

First Sunday after Christmas Day
December 27, 2020

(If you are home read the prayers and scripture readings and recite the Creed aloud, even if you are by yourself, in order to hear with the ears each one. Sing or read the final hymn aloud. If you are worshipping in person, please follow along silently.)

Prepare for worship: Sit in silence or with soft music for a few moments

Call to Worship:

He Is Born Refrain

He is born, the holy Child, play the oboe and bagpipes merrily!
He is born, the holy Child, sing we all of the Savior mild.

Centering Words:

If you steadily nurture a strong faith, other Christian virtues, such as strength, courage, hope, patience and love, will soon follow.

Prayer of the Day:

Oh, Heavenly Father: Please heal and lift up those whom we mentioned and those who are on our hearts. Have mercy upon us, God. As we enter a New Year, Lord, help us to avoid sin, help us to better serve You and others, help us to be strong in our faith and inspire us to spread the Good News. Replace our sadness with joy, replace our fear with peace, and replace our bitterness with love. Help us to have the kind of faith that your servants, Anna and Simeon, had dear God. We ask for these in the name of your Only Begotten Son, Who taught us to pray:

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 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. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith: 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 Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick 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.

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word O Lord our rock and redeemer.

(After each reading take two to three minutes to reflect upon the meaning of the passage to you today.)

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

Psalter Reading: Psalm 148

Epistle Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Sermon *Anna and Simeon*

Hymn:

Love Came Down at Christmas

1. Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.
2. Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?
3. Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and all men, love for plea and gift and sign.

Benediction:

Dress us in the New Year, O God, in your beautiful Presence and in the wonderful knowledge that we have a Lord and Personal Savior in Your Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Response:

Angels We Have Heard on High Refrain

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Leading in Worship Today

Speaker: Tom Geddens
Church Musician: Christopher A. McCroskey

AV Assistant: K. C. Warble

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...”

Francis Hipp	Steve Aiello	Patsy Shuler	John Ballentine	Oren Edwards
Jimmy Grahl	Steve White	Esther Carter	Latson Lewis	Ellen Matthews
George Taylor				

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Sara Efron; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Grover Shuler; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

Family and Friends: Kelly Knapp (wife of Laurie Knapp's nephew); Paul Kidney (son-in-law of Charles & Jackie McNeill); Ruby Pennington (friend of Laurie Knapp); Rick Baldwin (nephew of Tommy Johnson); Iris Turlington (aunt of John Zeigler); Billy & Betty Jean Newton (brother and sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff); Ellen Smith (sister-in-law of Dee Senn); Jimmy Brooks (Brother-in-law of Boots Morgan); Tonya Spires (friend of the Derricks); J. B. & Stephanie Martindale (cousins of Christopher McCroskey); Linda Hargett (stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Ollie Shelly (friend of the Derricks); Brenlee Carnes; Danielle Spotts (co-worker of Kathy White); Vickie Edwards (neighbor of Kathy White); Vicki Beatty, Connie Mason, Brenda Grier (friends of Lynn Martin); Allen & Lisa Fort (cousins of the Jordans); David Price & Family, Ty Moore, Julie Stroud, Fran Huck, George Dorn (friends of Kay Jordan); Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Dianne Schmotzer (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); Denise Paul (cousin of Gale Frady); Billy Johnson, Max Johnson, Beth Branham (friends of Gale Frady); Ray Culbreth's Group House; Nellie Gantt (mother of friend of Ray Culbreth); Amelia Zinski (great-niece of Linda Maloch); Wayne Blair (son of Dot Johnson); Xavier Crane (grandnephew of John Ballentine); Janet Beck (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); Charles & Vera Von Glahn (brother & sister-in-law of Jo Ann Heiting); Michael Carter (son of Esther Carter); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 12/20 Worship: 17

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 12/20 \$ 6,910.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."



