

Worship on May 23, 2021

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP #276 Come, O Spirit, with your sound
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination – prayer
- Scripture: Mark 4:30-32
- Sermon: In its shade
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – BOP # 475 I am the church! You are the church!

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 Sunday. May 23rd, 2021. Let us worship God with our whole hearts.
- . After worship, there will be Bible study today. We will share our lives and thoughts and we will have time to pray for each other.
- . Worship volunteers are always welcome.
- . 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.

Call to Worship

Breathe upon us, Holy Spirit, and inspire our worship with your truth.
Stir in our hearts, Holy Spirit, and fill us with your love.
Strengthen us, Holy Spirit, and move us to act with your power.
Breathe in us, Holy Spirit, and receive our prayers and praise.

Praise song – BOP #276 Come, O Spirit, with your sound

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of power and possibility, with the flame of your Spirit, you give us energy to move into the world in Jesus' name. With the breath of your Spirit, you refresh us to engage life in its complexity. Your Spirit embraces us in our diversity and invites us to find unity in your love. We honour you for the gift of creation in all its beauty and bounty. We praise you for your presence with us in every time and place. In this time of worship, send us the Holy Spirit once again, and renew us to serve you in the world, the world that aches for the healing and wholeness you offer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God of mystery and mercy, we confess that we have not always paid attention to the urging of your Spirit, calling us to follow your will and your way. Too often we claim to belong to Jesus, but choose instead to ignore his teaching. You created us to love you and one another, but we fail to offer your love to those who differ from us. Stir in our hearts and in our lives with your Holy Spirit. Transform who we are, and direct who we shall become through Christ's redeeming love.

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, this faithful saying is worthy of our trust and acceptance: "In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another. Thanks be to God for God's steadfast love and mercy!"

Prayer for Illumination: Let us pray for the wisdom of God before reading today's scripture. Holy Spirit, open our ears, our minds and hearts so that we encounter God's Living Word in the scriptures. May that Word change our hearts and inform all our actions in the example of Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture: Mark 4: 30-32

30 He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

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

SERMON: in its shade

Today's sermon title is "in its shade."

Last week, after worship, we had Annual General Meeting. It is a time of report to the whole congregation how church leaders carried out church businesses in accordance to God's plan. Another other way of describing Annual General Meeting is that it is a time of celebration of God's faithfulness upon our lives as a whole church.

When I did my field education, I attended Annual General Meeting. That church's Annual General Meeting was very unforgettable for me. I had a great expectation to see how congregation participated and initiated and took responsibilities. I was fascinated how the congregants participated in discussions and how responsibly they took their church businesses.

They were truly involved in church works. Also, they took every agenda seriously. In my young years, as a spectator, I did not see a lot of responsible church leaders. So, in my field education church, congregants' active and responsible participation fascinated me.

And last week, my first AGM! With church leaders, we prepared a lot. We shared our thoughts and opinions in responsible and reasonable manners. After worship, all things went through smoothly from beginning to the end. Together, we took a detailed look at what we did last year and what is expected this year. In mature manner and responsible attitude, we celebrated God's work within our lives and within our church. Awesome! I just loved it.

In my prayer, preparing it, I prayed Annual General Meeting to be the celebratory time for God. And it was like that. We talked a lot about money, but our focus was not on money, but God's works. Thinking of our AGM, I thought of today's scripture.

It is a parable of Jesus talking about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the smallest seed on the earth. When it fully grows up, it becomes the greatest tree. The kingdom of God looks like the smallest mustard seed, but the kingdom of God should be found in our midst. In other words, the kingdom of God is within each of us because we are God's churches. So, as one body, God's people are grouped together as God's church. Each of us is weak and small, like a small mustard seed. But, when we grow up within Christ's church by each other's support and help, we can become the greatest trees. Our church, in the same way, is like the kingdom of God, and we are like the fully grown mustard trees.

Do you know the most striking thing from today's scripture, for me? It is the last sentence. **"so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."** Birds come to the mustard tree to rest, to make nest. Mustard tree becomes the foundation of the life of birds.

What does this mean to us, today?

Church, the kingdom of God, is to make nest for the world. In its shade, we are to call the world to come and rest as the birds come to its the shade and make their nests.

