

Worship on February 21, 2021 – the First Sunday in Lent

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP# 680 – Christ, of all my hopes the ground
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: text
- Sermon: title

We Respond

- Prayer for the people of God
- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – BOP#202 – We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet

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 Feb. 21, 2021. This is the First Sunday in Lent. Lent is the season we are remembering the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus for us. As we worship our God, let us remember God's love for us and have him close to us.
- . For Bible study or sharing thoughts with discussion questions, please stay after the worship.
- . Please welcome our three new elders. Edwin Webster, Kevin Johnston, Robert Revington. We will have the session meeting with our new elders on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021.
- . Volunteers need for readers. Please let me know.
- . Thank you for your offerings. We are still collecting offerings to support PSW&D. God may use us and our gifts to spread his love to this whole world.

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: Lent is a journey with Jesus toward Jerusalem, toward the cross, toward resurrection and new life. We will have transformed and blessed on this journey.

All: We are pilgrims on a journey. We are travelers on the road.

One: We undertake the journey knowing we will not remain the same.

All: We are pilgrims on a journey. We are travelers on the road.

One: The journey will take time. We will feel the strain in our bodies and in our souls, yet love will urge us onward.

All: We are pilgrims on a journey. We are travelers on the road.

One: Let us start the journey with prayer:

All: God of all times and places, as we begin the pilgrimage from life to death to new life, you will surprise us and nurture us. We put our trust in you, knowing you will guide and provide for us. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Praise song – BOP# 680 – Christ, of all my hopes the ground

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Good and gracious God, Creator of storms and sunshine, of the sun and moon and stars, Maker of rainbows and raindrops, of all that is in the heavens and the earth, we praise you for the beauty of the created world, and for the hope of life with you now and always. We praise you for your faithfulness and loving kindness throughout all generations, for your promise of grace, for your compassion and redemption revealed to us in Christ Jesus. Receive our prayer and praise this day and teach us how to live by your love.

Source of mercy and wisdom, We are thankful for your steady presence and steadfast love, so we make our confession to you, with truth and humility.

O God, you made a covenant with us in faithfulness, but we confess we are not always so faithful to you. We grow tired and restless when things don't go our way. We lose patience with others. We lack compassion for our neighbours in need, and even forget to express our love for those closest to us. Forgive us, gracious God. Lead us in the way we should go. Make us prisms of your love, making rainbows of your light, creating beauty and deepening hope wherever we go.

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, Believe the good news. Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of God has come near. Trust in his forgiving love for you, and forgive one another in his name.

Passing the Peace

Prayer for Illumination: Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the wisdom of the Lord, Holy God, send us your Holy Spirit to calm our thoughts and prepare our hearts and minds

to hear your Word. Through your Word, teach us to see you more clearly and love you more deeply day by day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:1

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

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

SERMON: Death is not the end of you!

Today's title is “Death is not the end of you!”

Death is not the end of us. Death is not the end, but transition into eternity.

Today, we will think about two worlds. **2 Corinthians 5:1, “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (NRSV)**

The Bible calls our body “tent”, but refers to our future body as a “house.” **“When this tent we live in – our body here on earth – is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last forever.” (TEV)**

It is not very comfortable to think about death. We like eternal life from God, but we don't want to talk about death, which is the door to eternity. We only think about death and our eternal home in heaven, at funerals or when we hear the news of someone's death.

We tend to avoid uncertainty. Death is very unknown to us. We cannot plan it or we don't know when it will happen to us. We all know that it will happen to us for sure, but no one wants it. I sometimes think about the death of my loved ones. Parents, children, and my wife. It is not very positive feeling. It empties my heart.

But, Jesus gives us the hope for the life after death. Our life here on earth is stated a TENT, but life in eternity is call a HOUSE. The Bible continually gives us the hope for the next life. Even though we don't know it, nor we can understand what it will be like, the Bible continually assures us. We will enjoy unbroken fellowship with God. And God will enjoy us for an unlimited, endless forever. Without any distractions, or hindrances, but wholeheartedly, we will be with God in our intimate fellowship. **1 Corinthians 2:9, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”**

God prepared great home for us. However, because of our limited understanding, we cannot understand everything God has prepared for us.



This is a picture of an iceberg. The tip of the iceberg is visible and the rest of it is under the water, so we can't see it. We use this picture to explain our consciousness and unconsciousness. The same explanation is possible to describe this life and the life in eternity. This life we know is not all. There is more.

C. S. Lewis captured the concept of eternity on the last page of the Chronicles of Narnia as he concludes the whole book. **“For us this is the end of all the stories ... But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world ... had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read, which goes on forever and in which every chapter is better than the one before.”**

How beautiful he describes the concept of eternity. The stories of our lives will end one day, but the real story will begin when we finally go home where our HOUSE is.

