



Second Sunday after Christmas Sunday, January 3rd, 2021

*The inner mystery of being:
becoming children of God.*

GATHERING

Announcements

Greeting

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Mother,
and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Invitation

As we begin a new year, moving into an unknown future,
I invite us, as we prepare for worship, to hear the good
news in the promise found in the letter to the Ephesians.
"God destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus
Christ". Further on, we read, "In Christ, when you heard
the word of truth and trusted in him, you were marked with
the seal of the Holy Spirit".

So, let us enter this new year with confidence in the
steadfast love and faithfulness of God, who, whether we are
aware or not, is always present, within us, among us and
around us.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the candle as a sign and reminder
of the mystery of Christ within us and among us.

***The true light, which lightens everyone, has come
into the world.*** [John 1:9]

Prayer of Reconciliation [reflecting on John 1:1-18]

Before the beginning, lost in the mist of time,
even before time itself: the mystery of being;
the energy; the grace; the love; the hope;
the promise of heaven and earth, of stars and galaxies,
of life throbbing, creating, bringing forth humankind,
in a myriad of cultures and languages.

Light shining in the darkness.

Through the spiral of time, as stars live and die,
as empires rise up and are cast down,
through generations of people,
the darkness of sin and exploitation
threatens to put out the light,

but the darkness did not overcome the light.

The creative Word, born as a babe, to humble parents,
grew as one of us,

and in him the true nature of God was seen.

What it means to be truly human was seen in him.

The true light has come into the world.

But not all see, not all want to see,
and sometimes we forget the life he offers.

Distracted by our shining possessions,
blinded by past regrets or fears of the future,
minds clouded by rigid traditions, rules and prejudice

we turn away from the true light.

Now deep calls to deep.

From his fullness comes grace upon grace,
inviting us to put our trust in Christ,
who dwells in the hearts of those who trust.

Through him we are becoming the children of God.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Hymn 447 "Lord, your almighty word"

[Lord, Your Almighty Word - YouTube](#)

https://youtu.be/5Mz6u1g_sFI

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you;
and also with you.

We are invited to share the peace with those sitting near us.

HEARING THE WORD

Friedrich Schleiermacher [Protestant theologian early 19th century]

Religion is the miracle of direct relationship with the infinite;
and dogmas are the reflection of this miracle.

Seraphim of Sarov [18th Century Russian monk]

Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will find
salvation.

Orthodox Church commemorates St Seraphim on 2nd January

William P. Brown [Professor of Old Testament, Columbia Theological
Seminary, Georgia, USA]

God is enfleshed not only in our uniqueness as Homo sapiens
but also in our continuity with all living beings on earth, children
of dust that we are. Such is the legacy of evolution.

The Readings

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has
blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly
places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the
world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined
us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according
to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious
grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we
have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our
trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished
on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the
mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set
forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all

things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

John 1:1-18

*The beginning of John's gospel sings poetic music that will echo throughout the 21 chapters of the text. It is also a road map to what will unfold along the way through the gospel. When one is in doubt as to the meaning of a given passage, a return to the first eighteen verses will often shed clarifying light. [Wes Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God*, p.51]*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me." ') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Christ.

Reflection Some thoughts on becoming children of God

Prayer: "Eagle Poem" by Joy Harjo in HOW WE BECAME HUMAN: New and Selected Poems: 1975-2001 (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 85.

To pray you open your whole self to sky,
to earth, to sun, to moon
to one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
that you can't see, can't hear, can't know
except in moments steadily growing,
and in languages that aren't always sound
but other circles of motion.
Like golden eagle soaring on thermal.
Circles in blue sky in wind
swept our hearts clean with sacred wings.
We see you, see ourselves and know
that we must take the utmost care
and kindness in all things.
Breathe in, knowing we are made of all this,
and breathe,
knowing we are truly blessed
because we were born,
and die soon within a true circle of motion,

like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.
In beauty.

Song: 691 Faith will not grow from words alone

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Let's Give: Our Offerings

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him, above ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

With love, with courage,
come what may;
all that we are, and all that we share,
become a sign of Christ with us on the way.
We give thanks to you, our God,
for all that is, for all that will be,
and for your steadfast love and kindness,
expressed in our gifts and tithes.

