



AN AT-HOME LITURGY

*for the First Sunday
After Christmas*

Written by Sarah Are

We invite you to implement this liturgy as-is, or adapt it for your context.
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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.
- * **A Bible.**
- * **Post-It Notes**, 3 for each person.
- * **A pen or pencil** for each person.



AN AT-HOME LITURGY FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

SET THE SPACE

Supplies: An Advent wreath or candle with a lighter or matches.

A sanctuary can be defined as a place of refuge or safety. It is a space set apart. As you worship in the comfort of your own home, create a space set apart. Light your Advent wreath if you have one, or a single candle if you do not. Fill up a cup of coffee. Pull out your Bible and a pen. Settle in. Breathe deeply. Trust that God is with you, wherever you are.

SET THE SPACE (CONT.)

Tips for Young Families:

- * Invite your kids to have a hands-on role in this liturgy by having them collect the supplies from around the house (Post-It Notes, pens, Bible, candle/Advent wreath, lighter, etc). They could light the candle, read the scriptures, and write on the Post-It Notes if they're able.
- * Before you begin the liturgy, invite your children to create a special place for you all to sit and reflect. They can make a comfortable fort out of pillows for you to sit on the floor, or gather all the supplies needed around the table!

BE THE CHURCH

Supplies: Cell phone or computer.

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."¹ 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.

Tips for Young Families:

- * Invite your kids to film a short video that you can text to friends or family, sharing messages of love and affirmation. Empower your kids to select the people they want to say hello to and what message they want to share.

READ / *Luke 2:22-40*

Supplies: Bible, pen/pencil (optional).

Reading scripture is the central part of worship. Take a moment to read this week's scripture passage (Luke 2:22-40) about Simeon and Anna—two figures who could not keep silent about the dream unfolding in front of their eyes.

Tips for Young Families:

- * Use a children's bible if you have one!
- * If you have a nativity scene close by, invite your kids 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. Perhaps you might find other figurines or items that can serve as the Anna and Simeon characters.

1 Matthew 18:20. NRSV.

REFLECT

Reflection Prompts for Luke 2:22-40

1. Notice the characters in this story. For each character, imagine what emotions they might be feeling. Which character(s) do you relate to 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 things you have remained silent about? What prevents you from speaking?
4. Who in your life has been an Anna and Simeon for you? What did they speak about, and how did their profession change you?

Reflection Prompts for Young Families

1. The text today speaks of Jesus being presented in the temple. In many ways, this mirrors the ritual of baptizing¹ babies at a young age in worship. If this tradition applies to your family, pull out photos of your child’s baptism² 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 learn about God?
3. Finally, focus on the “now what”? What is your takeaway from the story? What are you charged to do, think, or feel?

1 or dedicating.

2 or dedication.

CREATIVE REFLECTION / *Reading the Poem, Swell*

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 news
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, good news
That we must tell.

—by Sarah Are

JOIN THE CONVERSATION / *Reflective Prayer*

Supplies: Post-It Notes (3 per person), pens/pencils.

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, we invite you 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 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 for and alongside others.

Once you are done with your Post-It Note prayers, place them somewhere where 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 a 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 to 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.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Sarah Are, *Founding Creative Partner of A Sanctified Art*
Sarah (she/her) is the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas. She believes that the Church has a responsibility to open every door to God, so that those of us who are visual, kinesthetic, or relational learners all have equal opportunity to engage God to the fullest of our abilities.



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