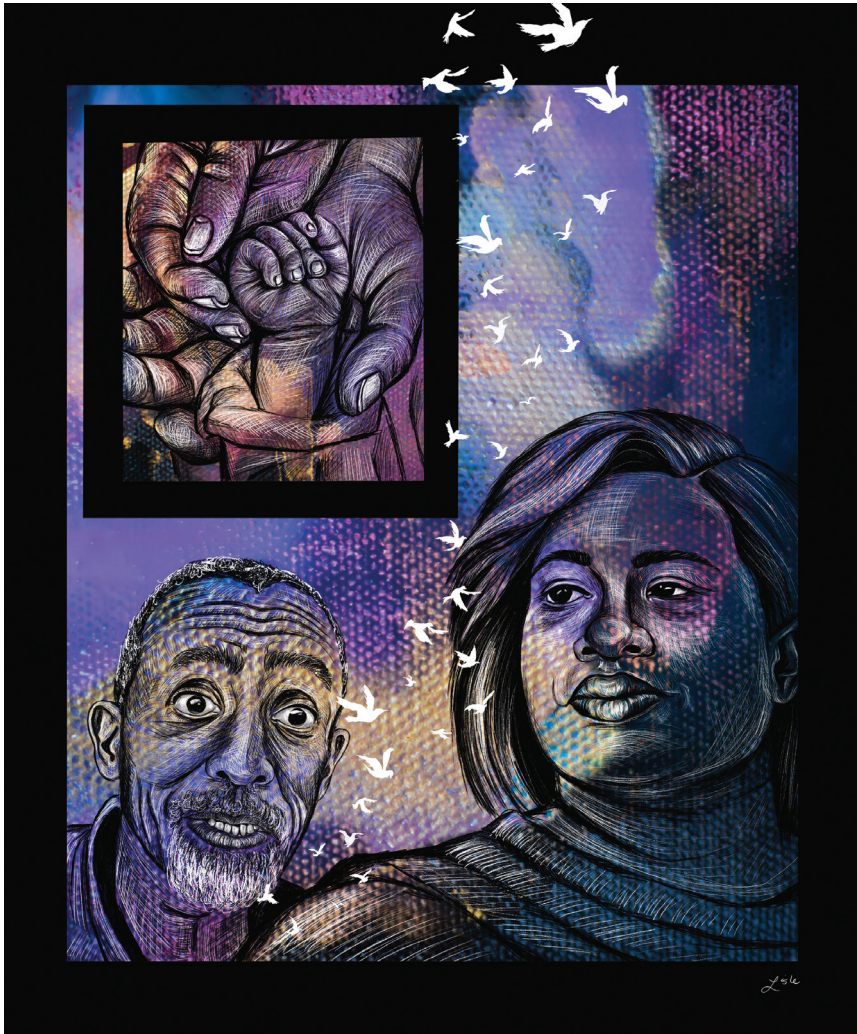


Community Presbyterian Church
open hearted, open minded



December 31, 2023
First Sunday of Christmas

Welcome to worship this morning!

Bulletin Cues: **Bold** indicates congregational response, * indicates please stand, if able

Revelation

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:21-38

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

I wonder what Mary and Joseph expect when they enter the temple to dedicate their newborn son. This customary ritual quickly unravels into an astonishing scene. A stranger named Simeon pronounces Jesus to be a “light” and “revelation,” and his dying wish is fulfilled. A prophet named Anna also draws near to the child, praising God for the redemption he will bring.



Simeon and Anna’s words fill Mary and Joseph with amazement. But that can’t be the only emotion taking up space in the room. For Simeon turns to Mary, perhaps privately, to continue sharing his message: the boy will also become the cause of great turmoil, the catalyst for opposition. He will expose the inner thoughts of many. A sword will pierce her innermost being. The mother of God will grieve as she bears witness to the suffering of the child she birthed.

In this image, Simeon bestows his blessing and prophecy with the urgency of a man desperate to say everything that needs to be said before his time runs out. Anna looks off into the distance, as if peering into the future. Her devotion to God over the years has sharpened her gaze; she knows redemption when she sees it.

In the top left, I depicted Jesus’ hand being cradled by the hands of his parents. This tender moment is frozen in time, like a Polaroid photograph placed in a scrapbook. Mary and Joseph treasure their child as they receive the fullness of his calling. I imagine them memorizing each wrinkle and tiny fingernail, treasuring the smallness of a hand that will one day become a strong fist, fighting for justice for the oppressed and liberation for those held captive. —Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Every year we celebrate Christmas.

Every month we break bread.

Every week we gather for worship.

Every day we count our blessings.

Every minute God is near.

Yes, every minute God is near.

