

Worship on March 7, 2021 –Third Sunday in Lent

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – Video hymn
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- Sermon: We Are Not Home Yet
- Communion (The Lord's Table)

We Respond

- Prayer for the people of God
- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – All in All - Soong

We Serve

- Benediction

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 March 7, 2021. It is the Third Sunday in Lent and we will have the Lord's Table during our worship today.
- . Communion during today's worship. From this month, we will have two Communions, 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.
- . Lent Prayer Challenge – it is to pray for a person each day during the Lent.
- . For Bible study or sharing thoughts with discussion questions, please stay after the worship.
- . If anyone wants to volunteer to participate in worship, please let me know.
- . Volunteers are needed for the Responsive Call to Worship and Scripture Reading.
- . Tax receipts for donations and contributions were mailed on Thursday March 4th.
- . Thank you for your support with your gifts. May God use us and our gifts for his kingdom.

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: Onward and ever closer, we move toward Jerusalem.

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

One: In ancient times, pilgrims sang songs as they walked to Jerusalem. Being in God's care, covenant and presence is a blessing.

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

One: Ancient psalms of an ancient people rise in a prayerful hymn to the Lord and redeemer of all life and creation.

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

One: Let us pray.

All: God of all creation, hear the songs of praise, of lament and of hope that we sing on the journey. Liberate us from fear and cynicism so that we may be caught up in the rhythm of creation and live in tune with your love and hope. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Praise song – video – Love Divine, All Loves Excelling - Knox College virtual choir

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Almighty God, you have set the whirling cosmos in motion and called all creatures into being. All that exists speaks of your majesty, yet no detail misses your care and attention. You know each of us by name, and make yourself known to those who seek you. Your wisdom delights the human heart and purifies the soul. We gather to enjoy your presence with us, and to listen for your Word for our times and our lives. God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, to you alone all worship, honour and glory are due, this day and every day, now and always.

God of majesty and mercy, we are aware that you are present here and everywhere, drawing near to us. Yet we confess we are often distracted from your presence. Many things compete for our attention. We are tempted to seek things that cannot truly satisfy. We envy those who are successful in the world's terms, and so pursue our own desires, without questioning the cost to the earth or those in need. Forgive us, O God. Send us the Holy Spirit to awaken us to your purposes and pursue them with renewed commitment.

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, the apostle Paul declared that the message of the Cross is foolishness to many, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. By this power, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God for the wisdom to live as forgiven people.

Passing the Peace

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, you have spoken in the Law and the prophets to teach us how to live. Move in and among us through your Holy Spirit, to open our minds and hearts to your truth and receive your life-giving Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

SERMON: We are not home yet.

Today's title is “We are not home yet.”

There is an old story. There was a retiring missionary coming home to America. On the same boat, there was the president of the United States. Cheering crowds, a military band, a red carpet, banners, and the media welcomed the president home, but the missionary slipped off the ship unnoticed. Feeling self-pity and resentment, he began complaining to God. Then God gently reminded him, “But my child, you are not home yet.”

In our lives, some are recognized like the president. And the others are not recognized like the missionary. This might create emotional ups and downs. But, God points out that it is not the end yet. What matters is what God thinks of our lives when we go home.

Today's scripture have multiple points, but we are going to focus on who we are. **V20, “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us.”** An ambassador is someone whom sent to another country to represent his or her home country. Even if the ambassador like the country he was sent, he cannot belong there. He has his own home country. If the ambassador became too comfortable with the foreign country and fell in love with it over his home country, they, ambassadors, could not represent his homeland. His loyalty and commitment would not be the same. My wife works at Korean Consulate. It's like the Korean version of Service Canada for Koreans living in Canada. Sometimes, I have chance to meet consuls. They usually stay in an appointed country for 3 to 4 years. When I talk to them, they are firm that their home is not where they live, but Korea. For me, where I live and sleep is my home. So, for me, it was somewhat memorable feeling that the consuls and their families were confident that their true home is not where they live but Korea.

The Bible calls us Ambassadors for Christ. What does that mean?

First, we are sent here.

Second, we are from Christ, the kingdom of God.

Third, we have a mission to accomplish.

Fourth, we are representing the kingdom of God.

Wow. We are so attached to Christ. We find it out by thinking about who we truly are. We are very much related to Christ.

But, here, we need to pause and ask ourselves a question.

“How are we doing?” “How am I doing as an ambassador?”

Which country do I feel attached?

Here on earth, we live. We live not as an inhabitant, not as a citizen nor a resident, BUT as an ambassador. That is what the Bible teaches us.

Last week, we thought of a life is a test and a trust.

This week's **LIFE-METAPHOR is a life is a temporary assignment.**

We don't want to be fooled with the word TEMPORARY. The Bible describes life as a mist, a fast runner, a breath, and a wisp of smoke. "Our days on earth are as transient as a shadow." So, our life here on earth is not permanent.

Permanent means everlasting. But, funny is our system. My wife is a Permanent Resident in Canada, but she has to renew her Permanent Residency every five years.

Not like the Permanent Residency in Canada, our Permanent Residency in heaven does not expire. We are made to live in heaven Permanently in the everlasting fellowship with our loving Father God.