It's pandemic, so we cannot even meet. It's lockdown, we cannot invite people. YES, it is difficult time. But, the shade means influence, positive influence. Beneficial impact to the world.

Through Annual General Meeting last week, something was awakened from sleep. I only focused on maintaining status quo. But, the church is not like that. We are not like that. We are to go forward. We are to make positive influences around our lives.

I don't have any new church business ideas in my head right now. But, I know our church is willing to do something for God. I know you are capable of taking the roles becoming God's hands and feet. So, from next week, elders will stand up and take their responsibilities. They decided to participate with the first part of the worship service. They will actively look for the ways to make everyone to take roles in worship. That is the beginning. This is our first step.

Let us gather our hearts and ideas, so we can find more ways to be united in hearts and in ministries. Let us look for the ways how we can create God's shade for the people who are suffering. Let us think together so we can invite the world to the presence of God's love and care.

So, through today's message, I wanted to say thank you for your love for God's church and your passion and willingness to stand up for God. This time might be the time that we don't have any flag to follow or there are too many voices asking us to follow. But, please know that there is

only one voice we should follow, and that is Jesus Christ. Let us take time in discernment in which voice we should follow. And at the same time, each of us is like the mustard seeds, but we are mustard trees together, in Christ. As one body, as God's powerful church, let us follow the steps of Jesus Christ, holding his hand and each other's hands.

Let us pray.

Lord, we are your servants. Speak Lord, your servant is listening. That is what young Samuel said when the voice of God called him. Heavenly Father, we are small like a mustard seed, but with your help, when we are fully grown, we are magnificent mustard trees. At the same time, we have authority and responsibility to invite the world to your shade, so you can provide rest and security for them. That is who we are. Thank you for calling us your church. Thank you for giving us your power. From now on, we make up our minds. We are going to stand up as your church with your power. We are going to use your power. Lead us. Help us function as your strong church. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Gracious loving Father God, with humble hearts, we stand before you. With our prayer needs, we are coming to your presence. When we pray to you, listen to our prayers and open our ears, eyes, minds, and hearts, so we can listen to you as well.

In Gaza strip, they finally ceased fire. But still, many lives are lost and their regular life was shattered. They lost their homes. Many families are broken. Hatred is filled. Hopelessness is everywhere. There is no winner in violence. Merciful God, fill their hearts with love. Help them stand up. The situation seems like mustard seed. What is the plan you have? Help them ask you for your plan and for your wisdom as they carry their lives and pursue their wants. Stir their hearts and may they listen to you and obey you.

By Corona virus, the world is suffering so much. Thankfully, vaccines are available for us and the confirmed cases are declining in Canada. Thank you. Help us be more aware and help us behave responsibly, so we will beat this virus. We pray for India, especially. Some days, there are more 100,000 COVID patients. It's massive. Help them. And help us find out ways to help them. Let us spend few moments to pray for India and for the world who are suffering with COVID. (30 Seconds silent prayer)

And we pray for our congregation. Thank you that we had a good Annual General Meeting last week. We are powerful. We are able. We are willing. So, Lord, here we are. Use us. Give us wisdom what we can do for you. Give us ears to listen to your voice. Let us use our resources wisely and responsibly for you. There are prayers need in our congregation as well. As we pray together, let us feel your love and each other's love in you.

We are humbling ourselves before you. Use us. Use us. Use us for your will and for your kingdom. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. At Pentecost, God poured out gifts of the Spirit upon the church, to equip Christ's followers to bear witness to him throughout the

world. We offer our gifts and our lives to God, so that the witness of the Church will continue with the blessing of the Holy Spirit in this generation and beyond. Let us pray.

Offering prayer:

Spirit of grace and power, bless the gifts we offer so that they accomplish surprising things in Jesus' name. Bless our lives, too, so that our words and actions may bear witness to Jesus' love and mercy each and every day. In Jesus Christ precious and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Offering – BOP # 475 I am the church! You are the church!

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. We are strong because God is with us. We seem weak, but we are not. We are mustard trees. We are magnificent! In our shade, let the world come and rest. Have positive influence and introduce Christ to the world.

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 kind of impact am I making in my daily life? Have I used God's power to make positive influence?
2. What have I done for God? What am I willing to do for God?
3. What kinds of ministries can we start as a church?