

Worship on January 31st, 2021

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP# 373 – Jesus Loves Me This I Know
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Isaiah 46:3-4
- Sermon: You are mine

We Respond

- Prayer for the people of God
- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – BOP# 27 – As the Deer

We Serve

- Benediction
- Postlude (Paul T.)

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us live right now and those who are worshipping God through this video. This is Jan. 31, 2021. Time flies. Today is the last day of the first month of 2021. In the midst of this pandemic, I hope and pray that you are safe and well. May God bless you and keep you.

. Sad news today. Don Wilson was passed away on last Friday, Jan. 22nd, 2021 due to COVID 19. May the peace of God be with Vera and the family.

. For Bible study or sharing thoughts with discussion questions, please stay after the worship.

. Next week, on Feb. 7, we are going to support our National Church for the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development. It is helping vulnerable communities around the world. So, we will worship together with the video provided by Presbyterian Church in Canada.

. Our usual first week of the month communion will be on the week after PWS&D support week.

. Thank you for your offerings. Come to the Lord just as you are with what you have. He will use us and our gifts.

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's praise endures forever, **All: and eternity meets us in fleeting moments.**

One: God's praise endures forever, **All: and glory bursts into ordinary activities.**

One: God's praise endures forever, **All: and faith is steadfast even in the midst of change and challenge.**

One: Let us worship the Eternal God who calls us to this time and place.

Praise song – BOP# 373 – Jesus Loves Me This I Know

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Loving God, you are the wisdom behind all mystery, the glory hidden in all that makes us wonder, the strength in all that nourishes. When our eyes are open and our spirits alert, we experience your glory around us. Scattered throughout the earth, smouldering deep inside us, radiating in acts of love, sparks of your glory reside. Deep is our joy each time we encounter you. So we gather in worship to express our reverence and praise. Together we celebrate the good we have experienced, knowing it all comes from your hand, Gracious God.

And yet, we are strangely resistant to your grace. There are so many times we turn from you, O God. We forget that food for body and soul comes from your goodness. We focus on what troubles us and ignore the help and healing you offer. We seek wisdom and meaning in the wrong places. We confess we can be cruel, harming the earth, other living beings, and one another. Forgive us. Open our eyes to your wonder and wisdom. Give us the courage to live lives that overflow with your love for the sake of Christ who loves us.

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 in Christ at St. Andrew's, Hear the good news: Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone away. A new life has begun. Thanks be to God that we can make a new start, forgiven and set free.

Passing the Peace

Prayer for Illumination: Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the wisdom of the Lord. Source of Wisdom, still our minds in these moments of listening, so that we may be fully present and attuned to your life-giving Word this day. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 46:3-4

3 Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; 4 even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. (NRSV)

3 *“Family of Jacob, listen to me! All you people from Israel who are still alive, listen! I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. 4 Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will take care of you. I made you and will take care of you. I will carry you and save you. (NCV – New Century Version)*

“Listen to me, family of Jacob, everyone that’s left of the family of Israel. I’ve been carrying you on my back from the day you were born, And I’ll keep on carrying you when you’re old. I’ll be there, bearing you when you’re old and gray. I’ve done it and will keep on doing it, carrying you on my back, saving you. (MSG)

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: YOU ARE MINE

Today’s sermon title is “You are mine.”

This is the first paragraph of today’s reading from the book.

You are not an accident. Your birth was no mistake or mishap, and your life is no fluke of nature. Your parents may not have planned you, but God did. He was not at all surprised by your birth. In fact, he expected it. Long before you were conceived by your parents, you were conceived in the mind of God. He thought of you first. It is not fate, nor chance, nor luck, nor coincidence that you are breathing at this very moment. You are alive because God wanted to create you! The Bible says, “The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.” (Psalm 138:8)

God first planned you, God first loved you, and God is holding you and walking with you, and God will fulfill the purpose of your life to the end.

Our lives are full of God. We are totally surrounded by God.

St. Patrick writes, “Christ with me,/Christ before me,/Christ behind me,/Christ in me,/Christ beneath me,/Christ above me,/Christ on my right,/Christ on my left,/Christ when I lie down,/Christ when I sit down,/Christ when I arise,/Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,/Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,/Christ in every eye that sees me,/Christ in every ear that hears me.”

We live our lives, but everywhere we go, there is God.

Rick Warren, the author of the book, titled this chapter, “You Are Not an Accident.” This chapter encourages us. God wants us to rise up and stand firm, and have confidence in our hearts. There might be people who are down. There might be people who cannot have hope. There might be people who think they are not worthy. There might be people who are never loved. There might be people whose lives are meaningless. And there are people who do not live meaningful life. There are people who don’t know their purposes of their lives. To them, God declares, ***“I know you inside and out, I know every bone in your body. I know exactly how you were made, bit by***

bit, how you were sculpted from nothing into something.” (Psalm 139:15) Do you know how I know it? **“Long before I laid down earth’s foundations, I had you in my mind, had settled on you as the focus of my love.”** (Ephesians 1:4a paraphrase). Because I made you and I loved you, I know all about you, through and through, inside and out. Also, I want you to know that I have a special purpose for you. Wherever you are and whatever you are facing, I love you and I want you to be confident because of my love. I want you to enjoy me in my presence because you are mine.

