

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church

Shobonier, Illinois

Christmas 2C

January 4, 2026

Luke 2:40-52

My Father's Business

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. . . . Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." [And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.] (Luke 2:41-42, 46-50 ESV)

In the name of Jesus, the only Savior of the world,

After Jesus was presented in the temple when He was 40 days old, having "performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth." (Luke 2:39). The next thing St. Luke tells us occurs 12 years later as we hear in today's Gospel.

According to their custom, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Don't miss that! Their custom was to go to church to celebrate the greatest event in Israel's history, the greatest act of delivery to date. According to the Law, all males were required to do this each year, but it wasn't uncommon that women would attend too. Thus, Jesus is keeping the law even in this. Notice as well that Jesus was twelve years old.

Oh, that our children, of any and all ages, would so willingly accompany us to God's house to celebrate His deliverance.

Now, after the days were fulfilled, it was common that people would return home as a group. Since Jesus was twelve years old, it would have been normal that He would travel with others and meet up with His parents at the predetermined place. But when Joseph and Mary stopped for the night, they couldn't find Jesus. So they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him.

After three days, they found Him in the temple "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." Can you imagine such a thing? A twelve-year-old sitting with pastors, even seminary professors, talking with them, and it wasn't about the weather or sports. They asked Him questions and He asked them questions. "All who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." I would think so! That a twelve-year-old child would be able to engage them with such knowledge and wisdom was amazing. Then, of course, He is the Son of God, Wisdom incarnate, but they didn't know that.

Once Joseph and Mary found Him, Mary asked Him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And Jesus answers, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And, it says, "they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them."

While Mary had pondered much in her heart, she seems to have forgotten who Jesus is and where He came from. How could this be? How could she forget the angelic announcement that she would conceive and bear a Son who would be God in the flesh? How could she forget all the events surrounding His birth? How could Joseph forget the angelic announcement to Him about Mary, and that Son she would bear would save His people from their sins? How could they forget Simeon's words when Jesus was presented in the temple? Perhaps day-to-day living and their son's growth and development lead them to forget who He really is and what He had come to do.

So, it's not totally surprising that they didn't understand. They didn't understand that Jesus was exactly where He was supposed to be, for they had forgotten who He was. They

needed to learn that their Son had a higher calling, a divine, heaven-sent mission. After all, Jesus was “theirs” only on loan. He had to be about His heavenly Father’s business.

Yes, Jesus had to be about His Father’s business, and His Father’s business was the salvation of sinners. Jesus was in the temple, the house of God. Being God’s Son, where else would He be? He was with the teachers, who would call for His death about twenty years later. He displayed wisdom and understanding. How could He not, since He is Wisdom incarnate?

Still, along with Joseph and Mary, we are confronted with the mystery of the incarnation. Here we must bow in silence and in reverence. This is the mystery of the person of Christ, both true God and true man, in one person. According to His divine nature, the Son of God possesses all wisdom from eternity. According to His human nature, the incarnate Christ–Jesus, the son of Mary–can grow in stature and increase in wisdom. And yet there are not two Christs but one Christ.

Thus, Jesus displayed divine wisdom, not just human wisdom, when He conversed with those teachers in the temple. He was explaining the truth of God’s Word as though He came straight from the side of God–because He did! Christ is God’s wisdom; He is God Himself, the Son of God come in the flesh. He makes God known to us.

And this is all part of why the eternal Son of God came in the flesh. Christ came to be one of us, to be our brother, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law–and that’s us. (Gal. 4:4). Only in this way, by Christ taking on our flesh and taking on our sins, could God redeem us from the curse that we were under. Jesus took on our flesh, so that He could be our perfect substitute. And in this way Christ did redeem us. He has saved us and set us free! This was His Father’s business.

Think of it! Jesus, your Brother, came and lived as a little baby and as a twelve-year-old boy and as a fully grown adult. He took your sins and the sins of every child and adolescent and adult, and He carried those sins to the cross. There the Son of God died for you and for me and for all. His holy precious blood has sufficient power to atone for the sins of all mankind. Think of it: Only a man, a human being in the flesh, could die. And only God could rescue us from the

death-trap we were in. Thus, our Savior needed to be both true God and true man—which Jesus is! This is the unfathomable, wonderful mystery of the incarnation of Christ!

And having defeated sin, death, and the devil by His death on the cross, this same Jesus is risen from the dead and ruling all things for the sake of His Church. Through the Church's gospel ministry of Word and Sacrament, our ascended Lord Jesus now saves the forty-day-old baby, the twelve-year-old adolescent, and the fully grown adult—whether you're thirty years old or fifty or seventy-five or older. All those who are baptized and believe in Him shall be saved. (Mark 16:16). You can count on it! Jesus saves you for eternity. Eternal life is yours. "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33).

Dear friends, Jesus was about His Father's business precisely in living and dying and rising again for you. He did this so that you may have life in Him. And now in your seeking and finding Jesus here in God's house—as you listen to Him, as He speaks words of wisdom to you here—the amazing thing is that now you also will increase in wisdom. Regularly being here with Jesus in God's house, every Sunday of this new year 2026, you will increase in wisdom. You will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. You will behold God in the person of Christ. And, like Mary His mother, you will treasure up all these things in your heart.

Thus, we, too, will be about our Father's business. We, too, will be found in God's House, attending to His wisdom. We, too, will attend to the reading and teaching of His Word. And why would we not do that? We have seen our Father at work as Oscar was rescued from the clutches of sin, death, and the devil and made a child of God through Holy Baptism. By God's grace in Christ, he too will grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. God grant that we are all about our Father's business every day of our lives, and together dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener