

Worship on November 29th, 2020

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture Matthew 20:1-16
- Sermon: Hang in there!

We Respond

- Prayer for the people
- Offering (Offertory music – Paul T.)

We Serve

- Benediction
- Postlude (Paul T.)

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us through this video today. This worship is for Sunday, November 29th, 2020. Let us give our hearts to the Lord our God as we worship him through this hour. May God speak to our hearts this hour.

. I will be away from pastoral care for two weeks. I will resume my home visit when I am back on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020. However, because of Pandemic, I am staying home. If there's any urgent pastoral need, let me know.

. While I am away, two different speakers will share messages for us. On Dec. 6th, my friend, brother Jon who has served in cross-cultural missions for 10 years among Muslims, will share the heart of God. And on Dec. 13, Dr. Daniel Wong, my formal professor from Tyndale, will share the love of God for us.

. I will be back on December 20th, I will be back with few important changes. We will begin live-stream from Dec. 20. I will circulate my worship script and the Zoom link through email. If you were getting the written script, you will continue to receive it and if you were worshipping at your convenient time through YouTube Video, you are able to continue do so. I will post the video after the worship.

. Online Communion on Dec. 20 – please prepare your own elements: bread and wine or grape juice.

. Bible study from Thursday, Jan. 21st, 2021 @ 7pm – via ZOOM – link will sent through email.

. Marion Monkman passed away on Sunday, November 23rd. Her Committal Service is on Monday, November 30th, @ 1 o'clock, at Aurora Cemetery. Please pray for the family.
. Thank you for your offerings. May God bless and multiply our gifts to him.

As we come into the presence of God, let us calm down our hearts and minds and focus on our Lord.

Call To Worship

Our Call to Worship today is from Hebrews 12:28, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe." (Let us pray)

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Creator God, You made the heavens and the earth. You set the planets in their courses, lit the sun with fire, caused the stars to shine and the world to turn. Life springs up wherever your breath moves. In Jesus Christ, you brought hope into a world full of fear and despair. You sent your Holy Spirit to enliven our hope and guide us on the way. We are waiting now in these anxious times for the world to be made new. We wait for new life, and we wait with deep hope.

Redeeming God, We confess that waiting is difficult for us. We want to be comfortable in this festive season, but the pandemic keeps us anxious and unhappy. We complain about our own troubles and close our eyes to the suffering of others, Forgive us for ignoring truths we do not want to see. Forgive us for seeking our own comfort at the cost of others. Give us eyes to perceive the great need within our community. Give us eyes to see the deep need within our own lives. Turn our hearts to you again and again.

This time, we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our
sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us
from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers at St. Andrew's, the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people. There is nothing we have done, nothing we will ever do, that will separate us from the love of God made known in Jesus Christ. This love is ours! So live in love as forgiven and forgiving people. Thanks be to God!

Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the illumination of the Lord.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of grace, you speak words of hope in the midst of our fear. Send us your Holy Spirit to open our ears to that hope. Guide us to interpret the signs of these times through the lens of your grace, so that we may find comfort and courage in your promises through Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; 4 and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. 5 When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. 6 And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ 7 They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ 9 When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12 saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ 13 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

This is the Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Title: Hang in there!

The title of today’s sermon is “Hang in there!”

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. The usual theme of today is HOPE. Jesus came to the world as the light shining in a dark place. This is exactly where I am going with today’s message.

Let us have hope in the Light of the world who shine the glorious light upon us while we were still in the darkness.

Today’s story is very interesting, isn’t it?

There was a landowner who hired workers day by day or hour by hour. And there were job seekers who did not have usual work. Let us think about who they are.

Landowner. If you were to own a vineyard and need people to harvest, who would you hire? What would you see when you hire a worker? Because it is somewhat physically demanding work, you would check their health condition first. I would hire someone who are fit and healthy looking. Probably they would be called early in the morning. They would be so proud of themselves.

And the landowner hired few people and went back to his vineyard. But, he came back to the marketplace where unemployed people were hanging out. After few hours, around 9 o’clock, he

came back and hired few more. Who would you choose among many people waiting to be chosen? Again, healthy, strong, powerful people. The second hired group would be confident about themselves as well. 'I am like the second best.. not bad..'

