

Worship on June 27, 2021 (Father's Day)

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – My hope is built on nothing less
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: John 3:1-7
- Sermon: Born from Above
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering – Still

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, June 27th, 2021. As we come and worship our Father God, let us give our whole hearts.
- . Bible study after worship. Please stay for sharing lives and thoughts, and prayer for each other.
- . Martha's Table served 62 bagged lunches and they are going on their deserved summer break.
- . 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.

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Out of the depths we cry to the Lord.

All: We wait for the Lord and find hope in God's Word.

One: Hope in the Lord!

All: For with God there is steadfast love.

One: With God there is great power to redeem.

All: So we come to offer our prayers and praise to God in whom we trust.

Praise song – My hope is built on nothing less

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Great and holy God, source of our life and all life, your glory is incomprehensible and your majesty infinite. You are the wellspring of new life and the fountain of true freedom. We marvel at your love, beyond all measure; we are challenged by your kindness which reaches further than we can imagine. We worship you in gratitude, offering you our praise with the voices of all creation, and we worship you in our trust because you have come to close to us in Christ Jesus. Receive our love and loyalty, now and always, offered through the Spirit who prays within us.

Great and merciful God, our judge and our hope, we confess we have sinned against you and one another, in the ways we think, the things we say and the things we do. We have been quick to judge others, but less critical of our own actions. We focus on what we lack rather than recognize how blessed we are. We ignore the needs of others and fail to see how we could make a difference. In your tender mercy, O God, forgive what we have been, amend what we are, and direct who we shall become, through the grace of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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! Who is in a position to condemn us? Only Christ—and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for us. Believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's generous grace. Share this good news in the way you live with each other.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of each and every generation, send us your Holy Spirit as we listen to the scriptures read and interpreted. Open our minds to your wisdom, open our eyes to see how to serve you, and open our hearts to receive and share your healing love. In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Scripture: John 3:1-7

1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus[a] by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' **"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."**

SERMON: Born from above

Today's sermon title is "Born from above."

We were formed for God's family. The entire Bible is the story of God building a family who will love him, honour him, and reign with him forever. God is love and relational. The Trinity,

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, shares perfect relationship. God has never been lonely or never needed anything. God never lacks anything. Instead, God desired to have a family. This is the reason why God devised a plan to create us, bring us into his family, and share with us all he has. This gives God great pleasure.

Every human being was created by God, BUT not everyone is a child of God, sadly. The only way to get into God's family is by being born again into it. We become a member of the human family by our first birth; likewise, we become a member of God's family by our second birth.

Jesus said to Nicodemus. **"No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." (V3)** This strange statement was difficult to understand for Nicodemus.

So, Jesus said this to him, **"What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit." (V6)**

The invitation to be part of God's family is universal. It is for everybody. But, there is one condition. That is Faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus Christ. Who has this faith? Do we believe in Jesus Christ that he died for us and saved us from our death? YES! However, sometimes, I have to ponder upon my own faith whether it is my own willingness or true faith from God. My wisdom is not reliable. My knowledge is nothing. My experience is not enough. My own willingness to believe is not faith in Jesus Christ. It's only my desire.

Birth is not done by our own wills. We were born. We don't say we actively caused our own birth. In the same way, spiritual birth is not done by our own power or determination. When I first believed, I tried to believe God for three years. I went to church and I listened to sermons. It all made good sense to me. Some sermons touched my heart and I was deeply moved. I prayed to God, "I want to believe you." But, I was not too sure that I believed in him or not.

Nicodemus was a pharisee. This means that he studied God and his word from birth. From religious family, Nicodemus was raised with strict observation of the biblical teachings. Pharisees are one of the Jewish groups. Nowadays, this word is used negatively, like hypocrite, but originally, they are very faithful and obedient group of God's people. Because they were very very strict to their traditions, it was hard for them to accept new things. They were blind to their traditions. Jesus was a new movement at that time. That's why Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to avoid other pharisees to see him. And Jesus said to Nicodemus that he had to be born again of the Spirit.

He was not able to understand it. Even if he wanted to believe what Jesus said to him, and desired to give his whole heart to him, he was not able to do it without the help of the Holy Spirit.

During my three years of seeking God, I prayed to God very very diligently. "God, I want to believe you." I wanted to believe him and I thought I did, but I could not stop questioning whether it was my own determination. "Is this it? Do I just decide to believe God? Is it just changing my thought?" I asked. I wanted something more and I asked God to make me believe him.

I desired to be born again, born of the Spirit. One day, I was in a worship service. The preacher preached the same Jesus story. Jesus died on the cross and he washed my sin and made me clean and gave me life. But, on that day, it was different. The message always had been coming to my

head, but this time, it came to my heart directly. I just knew that God was my God. From that day on, my heart knows God. I think this was God's answer of my prayer to give me some kind of sign or some kind of proof of my born again faith.

