

FAITH @ HOME

Week of February 2, 2020

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (Presentation of our Lord)

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Luke 2:22-40

REFLECT: Jesus' parents brought him to the temple where people worship, and there was a man there named Simeon who was very happy to see Jesus. Simeon had been wanting to see the Messiah for a long time. Jesus was the Messiah; someone sent by God to help us and show us how much God loves us.

It can be hard to wait but Simeon was patient. God told Simeon he would see the Messiah one day. He listened to God and he watched carefully for the Messiah. If he hadn't listened to God or hadn't been paying attention, he might not have realized that Jesus was the Messiah.

When we don't pay attention, we may not see that God is here with us. But if we are patient and we watch closely, we can see all the ways God shows us love. God shows us love through the people who are kind and who love us, and through the people who work hard to help others. If we look carefully and wait patiently, we'll see all the ways that God is here with us.

RESPOND: When Simeon finally saw Jesus after waiting a long time, he was so happy that he started to sing. What things make you want to sing? Sing a song with your family or friends that you like to sing when you are happy.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JEREMIAH SIERRA



Jeremiah Sierra is currently the communications manager for Cities of Service, a nonprofit that works to change the way local government and residents work together. He has worked for a variety of other nonprofit organizations and Episcopal churches, most recently Trinity Church Wall Street, where he was the managing editor of the quarterly magazine. He has written for *Forward Day by Day* and other publications about faith. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Luke 2:22-40

REFLECT: Imagine being told by the Holy Spirit that you would not die until you had met the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as a newborn child. Pretty crazy, right? But that's exactly what Simeon was told by God--that he would live to meet the Christ-child. In fact, the praise that Simeon offers after meeting Jesus is reflected in our daily worship within the Episcopal Church. Our bedtime prayers, also known as Compline, contain a similar version to the words we hear in our reading. Simeon is telling God that he can now die in peace as he has fulfilled God's wish to meet the Messiah. And he's not the only one who is moved by the presence of Jesus. Anna, a prophet from the tribe of Asher, also recognizes that Jesus has come to be the Savior for the people of Israel. God has fulfilled God's promise--the Messiah has come at last, and she, too, may now die in peace. Both clearly see who Jesus is, and they worship and praise his name with pure and faithful hearts that set an example that we still carry on to this day.

RESPOND: Either find a copy of The Book of Common Prayer or head to bcponline.org to find Compline among the Daily Office (page 127 in the prayer book itself). Before bed each night this week, take time with your grown-up and other family members (if available) to pray through Compline. Do you find that you enjoy working through this practice together? Do you feel peaceful and ready to go to sleep when you are done? Why do you think it's important for us to remember Simeon's song in our bedtime prayers?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at ewolf@diofdl.org.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Luke 2:22-40

REFLECT: Forty days after the birth of Jesus, according to the laws of Moses, Mary must go to the temple for purification—according to the Mosaic law for forty days following birth, a woman was impure. That may sound strange to our ears. But remember, this was the first century (and earlier). People did not know all that we do about the body and how it works. At the same time as the purification of Mary, Jesus, as the first born, was dedicated in the temple.

The amazing part of this Gospel narrative is that Simeon and Anna recognized who Jesus was and proclaimed it to all those present. We are growing and learning as we deepen our relationship with God and with each other. Every day we are presented with opportunities to respond to the world in loving, kind and compassionate ways. Some days we even get it right.

Every day, even the days we don't see it, God is working in our hearts and lives. Daily, with work, we grow stronger in our desire to respond to God's call to love others. With each yes to God, our hearts become more and more pure. It takes work, but the end product is beautiful.

RESPOND: Find an item that is severely tarnished. For example, a piece of silver or brass, a dish covered in dry dirt, or even an old coin or penny that has lost its luster. Polish or clean your item and notice the amount of work it takes. How hard are you scrubbing? Do you feel like giving up? When finished, look at it and give thanks. God creates beauty in our lives and hearts even when we cannot see it. God doesn't give up.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KATHERINE DOYLE



Katherine is the Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Kentucky. She lives in Louisville with her husband and whichever of her four young adult children happen to be home at the time. Katherine's greatest joy is being a mama: first to her own four and then to all the children, youth, and young adults who call her Mama Doyle. She often finds God in the ordinary messiness of everyday life and writes about it on her blog thesixdoyles.blogspot.com.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Hebrews 2:14-18

REFLECT: We live in a culture built on achievement. We measure our worth by what we accomplish and what we have earned. We work for promotions, we try to get our kids into the best college, we want to look the part. This all points to one core problem we all share: sin. Sin makes us want to justify ourselves. We want to make ourselves right before God by proving we have done enough. The truth is, God doesn't love us because of our work. God loves us because God does. God looks at us and sees beautiful daughters and sons who are created in God's image. God looks at you and says you are enough. You today. Not a future, distant you, but you right here, right now. God loves you. As we work, live, and play today may we remember that we are deeply loved and deeply known by God.

RESPOND: Listen to the classic hymn: "Jesus Paid It All." spend some time in prayer and reflection on the lyrics of that song.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CJ QUARTLBAUM



CJ is a writer and speaker from Brooklyn, NY. He spends most of his time hanging with his family, playing with his daughter, playing basketball, and reading. He's passionate about seeing the gospel spread in his city, in Brooklyn as it is in heaven. You can catch up with him on Twitter @CJ_Quartlbaum or at CJQuartlbaum.com

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