God’s love surrounds us. Many times in our lives, we don’t think about God often. We easily forget the love of God for us. If you have a little baby, would you pour out your love on that baby? Why? Because it’s your baby whom you love and cherish. Imagine a baby or remember the time your children were little babies. That’s who we are to our loving and faithful Father God. So, have confidence in your life, not because of what you have or what you’ve done, but because of our Father’s love for us.

When thinking about the perfect love of our faithful Father God, I have a question about people with disabilities deep down in my heart. The author of the book writes, “God knew that those two individuals possessed exactly the right genetic makeup to create the “custom you” he had in mind. They had the DNA God wanted to make you.”

My son has a chromosome deletion. Humans are made up with 46 chromosomes. And each chromosome has three pairs of strings. But, if we say someone has a chromosome deletion, this means one of the chromosome has only two pairs, and one pair is short. So, my son’s chromosome deletion causes him to have developmental delay in size and slow in learning. My wife and I were told about this baby during the pregnancy. During pregnancy, there are few important scans. One is called NT scan. By the thickness of the neck, doctors can find out what kinds of diseases a baby will have. Doctor told us that our baby had a chromosome problem and they were not sure what this deletion would bring to our baby. We met genetic specialists number of times before the child’s birth. Knowing that our baby will have a problem for sure, doctors gave us an option to stop pregnancy. It was that early. But, we firmly believe that the life is from God. Thankfully, we went through all the pregnancy process safely. So, there’s our lovely John.

In the Bible, there are people who were born blind, people could not walk from birth, or some physical disabilities. According to this book, God has purposes for the people who are with those disabilities.

I wondered if we can say, “it’s not fair for them.” But, at the same time, on the other hand, God is the potter. He decides. He has the authority, not us.

Apostle Paul prayed to God three times to heal his sickness. He frequently had seizure attack. During his preaching, sometimes, his seizure attack came. He prayed to God, but God answered no. But, God added this famous statement. **“My grace is sufficient for you.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)**

This means, like today’s scripture, “you are mine. I will take care of you from your birth to your last breath.” So, God is saying to Paul, “Don’t worry! I will pour out my grace upon you, so your sickness won’t hinder you to accomplish your life’s purpose for me. I will fulfill my purpose for you. My grace is sufficient for you.”

We all have complains about our own honest selves. But, learn from the answer of God to Paul.

Is his grace sufficient for you?

Come back to God and remain in his presence. **Romans 12:3 says, “The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us.”**

I will end my sermon with a poem by Russell Kelfer

You are who you are for a reason. / You are part of an intricate plan. /
You are a precious and perfect unique design, / called God's special woman or man.

You look like you look for a reason. / Our God made no mistake. /
He knit you together within the womb, / You are just what he wanted to make.

The parents you had were the ones he chose, / And no matter how you may feel, /
They were custom-designed with God's plan in mind, / And they bear the Mater's seal.

No, that trauma you faced was not easy. / And God wept that it hurt you so;
But it was allowed to shape your heart. / So that into his likeness you'd grow.

You are who you are for a reason, / You've been formed by the Master's rod.
You are who you are, beloved, / because there is a God.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, thank you for your love. Many times, we try to take charge of our lives. We hold on to our lives with our own power. But, you are saying to us, “YOU ARE MINE. I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.” What a great love and privilege for us. We lay down our burden of our lives and all the stress we have caused by our life's problems to you. That relief is what you want from us. Help us always to lean on you with our lives. You are an awesome God. Thank you for being our God. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Precious and loving Father God, as we come to you with our prayers, fill our hearts and lives with your presence, so our hearts and prayers become align with yours.

We pray for Don Wilson's family. After 3 weeks COVID battle, Don was called to your side. Please give your peace to Vera and the family. Guide all the process of grieving. And fill their hearts with the hope for you and your kingdom.

We also pray for the sick in our congregation and their family members. Comfort them and relieve them from their pains. Please heal them with your love and healing power, Lord.

Corona Virus is around us. We hear many cases around our lives and especially from Long-term care homes. Protect vulnerable people. Provide them vaccine and let the cure be developed. Protect all of us from this virus and guide our daily lives, so we are safe and protected by you. Also, protect the first line workers and protect their family and fill peace and love and patience upon them.

As we pray and wait for your answer, give us desiring hearts for you and make us like you, restoring your image in us. Through our lives, be glorified and praised. In Jesus' precious and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Jesus' ministry was often filled with challenge and choice. We face challenge and choice as we follow him in a new day and age. The invitation to give an offering week by week is a challenge. The gifts we choose to offer continue his ministry of healing and hope. Take the challenge and give as God has blessed you. Let us pray for the offering first.

Offering prayer:

Lord Jesus, we bring our gifts to you, asking that you bless them so that they may accomplish more than we can ask or imagine in your name. Bless us, too, so that our lives speak of our choice to follow you, and our ministries offer the healing and hope you have offered us. In Jesus' name, Amen. // Let the Lord's offering be received as we sing our hymn.

Offering – BOP# 27 – As the Deer

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God loves you. God is holding your hands. God is walking with you. God is embracing you every moment you are awake. Be with God. You are God's.

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) How do I experience God's grace? Have I felt that it was sufficient for me?
- 2) YOU ARE MINE, God says to me. What does it mean to me?
- 3) Knowing that God uniquely created me, what areas of my personality, background, and physical appearance am I struggling to accept?