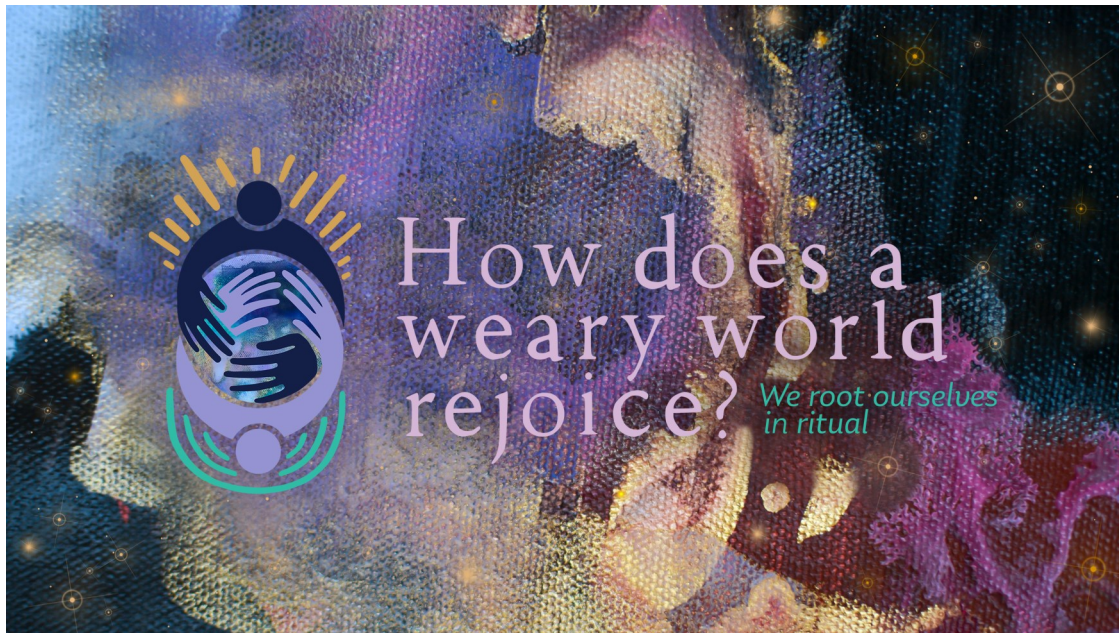




Sunday, December 31, 2023

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Luke 2:22-40 (NIV)

- *CONNECTING YOU WITH CHRIST AND COMMUNITY* -

Greeters: Kim Buzzard, Marty & Jack Hynd, Joyce & Peter DeBarger, Lois Snyder, Tom & Sharon Kennedy

Ushers: Michel Gibeault, Bill DeLong

The white rose recognizes and bears witness to the life and memory of William "Bill" Johnson

The Chancel Flowers are Presented By:

Diane Loucks, with hope in the new year

Leigh & Kathleen Shuman, in honor of their granddaughter's birthday

Gathering in God's Name

Chimes

Prelude

Welcome & Ministry Highlights

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Please sign and pass the "Friendship Pad" down the pew.

At the end of the row, pass it back so that we can greet one another by name after the service.

* Call to Worship

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Leader: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

People: Every month we break bread.

Leader: Every week we gather for worship.

People: And sing songs of praise.

Leader: Each Sunday the word is read and proclaimed.

People: And we are sent out to serve the Lord.

Leader: These are the rituals of our faith.

People: Let us worship God.

* Opening Hymn #49

"Once in Royal David's City"

Proclaiming God's Word

Call to Confession

Will Massey

Church family, our faith is decorated with rituals and rhythms that help tie us to God. Confession is one of those rituals. Every week we gather in this space and tell the truth about our lives. And every week God hears our prayers and offers us grace. This holy dance of confession and mercy is one of the many rituals we cannot live without. So let us embrace this holy tradition together. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Will Massey

Merciful God, we confess that our faith would not be what it is without rituals. We have to return to this space again and again to hear old, familiar stories. For if we stopped, we know it would not take long before we lost our way. Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto. With grateful and humble hearts we pray, Amen.

Kyrie Eleison 572

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Pardon

Will Massey

Leader: Friends, it is not enough to hear once a month or once a year that you are forgiven. We need to hear it every single week. Every single week we need to be reminded that we are held in God's loving embrace. So hear this good news: no matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith, and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God. You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven. Friends, this is the good news of the gospel!

People: Thanks be to God! Amen!

Passing of the Peace

Will Massey

Leader: As we are forgiven and reconciled to God through Christ Jesus, let us be reconciled to one another. The peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

* Gloria Patri 579

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:22-40

Message

"We Ground Ourselves in Ritual"

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Responding to God's Word

Carol Sing

(please choose carols in the blue hymnal between pages 21-61)

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Lord's Prayer

Rev. Dr. Ann Osborne

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.

Invitation to the Offering

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Wooden offering boxes are located in the narthex

Going in God's Name

* Closing Hymn #31

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

* Charge and Benediction

Rev. Dr. Ann Osborne

Postlude

*PLEASE STAND IN BODY OR SPIRIT

MUSIC: DR. PAUL THORLAKSON, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

JONATHAN LEFEVER, ORGANIST

A/V: MARK ANDERSON, KEN OSBORNE

A description of the stained Chancel window can be found in the front of the hymnal.
FM sound devices are available. Please ask an usher for your own personal receiver.

Cell Phones should be silenced during the worship service.

Video Recordings of the service can be found on the Highland website at www.HighlandPC.org

In the event of an emergency, please refer to the card in the pew racks for evacuation and re-assembly information.