So far, we identified our origin. We are made for God and we are made to live in heaven. Also, we are sent here on earth with a mission representing for Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, as ambassadors from the kingdom of God, what values are we holding on?

There are happy moments in our lives for sure. But, these do not exceed the joy and happiness God has planned for us in heaven.

Realizing that life on earth is just a temporary assignment should radically alter our values.

Eternal values, not temporal ones. It seems like we are very passionate and full of energy once we equipped with eternal values. The Bible does not promise that it's *gonna* be all fine. It's not always like that. We fall. We are confused. We make mistakes. We pursue material things. We chase visible success. We know who we truly are. Like the ambassador who falls love with a foreign country, we sometimes lose focus from our mission and from our original identity. That is why Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit.

What does the Holy Spirit do to us? The Holy Spirit intercedes for us. He always prays for us.

He guides our steps and he makes us realize what to do and what not to do. He gives us dreams and passions and love for our lives. He is our personal coach guiding us through our mission, so we don't forget who we are and what we are to do.

In the Bible, there is a book called Hebrews. Chapter 11 is called **Hall of faith.**



There is a list of the people who kept the faith in God and accomplished life's mission and purposes for God. By faith Abel did something. By faith Abraham did something. By faith Moses did something, by faith Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel... by

faith... by faith... **Hebrews 12:1-2, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”**

Through this verse, it connects the faithful people from the Bible and us who are living right now. These people are examples who followed their faith. Now, knowing there are good examples of ambassadors, let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us! Let us look Jesus, who makes our faith perfect by enduring the passion on the cross.

God is commissioning us to represent for Christ and he is inviting us to put our faces on the Hall of Faith. Know that our life here on earth is not permanent and it is a temporary assignment.

Imagine that our names and faces are on the Hall of Faith. Let us guard our hearts and focus on our eternal goal.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God we thank you for the hope we have in you. And we thank you that you called us ambassadors of your kingdom. We are small and weak. We make mistakes. We easily lose our focus. So, we come to you with our humble hearts. Please hold on our hands tight and walk with us. Whenever we fall, raise us up. Whenever we forget about you, come into our hearts and turn our hearts toward you. Thank you for making us your children. Thank you for your saving grace and love. Thank you for our true identity of your beloved children. Be praised and glorified through our lives. In Jesus' precious and beautiful name, we pray, Amen.

The Lord's Supper – Communion

This is the Table of the Lord. I invite you to come to the presence of the Lord.

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.

Come, because the Lord loves you and gave himself for you.

Let this bread and wine be for you the token and pledge of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit, all meant for you if you will receive them in humble faith. “O taste and see that God is good.”

(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: Loving Father God, you call your people to repentance, to renew their covenant with you and to prepare for the joyful victory feast of the Lord who is slain. How awesome is your love! How wonderful are your ways! You alone are God and the Lord of our lives. Humbly we come before you praising your name. With our whole being, we lift 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: We praise you, most holy God. Holy and merciful God, you gave your Son for the life of our world, who being truly and eternal God, took flesh and became human for us and for our salvation. Not as we ought but as we are able, we offer you thanks for your incarnation, for your life on earth, for your sufferings and death upon the cross, for your resurrection from the dead, for your glorious return to your right hand until you come again in glory. Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

L: Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

When we break the bread, it is a sharing in the body of Christ. (BREAD)

When we bless the cup, it is a sharing in the blood of Christ (CUP)

The gifts of God for the people of God (BOTH)

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

“This is the body of Christ broken for you.” (Let us take it)

“This is the blood of Christ shed for you.” (Let us drink it)

Prayer after Communion:

Gracious Father God, during this Lent, we remember your love and grace and sacrifice. Thank you for dying on the cross to save us. Thank you for your sacrifice for us to give us true life and true hope. By your love, you called us to be your daughters and sons. You cleansed us with your life to deliver us from death to life. Now we have new identity. As your children, as the ambassadors of your kingdom, we are going to glorify your name. Hold our hands and be with us.

This time, we pray for the people who are suffering with their life's issues. Church is the body of Christ and each member is the cell. To build healthy church, we know that we need to have a healthy cell. Restore each of us and help and guide each of our members, so we can build your church healthy and strong, so we can praise your name as your church, so we can display your greatness to the whole world. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. When Jesus grew angry at the money changers in the temple, he reminded God's people that our offerings are intended to express our commitment to God's ways. They are not just a financial transaction. As you present your offering to God this day, consider what commitment to God's purposes your gift expresses.

Offering prayer:

Lord Jesus, you challenge your followers to give to God with commitment and thanksgiving. Receive our gifts as an expression of our commitment to you and your ministry. Bless them and us, and use all that we can give to offer hope and healing in the world you love. Amen. // Let the Lord's offering be received as we sing our hymn.

Offering – BOP # 64 Be still and know that I am God - Soong

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Hall of Faith. I hope and pray that our names can be found in the Hall of Faith. Faith is not something we practice on Church day, but it is our foundation that sustains our lives every day. By faith, let us display God's glory in our daily 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. How should the fact that life on earth is just a temporary assignment change the way I am living right now?
2. If everyone understood that life on earth is really preparation for eternity, how would we act differently?
3. What do people get attached to on earth that keeps them from living for God's purposes?
4. What have I been attached to that could keep me from living for God's purposes?