

**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD
February 2, 2025**

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INVOCATION

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION p. 117

KYRIE

HYMN OF PRAISE – “Gloria, Gloria, Gloria” p. 176

PRAYER OF THE DAY – Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON MALACHI 3:1-4

PSALM 84

SECOND LESSON HEBREWS 2:14-18

VERSE: Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go. You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL LUKE 2:22-40

REFLECTION – The Presentation of Our Lord is referred to in some corners of the church as Candlemas because of an ancient tradition of blessing all the candles to be used in the church in the coming year at the mass celebrated on that day. It was a way of underscoring the truth of Simeon’s confession that this baby Jesus was “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” and a light for glory to Israel. Let the light of every candle in church be a little epiphany of the love of God for all people in the person of God’s son, Jesus, the light of the world.

**HYMN #715 ELW “Christ Be Our Light”
INSERT “¡Cristo, la Luz!”**

APOSTLES CREED/COUNCIL INSTALLATION p. 127

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. God of generations, you instilled in Anna and Simeon faith, dreams, and the welcome of a child. Bless elders who embody faith and hope; bless the newly baptized. Energize us to share faith from generation to generation.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of creation, in you the sparrow finds a home and we find lush valleys and living water. Bless the birds of the air, the animals of the valley, and renew our stewardship of this bountiful creation.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of the nations, strengthen our resolve to care for all children and strive for peace among nations. Refine our nation where we have failed to root out racism. Guide us in truth-telling and reconciliation. We ask for order and mercy in our country and the world.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of hope, many long to see your presence revealed amid challenging circumstances. We hold in prayer all longing for sustainable housing, secure employment, access to medical care, and health and wellness (*especially*).

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of the people, you are made known in caring ministries. Bless those who serve as communion servers, homebound visitors, English teachers and interpreters, and as prayer support. Reveal yourself in the neighborly care we give and receive.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of life, we thank you for Jesus' life and for his death that has destroyed death. We remember the dearly departed (*especially*), as they dwell with you in your holy courts now and forever.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

SHARING PEACE

OFFERING Song

"Allelu, Allelu"

HOLY COMMUNION WITH LORD'S PRAYER p. 129

BENEDICTION – The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

THIS WEEK AT EMMANUEL

SUNDAY	10:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Black History Month Discussion
WEDNESDAY	7:00 p.m.	AA
FRIDAY	10:30 a.m.	Parish Life Committee Mtg.

Let us pray for...

Kurt Kusserow, **Bishop, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod**

Peter Asplin, Melissa Stoller, **Assistants to the Bishop**

Elizabeth Eaton, **Presiding Bishop, ELCA**

Bishop Henrik Stubkjær, **President, Lutheran World Federation**

President Modeste, **Tulear Synod, Malagasy Lutheran Church**

HEALING & SPECIAL NEEDS: George & Debbie K., asylum seekers especially children, Rachel F., Pr. Norm M., Peggy E., Marilyn & Brian H., Rose & Chip, Rita, Judy H., Kirk D., Noah, Karen M., Len & Carole, Roni, Karin, Tommy C., Karen S., Darlene & Al, Lana, Dayton, Jeffery, Don W., Mindy, Nancy, Aligha, Ron R., Zach F., Katie, Ed, Tyler C., Nan, Sandra, Lisa, Marlene, Bill, Amy, Tony, Patty N., Marylene, Yuri, Roy, Leilani, Lynn F., Pr. Tony, Shelly, Debbie, Myschal, Dawn, Danny M., Dr. Simek, Pr. Dona, Pete, Alex, & all with flu, RSV, COVID and unknown illnesses.

HOSPITALIZED: Marilaine J.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY: Josh Willy.

NURSING HOME / ASSISTED LIVING: Mary Jane Freund (Concordia Ridgewood-Plum); Shirley & Jack Pickens (William Penn Center); Roni Mayhood (Merakey); Esther Schwab (Beatty Point) June Minnear (Beatty Point Village); Evelyn Rae Dodson (Harmarville Village); Georgetta Colton (Seneca Place).

CAREGIVERS: Judy M., Chris, Chip, Rebecca, Darlene, Elaine, Sandi.

EMPLOYMENT: Derrick, Yelisbeth, Cassie, Tyler.

COUNTRY OF THE MONTH: Republic of the Congo.

MISSION PARTNER: Holy Trinity - East Pittsburgh

CHURCH OF THE MONTH: Zion Penn Hills

LUTHERAN AGENCY: Camp Agapé

SCHOOL OF THE MONTH: Woodland Hills High School

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

This reading concludes a larger section (2:17—3:5) in which the prophet speaks of the coming of the God of justice. Malachi looks for that day when the wondrous power of God will purify the priestly descendants of Levi who minister in the temple at Jerusalem.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Psalm: Psalm 84

How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD. (Ps. 84:1)

¹How dear to me is your dwelling,
O LORD of hosts!

²**My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.**

³Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young,
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.

⁴**Happy are they who dwell in your house!
They will always be praising you.**

⁵Happy are the people whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

⁶**Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a place of springs,
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.**

⁷They will climb from height to height,
and the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

⁸**LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob.**

⁹Behold our defender, O God;
and look upon the face of your anointed.

¹⁰**For one day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.**

I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

¹¹For the LORD God is both sun and shield, bestowing grace and glory;
no good thing will the LORD withhold from those who walk with integrity.

¹²**O LORD of hosts,
happy are they who put their trust in you!**

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

Jesus shared human nature fully so that his death might be for all humans a liberation from slavery to death's power. Here the writer uses the image of priestly service in the temple as a way of describing the life and saving death of the Lord Jesus. He is the high priest who offers his life on behalf of his brothers and sisters.

¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, [Jesus] himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

This story is a study in contrasts: the infant Jesus with the aged prophets; the joy of birth with the ominous words of Simeon to Mary; the faithful fulfilling of the law with the presentation of the one who will release its hold over us. Through it all, we see the light of God's salvation revealed to the world.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.