A Winter Quiet Worship
Saturday, 18 January 2020, around the fireplace in the Bushnell Room, at 9:00 a.m.
with Rob Carlson as Worship Leader

After retiring as our Senior Minister, Dr. Donald Meisel asked to lead this worship service each year because it is built around his favorite Biblical text, the Candlemas story (Candlemas is 40 days after Christmas, on February 2) 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. **

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

Three weeks after leading this service, in the sixtieth year of his ministry, Dr. Meisel died quietly at the breakfast table. In this time for quiet worship and reflection, we are invited to remember the lives and ministries of Dr. Meisel and of all the clergy and lay members who have gone before us at Westminster.

Gathering Music
Three Sung Prayers from Taizé (music only)

“Bless the Lord, my soul . . . ”
"Laudate omnes gentes . . . ”
"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

A Sung Prayer from Taizé:
"Ubi caritas"

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

“Ubi caritas et amor,
ubi caritas Deus ibi est”
“Where there is charity and love,
God is to be found”

A brief period of silence
"Praise for God’s Goodness"
from the Lectionary, the Morning Psalm for this day

Psalm of the Day, from Psalm 149

“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!”

A period of silence, to reflect upon God’s goodness,
or 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 Gospel Reading


“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. . . . " KJV

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

As noted above, Dr. Meisel's favorite Biblical text was the King James text for “The Song of Simeon.” He led this Quiet Worship service, with it as the text, for a number of years after his retirement. And, after sixty ears of ordained ministry, he died peacefully at the breakfast table three weeks after leading it for the last time.

Great Silence

The sound of the gong signals the beginning (once) and the ending (three times) 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. . . .

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 the treasure stored in every human life. . . .

And especially, this morning, we thank you . . .
for the quiet joy of the Song of Simeon . . .
for the lives and service of all those clergy and lay people . . .
who have gone before us at Westminster . . .
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

"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

A Sung Prayer from Taizé:

"Praise the Lord, All You Peoples"

Listen to the music or hum or sing, as you wish.

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

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

Leave when you are ready.

** According to an ancient tradition, Simeon was one of seventy-two scholars, six from each of the twelve tribes, 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.