

A reading from the Hebrew testament and the writings of the prophet Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in God, my whole being shall exult in God; for the Holy One has clothed me with the garments of salvation, has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Holy One will give. You shall be a creature of beauty in God's hands, a solemn crown worn by your God.

PAUSE

Listen for the leading of the Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

*Isaiah 61:10-62:3, NRSV
Psalm 148, The Voice*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Church in Galatia.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent the Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of the Son into our hearts, crying, "Creator, God!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

PAUSE

Listen for the leading of the Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

Galatians 4:4-7, NRSV

Gospeller May God be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Gospeller The Gospel of Jesus the Christ, according to Luke.
People **Grace to you, Jesus the Christ.**

When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. For it's written in the Law of God, "Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God." They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of God. Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by the Spirit, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, Simeon took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the peoples to see—a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well." There was a woman named Anna, the

daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying. Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem. When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him.

PAUSE

Gospeller	The Gospel of Christ.
People	Praise to you, Jesus the Christ.

Luke 2:22-40, Inclusive Bible