The landowner came back every 3 hours. He came back at 12 o'clock and hired few more. He came back at 3 o'clock and hired few more.

And about the day's end, at 5 o'clock, he came back. This time, he asked question. **V6 "Why are you standing here idle all day?" V7, They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.'**

So, the landowner hired them also.

Then, who are the workers? First of all, they do not have regular jobs such as bakers, carpenters, or construction workers. They do not have special ability. It is possible for us to say that they did not have enough money. They had to work to earn their food day by day. So, if we were picked at first, we would be very happy that we made the day!! I can eat after this work!

Early in the morning, few were called and many were left behind. The chosen were happy and proud of themselves, but the unchosen would be disappointing and somewhat discouraging.

But, after few hours, the landowner came back, how would they feel? They would be hopeful. Again, few were chosen and more were left behind. At noon and at 3 o'clock, same thing happened. Now, there were few who were not chosen.

If you were not chosen all day long, what would you do at 3 o'clock? Would you go back home and rest? Would you NOT give up? Who would hire a worker at 3 o'clock? In few hours, day is over. But, some were still stayed. I am not too sure that they were hopeful to be called by landowner so that they could work and earn some money. Maybe, they did not know what to do and they did not have some place to go. So, they just waited till the day was over, helplessly.

V6 and 7 describe the situation. The landowner came to them and ask at 5 o'clock. Why are you still here? What are you doing? Why didn't you go home? They answered, "no one hired us. That's why we are still here.

The landowner hired them at 5 o'clock, near the day's end. What would they think as going to work near the end of the day?

About one hour later, the landowner called them all. From the people who came in last, he gave out their wage. The people came at 5 o'clock stood up without much expectation. The landowner gave each person ONE DENARIUS. That was one full day's wage. They were puzzled, but happily went back home. The group who came at 3 o'clock received ONE DENARIUS, people who came at noon received ONE DENARIUS, people who came at 9 AM received ONE DENARIUS, and lastly the first group who were called early in the morning and worked all day long received ONE DENARIUS.

As they waited for their turn, the first group would want more than ONE DENARIUS because they worked so much more than other people. But, ONE DENARIUS ONLY!!

“Why ONLY ONE DENARIUS!?!?!?” They complained to the landowner.

But, they remembered that they agreed to receive ONE DENARIUS when they were hired early in the morning. The landowner told them, I am doing no wrong to you.

What does this story tell us? What lesson can we take home today!?

If we can be chosen early in the morning all the time, this is a sad story for you. It's just a story of a weird and not fair master.

However, I believe no one can be in the first place all the time. No one can always be successful. There are always unexpected events in our lives.

Let's say that we are the workers who desperately need to work day by day to make our living. If we are all by ourselves, it could be better. But, if we have dependent family members, then we don't have any choice, but to be hopeful to be hired by anybody to feed the family. That is the reason why they could not leave the marketplace, helplessly, with or without hope...

Matthew 18:12-14. 12 What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Famous story of a lost sheep. Would you go to find one lost sheep or keep the 99 safe sheep? I might just keep the safe 99 and forget about 1. But, that is the view point from the shepherd. If we become the one lost sheep, we are totally hopeless. When the Bible tells us that the shepherd leaves 99 and looks for one lost sheep, the shepherd has a trust on 99 sheep that they can take care of themselves. If we say that we have 10 children and one is lost, what do we do? Well, I still have 9 children, so I should take good care of these safe 9 children??? NO NOBODY will do that!

What if we are sheep? When we become the one lost sheep, we are dead without shepherd coming for us. We should wait for our miserable death helplessly.

Isn't the people who were hanging out till 5 o'clock the same as the lost sheep? They don't know what to do. They don't have anywhere to go. They don't know how to support their own lives. They have no way to feed their hungry babies. Then, what do they do? They just hang in there. They just wait for someone to help them.

When Jesus came to earth, the gospel of John describes our situation. **John 1:10-11, “10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.”**

Jesus came to us, but we did not know who he was. He came to his own people, but we did not accept him. In short, we were in darkness. We were hopeless. We were helpless. We did not know what to do and we did not know who we are and we did not know where to go.

