

# Sunday, December 26, 2021

## First Sunday of Christmas, Year C

### Introduction

On the first Sunday of Christmas we find the boy Samuel and the boy Jesus, both in the temple, both growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and humankind. We too have returned to the house of God “to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God,” who has gifted us with a savior. As the festival continues, “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” It is Christmas, still.

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who sends the word with angels,  
who is made flesh among all peoples,  
and who breathes peace on all the earth.

**Amen.**

In Christ, we are bold to name our sin and cry out for peace.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,  
**we confess our sin before you.**  
**We replace compassion with competition.**  
**We seek what is mighty while ignoring the meek.**  
**We are quick to anger but slow to forgive.**  
**We have not put on love in harmony with you.**  
**Wrap us in the grace of your powerful Word.**  
**Swaddle our hearts with your peace,**  
**that all we do, in word or deed,**  
**may reflect your love born among us.**

**Amen.**

I bring you good news of great joy for all people:  
God has come among us  
in the child born of Mary, Christ the Lord.

✝ In Christ your sins are forgiven  
and you are clothed in peace.

**Amen.**

### Prayer of the Day

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* Let the peace of Christ rule <sup>1</sup> in your hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell <sup>1</sup> in you richly. *Alleluia.* (Col. 3:15, 16)

## **Readings and Psalm**

### **1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26**

*The boy Samuel grew in favor with the LORD and the people*

### **Psalm 148**

*The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)*

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

*Clothe yourselves in love; let the peace of Christ rule your hearts*

### **Luke 2:41-52**

*The boy Jesus increased in wisdom, and in divine and human favor*

## **First Reading: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26**

*Having dedicated her son Samuel to God's service, Hannah visits him every year when she and her husband Elkanah come to the temple to offer sacrifices. God grants Hannah more children, and Samuel himself gains favor in the sight of all.*

<sup>18</sup>Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. <sup>20</sup>Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD"; and then they would return to their home.

<sup>26</sup>Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people.

## **Psalm: Psalm 148**

*The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)*

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the LORD<sup>1</sup> from the heavens;  
praise God<sup>1</sup> in the heights.

<sup>2</sup>**Praise the LORD, <sup>1</sup> all you angels;  
sing praise, all you <sup>1</sup> hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup>Praise the LORD, <sup>1</sup> sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you <sup>1</sup> shining stars.

<sup>4</sup>**Praise the LORD, heav- <sup>1</sup> en of heavens,**

**and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup>**who made them stand fast forever and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not pass away. R**

<sup>7</sup>Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup>**fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup>mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup>**wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup>sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;

<sup>12</sup>**young men and maidens,  
old and young together. R**

<sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup>**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah! R**

## **Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17**

*Just as newly baptized Christians in the early church were clothed with new garments upon arising from the baptismal waters, so all who have received God's gift of life in Jesus Christ are covered with the character of Christ.*

<sup>12</sup>As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## **Gospel: Luke 2:41-52**

*Jesus grew up in a family that went to the Passover festival each year. It was in this environment of faithful adherence to the law that Jesus grew into spiritual maturity and an understanding of his identity and mission.*

<sup>41</sup>Now every year [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. <sup>43</sup>When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

<sup>44</sup>Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." <sup>49</sup>He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup>But they did not understand what he said to them. <sup>51</sup>Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

## Prayers of Intercession

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

You come to us in gatherings of your church across the globe. Unite us with those who celebrate your birth even when they are weighed down by grief, loss, poverty, hunger, or injustice.

Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You come to us in the diverse splendor of the universe. Grant us the humility to trust our place in the network of creation, that we live in service to you and the natural world. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You come to us through relationships of many kinds: families, friendships, communities, and nations. Guide us in these relationships, that we recognize the Christ child in one another and show your love to those most vulnerable. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You come to us through people whom the world forgets. Poor shepherds and an imprisoned Paul announced your good news. Send your Spirit to all who are imprisoned, struggling with addiction, unwell, or in any need this day (*especially*). Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You come to us in acts of justice and forgiveness. Open our hearts to forgive one another, without permitting injustice. Supply us with the wisdom to be clothed with love, binding all things together in perfect harmony. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You come to us through those who have died yet live with you forever (*especially*). We give thanks for Stephen, deacon and martyr, who gave his life to tell the story of your love. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **Offering Prayer**

Gracious God,  
your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth.  
As we offer ourselves and these your gifts,  
prepare us to receive the grace and truth  
you offer at this table  
and renew in us the song of your salvation,  
in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **Invitation to Communion**

In Christ's manger, at Christ's table,  
come, see what God makes known for you.

## **Prayer after Communion**

We thank you, wondrous God, for Jesus,  
God with us, in these gifts of bread and wine.  
As we have shared this feast of love,  
strengthen us to share your love with all the world.  
In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

## **Blessing**

The God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that we may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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## **Upcoming Commemorations**

**Stephen, Deacon and Martyr**  
**Sunday, December 26, 2021**

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

**John, Apostle and Evangelist**  
**Monday, December 27, 2021**

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

**The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**  
**Tuesday, December 28, 2021**

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

**Name of Jesus**  
**Saturday, January 1, 2022**

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.  
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