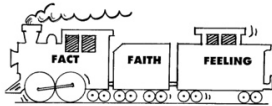
Pastors usually ask people to accept the invitation of Jesus. We make determination to trust God, to give our whole hearts to God, and to follow Jesus' ways. But, how do we discern whether it's our own desire or it's from God? How do we have the assurance of our faith?

The assurance of faith never comes from our own hearts. Looking back of my seeking time, I had God in my heart for the whole time. But, I was too immature and wanted some kind of experience or feelings. So, I think God finally gave something I wanted. The faith in Jesus Christ only comes from God. The only thing we can do is to rely on what we are given, which is the Bible. The Bible says God is love and he loves us and he will give us the Holy Spirit. **Revelation 3:20, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me."**

This promise is so clear. If we ask, God comes. Actually, he is asking for us to open our hearts, so he can come into us and be with us.

We all love to feel something. We desire experience. But, for God, it does not work the same.

WHAT DRIVES THE TRAIN?



What is the driving force of our lives in this diagram? What is the foundation of our faith?

Isn't it feeling, many times?

The FACT is God and God's Word

Whether there is faith or feeling, the engine does not change. God is unchanging.

FAITH cannot do anything by itself. It needs the foundation. That is God.

And the feeling comes the last.

Our faith in God is like this diagram. If we know this diagram, we experience a lot less hesitation, doubt, or fear. There are times of uncertainty in our own faith journey, but that's who we are. Only firm foundation of the faith is God. We are shaky without God. The passenger cart is powerless.

When we place faith in Jesus Christ, spiritual birth takes place. We are made alive in Christ and become a new creation. We are no longer enslaved to the flesh.

So, our only hope is God. Being born again is all from God. Our faith in Jesus Christ is not from us, but from God. If you are seeking God, hang in there. God is faithful and God is love. He is with you. Whether our hearts experience him or not, the assurance is already given to us. Remember this diagram. Our feeling comes the last and our feeling has no control over anything. God is faithful and God is unchanging. Open the door of your hearts and accept God's invitation to be with him. This is the promise of God for all of us.

Born of the Spirit, born from above is not something what we can do. It teaches us how weak we are and how hopeless we are without God. God is our everything. God is our only hope. God is our only life.

Let us pray.

Loving God, we thank you so much for your amazing plan for us. You first loved us and you created us. You knew how weak we are and you became our solution for our death. You gave your own life so we have life. Father God, when we place our faith in you, we believe that we are born of the Spirit whether we feel it or not. Now we know the diagram of faith, so we won't be shaken! We are ON the firm foundation. Always be with us and help us hang in the faith in you. You are our God and you are awesome. Thank you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Father God, thank you for this time of prayer. It is the time that we lay down our concerns and needs before you. As we lay down our hearts, listen to our prayers and open our hearts so we can listen to you as well.

We hear a lot of sad news these days. One family was hit by a truck when they took a walk near their house. Hate crime. Terror. Someone shot children when they had birthday party. And sad deaths of indigenous children from residential school. In our world, there are so much anger and hatred and sadness and pain and agony. What do we do about it? How should we respond to them? Do we go fight them? Do we just sit and pray to you? What is the way we can do to make some changes?! We know you can fix this. We also know that you want to use us to fix this world.

You are the light of the world and you are the salt. And you call us the salt and the light. We are willing to become your hands and feet to restore your world. Help us pray and embrace this hurting world and hurting people. Give us wisdom so we know what we need to do. And give us courage and strengthen us, so we do what we are supposed to do, with confidence. You are the God of love and patience. We will grow. We will walk with you and we will be confident because you are with us.

This time, let us take 1 minute to pray for this hurting world. And the people we know the prayer needs. And, this is the last week of children and youth. Include them in your prayer.

Let us pray. **(1 minute silent prayer)**

Gracious Father God, as we live our daily lives in this world, let us shine our light and let us be the salt, so we prevent it go bad and we drive away the darkness of this world. We have your Spirit and we have your power. And because we are your children, we will exercise your power in our lives. Be with us. We want you to be proud of us. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. The stories of the scriptures remind us how much we need God's healing love and mercy in times of loss and loneliness. Our gifts to God support ministries of care and compassion through our congregation and in the mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Consider your gifts as an outreach to those in deepest need. Let us pray.

Offering prayer:

Compassionate God, we offer you our gifts with grateful hearts, glad to know you keep reaching out to us and the world you love. Bless what we bring to you, and use us and our gifts to touch the world with your healing love and grace, through Christ, our Saviour and friend. Amen.

Praise song – Still

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. We will have busy life. Sometimes we will forget about God. At that moment, remember the promises of God. He is with you and he will help you. So, be still and know that he is our God.

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. Have I experienced the feeling of God's presence?
2. How can I be so certain of God's love for me?
3. What is my favorite promise of God?