

A Winter Quiet Worship

Saturday, 21 January 2017, around the fire place in the Bushnell Room, at 9:00 a.m.

After retiring as our Senior Minister, Dr. Donald Meisel asked to lead this worship service each year because it contained his favorite Biblical text, the Candlemas story of the infant Jesus' presentation at the Temple and of the aged Simeon taking the awaited child in his arms, blessing God, and giving voice in the "Song of Simeon" to the deep joy that flooded over him. **

In a time for quiet worship and reflection, we will remember the lives and ministries of Dr. Meisel . . . and of all the clergy and lay members who have gone before us at Westminster.

As the worship ends, as services using this text have since early days, each of us will be invited to light a candle at the Christ Candle—which commemorates the coming of Christ, the "Light of the World"—and then to carry that Light from this time of remembrance and quiet . . . back out into the world, to do ministry as each of us is called, in this time and place.

And, also in keeping with early tradition, our leaving will be accompanied by voices (this morning, from the Taizé Community in France) quietly singing the ancient Song of Simeon:

***"Let your servant now go in peace,
O Lord, according to your word:
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation . . ."***

Gathering Music

Three Sung Prayers from Taizé (music only)

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord"

"Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life"

"Let your servant now go in peace"

A period of peace and silence

Opening Words

from *Celtic Treasure*, J. Philip Newell—as the Christ candle is lighted

**"We light a light
in the name of the God who creates life,
in the name of the Saviour who loves life,
in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life."**

A brief period of calm and silence

Psalm of the Day, from Psalm 149

“Praise for God’s Goodness”
from the *Lectionary*, the Morning *Psalm* for this day

**“Praise the Lord!
Sing to the Lord a new song,
his praise in the assembly of the faithful.
Let Israel be glad in its Maker;
let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.

Let them praise his name with dancing,
making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.
For the Lord takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with victory.
Let the faithful exult in glory
let them sing for joy on their couches. . . .
This is glory for the faithful ones.
Praise the Lord!”**

NRSV

A period of silence, to reflect upon God’s goodness,
or if you wish, to remember the Faithful Ones who have gone before us

A Sung Prayer from Taizé:

"Praise the Lord, All You Peoples"

Listen to the music or hum or sing, as you wish, offering praise and thanks.

**"Laudate omnes gentes,
laudate, Dominum."**

**"Praise the Lord,
all you peoples"**

A brief period of silence

The Song of Simeon Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-33

**“And when the days for [Mary’s] purification according to the law of
Moses were accomplished, they brought Jesus to Jerusalem, to present
him to the Lord. . . .**

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then Simeon took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

**‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word:
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people . . . ’**

And Joseph and Mary marveled at these things which were spoken of him. . . . ”

[Dr. Meisel's favorite Biblical passage, in the King James text]

The Word of the Lord *Thanks be to God.*

Great Silence

The sound of the gong signals the beginning and the ending of this time for listening with the ears of our hearts, for seeking to rest in God's presence. (c. 10 min.)

Prayers of the People:

from *Celtic Treasure* by J. Philip Newell & the *Book of Common Worship*

“In the silence of our hearts or in spoken words . . .

let us give thanks for the gift of this day . . .

and pray for the life of the world. . . .

Especially this morning we thank you . . .

for the miracle of new life and the wonder of living . . .

for particular blessings coming to us in this day . . .

for gifts of creative vision and skillful craft . . .

for the treasure stored in every human life

for the quiet joy of the Song of Simeon . . .

for the lives and service of all those who have gone before us . . .

and for the ongoing life of this congregation . . .

and the work it seeks to do. . . .

Lord in your mercy *hear our prayer.*

**We dare to pray for others, God our Savior, . . .
claiming your love in Jesus Christ for the whole world, . . .
committing ourselves, in his name, to care for those around us. . . .
Especially today we pray . . .
for those who work for peace and reconciliation . . .
for families suffering separation . . .
and for children who are without families or homes . . .
for those in positions of authority . . .
and for those, surrounded by war, who long for peace. . . .
Lord in your mercy *hear our prayer.***

**Lord, listen as we now offer our individual prayers, in silence
or in words.**

[each individual prayer ends with: "Lord in your mercy *hear our prayer.*"]

**We know that you hear our prayers, Lord. Listen also now as we join our
voices in praying the prayer taught to us by your Son, Jesus,**

**"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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen."**

A brief silence

Closing Words

from the *Book of Common Worship*

**“As you cause the sun to rise, O God,
bring the light of Christ to dawn in our souls
and dispel all darkness.
Give us grace to reflect Christ’s glory;
and let his love show in our deeds,
his peace shine in our words,
and his healing in our touch,
that all may give him praise, now and forever. Amen.”**

A brief silence

Carrying the Light of Christ out into the world

a Sung Prayer, from Taizé

When you feel ready (as worshipers at Taizé sing for us the ancient *Song of Simeon*) you are invited to come forward to the altar, take a candle, light it at the Christ Candle, and then carry it—the True Light—with you as you go back out into the world. If you wish, sing or hum along:

**“Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace, Domine.”**

**“Let your servant now go in peace,
O Lord, according to your word.”**

** According to an ancient tradition—it might be called a Christian Midrash—Simeon was one of seventy-two scholars summoned from Jerusalem by the Egyptian King Ptolemy to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (the completed work being called "The Septuagint"). As Simeon was translating the book of the prophet *Isaiah*, he came upon the words, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bring forth a son" (*Is. 7:14*). He thought the word "virgin" was surely inaccurate and started to correct the text to read, "woman."

But at that moment an angel appeared to him and held back his hand, saying, "Simeon, you shall see these words fulfilled, for you shall not die until you behold Christ the Lord, born of a spotless virgin." And Simeon died at a great age, after having held up the infant Christ in the Temple at Jerusalem, blessing God.