Prayers of the people

Seng Eng Low

*Holy God, source of light for all the world,
After a difficult 2020,
we pause at the opening of a new year,
to listen for your guiding voice.
We bring you our hopes and our fears,*

*our longings and our dreams,
trusting that you journey with us into the future.*

***As your adopted children,
We set our hope on Christ.***

*Merciful God,
today, we pray for all the people and places
that are in darkness,
that are in need of your light and life.
We pray for those nations
that are still in the grips of the pandemic,
for the sick and the dying,
for the frontline workers who care for them.
We thank you for the hope
that the new vaccines bring.
We pray for refugees,
and in particular, those caught in the northern hemisphere
winter
without adequate shelter or warm clothes.
May the international community
not turn away from them
but recognise them as fellow human beings
caught up in desperate circumstances.
Bring your justice, O God.
Shine your light in those dark places,
that the darkness may not overcome it.*

***As your adopted children,
We set our hope on Christ.***

*Compassionate God,
we lift before you all in our community
who suffer in body, mind and spirit.*

We pray for those whose finances have been impacted by the pandemic, those who are out of work, or whose businesses have failed. We pray especially for the children in those families, for their safety and their needs. We pray for the various organizations that support the vulnerable in our community, for the Salvation Army, for food banks, and mental health and domestic violence services. Shine your light in those dark places, that the darkness may not overcome it.

***As your adopted children,
We set our hope on Christ.***

*God of healing,
we pray for those whose needs we know, our family, our friends, our neighbours. May we hear your call to care, that we might be bearers of your light to those we know are hurting.*

***As your adopted children,
We set our hope on Christ.***

*God who journeys with us,
we pray for our church. We thank you for your faithfulness to us in times past, and especially for the gift of the Christ child. And as we begin the new year, centre us in your hope for the year ahead. Renew our faith, and grant us courage.*

*Help us to look for fresh revelations of your love.
Shape our living,
that we may go forward boldly and joyously,
and so shine the light and life of Christ
to the glory of your name.*

***As your adopted children,
We set our hope on Christ. Amen***

FEEDING ON THE WORD

Invitation

Nazareth is a long way away,
and Jesus was born a long time ago.
But Jesus was born for us, he is here with us still.
Jesus invites us to meet him at this table.

As the wise and the humble, the rich and the poor,
gathered around and worshiped the saviour,
so we come to the table.

Preparing the Table

God of all creation, you bring forth
bread from the earth
and fruit from the vine.
By your Holy Spirit, this bread and wine
will be for us the body and blood of Christ,
in whom we have forgiveness and redemption,
according to the riches of his grace.

***All you have made is good.
Your love endures forever.***

Hymn Video 539 "Finest Wheat" ["Gift of Finest Wheat" by Richard Proulx and the Cathedral Singers \(Lyrics and Photos \) - YouTube https://youtu.be/DvPCjVWFXJw](https://youtu.be/DvPCjVWFXJw)

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you,
and also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eternal and gracious creator,
we do give you our thanks and praise,
for the true light which enlightens everyone,
always present, and made visible
in the person of your Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

In him, you came in human form to dwell among us.
and now in faith we recite the words of the ancient hymn:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!***

***Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!***

Through Jesus Christ, you turned the world upside down -
Healing our afflictions;
opening our eyes to truth;
living with us into new ways of community;
overcoming the power of death
to rise again in newness of life.

At his final meal with his disciples,
Jesus took a loaf of bread,
and after giving thanks, he broke it
and gave it to them saying:
"This is my body, which is given for you.
Do this to remember me"

Jesus did the same with the cup after supper, saying:
"This cup that is poured out for you
is the new covenant in my blood".

Come now, with your Holy Spirit, and make us anew.
Release us from our old burdens of hate and sorrow.
Free us from our doubts and fears.
Empower us to become your children, full of love and joy,
ready to do justice and to dwell with you.

By your Spirit, bless these elements
and use them in your transformation of us,
that Christ may dwell in us
and we in you, Creator of all that is.

***Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory is yours, eternal God,
now and forever. Amen.***

The Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.***

***Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.***

Breaking of the Bread

Christ is the bread of life,
child from Nazareth, child of God.

Christ is the cup of salvation,
humbled for a time, now revealed to all.

Let us receive what we are.

Let us become what we receive.

The body of Christ.

Lamb of God

Jesus, Wisdom of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, Word made flesh,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, Liberator of creation,
grant us peace.

The Communion

Prayer after Communion

Thank you, dear God, for this holy meal
through which we have remembered
your Son, the eternal Word,
whose life is the light for all people.
May we now be filled with his life.

***Create a space in our hearts,
fill it with love,
as if it were a newborn child:
a promise of abundant life for the world.
Amen.***

SENDING OUT

Hymn 317 "Love came down at Christmas"

<https://youtu.be/FAjB0GVpleg>

Blessing

May the life of Christ,
dwell in your hearts,
drawing you into a deeper connection
with the one who is the ground of all being.
You are blessed as the children of God,
knowing the true light of the Spirit of God's son,
within you, among you and around you.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.