

**Trinitarian Congregational Church
TakeOut
Christmas 1B
December 27, 2020**

Bells <https://youtu.be/-6qZ9A6GFik>

Announcements

Prelude A Light Has Shone/A Child is Born Lynne Walker
Weston Priory
<https://youtu.be/ySFJO8t17hA>

Call to Worship Bob Scott

Leader: Let us rejoice in God, our Sovereign,
whose redemption comes wondrously into our everyday lives.

**People: God's consolation has been revealed before us.
God's light is made known to all the peoples of the earth.**

Leader: Let us give thanks with our whole hearts,
for God's grace and mercy reaches the ends of the earth.

**People: In the birth of a child, God has come.
In the babe of Bethlehem, we are made whole.**

Leader: Let us worship the God of wondrous works,
who offers to enter into covenant with us.

**People: In the gift of Christ we receive a new name;
salvation comes and nothing is the same.**

Hymn Joy to the World Chris Harris
https://youtu.be/qyoVinx5_tU

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her
 2. Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em -
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him room,
 ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heav'n and na - ture sing,

and
 sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Gathering Prayer

Bob Scott

Faithful, God, by whose Spirit all people and places become holy, lead us by your Spirit today. We have come to celebrate the birth that offers us rebirth. We have gathered that you might claim us as heirs, with Christ, of eternal life. Unite our hearts and minds in a chorus of praise, that the life of this church might be strengthened, renewed and refocused. May your faithful people become witnesses to your salvation and servants of your peace. Amen.

Gloria Patri

<https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>

Chris Harris

Scripture

Ephesians 1:3-14

Bob Scott

³ 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, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ¹ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ 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, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ 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; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Luke 2:22-40

²² 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 ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ 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 ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ 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, ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ 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.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Musical Reflection

Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head
Appalachian Christmas Carol
<https://youtu.be/KIstK-j050M>

Lynne Walker and Chris Harris

Sermon

My Eyes Have Seen

Picture an old man with the baby in his arms. He stands chuckling with giddy joy, or gazes with tears streaming down his cheeks, or is lost in transfixed wonder. He is so very, very happy. And then, with a deep sigh, he says “it is enough now; I am ready to die.” He has seen God’s salvation; he can depart in peace.

But what has he seen, really? It’s just a little child in his arms, a powerless, speechless newcomer to the world. Whatever salvation this baby might work is still only a promise and a hope; whatever teaching he might offer will remain hidden for decades. Nothing has happened yet. Herod still sits on his throne and Caesar governs from afar. The world looks and acts just like it did before.

But Simeon stands there in grateful wonder. It is the future he holds in his hands. He has seen and touched it. He is satisfied. And, as he said, it is enough. Then Anna, also old and approaching the end of her days, adds her own joy and praise to the moment. And she starts telling everyone about a baby she saw for just a few minutes.

By the time a mature Jesus comes onto the stage of history, Simeon and Anna will be long dead. So will most of those shepherds who came to see the child in the manger, and possibly Joseph, who watched over him, as well as some or all of the magi who had travelled so far, and back again, at the sign of a star. Thirty years or more will pass before the gospel story resumes with the ministry of Jesus. In the meantime, those who saw the baby, knelt at the stable or laid their tributes before him would not know what became of him. They would only know what they had heard and seen back then.

Many of us might drift by this story without much thought; maybe only reading it as a blip on the screen of our traditional the nativity story. But for me it is a welcome gift because it is so ‘untraditional’. And it speaks to me of God’s power and presence. We too are people who have seen something and yet have not seen its full unfolding. Especially as your pastor, a designated pastor, I find myself feeling like Simeon and Anna, rolling around God’s temple, looking for the hope of God’s promise among us, and announcing to those who will hear, that Christ is among you and will achieve God’s good purposes for you.

Like Simeon, I see the promise, but not its fulfillment. And I believe you too have known that same experience of ‘already and not yet’ just like Simeon and Anna. They are, in effect, our models, not so much of the gospel’s forerunners, as they are models of our own experience of living in God’s grace.

What you and I have is really not much more than they had. Together we have heard the scriptures that have schooled us in hope and attentiveness, faithfulness, trust, and obedience. We have stories and covenants and signs. We have had moments, or the memory of moments, when the tender compassion of God has come close enough for us to see and feel. We have something like what the shepherds would have had, recalling all their lives a night of mysterious glory and a message of divine grace. We have something like what the magi brought back to their homelands, a vision of a different kind of king and kingdom. Their eyes had seen the glory of Israel, the light for the nations, and the hope of all peoples of the earth.

Of course, we also have more than Simeon, Anna and the other Christmas characters did, because we have the rest of the gospel story. We know what happened to the baby and understand more fully the purpose of his life. We know his teaching and the example of his sacrifice and triumph. And we have his spirit which leads us and empowers us in the life that this little child had come to achieve. And so like Simeon, we can proclaim “...now let your servant depart in peace... for my eyes have seen your salvation...”