These are the rituals of our faith.

Let us worship Holy God.

OPENING HYMN GTG 134

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her king;

let every heart prepare him room,

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the World

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,

nor thorns infest the ground;

he comes to make his blessings flow

far as the curse is found,

far as the curse is found,

far as, far as the curse is found.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

Let all their songs employ,

while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and

plains

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,

and makes the nations prove

the glories of his righteousness

and wonders of his love,

and wonders of his love,

and wonders, wonders of his love.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Church family, our faith is decorated with rituals and rhythms that help tie us to God.

Confession is one of those rituals. Every week we gather in this space and tell the truth

about our lives. And every week God hears our prayers and offers us grace. This holy

dance of confession and mercy is one of the many rituals I could not live without.

So let us embrace this holy tradition together. Let us pray:

**God of rhythms, we confess:
our faith would not be what it is without rituals.
Unlike you, we depend on bread and water.
We have to return to this space again and again
to hear old, familiar stories.
For if we stopped,
we know it would not take long before we lost our way.
Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us
ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto.
With grateful and humble hearts we pray,
amen.**

Friends, it is not enough to hear once a month or once a year that you are forgiven. We need to hear it every single week. Every single week we need to be reminded that we are held in God's loving embrace.

So hear this good news: no matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith, and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God. You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven.

This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God! Amen!

LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious God,
When our world turns upside down
or when the road ahead is unclear,
we return to ritual.
We come to the sanctuary.
We greet one another as family.
And we listen to your Word.
Today we pray—meet us in this moment.
Meet us in these rituals that anchor us and speak a word of hope.
We are listening.
We are drawing near.
We are seeking you.
Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Hymn Sing

GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:21-38

When the eighth day came, it was time to circumcise the child, and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

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

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

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

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

There 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, 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. At 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.

Heaven and earth will pass away but the word of the Lord stands forever.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Pastor Carla

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE

*HYMN OF THE DAY GTG 148 Mary and Joseph Came to the Temple



1 Mar-y and Jo - seph came to the tem - ple brought the boy
2 An - na had prayed there, wid - owed, long wait - ing, wor - ship - ing
3 Sim - e - on sings now: God prof - fers bless - ing, bril - liant - ly



Je - sus, of - fered him there. Peo - ple were wait - ing
God by day and by night. Now she is prais - ing,
gild - ing dawn of his day. Light in the dark - ness,



want - ing to greet him; long had they sought him, so - lace for care.
filled with e - la - tion: here is God's prom - ise, Christ is her light.
nev - er ex - tin - guished, Light of all na - tions, light up our way.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that faith is a journey marked by rituals and rhythms.

We come to worship.

We confess our sins.

We pass the peace.

We offer grace.

We hear the Word.

We baptize children.

We break the bread.

And we tell the story of a loving God.

And through these sacred rituals,

we are reminded: we are not alone.

God is near, and we have work to do.

May this belief shape the rhythm of our lives.

Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God, our Savior, **hear our prayer.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father and Mother in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your 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 let us not be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen**

SENDING INTO THE WORLD TO LOVE AND SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN GTG 113

**Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

Angels We Have Heard on High

**3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

Family of faith, as you leave this place,
you go into a weary world—so speak tenderly.
Do the good that is yours to do.
Choose connection. Hold onto hope.
And remember that Christ took on flesh for you.
You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing.
The world needs it.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Community Presbyterian Church

open hearted, open minded

Sunday, December 31

9:30 am Worship - Onsite and Online

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Monday, January 1 Happy New Year!

Office Closed

Tuesday, January 2

Stephanie will work from home

12:00 pm Bulletin Information Due

6:30 pm Christian Education Committee

7:00 pm Building Use: Mission Aid Network

Wednesday, January 3

6:30 am Prayer Group at CPC

Thursday, January 4

5:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Sunday, January 7

**9:30 am Worship with Communion
- Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios



Judy Leal

Jane and Ed Burgstaler family,
especially daughter Jenny

Connie Holst

Vera Atkinson's daughter, Teresa

Shannon Cisewski

Ron Murray

Dick and Nancy Massaro

Nellie Brovold's mother, Jacqueline

Glenna Muir's sister, Annie

Mary Alice Richardson and family

*To be added to the prayer list,
please contact the office via email:
office@cpcrochester.org.*

Emergency Pastoral Support:

Rev. Carla Nelson: 507-254-1254

Church Staff

Bridge Pastor

Rev. Carla Nelson

Pianist

Glenna Muir

Custodian

Nancy Sanford

Office Manager

Stephanie Pasch

Serving in Worship Today

Liturgist

Mark Neville

IT Support

Louis Bouchard