Ministers	The Congregation
Pastor	John D. Jordan
Resident Bishop	Jonathan Holston
District Superintendent	Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



1201 Mohawk Drive
West Columbia, SC 29169

Telephone: 803.794.7777

E-mail: trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com

Website: www.trinityumcwc.org

“Anna and Simeon”

By Tom Geddens

(Sermon begins after a reading of Luke 2: 22-40)

This is the Word of God for the people of God! Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: Dear God: We thank You for the Gift of Your Only Begotten Son and His saving us from our wretched sins. As we enter a New Year, Oh, God, inspire us to renew our faith and to better serve You. It is in Your Son’s Name that we pray. Amen.

I remember that it was either 1981 or ’82, because I was in junior high. My Aunt Mary Lee, who passed away on March 2 of this year, God rest her soul, had given me money for my birthday and with it, I bought what I had wanted for a long time: A little black-and-white TV that was my very own that I kept in my room! I did not have cable in my room, so I just had the three standard channels. But that was okay! I could watch TV in my bedroom late at night while my parents were asleep and while I was supposed to be sleeping, too! I felt like a big man!

And I used to like watching reruns of “Maude,” the popular sitcom from the Seventies starring future “Golden Girl” Beatrice Arthur, who played the title character: a feisty and outspoken New York woman. There was one episode of “Maude” that began in late December, probably just after Christmas like today, in the year 1974. Maude, her husband Walter, and their neighbors, were standing around lamenting over what a truly rotten year 1974 had been. 1974 was the year that Richard Nixon had resigned as President over the Watergate Scandal. Watergate was in the news constantly! Can you imagine anything like that today?

As Maude’s husband and their friends were complaining about what a divisive year it had been, Maude remained undaunted. And if you ever watched the show, you remember that she usually was undaunted! Maude announced that despite how lousy a year 1974 had been, she was still determined to hold her annual New Year’s Eve Party.

“Maude! Are you crazy?” everyone pleaded with her. “How can you think about throwing a New Year’s Eve Party this year, with what a lousy year this has been? And 1975 is probably going to be even lousier!”

But Maude had a grand idea! She always did! Maude said that everyone will come to her party dressed as their favorite year! “Dressed as your favorite year?” everyone asked in confusion. “Yes,” said Maude. “Whatever is your favorite year, just come dressed in the fashion of that year. We’re not going to celebrate 1974! Each of us is just going to instead celebrate his or her favorite year and we are all going to have a great time!”

Everyone rejoiced and told Maude what a marvelous idea she had!

New Year’s Eve came and just as Maude had planned, everyone came dressed according to the fashion of their favorite year. Everyone was having a good time... at first. Soon, however, the divisive sentiments of 1974 bubbled to the surface. Partygoers began criticizing one another over their choice of favorite year. “1941?” one of them asked. “How can that be your favorite year?”

“Well, it was the year that my wife and I met!”

“But it was also the year that Pearl Harbor was attacked! I can’t believe that 1941 is your favorite year!”

Soon each partygoer had his or her favorite year debunked by everyone else. Maude's grand idea, like most of her grand ideas, had descended into chaos. Everyone was shouting at each other. Exasperated, Maude finally shouts for everyone to be quiet. "I'm sorry," said Maude. "This party has been a complete disaster. I just wanted us all to have a little fun and to forget about what a lousy year this has been."

From what little that we know of Anna and Simeon from Luke's Gospel, they probably would not have gone in for Maude's grand idea. You probably could not have paid either one to come dressed as his or her favorite year, because it is doubtful that either Anna or Simeon had a so-called favorite year. From the spare sketch that Luke draws of Anna and Simeon both, we can tell that they were both elderly. In fact, of Anna, Luke says that she was "of a great age." We tend to think of an elderly person as someone who loves to sit around and reflect on the "good old days." But Anna and Simeon both seem to shatter that stereotype. When we briefly meet Anna and Simeon in Luke's Gospel, they both seem to be far more interested in looking ahead rather than looking back.

Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. My copy of Smith's Bible Dictionary says that this Simeon may have been the same Simeon who was at one time the president of the Sanhedrin around A.D. 13. The Sanhedrin, you may recall, was the supreme council of the Jewish people during Jesus's day. If the two Simeons were indeed the same, then the Simeon whom Luke describes was not only a very devout man but a very important man in Jewish society.

Anna, on the other hand, was not as prestigious a figure in Jerusalem during the days of Christ's birth, so it is unsurprising that the details of her background are even more sparse than Simeon's. John MacArthur, a longtime popular pastor and a very prolific Christian author, probably does as good a job as anyone in elaborating on the portrait that Luke presents to us of Anna. In his excellent book, "Twelve Extraordinary Women," which profiles six women from the Old Testament and six from the New Testament, Pastor MacArthur informs us that when Luke describes Anna as "a prophetess," it probably does not mean that she had powers from God to foretell the future. Rather, it probably meant that she was a woman who was unafraid to speak the Word of God. Anna spoke the Truth, and that is "Truth" with a capital "T."

In Luke 2: 37, Luke writes that Anna "was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

Now, if you are like me, before I read "Twelve Extraordinary Women," I had always assumed that when Luke said that Anna "never departed from the temple," that he simply meant that Anna was in the temple a lot! You know, like that church member who is in church every time that the doors are opened! But Pastor MacArthur opened my eyes by letting me know that Anna probably lived in the temple! As a prophetess, Anna had probably been a teacher of the Word of God to other women most of her adult life. As a widow, she had probably been employed as a servant in the temple. She may have even served meals to the priests. And because she was a widow and because of her "great age," as Luke put it, the priests had probably set aside a small room in the temple for Anna to live in.

Anna just happened to be entering the room as Simeon was holding up the baby Jesus and blessing Him. After hearing Simeon declare that this beautiful baby was the Lord's Christ, Luke writes in Luke 2: 38 that Anna went out and "spoke of Him (meaning, the baby Jesus) to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

I admit: For many years, I have read that verse and it more-or-less went through one ear and out the other! But Pastor MacArthur says that this is no small point! What Anna did was that she went out and told everyone whom she knew to be devout that the Christ of God was here! Pastor MacArthur wrote, "The verb tense signifies continuous action. It literally means that Anna continually spoke of Him to all who were looking for the Redeemer. This became her one message for the rest of her life."

This means, Pastor MacArthur points out, that Anna was one of the first and most enduring witnesses of Christ. She probably had passed away before Jesus performed His first miracle at the wedding in Cana. Nevertheless, Anna was witnessing Christ to others several years before Peter, Andrew, James and John had dropped their nets to become His disciples.

Amazing!

Anna and Simeon both had a very strong faith. There are many important Christian virtues that we talk about in church. Many of those virtues Paul called the Fruit of the Spirit. The Beatles famously sang, “All You Need Is Love.” But love is not all that you need! When Peter wrote about the Fruit of the Spirit, although he did not call it “The Fruit of the Spirit,” in the first chapter of his Second Epistle, he listed faith first and advised that we are to use our faith as the foundation that all the other virtues are to be built upon.

If you steadily nurture a strong faith, other Christian virtues, such as strength, courage, hope, patience and love, will soon follow.

Instead of dressing ourselves in the attire of our favorite year, like Maude and her friends (and make no mistake about it: I loved 1977 but you will not catch me dead dressing like 1977!), we should dress ourselves in the beautiful knowledge of what God has done in our lives and in the fact that we have a Lord and Personal Savior in Jesus Christ! Instead of complaining about what a lousy year this has been, we should do what Anna and Simeon did: Look ahead and look forward to seeing Christ!

I am going to make a New Year’s Resolution! I hope and pray that you will make it with me! My New Year’s Resolution is that I will have the same kind of strong faith that Anna and Simeon had! I want to see Christ! And no lousy year is going to keep me from seeing Him!

Amen? Amen!