



AN INTERACTIVE LITURGY

for use by small family groups &
individuals at home

on

December 27, 2020

adapted from liturgy written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

INTRODUCTION

This liturgy is designed to help you set aside time and space for worship in your own home as we continue to walk through this sacred Christmas season. While this may not be the formal order of worship you are accustomed to, this simple liturgy invites you to carve out space for reflection, scripture, and prayer—using items you may have at home. It can be used by individuals or families with young children.

Supplies

- An Advent wreath or candle *with a lighter or matches.*
- A cell phone or computer *to use briefly to send a message of peace to someone you love.*
- Post-It Notes or small pieces of paper, *3 for each person.*
- A pen or pencil *for each person.*
- A copy of the poem, "Swell," by Sarah Are, *for each person.*

Call to Worship/Opening Prayer

Begin by lighting a candle or the white Christ candle on your Advent wreath if you have one.

On the heels of Christmas, we speak of love.

We speak of candlelight and fireside.

We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

We speak of "glorias" and angel choruses.

We speak the words, "Do not be afraid."

Here on the heels of Christmas, we are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.

Be the Church

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matt. 18:20) Our scripture passage for today tells the story of young Jesus being blessed in the temple by his community of faith. Two prophets, Anna and Simeon, proclaim praise and blessings for Jesus. The church is the people, and we cannot do faith without one another.

Knowing that, take a moment to text or email someone in your faith community. Think of the people who have served as Anna and Simeon in your life—pointing out good news and Jesus when they see it. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them.

Read **Luke 2:22-40** Jesus Is Presented in the Temple (NRSV)

Reading scripture is the central part of worship. Take a moment to read this week's scripture passage about Simeon and Anna—two figures who could not keep silent about the dream unfolding in front of their eyes.

Tips for worshipping with children: If you have a nativity scene, invite children to point out Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus from the nativity scene—three of the characters in this story. Use those characters to act out the story of them traveling to the temple.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him 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.

Reflect Prompts

1. Notice the characters in this story. For each character, imagine what emotions they might be feeling. Which character(s) do you relate to the most—Mary, Joseph, Simeon, or Anna?
2. The text says that Simeon was "moved by the Spirit" (v. 27). Have you ever felt "moved by the Spirit"? What does that look like for you?
3. Both Anna and Simeon publicly display their faith, telling all who will listen about Jesus and their dreams for Jerusalem's future. What things do you speak up about? What are the things you have remained silent about? What prevents you from speaking?

4. Who in your life has been an Anna or Simeon for you? What did they speak about, and how did their profession change you?

Reflect Prompts for Young Worshippers

1. The text today speaks of Jesus being presented in the temple. In many ways, this mirrors the ritual of baptizing babies at a young age in worship. If this tradition applies to your family, pull out photos of your child's baptism and talk about that special day. Share with your children what this experience was like for you, and why this tradition is special.
2. One way to study scripture is by asking questions that begin with who, what, why, and how:
 - a. Who are the people and places involved?
 - b. What is happening here? What does this story teach us about?
 - c. Why did the people do what they did? Why was this story included in the Bible?
 - d. How does this story compel me to action? How does this story help me to learn about God?
3. Finally, focus on the "now what"? What is your takeaway from this story? What are you charged to do, think, or feel?

Creative Reflection

1. Read the poem, "Swell" printed below.
2. Underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.
3. What topics of conversation create a swell of emotions for you?
4. What things are you so passionate about that you cannot help but speak them out loud?

SWELL | Luke 2:22-40

You know that feeling when you fall in love?

Time-stands-still and moves too fast.

You'd give up sleep just to talk all night,

Because there's so much to say and not enough time.

It's that full to the brim,

Over the stars,

Living is dreaming,

Too-good-to-be-true

Kind of feeling?

I imagine that's how Simeon and Anna felt

When they saw Jesus that day.

I imagine it was that full to the brim,

Over the stars,

Living is dreaming,

Too-good-to-be-true

Good news kind of feeling.

I imagine it was love.

And I imagine that that good, good new

Swelled to the tip of their tongues

Until they could not keep silent.

So may we know what Simeon and Anna knew,
Which is that some dreams we hold close to our chest,
For ourselves to cherish and never forget.
But other dreams must be spoken out loud—
Dreams of justice and love and hope, here and now.

So today my prayer is to know that swell,
For there is good news
That we must tell.

—by Sarah Are

Reflective Prayer

Supplies: Pens/pencils, Post-It Notes or small pieces of paper, *3 for each person.*

There are some dreams that we keep to ourselves, but there are others that must be spoken out loud. Anna and Simeon speak about their dreams for Jerusalem. They speak of their dreams for the Messiah. They could not keep silent. To practice speaking aloud our dreams for this world, you are invited to write three things on Post-It Notes, following these prompts:

1. Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God. Write something that you are grateful for—a piece of good news worthy of praise.
2. Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world. Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about.
3. Anna and Simeon speak and are heard, but not all people that are listened to with the same equality in our world. Think of one person or group of people that are speaking, but are not being heard. May this be a reminder that we can use our voices alongside others.

Once you are done with your Post-It prayers, place them somewhere you will see them often. Take a picture of them and share it on social media, tagging @sanctifiedart (using the hashtag: #ThoseWhoDreamSA). This will allow you to see what other people cannot keep silent about, adding your voice to the wider conversation.

Pray

In conclusion, pray the following prayer. When you finish, blow out your candles, and know that God is with you always.

Divine Voice,
In the beginning,
It was you who spoke over the water and brought forth creation.
And then it was you who asked, “Cain, where is your brother?”
It was you who spoke to Elijah in a still, small, voice.
And it was you, through angels,
Who spoke to Mary and Joseph and the shepherds.
You have always been speaking—
In words, in memories, in songs, and in dreams.
We come to you today, asking for the strength to join our voices with yours.
Open our ears to hear the voices of those crying out.
Open our mouths to speak aloud your dream for this world.
We are listening. We are grateful. Amen.

