

Year B; First Sunday of Christmas
Liturgical Elements
Developed for December 31, 2023
Prepared by Pastor Andy Smothers

Lectionary Texts

- Isaiah 61:10-62:3
- Psalm 148:1-14
- Galatians 4:4-7
- Luke 2:22-40

CALL TO WORSHIP (*from Isaiah 61-62*)

One: We will greatly rejoice in the Lord, our whole beings shall exult in our God;

All: for he has clothed us with garments of salvation, he has covered us with the robe of righteousness.

One: For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,

All: so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

One: For Zion's sake we will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake we will not rest,

All: until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.

One: The nations shall see your vindication, and the kings your glory;

All: and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.

One: You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,

All: and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. Let us worship God!

CALL TO WORSHIP (*from Psalm 148*)

One: Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

All: May all the creation praise the Lord!

One: Praise him, all his angels and all his heavenly host!

All: Praise him all the cosmos and highest heavens!

One: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

All: He established them forever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

One: Praise the Lord from the earth!

All: Praise the Lord all that is in the sea, the mountains, all hills, all trees, wild animals, cattle, creeping things, and flying birds!

One: Praise the Lord all rulers of the earth and all peoples!

All: Praise the Lord young and old!

One: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

All: He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Let us worship and praise the Lord!

CALL TO CONFESSION (*from Luke 2*)

Before God sent his Son, the people had to offer sacrifices to atone for their sins and to honor God. God, though, has sent his Son, who paid the price for sin for each of us. Let us come now before the High Priest in heaven and confess our sins.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*from Luke 2*)

God of mercy, we read of Simeon and Anna, who had dedicated their lives to you. Simeon knew that his life rested upon seeing the Lord's Messiah. Anna never left the Temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. Too often, Lord, we go through life worshiping for a time on Sunday and forgetting about you through the remainder of the week. You call us to live out worship and prayer through every part of our lives. Forgive our lack of devotion, and help us to make our lives about your calling to each of us. We pray this in the name of the one so devoted to you that he went to the cross on our behalf, our Lord Jesus the Messiah. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (*from Galatians 4*)

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who are under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. You are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. Live into this new status, and know that you are forgiven. Friends, hear and believe this good news.

All: Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*from Galatians 4*)

Gracious God, though we are sinners, you sent your Son in order to redeem us so that we might be adopted as your children — brothers and sisters to our Lord Jesus Christ. You have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts, which cry out to you, "Abba! Father!" You have saved us from slavery and invited us into relationship as children and heirs. With our thanksgiving, we offer these gifts from the abundant creation and from the work you have gifted us to do. Guide your church to use them wisely. Amen.

Elements in this document are based on the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV). Some portions are direct quotes; though, quotation marks and designations are usually left out for ease of use in bulletins and other worship resources. Usually, the Call to Worship is based upon the Psalm of the day and follows that Psalm very closely but modifying it for a leader vs. congregation responsive setting if necessary. Other elements usually deviate more significantly from the text. While they may quote very short sections, they are generally written in the theme of the text. Elements usually designate the book and chapter from which they are derived.

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