Indeed my eyes have seen God’s saving work among the churches I have served. And I see that same saving work among you. I see God’s faithfulness to you, and your response of hope and trust. I see God’s Spirit leading you in discernment, and I see your commitment to pursue that vision with me as your pastor. I have seen and experienced the grace of God among you in your loving community and faithful service. I have seen the salvation of God which he has prepared in the presence of this people.

Perhaps you’ve seen it too. Perhaps you have seen God’s grace among us, perhaps you have seen God’s faithfulness and wisdom. Perhaps you have seen God’s promise for your future, and his mercies for today. And perhaps like Simeon we too will lift our voices in praise, because we have seen and touched the salvation of our God. And perhaps together we can go forward to live with purpose and then to depart in peace with hope and joy, faith and love.

Amen.

Hymn

In His Temple Now Behold Him
<https://youtu.be/mVbb-LU4Ops>

Chris Harris

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In His Temple Now Behold Him

1 In his tem - ple now be - hold him, see the long - ex -
 2 In the arms of her who bore him, vir - gin pure, be -
 3 Je - sus, by your pre - sen - ta - tion, when they blessed you,
 4 Prince and au - thor of sal - va - tion, be your bound - less

pect - ed Lord; an - cient proph - ets had fore - told him,
 hold him lie, while his a - ged saints a - dore him,
 weak and poor, make us see your great sal - va - tion,
 love our theme! Je - sus, praise to you be giv - en

God has sent the prom - ised Word. Now to praise him,
 ere in per - fect faith they die. Al - le - lu - ia!
 seal us with your prom - ise sure; and pre - sent us,
 by the world you did re - deem, with the Fa - ther

his re - deem - ed shall break forth with one ac - cord.
 Al - le - lu - ia! Lo, the in - car - nate God Most High!
 in your glo - ry, to your Fa - ther, cleansed and pure.
 and the Spir - it God of maj - es - ty su - preme!

Text: Henry J. Pye, 1825-1903, alt.
 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879

REGENT SQUARE
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Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

Prayers of the People

Wondrous God, we thank you and praise you for all your mercy and grace to us. We thank you for the promises you have fulfilled through Jesus Christ. And we thank you for your Spirit who has opened our eyes to see your salvation, and who empowers us as heirs of your kingdom. Awed and humbled by your grace we come to you now seeking your strength and guidance that we may live as your people.

And so we pray for your church and for this congregation. Inspire us with your grace, lead us into your vision, and fill us with your power, that we may make your glory known to all people. May this church always be a place where your presence and power and love are revealed.

We pray also for all our leaders. Grant them the hope and wisdom they need that they may establish your peace among the nations. And grant your faithful care to all who are in need – the hungry and homeless, the sick and the suffering, the troubled and the mourning. We especially lift up... and we thank you for... And guide us, who have seen your lovingkindness, as we seek to share your goodness with all whom our lives touch.

We praise you, Glorious God, for all the wonders of your salvation, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

Lord's Prayer

Choral Response

https://youtu.be/IAivVHv_mbc

Chris Harris

Offering

We have known the wonder of God's majesty and the amazing extent of God's concern for us. From the blessings we have received we are invited to become servants who make known God's salvation. We dedicate our gifts today in response to God's goodness and mercy. Let us pray.

How good you have been to us, gracious God! You have blessed us with the abundance of earth and the joy of heaven. It is enough and more than enough. Now we offer our gifts to make known your goodness to all people. By your grace, may we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. Amen.

Doxology

<https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ>

Chris Harris

Common Commission

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn

Love Came Down at Christmas

Chris Harris

<https://youtu.be/xIxpdcuAHJo>

Note - this tune is different than the one printed in the bulletin, but you can follow the printed hymn on the youtube clip.

Love Came Down at Christmas 210

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Love Came Down at Christmas'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment line on a bass clef staff. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line.

1 Love came down at Christ - mas. Love all love - ly, Love di - vine;
2 Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine;
3 Love shall be our to - ken; love be yours and love be mine;

Love was born at Christ - mas; star and an - gels gave the sign.
wor - ship we our Je - sus, but where-with for sa - cred sign?
love to God and neigh - bor. love for plea and gift and sign.

WORDS: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), alt.

MUSIC: Maurice C. Whitney (1909-1984)

WHITNEY
6.7.6.7.

Music © 1962, Ren. 1990 The H.W. Gray Company (Admin. Walter P. D. Williams)

Benediction

Go now into the world,

and may all God's servants depart in peace for God's word has been fulfilled;
for our eyes have seen the salvation which God has prepared in the presence of all people.
Luke 2: 29-31 adj.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Amen.

Postlude

O Thou Joyful
Falk/Katterjohn
https://youtu.be/_Jh4WSEAwKo

Lynne Walker