

Worship on December 20th, 2020

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP# 119 – Hope is a star
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture Luke 1:46b-55
- Sermon: Favor on the lowliness of his servant
- The Lord's Supper

We Respond

- Offering
- Offertory Hymn – BOP# 159 – Oh Come all ye faithful

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, December 20th, 2020. It is the last Sunday of Advent of this year. Let us worship God wholeheartedly.

. In this circumstance of lockdown, I don't think it is a good idea to continue personal visitation. Instead of in-person visit, I will give you phone calls or let us meet via Zoom. If you want to talk to me, please feel free to reach me.

. I appreciate two speakers who led worship while I was away. Thank you Brother Jon and the Rev. Dr. Daniel Wong.

. The Purpose Driven Life Bible study will start on Thursday, Jan. 21st, 2021 @ 7pm – via ZOOM – link will sent through email. If the majority of participants need the book, we might be able to consider buying it together. So, let me know.

. Thank you for your offerings. God may be glorified through our gifts, and us and purify us and multiply our gifts.

. During today's worship, there will be The Lord's Table. Please prepare your own elements. It doesn't have to be exact same as we used to have at church. It could be piece of cereal and cup of water. The whole point of Communion is to celebrate us being united through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Responsive Call to Worship

One: God comes to us in the cry of a child:

All: Let every heart prepare a welcome.

One: God comes to us in the whisper of a loving mother:

All: Let every heart prepare an embrace.

One: God comes to us, abides in us:

All: Let every heart prepare to receive the Christ.

One: Let us worship the God who has come, who is here and who will come again.

Praise song – BOP #119 – Hope is a star

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of majesty and mercy, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, you are powerful, you are holy, and you are loving. You come among us not as a warrior or tyrant, but as a child, new life born among us and for us. And so we come to worship you this day, trusting your wisdom with Joseph, pondering your mystery with Mary. We offer you our love for all that you have been, all that you are, and all that you will be, one God, holy and loving, now and forever, Amen.

God of mystery and mercy, you came to be with us and offer us new life in Christ, and yet we often stray from your side. You came to offer us love, but we confess that we can be stubborn and selfish in the ways we live. You came to reconcile all people, but we confess that we often resist repairing relationships and so remain divided. Forgive who we have been, amend who we are, and direct who we shall be through Jesus Christ who reaches out to us from the manger and the cross.

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, Words from Christina Rossetti fit the Advent theme for today: "Love came down at Christmas; Love all lovely, love divine. Love shall be our token, Love for plea and gift and sign." We meet God's gift of love in the Christ Child, whose forgiveness restores us for whatever lies ahead, giving us reason to rejoice. Thanks be to God for this hope!

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

Prayer for Illumination:

Living, loving God, the stories of this season are familiar, so open our minds and hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit to hear your Word afresh. Make us attentive to Jesus, the Living Word, and gift he brings to our midst. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: Luke 1:46b-55

“46b My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. 52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

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

Title: Favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Thank you all for allowing me to have two weeks' vacation. I had great time with kids at home. Because of lockdown, we won't be able to go anywhere. I was totally stuck with my loving children and it was great and at the same time very tiring. I wanted to come back so much. Coming back, I feel so much better. Two weeks was not long, but it was enough time for me to miss this worship. And today, we are finally interacting virtually. I longed for it so much! Let's see how it will go.

Today is the last Sunday of Advent. There are different traditions celebrating different themes of the weeks. Most common weekly theme is Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Christ. Sometimes, Love comes before Joy. One tradition remembers NOTHINGNESS of Christ on the last Sunday of Advent. I found it was very inspiring and interesting.

The title of today's sermon is “Favor on the lowliness of his servant.”

The Scripture is the praise of Mary. She found the love of her life and she had a plan to get married to him. But, one day, unexpectedly, the Holy Spirit came to her and made her pregnant.

We all know her story. But, I never questioned her age. I googled The average age of first-time giving birth. In 1960's it was 26. It lowered down to 24 in 1970 and it began to go up gradually. 26 in 1983, 28 in 1992, 28.6 in 1995, like this manner, it is slowly going up to 29.9 in 2018. This shows the cultural and historical norms. In 1970, many mothers had their first babies in their mid 20's. But, these days, many moms have their first babies when they are 29 years old. Then, what was cultural norm of the time of Mary? Many resources agree upon that they had their first babies when they were teenagers. They were only age between 15 to 17 years old. Mary also was about that age.

I cannot imagine to face such huge change and challenge in my life. My parents told me that we were leaving Korea a month before we left. I was 17 years old. I had no idea that we were going to come to Canada and I had plans. First time, I told my family, "Okay. Bye bye. I will stay here. I got my plans. I will visit you in Canada." Cultural norm is different from now and Mary's time. But, changing the courses of teenagers' plan is extremely hard all the time.

What would you say to the Lord if you were Mary?

"I need to get married to Joseph. I found the love of my life. I will give birth to your son after I am having my first baby with Joseph!"

"Not me! If I have a baby, what about my love, Joseph? What about my marriage? What about my life???"

That should be typical answers, if you think about your life seriously.

But, Mary responded differently. Luke 1:28-38: 28 And he (the angel of the Lord) came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

How could she do it? It was a BOMB. Her life would never be the same. But, the angel called her "favored one" twice. She was the "Favored one" of God. What makes her favored one to God? Her attitude! V38, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

"Let your will be done. I am only your servant. Have me. Use me." This was Mary.

