

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

1st Sunday after Christmas - December 29, 2024

Call to Worship

Children of God, Jesus Christ is born!

God has come to make a home among us!

Yet the story is not over. After birth comes the ordinary and mundane growing, maturing, and discovering, even for the Christ Child.

In the ordinary and mundane, God has come to make a home among us.

And sometimes, in the midst of the everyday, something surprising happens, and we discover anew just what God is up to in our midst.

In the surprising and spectacular, God has come to make a home among us.

Children of God, let us worship the God who dwells with us in all things and all seasons.

We come to make our home with God who makes a home among us. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2024. [Discipleship Ministries | First Sunday after Christmas Day, Year C - ...](#)

*Hymn

Good Christians, all rejoice

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1. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now give heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today,
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today;
Christ is born today.

2. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this.
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this;
Christ was born for this.

3. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save,
calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save;
Christ was born to save.

Words: public domain

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Loving God

may we be found and may we find a place called home,
a place where faith holds us and grace renews us
where forgiveness longs for us to be who you will us to be

may we find a place called home where we are accepted as we are
where we are taken in and loved unconditionally
a place called home where we belong and our souls fit
and our questions are allowed and our anger is heard
and our needs are recognised and our pain is held and our names are known
and may this be that place, O God, this community
this group of travellers and doubters and companions on the way
this home where your place is our place
and place isn't a building but a way of being together
in relationship, held together by love

Loving God, Homecoming God
may we make this a home to all who still yet seek
a place of grace-filled sanctuary and gracious welcome

Written by Roddy Hamilton and posted on Mucky Paws. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2019/03/prayer-reflection-place-called-home.html>.

Most Loving God,
because you knew how twisted and corrupted our humanity had become,
you sent us your Holy Son—

We name him Jesus, our Savior, for he has saved us from our sins.

Because you have stood in our shoes and understand how difficult it is to live
by the rule of law in an often cold, unfeeling, and ruthless world—

**We name him Jesus, our Savior,
for he is this very day saving us from all our sins.**

Because you have given us a gracious spirit, forgiving those who sin against us,
and you call us to a ministry of reconciliation in a fractured world—

**We proclaim him Jesus, our Savior,
for he will save our world from its many sins.**

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2024. [Discipleship Ministries | First Sunday after Christmas Day, Year C -...](#)

Assurance of Forgiveness

God of Christmas, God of unspeakable grace,
forgive and renew us all, that our lives may declare
the wonders of that Holy Love
that has called us out of darkness into glorious light. Amen!

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, June 2024. [Discipleship Ministries | First Sunday after Christmas Day, Year C -...](#)

Luke 2:15-52

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in

her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

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’), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided 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, ²⁸Simeon 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. ³⁴Then 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 ³⁵so 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 for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At 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. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to

search 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. ⁴⁸When 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.' ⁴⁹He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

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A Message for the Young and Young at Heart

Has this ever happened to you? You are shopping when an announcement comes over the store's loudspeaker, "May I have your attention please? We are looking for a six-year-old child who is lost. His name is John and he is wearing blue jeans and a red shirt. If you find John, please bring him to the customer service center."

How did this child become lost? Perhaps he just wandered off to look at the toys and his parents left him behind. Maybe the child's mother and father each thought he was with the other parent and went on about their shopping. You can imagine how concerned the parents were when they realized that the child was missing. How about John? How do you think he felt? If he was having a good time playing in the toy department, he probably never even knew that he was lost!

Have you ever been lost? How did you feel? Were you afraid, or were you confident that you would be found and everything would be alright?¹

In our scripture reading we just heard a short little story about Jesus when he was growing up and his parents thought he was lost so they go searching for him. But when they find him, they realize he didn't feel lost at all. Just like little John in the department store, Jesus was having so much fun learning from the teachers in the temple that he didn't realize or think about the fact that his parents thought he was lost. Their anxiety levels were going through the roof, likely thinking about all the different possible scenarios, blaming themselves for not noticing and at the same time angry that Jesus wandered off on them.

And not to be too harsh or judgmental about Joseph and Mary. This is a time when community felt a lot more like family and they assumed that Jesus was with someone they knew. At the same time, in the culture, even at twelve years old, Jesus would have been seen as on the cusp of maturing into a man. At age thirteen boys began to be held accountable for their own actions, they were to know the scriptures and could also be counted on to make quorum for prayers and worship. So, let's give the couple a little

¹ [Left Behind - Children's Sermons from Sermons4Kids.com | Sermons4Kids](#) Accessed December 28, 2024.

slack. Still, they were living one story line, that of Jesus missing in action, and Jesus was living another story line, where he was exactly where he thought he should be.

