

Chosen Home

Gathering

Boxing Day!

Traditionally a day of rest for all those who served Christmas lunch the day before. A day when servants were given a gift and the day off - when the whole community rested.

So before the cricket starts or you settle in to watch the yacht race, as you wake up from your sleep after Christmas dinner, take some time to stop and give thanks.

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **white cloth** or scarf to signify that we are in a time of "celebration".*

If you journal, grab your journal and a pen. Or just grab a pen and some paper.

Pour yourself a drink of your choice and settle in.

You might want to put on some Christmas music to play quietly in the background. Turn off the TV and put your phone on silent.

Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God



Light Candle

We light a candle to centre us and to draw us towards Christ. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Chosen Home
Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Acknowledgement of Country

Across the vast and beautiful land that is now called Australia, indigenous peoples have cared for the earth since time immemorial.

In this place, between the ocean and the mountains, the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have lived in harmony with the land and waters and its flora and fauna.

We give thanks for them and this place.

We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

And we pray that we will learn to walk together and to care for one another and this land in ways that honour our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Prayer

One common psychological practice for clearing our mind and opening space in our hearts is to write a "brain dump." In a brain dump, you write down everything that's on your mind: to-do lists, concerns, worries, things that pop into your subconscious—anything that might distract or pull you away from the here and now.

If you have access to music, choose your favourite Christmas song and put it on. As the music plays, commit to writing down your brain dump prayer until the song ends. If you run out of things to write, give yourself space to listen, and trust that more ideas will come.

When the song is over, put your pencil down and pray the following words:

Holy God,
Even here,
even now,
you are with me.
And so I pray -
hover over this swirl of words that make up a prayer.
Read between the lines.
See what weighs heavy on me.
Know what distracts,
and carry it all.
I am giving it to you.
I am clearing out space.
I am opening myself up
to draw closer to your home. Gratefully I pray,
Amen.

Listening for God's Voice

Reading: Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' ⁴⁹He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Reflect

Read Luke 2:41-52. Give yourself permission to read it two or three times through. During your first read, pay attention to what words stand out. During your second read, pay attention to what emotions stand out. On your third read, pay attention to what actions stand out.

Discuss or journal, using the following questions and observations:

1. Jesus stays behind in the temple when his parents head home. Why do you think Jesus stays?
2. In this story, we get a glimpse of Jesus coming into his own self. He is on his own, listening, and asking questions. And “all who heard him were amazed at his answers” (Luke 2:47). What spaces have allowed you to be who you are truly called to be? Where do you feel the freedom to come into your own being? List those places. Reflect on what makes those spaces unique.
3. Jesus refers to the temple as a house - God’s house. In your experience, has the church been a home for you? If so, how? If not, why not? What steps need to be taken to allow all churches to reflect the same welcome, safety, and security of a loving home?

Optional Questions for Kids

4. This story is of Jesus spending time at church. What is your favourite part of our church? What are some of your favourite memories at church?
5. When Jesus is in the temple, he reads the Bible. Do you have a favourite Bible story?
6. Jesus tells his parents he likes being at the temple because it is God’s house. What is the best part about being home? How do you feel when you are home?

Responding

Share This Good News

Worship calls us outside ourselves to connect with others and the world. To close the service, think of a person or a place that has helped you be your true self or has made you feel at home, just as Jesus was being his true self and felt at home in the temple. Send them a text, write them a letter to mail, or call them to thank them for their grace and welcome.

Closing

Close this sacred time by reading and reflecting upon the following poem. Blow out your candles. Close your journal. Allow yourself to re-enter the world refreshed, renewed, and grateful.

Chosen Home

There are a million ways to choose a home.

We choose to make it work.

We hang a wreath on the door of our shoebox apartment.

We invite company over.

We ask, “Would you like coffee with that?”

We choose to make the most of it.
We take up watercoloring or kickboxing and show up to class.
We mostly embarrass ourselves, but we were there.

We choose to not go it alone.
We sign up to volunteer and make ourselves a nametag.
We slide weary bones into weary church pews.
We shake hands and say hello.
We let the music cover us, like a blanket, or a prayer.

We choose to love what we have.
We look in the mirror and speak kindly to our body.
We buy flowers at the market and arrange them in jelly jars.

There are a million ways to choose a home.
So like Jesus in the temple
who chose to stay,
who chose to speak,
who took up space because he knew he was home,
I invite you to do the same.

Put your body
where your soul feels alive.
Give yourself permission
to take up space there.
Stay, as long as it takes.
Return, as often as you need.

There are a million ways to choose a home.
Choose wisely. We need you here.

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed