
BETHEL NOTES

First Sunday of Christmas

Serving This Sunday

Accompanist: Lynn Ryan

Lay Assistant: Sandy Pepos

Usher(s): Mary Gernaat

Projectionist: Vann Arvanetes

Counters: Pam Dougherty & Kristine Voorhees

Nursery: Heather Farris

Readings:

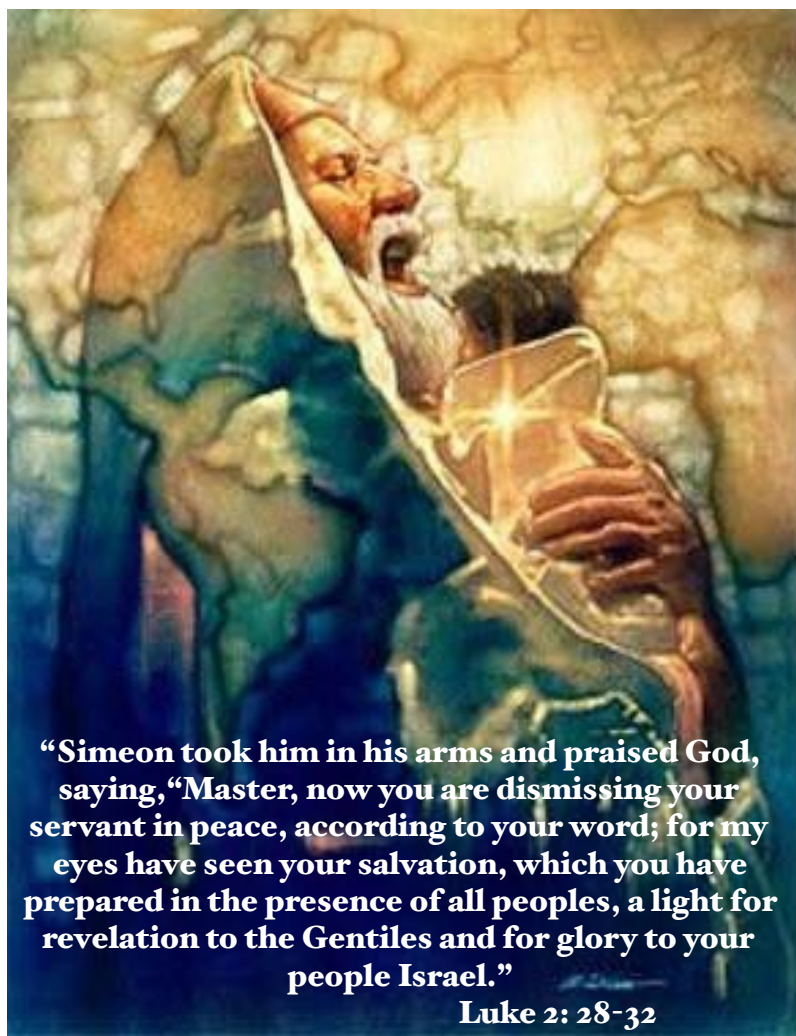
Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

Happening This Sunday.

- Celebration of Holy Baptism for Kaleb and Maya Stringer.



“Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Luke 2: 28-32

In the psalm all the natural world praises God, including all humanity, male and female, young and old. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon’s song is often

sung after communion, for we have seen God’s salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we speak of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Pastor Steve's Article

"How Can I Keep from Singing?"

Some of us grew up and were nurtured in households which made sure we learned and appreciated music. That's my story. At a very young age it was the Sunday School openings where Myrtle Teeter taught and led us in the songs and hymns of the church. Then it was the school band program for seven plus years. At Christmas, before any of my siblings and I could open a gift from under the tree, my father insisted on each of us picking a piece of music and playing it for the family. At those moments I believed it brought more joy to our parents than to us. Later in life, I was able to appreciate the gift which I was given and to pass it along to my own family. The gift of music, sung and played.

Today's gospel reading for this Sunday (Luke 2: 22-40) presents us with a couple of old, devout people of faith, at the temple of the Lord, caught up in song. I can imagine that Simeon and Anna, being raised in the God fearing families, never missing a worship service. They told the story of the presence of God in the songs....offering to the Most High songs of prayer and praise.