When she sings praise to God, she refers herself, the lowly. Her humble heart made God found favor from her.

The whole world is shut down because of Corona virus. The whole world is stopped.

What is our attitude experiencing this world wide disaster? How are we managing our lives?

How do we worship God in the midst of this chaos?

Where is our God? What is our God speaking to us?

This is the questions we can think of.

Then, what would God ask in this different and difficult situation for us?

Who is ready to obey me? Who is ready to listen to my voice?

Who is humbling down their hearts, so I will be glorified? Who is putting me first over their own interests and lives?

WHO IS TODAY'S MARY?

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that there will be another Jesus. What I am saying that Who will be as humble as Mary? Who is ready to obey God's word?

Who is ready to embrace hardship for Christ? Who will sacrifice themselves for God?

I love Christmas. I love music. I love this atmosphere of party everywhere. I love sales from all the stores. I love everyone being friendlier than usual. And I love Jesus Christ came to us in the most lowly place and in the most humble form. The little baby Jesus could not do anything! He's just a helpless baby. The God who created the whole universe with words became a helpless baby. Can you imagine God becomes a helpless baby?! That's what Christmas is!

You know I have one helpless baby at home. Benjamin, who is 8 month old tomorrow. He tried to pick a small snack, finger food. And he tried to put them into his mouth. Not easy. He's making so much mess. He's frustrated. Imagine Jesus holds a small piece of finger food and tries to put it into his mouth, like any usual babies.

We need to learn lowliness from Mary and Jesus on Christmas. What do we see from baby Jesus? What do we see from teenager mom Mary?

Christmas is the season of hope, peace, joy, and love. How do we have hope? How do we have peace? How do we have joy and love? Through Mary's humble obedience. Through Jesus' humble sacrifice.

Be hopeful, be joyful, enjoy peace and love in our lives. ALSO, let us remember and learn lowliness of Mary and Jesus.

Let us pray.

Merry Christmas. It is great to say that. We are grateful that Christ came to us. Christ came for us. Christ lowered himself for us. Christ lived in this world for us. He experienced the same courses of growing from baby. How great love and sacrifice it is for us. Thank you Jesus. You are awesome! And we love you. You restored our brokenness and you gave us life. And thank you for the example of Mary. She humbled herself and you liked it. Let us learn from Mary. On this Christmas season, let us focus on you and remember how Mary humbled herself and you as well, so we try to humble ourselves before you. We are glad that we could worship you together virtually. Be praise and honoured through our worship. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Supper (Virtual Communion)

As I announced, we will gather around the Lord's Table together, now. Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Those who come to me will never be hungry, and those who believe in me will never be thirsty. No one who comes to me will I drive away.

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

*(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) (Please say **BOLD print together**)*

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

L:

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You. Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, You formed us into Your image, and breathed into us the breath of life. When we sinned and turned away from you, Your love remained steadfast.

Your faithfulness is with us as we face difficulties or hardships. In the midst of our lockdown, we still give you praise and worship. When we walk through this hard time, we know that you are still faithful and you still lead us with your love and guidance. We join with the whole creation to lift up our hearts in joyful praise.

(Sanctus) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: Holy are You, Lord. And Blessed is Your Son Jesus Christ. When You gave Him to save us from our sin, Your Spirit led Him into the wilderness, where He fasted and tested for his

ministry. When He suffered and died on the cross for our sin, You raised Him to life, presented Him alive to the apostles and exalted Him at Your right hand. By the baptism of His suffering, death, and resurrection, You gave birth to Your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. Now, when we, Your people, celebrate Christmas, fill our hearts with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

And so, in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in unison with Christ's offering for us AS WE PROCLAIM THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

BREAD -- On the night in which he gave Himself up for us, he took the bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread, gave it to His disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

WINE – When the supper was over He took the cup, gave thanks to God, gave it to His disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Communion of the people (Partake all together) Prepare the elements and take them.

"The body of Christ given for you." (Let us take it)

"The blood of Christ shed for you." (Let us drink it)

Prayer after Communion

Glorious God, as we take Your body and blood, pour out Your Holy Spirit on us. Renew Your Lordship in us. Let every single cell consisting us cry out to You, that You are Lord. And let every drop of our blood in us shout out to You, that I am Yours. You are the Christ You are the King You are the Lord You are the Master. By Your power and might, with Your Holy Spirit, remind us who You are and help us know who we are and where we should stand as Your people. Holy God, by Your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at Your heavenly banquet.

As Your people, let us shine Your light. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time of offering. The fourth Sunday in Advent celebrates God's gift of love. At this time of year, we give gifts to express our love. So let your offering today be a sign of your love for God and those in God's world who need our love to brighten dark days and difficult times. Let the Lord's offering be received.

Offering – BOP #159 – Oh Come, all ye faithful

Offering prayer: God of love and joy, God of peace and hope, we are so grateful for these Advent gifts, which bring comfort and courage even in the most challenging times. Receive our gifts as tokens of our love and loyalty. Bless them with your grace so that they will bring love to those who need it so much this year. Bless our lives, too, so that we shine with your love, blessing others in the name of Jesus, our friend and Saviour. Amen.

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Who is ready to listen to God? Who is ready to be obedient to what God speaks to us? Let us learn lowliness from Mary and let us learn humble heart from Jesus.

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. What is my priority these days? Where is God in my list?
2. Being humble, what does it mean to me?
3. What area of my life can I practice humbleness, like Mary or Jesus?