

**Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish**  
**Order of Sunday Worship- First Sunday after Christmas– December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023**  
**At Sauk Valley Lutheran Church**

**Prelude**

Emily Larson, Musician

**Welcome/Announcements**

**Opening Hymn**

“Good Christian Men Rejoice”

Praise #198

**Invocation:**

P: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

**Opening Prayer:**

P: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your holy Word. We pray that You would open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ’s sake. **C: Amen.**

**Hymn:**

“O God, our Help in Ages Past”

Praise #32

**Confession of Sin:**

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

**C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Kyrie:**

*C: O God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us!*

*O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us!*

*O God the Holy Spirit, true Comforter, have mercy upon us!*

**Absolution:**

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake God forgives all our sins. To those who believe in his name he gives power to become the children of God, and has promised them his Holy Spirit. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this Lord unto us all.

**C: Amen.**

**Gloria:**

P: Glory be to God in the highest.

*C: And on earth peace, good will toward men.*

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And also with you.*

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: Let us pray together.

**C: 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.**

## Psalm-148

First Reading- Isaiah 61: 10-62:3

Second Reading- Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel Reading- Luke 2:22-40

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

*C: God be praised for his glad tidings!*

## Apostles Creed

**C: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

Children's Message – "Jesus Loves Me"

**Offering and Offertory: *We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift might be. All that we have is Thine alone, a trust O Lord from Thee.***

**Hymn:** "Away in a Manger"

Paise #186

**Sermon**

**Pastor Lexy Carson**

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

When Mick was born, the first piece of mail he received was an hospital medical bill. The second piece of mail was his social security card and the third piece of mail was a bank account statement. At first it was just simply surprising as parents to see our child's name on a piece of mail and then it hit home how our son was just born and already under the authority of the law. Talk about being thrown into the law right from birth.

When Christ was born in the manger, he was born under the law. Instead of getting a social security card in the mail, Christ is taken to the Temple for purification. Mary and Joseph are being the responsible, abiding parents tending to their son by ensuring they're following the Jewish rituals. For you it's like making sure your child is on your health insurance, opening their first saving account, getting their birth certificate. It is getting everything in order and prepared for your child's future. To provide them stability, a foundation for a livelihood. The law is established after all to protect you, to ensure life.

It is at the Temple that Mary, Joseph and Jesus encounter Simeon. Now Simeon was named righteous and devout. What was it about Simeon that made him righteous and faithful? Was it that he ensured all his children were purified, set up with a health insurance plan, A Thrivent life insurance plan, a little piggy bank to start saving? Absolutely not. Simeon is faithful and devout because he was waiting. What exactly is he waiting for? Well, he's not waiting for a confirmation of his success, a golden star, affirmation or an A on his report card for all his good

deeds and care. He is not waiting around for someone to see he is worthwhile. He isn't waiting to gain favor for his accomplishments. Simeon is waiting for Christ, the Messiah, our Savior.

How is waiting for the savior different from waiting for a teacher to grade or spouse to give you affirmation? With Christ, you are waiting for him to take you out of your situation. Whereas with a teacher or spouse you are waiting for them to affirm your situation, to ground you further in your situation. That is not what Christ was sent for. Christ was sent to free you. To release you from your situation, to free you from what is literally killing you. He frees you from death itself. Simeon was waiting and waiting not to be acknowledged and patted on the back but to be set free. Thy death has no sting. When you have Jesus Christ, your Savior, death no longer worries you. Death is of no concern to you. When Christ comes and absolves all your sins, you are free. You are ready to die in peace, according to God's word.

It was revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he would see the Messiah. So Simeon waited and waited until the day the Spirit led him to the Temple. The day of our Gospel reading when he would hold the Christ child. Beautiful. It is this long awaited, promised moment that Simeon had longed for. It was at this moment, Simeon was set free. No longer concerned over his own livelihood.

Anna, like Simeon, understood who this baby in the Temple was. She knows this child is the one who released her and the whole world from death. All through this little baby. This amazes Mary and Joseph. Like in Luke 1, when Mary treasures and ponders all these things in her heart. She knows what the Angel Gabriel said was true. That she would give birth to a son that would be the Messiah. She is continually seeing and hearing the fulfillment of God's promise. God's word does not return empty. God does not lie. What he says, happens. Mary was amazed. This is faith, amazed by the treasure that was placed in her hands. The same faith and amazement that Simeon had when he held Christ in his own hands. The same faith Anna had when she approached the Christ child. This little Christ.

Although you do not get to hold the Christ child in your own hands, you hear Christ in your ear. There is no more waiting. God has chosen you. When God chooses you, you have his favor. When you are born you are born into the law, just as Christ was when he was laid in the manger.

When God chooses you, he takes and lifts you out and over the law. Today, his Word comes to free you, to take you out of your situation. Stop concerning over your own livelihood, success and image. Nothing has a grip on you, not sin, the devil or death. None of them are of concern to you anymore. Christ was born to set you free. Christ was born and suffered under death under the law so that death would be of no concern to you. You are free, on Christ's account.

The peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn:**

*"O Come All Ye Faithful"*

Praise #178

**Prayer of the Church:** Each prayer will end: Lord, in your mercy. *C: Hear our prayer.*

**Holy Communion**

P: The Lord be with you.

***C: And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts to the Lord.

***C: We lift up our hearts unto the Lord.***

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***C: It is meet and right so to do.*** P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give praise to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have given us a new revelation of your glory that seeing you in the person of your Son, we may be drawn to the love of those things that are not seen. Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name; evermore praising you and singing:

***C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Invitation/Distribution

Thanksgiving-

P: The Lord be with you. ***C: And also with you.***

P: Let us give thanks and pray: We thank you Lord God almighty that you have refreshed us with these gifts; and we ask you, in your mercy, to strengthen us through these same gifts in faith toward you and in fervent love for one another; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

***C: Amen.***

### **Benediction**

P: Now may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us his peace.

***C: Amen, Amen, Amen.***

### **Doxology**

***C: 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. Amen.***

### **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**Dismissal:** P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God! Postlude**