

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2020

### **Call to worship**

Christmas has arrived, God is with us – Emmanuel. We are your people, and we believe in your new life, new hope and the possibility of transformation. Within us. Amen.

MP589 See him lying on a bed of straw.

### **Prayers and Lord's prayer.**

MP83 come and join the celebration

### **Intercession Prayer**

Reading Luke 2:22-40 **Jesus Presented in the Temple**

<sup>22</sup> 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 <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup> *"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."* <sup>33</sup> The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> 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, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." <sup>36</sup> 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, <sup>37</sup> and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

MP 39 As with gladness men of old verses 1, 4 & 5

## **Sermon**

Merry Christmas. Happy third day of Christmas. Are we already getting ready to put all the decorations away? Have you been asked if you had a nice Christmas? For some it is as if that's Christmas over for another year. But there are twelve days of Christmas, so we are really still celebrating and are still okay to wish each other Happy Christmas and to add our good wishes for the New Year and the good thing about this we can still sing carols. And as we think of the reading this morning we hear the story of Simeon and Anna. Simeon was very old and he had lived his entire life waiting for the Messiah to come. He spent many hours at the temple praying that each baby that came to be baptised would be the Messiah. And of course it wasn't until Jesus was brought to the temple and he took him into his arms that he knew his Messiah had finally come to the temple. On seeing Jesus, he said, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation which has been prepared for all people." He did not need to see signs of miracles or Jesus telling the parables he just knew and believed. Anna who also was very old, when she saw the baby Jesus, like Simeon did not need to see the signs she also knew and believed the Messiah had finally come just like most of us. Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple to comply with the rituals of their time. According to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law, 'a pair of turtle doves and two young pigeons.' Fortunately, nowadays we do not have to bring a sacrifice when we bring a baby to be baptised in the church. But it is lovely when we do have a baby baptised everybody has that fuzzy feeling of love for the baby and the concept of baptism renews us all.

Jesus went through his cultural traditions as was expected of his parents as he was the first born son. And that he was here on earth as a real human baby. I bet he was just like other children and did all the things he was not supposed to do. He was the son of a carpenter and was taught at Joseph's side the skillsets of a carpenter. He was a normal little boy but we do not hear of his early childhood and that is when it is hard to see the human behind the Messiah. During the season of Christmas and the twelve days of Christmas, we give thanks that Jesus was truly human. God comes to us in an in the form of baby Jesus. He was born in a stable, in a manger full of straw, alongside the live animals that lived in the stable. Just an everyday scene in those times I mean the stable. It only became special when the baby Jesus was born in that humble stable. As we know the church year begins anew on the first Sunday in Advent, as we wait again for God to come to earth through his Son. An ordinary little boy born to humble parents but, we with our knowledge today know that the baby was no ordinary baby. He was born to be a leader, a counsellor, a king of kings and the one who truly followed his Father's will to the very end so that we would

have all our sins forgiven. Such love giving God giving his only son so that we be forgiven. Our Christmases are filled with love. Love for one another and as we write the cards and wrap the gifts we are reminded of family and friends it is often a very hectic time but it is also a time to reflect on friends and family and renew our faith once again. We surely do not need to see Jesus performing miracles, or signs and no wonderful revelations. All we have to do is remind ourselves that he is God and believe in the wonder, and love of that special holy birth. Christmas is all about Jesus that tiny baby, Christ amongst us always. Let us be like Simeon and Anna look upon the baby and believe in God's holy word. Amen

MP 35 Angels from the realms of glory. Verses 1,3 & 4

### **Blessing**