Jesus was learning from the teachers in the temple. His parents went back to Jerusalem in search of Jesus and they were understandably upset when they found him. Mary said to Jesus, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

I can't imagine that was the answer they thought they would get. On top of that who would have thought they would find their child in the temple learning. I'm sure they spent the three days searching everywhere first before heading to the temple. Yet, even at this young age Jesus knew where home was...his Father's house.

Today we are often cautioned about only using the masculine form of God by referring to God as father and for good reason...some fathers are just not good at being fathers and so it can be difficult for people to think that home is with the father. But God is everything a good father should be. God is good, loving, forgiving, protecting, and caring. That is the Father that is God and the father that Jesus is referring to.

Jesus wasn't born with all knowledge about God even though he was God. He was born a baby and had to develop as each of us has to. But he also had the Holy Spirit working in him and revealing to him, as Jesus grew and matured, who his father truly was. Jesus was drawn to the knowledge of those around him, those who could teach him more about God, but he was also drawn to the place where he believed God was present.

This story of Jesus in the temple is one about where home for our hearts is. God is still teaching and leading, making a place for us to call home, not only when we die, but each day as we live. God makes God's dwelling place with us and among us. We get to live our own story of God with us. Even when we feel lost, we are never out of God's sight or separated from the love of God. Maybe you are able to delight, as Jesus did, in the presence of God no matter where you call home.

Just one more thought...another perspective on this story. "Do we sometimes become so focused on what we are doing that we leave Jesus completely out of the picture? When we realize that we have left Jesus behind, [could it be] we need to do what Joseph and Mary did. We need to go back to the place where we left him. That's where we will find him... right where we left him."² So if you left Jesus in the manage, or at church, on the cross, or at the hospital, grocery store, doctor's office, or the broken relationship, go back and find him. Go back in your heart and mind, or maybe even to a physical place and find Jesus. He is right where you left him, with our Father God, the one who created you and loves you, and desires that you have life. This is home. This is God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

² Ibid.

Prayers of the People

Loving God, creator of heaven and earth,
we bring you our prayers with glad and grateful hearts
in this season of hope and joy.

For your image set within us all, calling us to love one another
and to care for your creation, we give you thanks.

For the gift of your Son who redeems us
and guides us to serve you in the world, we give you thanks.

For the energy and inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
who equips us to meet the challenges we face, we give you thanks.

By your Holy Spirit, empower us to show your love to those
for whom we pray this day:

For the Church and those who lead in it in complex and difficult times. . .

For the world that you have asked us to care for...the earth, the people, the plants
and animals...

For those who rule in the nations of the world, that they will attend with compassion
to the needs of the most vulnerable and with wisdom attend to the cries for justice in
their lands . . .

For those who serve as teachers, instructors, and mentors, and for students who
face a world of constant change and challenge . . .

For those who serve others as healers and caregivers, especially those feeling
exhausted by the demands placed upon them . . .

For those struggling with poverty, homelessness, and hunger, and the horror of war
and occupation. . .

For those who mourn the loss of someone dear and those who feel alone or
neglected...

For those imprisoned for defending truth and justice, and all who experience
exclusion, powerlessness and oppression . . .

As the year draws to a close,
give us grateful hearts for what has been loving and life-giving;
give us peace about things that have been painful;
and focus our attention on emerging opportunities
to grow closer to you and to each other.

Keep us faithful in all we do in the name of Jesus Christ, our friend and saviour, who
taught us to pray together:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Invitation to the offering

The gifts from under the tree are all unwrapped,
the glow of Christmas Day is already starting to fade,
but the glow of love that God has for us as given to us in human flesh
through the birth of Jesus never fades, it is always and forever.

So we continue to give back to God our gifts through tithes and offerings
as a recognition that God is still with us, always,
as gift, as love, as hope for us and the world.

Joyce Yanishewski written for the 1st Sunday after Christmas. December 29, 2024. Year C.

You can find ways to support this ministry by checking out our website at
standrewspres-tbay.ca

*Hymn

Hark the herald angels sing

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1. Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King.
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate deity!
Pleased on earth with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King.
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail he son of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings,
Mild, he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise the lost of earth
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King.

Words: public domain

Benediction

May God bless you with transformation,
because together we have encountered the incarnate Christ
who makes a home among us and in the world.

As holy and beloved by God,
clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility,
meekness, and patience as you dwell in the world
with Christ, in Christ, and through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Postlude