Simeon reaches for the infant and as he held Jesus in his arms, blesses God with song. Simeon's song, a song which the church has named the **Nunc Dimittis** – Latin words that translate into English: "**Now you dismiss.**" In the Christian church's liturgy, a song incorporated in the Compline and Evening Prayer Service. Inspired by the Spirit of God, Simeon does not sing of a manger nor of angel's or of a Natal star, but he sings of letting go...of being dismissed from this life. His death. Why such a song as this? Because the child he now holds in his hands is God's salvation – God's promise fulfilled – for him and for all people. Jesus' days on earth have just begun but Simeon's have now come to an end. His purpose on earth has now been completed and he can depart in peace, knowing that God has kept God's promises. God is with us now and will walk with us through whatever we face in the new year, the future.

Now it's Anna's turn to sing. She was the epitome of faithfulness, camping out in the temple worshipping day and night, all her years. She, like Simeon, had received the Christ as the fulfillment of all of God's promises and she offers a song of praise to God for his birth, life and salvific work for the life of the world.

Both Simeon and Anna remind us of the power of song and that there is not just one kind, but many different kinds of songs to sing to God. We need Simeon and Anna's witness in song to help us to express what is deep inside our souls and in need of expression. We need Simeon and Anna to help us to tell the story of Jesus' presence in love.

Robert Lowry told the story of Jesus in many a song. Robert was born in Philadelphia, PA. in 1826. He was a Baptist minister who served a number of congregations – helping to found the 6th Avenue Baptist Church in New York



Prayers for **Marj VanderAarde** as she recovers from surgery. Also for her sister, **Jann DeGroot**, who is battling cancer.

Prayers for **Michelle Meredith** as she recovers from surgery.

Prayers for healing for **Ryan Pottratz** (son of Ed and Myra Pottratz and grandson of Sue Hesse).

Prayers for healing for **Brenda Slater** as she continues her treatment for cancer.

Prayers for healing for **Frank Potter and family** (friend of Doug Sexe) as he battles cancer.

Prayers for **Ed Pottratz and family**.

Prayers for **Todd Whitted** (nephew of Bobbie Bowen).

Prayers for **Anne Trunkle** (friend of Dean Wagner-Fossen) in hospice care. Also prayers for Dena's sister, **Trina**.

Prayers for **Thelma Seyfert** for the loss of her sister-in-law and also her niece within the last month.

Prayers for **Shelly Murphy**.

Prayers for family and friends of **Ashley Shell** (friend of Dena Wagner-Fossen) as they mourn her death.

Prayers for God's blessing on the marriage of **Raph Graybill**, son of Turner and Bishop Jessica Crist, to **Marisa Franklin**. They will be married in Boston on this Sunday, Dec 31.

City, NY. He was a professor of Literature at Bucknell University and is credited with writing about 500 gospel tunes, some of the most familiar being, *Shall We Gather At the River?* and *My Life Flows On in Endless Song* (ELW # 763). Here are the verses of the latter:

*My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation I hear the sweet though far off hymn
That hails a new creation:
Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?*

*What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth:
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of Heav'n and earth,
How can I keep from singing?*

*I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smoothes
Since first I learned to love it:
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing:
All things are mine since I am His—
How can I keep from singing?*

On Sunday, we will sing Christmas carols; praising God for the gift of Jesus, the gift of salvation. We will give thanks for the gift of new life celebrated in the sacrament of Holy Baptism for Kaleb and Maya Stringer. We join with Simeon, Anna, the saints of the church...for *How can we keep from singing?*

Christmas Giving Tree

As always Bethel has shown what a generous congregation we have. For this year's Giving Tree we designated two different opportunities to share our many blessings with those less fortunate. This year Bethel contributed \$440 for gift cards for the YWCA Mercy Home to buy. Thank you to everyone who contributed to these worthy causes.





Family Promise Volunteer Training Opportunities

January 3, 2018

7:00 pm sponsored by Sun River Ward at the Sun River LDS Church

January 13, 2018

1:30 pm sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 16 14th Street South

If you are interested in attending a training, please let Dew Elkin or Tami Grosenick know. All are welcome at any and all sessions!



New Member Inquiry Night at Bethel

Are you interested in joining our congregation, but have a few questions you would like to have answered? Please join us for some time together to answer your questions and get to know one another. New Member Inquiry Night is scheduled for Thursday, January 11th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. This is open to all who want to know more about Bethel and the ELCA Lutheran church. Please let Tami Grosenick or Pastor Steve know if you are able to attend.

