRTHDAYS

9 th	Steven Straw
19 th	Kevin Dull
20 th	Blake Dull

Prayer Concerns

Ongoing Need for Prayer

Norma Turak, Cecilia Shott, Jean Geiser, Betty Diehl, Gillian Taylor, Charlotte Shifflett (Danny's aunt), Inez Johnson (Becky and Debbie's aunt), and Susan Zirges (friend of Sherie & Paul).

Prayer Request for

Zeby (Ellen & Charles' grandson), Charles, Ellen, Claire, Pastor Stewart, and Loretta Whiting (Sherie's mother).

Community Conversations

- December flowers are given by Gene Giltner.
- January flowers will be given by Chris & Carolyn Fuss in memory of the Davis Family & Jim Williams.
- Choir practice every Tuesday at 6pm at Betty Bartley's home.
- Men's Group meets every Friday at 9:00 am.
- January 9th Open Circle meets at 1pm at St. James. Sherie is our hostess.
- January 9th Council meeting at 7pm in Fellowship Hall.
- January 28th Reports for our Annual Report are due to Anne.
- For prayer concerns, contact Pastor Gordon.
- Council Person of the Month
 - December—Lynda Diehl
 - January—Joyce Dull

Annual Reports

- Pastor’s Report—Pastor Gordon
- President’s Report—Gene Giltner
- Property Committee—Paul Rohal & John Grove (co-chairs)
- Social Ministry—Joyce Dull (chair)
- Worship & Music & Altar Guild
Flora Williams (chair)
- Open Circle—Anne Putnam (President)
- Cemetery Treasurers’ Report—John Wright
Reports due by January 28th

Pastor Gordon Putnam
 434-760-0263
Grputnam1949@gmail.com
 Pastor Carl Trost
 Hannah Pingel, Pianist
 Sam Diehl and Bambi Straw, Assisting Ministers



We need your help the Backpack program now has 19 kids. Your support by purchasing any of the items listed below is much appreciated. Items can be placed in the box in the narthex. There is also an offering basket for financial support of the program.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mac and cheese | Kroger meals |
| Chef Boyardee meals | Fruit cups |
| Boxes of cereal | Poptarts |
| Oatmeal | Ramen Noodles, any kind |
| Boxed juices | Yahoo chocolate milk |
| Apple sauce | Raisins |
| “Hugs” Drink Barrels | All single servings |

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