

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

What's Really Important in Life?

January 3, 2021



AS WE GATHER: The end of a calendar year and the beginning of a new set of months brings a special opportunity to look at our lives. What has been most memorable in our lives in the past weeks and months? How might our priorities change in the next months? The Readings

in today's service are not often heard because the calendar does not always bring two Sundays after Christmas. Wisdom is waiting to be found by each of us here in this place today as we hear God's Word and seek His kingdom in this New Year of grace. God's wisdom is here to bless us each time we gather for worship!

✘ PREPARATION ✘

OPENING HYMN Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
#686 v. 1, 2

- 1 Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
 Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
 Call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
 Fills my heart with joy and love,
Teach me ever to adore Thee;
 May I still Thy goodness prove.

- 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer,
 Hither by Thy help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
 Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and
of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Hebrews 8:10–12; Psalm 122:1*

Pastor: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the
house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord:

People: **I will put My laws into their minds, and write
them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and
they shall be My people.**

Pastor: And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and
each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for
they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the
greatest.

People: **For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and
I will remember their sins no more.”**

Pastor: I was glad when they said to me,

People: **“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”**

HYMN Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing #686 v. 3, 4

3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace now like a fetter
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

4 Oh, that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in the blood-washed linen,
How I'll sing Thy wondrous grace!
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry;
Take my ransom'd soul away;
Send Thine angels soon to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

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CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us now make confession of our sins to God,
our gracious and heavenly Father.

People: **Eternal God, we confess that by nature we are sinful people. We have transgressed Your Law in many ways, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not always been wise in our thinking and our speaking and our actions. Our motives and thoughts have not always been pure. We deserve Your punishment now and for eternity. O God, in Your mercy forgive our sin and restore us to a full and joyful relationship with You, through the merits of Jesus, our Lord. Direct all that we do by Your Holy Spirit that in the year now beginning we joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your Commandments as Your redeemed people.**

Pastor: In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Be at peace.

People: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

INTROIT *Psalm 147:1, 5, 11–12; antiphon: John 1:14*

Pastor: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure. But the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His steadfast love. Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

People: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Pastor: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

KYRIE

People: **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.
Almighty Father, You have shined on us the new Light of Your Word made flesh, who lived among us. Cause us to find in Jesus, this Light, who and what is really important in life, and grant us Your blessing as we follow Him; through the same Jesus

Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

1 Kings 3:4–15

(Solomon prays to God for the gift of wisdom.)

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” ⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD,

and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Ephesians 1:3–14* (We are gifted with God’s spiritual blessings.)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL *Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a*

Pastor: To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty

God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

VERSE *Luke 2:40*

Pastor: Alleluia. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 2:40–52* (The boy Jesus is found in the temple at Jerusalem.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

CONFESSION OF FAITH: The Apostle's Creed

People: **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, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will 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 the life ☩ everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY God of Grace and God of Glory

#850 v. 1, 2

- 1 God of grace and God of glory,
On Your people pour Your pow'r;
Crown Your ancient Church's story;
Bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

- 2 Lo, the hosts of evil round us
Scorn the Christ, assail His ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
Free our hearts to faith and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

SERMON “Lost and Found” - *Luke 2:40–52*

HYMN God of Grace and God of Glory #850 v. 3, 4

3 Cure Your children’s warring madness;
 Bend our pride to Your control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
 Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
 Lest we miss Your kingdom’s goal,
 Lest we miss Your kingdom’s goal.

4 Save us from weak resignation
 To the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of Your salvation
 Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
 Serving You whom we adore,
 Serving You whom we adore.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ
 Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

We pray for the Church, that the light of the Gospel
of salvation be proclaimed here and everywhere, the
wisdom of God be honored and followed, and the
gifts of God be treasured and shared. Lord of the
Church,

People: **in mercy, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: We pray as this New Year begins for our nation and for all of the people of the world, that there be an end of Covid-19 and there be an end to hostilities and that times of peacefulness and wellness everywhere prevail. Lord of all times and all people,

People: in mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor: We pray for our families and our neighbors. Help us to remember that each person in our lives is a precious gift from God. Guided by the Holy Spirit, help us to choose wisely how we invest our time in the coming weeks and find in our associations with God's people a source of mutual support and blessing. Lord of all generations,

People: in mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor: We pray for all sorts and conditions of people, especially making our petitions for the sick and the hospitalized and those who are shut in. We pray for those whose lives are in transition, the unemployed, those who are downcast or grieving, and for all those for whom our intercession is desired, [especially . . .]. Lord of care and grace,

People: in mercy, hear our prayer.

[Individual petitions may be added here.]

(After each petition the pastor prays: Lord, in Your mercy, and the people respond: **hear our prayer.**)

Pastor: As a community of the faithful gathered, we remember those who have shared the faith with us and now have departed this earthly life, especially those whose earthly lives came to an end in the past year. Direct our ways that we complete our journey of life in faith with divine wisdom to direct us. At the end of our days, bring us to rejoice together eternally

with saints and angels and all the company of heaven
in light everlasting. Lord of eternity,

People: **in mercy, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom
we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Savior.

People: **Amen.**

Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD’S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

People: **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 and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The blessing of almighty God—the Father, the ✠
Son, and the Holy Spirit—be with you now and
forever.

People: **Amen.**

HYMN Children of the Heavenly Father #725

1 Children of the heav’nly Father
 Safely in His bosom gather;

Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.

2 God His own doth tend and nourish;
 In His holy courts they flourish.
 From all evil things He spares them;
 In His mighty arms He bears them.

3 Neither life nor death shall ever
 From the Lord His children sever;
 Unto them His grace He showeth,
 And their sorrows all He knoweth.

4 Though He giveth or He taketh,
 God His children ne'er forsaketh;
 His the loving purpose solely
 To preserve them pure and holy.

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