We were totally hopeless and helpless and, at the same time, we were totally ignorant.

Few days ago, I read today's scripture and wondered why they stayed till 5 o'clock. That's how today's sermon began. They waited until someone came for them. This reminded me Jesus came to us. On this Advent season, as we wait on Jesus Christ, let us remember the helpless workers who waited till the end of the day. In their hopelessness, they did not know what to do. Maybe, we are like them. As John passage tells us, we were in darkness. We were in hopelessness. BUT, God will help us for sure. God will come for us for sure. So, if you feel like you are the lost sheep, hang in there, God is on his way. If you feel like it's almost 5 o'clock, God will come and call you, so hang in there. Trust his faithfulness and his love and grace.

Let us pray.

Gracious Father God, thank you for your love. You see us and you hear us. You know us. You know our situations. We are like the lost sheep. We are like the workers who waited until 5 o'clock. We are desperate for you. We are hopeless without you. We cannot have hope because we don't know what to do and where to do. But, you are shouting us your love. You are coming to us with love. You are pounding our hearts and trying to get our attention. You are telling us to HANG IN THERE because you are on the way. Thank you. Sometimes, we cannot have hope. Many times, it is easier to give in. But, you are with us telling us HANG IN THERE. Because of you, we can have hope. Because of you, we can hang in there. Help us continue to be with you and keep our eyes and hearts to you alone. Thank you for being with us. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Let us continue to pray for the people of God.

Prayer for the people

God, you are our Hope. You are our Help. You are our Rock. You are our Power. You are our life. You are all that we need. Thank you for being with us and thank you for holding us. Make us be like you. As your children, as the people who were created in your own image and characteristics, we want to be like you. Help us show your love and greatness to our surroundings through our lives.

We are very grateful that we have Martha's Table in our church and in our community. Welcoming Arms Aurora is doing amazing works for the needy. Heavenly Father, thank you for all the volunteers. They are like the workers who were called early in the morning. They are giving their lives and their energy and time and resources for your glory. Through their service, let many people be blessed and let your glory fall upon their lives and their services.

We thank you for our church. In the midst of this difficult time, there are people who are showing their love and care within our community. There are people in need of prayers and care. And there are many who cares for them with their phone calls, grocery shopping, and prayers. Let us continue to be the body of Christ loving and caring for each other.

We also thank you so much for each other's support within our church. We are in the process of elder election. We are very excited to have more leaders for your church. As our church make careful steps toward having more elders, open our hearts and minds, so the congregation welcomes them and bears each other's weaknesses with patience. Also, we pray for the soon to be new elders. Prepare their hearts and let your love grow in their lives and hearts, so their cups overflow and make positive influences in their surroundings.

As we wait on the coming of Christ, this Advent season is very hopeful and exciting time. However, because of the Pandemic, it is quieter and somewhat more careful for the safety. Keep everyone safe and healthy in this difficult time. And help us be hopeful for the time overcoming this Corona Virus. And help us be more mindful of our resources and environment. You called us stewards of your creation. And we are to hand down this earth to our children and children's children. Let us be mindful of being good stewards of your creation and help us be mindful of the next generation.

Through our lives, we pray that your glory be reflected. Be lifted up and be praised. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time of offering. We enter Advent today amid the advertising of the season, tempting us to buy gifts, suggesting new desires to satisfy our longing. But God has given us the love that truly satisfies in Christ Jesus. And so we offer whatever we have to share, knowing these gifts can fill the deepest hungers in the world God loves and bring hope to lives in despair. Let the Lord's offering be received.

Offering – Paul's music

Offering prayer: God of hope, we offer you our gifts with our thanks that your love never goes out of style, your presence is never beyond our budgets. Bless what we bring with your Spirit and enrich their impact in a world with desperate needs. May we shine as symbols of the unending hope we have in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Friend. Amen.

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus is our HOPE. Jesus is the reason that we can HANG IN THERE today and tomorrow. Let us have Jesus in our hearts and live our daily lives in HOPE.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

1. Do I have any experience of hopelessness?
2. How did the time pass? OR how did I overcome?
3. Jesus backs me up. Jesus is my hope. What does this mean to my everyday life?