

December 28, 2025

Generational Praise

Luke 2:22-40 & Psalm 148

I welcome you to this last Sunday of the year 2025! It has been a challenging journey for many of us. This year has been a mix of sadness and joy. We have experienced many challenges due to political upheaval in the country and sorrow over the loss of our beloved family members and members of the church. On the other hand, we have also celebrated achievements and felt God's mercy, grace, and provision that have sustained us to this day.

We gather today before the Lord, both old and young, to offer our praises to God, who remains faithful and keeps His covenant with Israel, just as Simeon and Anna did. As Psalm 148:11–12a states, “God’s name alone is exalted.” The celebration of Jesus' birth is a joyous occasion because it fulfills God's plan for human redemption. Like Simeon, we come before the Lord to declare that our eyes have seen the glory of God through the birth of Jesus.

As we look at the four major participants in today’s readings: Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, we discover the importance of praising the Lord, looking at our past and present situation, and anticipating a better future! Today is indeed a day of praise and reflection!

Joseph and Mary joyfully brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to complete the necessary rites for a male child who is the Messiah of the world, to put an end to any future doubts about the Messiah! Simeon and Anna confirmed the prophecy and God’s fulfillment of His promise. Mary treasured all they said in her heart.

As we approach the end of another year, we finish yet another chapter. We find ourselves a bit older and wiser, with a few more scars left on our bodies and souls. But the good news is that a new year lies ahead, offering a fresh start for the days to come. A new adventure is just around the corner. As we get ready for this upcoming journey, I want to take a moment to reflect on the blessings and challenges we've faced this year.

We remember the transition to the Church Triumphant of three devoted members: Bruce Neel, Jivini Hayes Williams, and Wylladene. At this moment, let us also take time to remember our family members who have entered eternity. Many of us have faced health challenges this year, and we are thankful to God for the healing process.

This year has had its ups and downs, but we wouldn't have made it through without our Lord and Savior. God has blessed us in many ways. One of my greatest blessings is all of you who brings me joy as we see each other every week.. I also want to thank you for supporting our outreach programs, which have brought joy to both our church and the community. While these programs may not have led to significant growth in numbers, they have been spiritually uplifting.

As we stand on the brink of a brand-new year, we face new challenges, new adventures, and new blessings ahead in the unknown 2026! Given the experiences of 2025, it can be daunting if we aren't spiritually prepared. However, the Scripture reminds us that Jesus assures us, “And surely I am with you always – to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20b).

Remember Simeon and Anna, who were promised by God that they would not die before seeing the Messiah, and it came to pass because the Lord was with them. As we enter the new year, I want you to hold on to this truth: Jesus will be with us. **There is nothing we will face that we cannot handle together with Him. God will never lead us to a place where His grace cannot sustain us.** Jesus, as the Creator and Designer of this world, knows everything and is aware of all that will happen. Nothing that occurs in 2026 will surprise Him. It may shock us or catch us off guard, but Jesus has already witnessed 2026 from beginning to end. Therefore, don't be afraid.

"Be strong and courageous" were God's words to Joshua as he began his leadership after the death of Moses. God assured Joshua that He would never leave him or forsake him. He then instructed him to "be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go" (Joshua 1:7).

Do you want to succeed in everything you do? Then commit to being a diligent follower. If you aspire to have a prosperous new year, pay close attention: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8). Joshua followed the Lord wholeheartedly, and as a result, he prospered in all his endeavors..

God is faithful and will never fail you. Although we may forsake Him, let Him down, or turn away from Him, He will never leave or abandon us. All we need to do is maintain an obedient relationship with Him. This is where blessings are found, where power resides, and where safety and salvation await us.

The Bible states, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Furthermore, "And once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

As we enter the new year, let us commit to walking in obedience to God. He will always be by our side; He will never leave or forsake us. Remember, the weaker you feel, the stronger He becomes in your life. As long as you hold onto His nail-scarred hand, nothing in the future should frighten you. He will be with us until the very end.

As we face an uncertain future, it's crucial to remember that Jesus has all authority. Do not hesitate to call on this authority to combat any evil that may arise.

In just a few days, this year will come to an end. But I have good news: 2026 is not the end; it is a new beginning. It can mark a fresh start and a happier life for each of us. God promises prosperity, success, and blessings in the year ahead. All we need to do is journey through it with Him. Will you join me in this commitment?