God gives us the purposes for eternity. He gives us purposes that last beyond our lifetime, beyond the temporary tent.

We all spent 9 month or so in our mothers' womb. After the 9 months, what happened? We came out. It is the new stage of us. Dramatic change, maybe not a pleasant experience, but it was the beginning of new life which we could never have imagined, as babies. Our life in eternity is like the birth. **Hebrews13:14 says this, “This world is not our home; we are looking forward to our everlasting home in heaven.”**

Last week, we talked about the driving forces of our lives. Colossians 1:12, “God enabled us to share in the inheritance of the kingdom of God.” → This means God enabled us to overcome the power of death. God enabled us to enter into the eternal relationship with God. God enabled us to take the opportunity beyond our lifetime. Comparing this life on earth to the life in heaven in eternity, this life we know is blink of an eye.

What will you do with your life now, for your life in eternity? **1 John 2:17, “This world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.”**

We are made to last forever. We are planned to live with God in eternity. How are we going to use our lives to fulfill the purposes of God for our lives? This life in TENT is given to us to prepare our real life in heaven where our HOUSE is.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, thank you for telling that this life is not all. For some of us, this life on earth is great place to enjoy. We thank you that we can taste your goodness in this life and hope for the greater joy and happiness with you. For some of us, this life on earth is not that great. We also thank you that we can fix our eyes on you and have hope for eternal home and intimate fellowship we will have with you.

We confess that you are the LORD and whatever we are facing with our lives, you are with us guiding all our steps. You are protecting us. You have holding our hands. Like the confession of King David, even though we walk through the valley of death, we fear no evil for you are with us. We live in uncertainty every day, but because you are with us, we can face our daily lives. Place the true hope in our hearts and be with us always. We thank you and praise you. In Jesus' precious and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Gracious Father God, we come to your presence with our hearts' desires and our needs. As we pour out our hearts before you, listen to our hearts and come beside us. Holy Spirit, open our eyes and speak to our hearts.

We are living in lockdown under the order of staying home. But at the same time, the school opened. Some jobs are opened. People are here and there to meet their needs. With their best wisdom and plans, there are many things seem don't make any sense. But, we all know everything going on right now is unavoidable to sustain our lives. In this disorder, all we can do is to seek your help. Lord, as we go to our schools, works, and essential things, protect us. People are this situation of lockdown and spread of virus will be worse as time passes.

We are before you Lord. Humbling our hearts and our lives. We lay down our life. We put up our hands toward your presence. We lift up our eyes toward you. Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, pour out your wisdom upon us.

We are facing many crises. Threats from virus. Climate crisis. More extreme bipolarity of wealth and poor. Loss of sensitivity to others. And many other chaotic situations we are now at. Wake up our souls. Let us daily look up to you for daily wisdom. So little by little, hands in hands, together, let us overcome difficulties with your power and grace.

We pray for churches. We are getting old. Not much input of younger generations. We might disappear for lack of new generations. We need to focus our energy on somewhere more than others. Where are we looking at? What are we planning with our gospel? You shed your precious blood to save all people. We have our lives by your blood. In flame our hearts with the fire of your love again. Many are staying 24 hours with our younger generations. This might be the best time to teach how to live with your presence and power of the gospel, not to watch TV all day long. Wake up all the parents and grandparents, so we can hand down our life's gospel stories to the next generations. We know that your glory will not fade away. We want to witness the glorious and powerful works of yours in our lives. Prepare us and use us.

Heavenly Father, we love you. In our daily lives, help us show our faith and love for you to the people we encounter. Your love is great. Thank you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. The season of Lent takes us on a journey with Jesus to prepare us for the day he gave his life for our sake on the Cross. Remember what he has given for us. May God use our offerings to let all the people know his name and his love.

Offering prayer:

God of courage and compassion, we bring our gifts to you in Jesus' name. This year we need both his courage and compassion for ourselves. Receive our thanks with these gifts and bless them so that they may bring hope to others in these challenging times. In Christ's name. Amen. // Let the Lord's offering be received as we sing our hymn.

Offering – BOP# 202 – We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. In uncertainty, we fear. But, there is a way we can overcome our fear. That is the love of God. God, in his love, prepared our eternal home. Have hope in God and fulfill the purposes of God for our lives.

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. In this year's Lent, what is my plan to remember and honour God's love and sacrifice for us?
2. What is my reflection and response of today's message of God for me?
3. Since I was made to last forever, what is the one thing I should stop doing and the one thing I should start doing today?