

Worship on September 12, 2021

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – Create in me a clean heart
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Ezekiel 36:16-32
- Sermon: I will pour pure water
- The prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering – Christ in Me

We Serve

- Benediction

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us live right now. This is Sunday, September 12th, 2021. God knows what we need and God knows where we are. God knows our hearts and God hears our prayers. Let us come to our gracious Father God and let him take the lead of our lives.

. Session's decision that in-person worship will resume on the first Sunday of October. (Oct. 3rd). The detailed guideline will be announced in following weeks.

. There is Bible study after worship. Please stay for sharing lives, thoughts, and prayer for each other.

. Worship volunteers are always welcome.

. Thank you for your support with your gifts. God may use our gifts and us for this world and our community.

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: Come, people of God, worship the One who listens to our prayers.

All: We will worship the One who hears us.

One: Come, people of God, worship the One who watches over us.

All: We will worship the One who cares deeply for us all.

One: Come, people of God, worship the One who offered his life for us.

All: We will offer thanks and praise to the One who gives us life.

Praise song – Create in me a clean heart

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Living God, artist of the changing skies, builder of the steadfast earth,
Lively Christ, born to walk life's journey with us,
Spirit of life, always moving in us and among us,
Your presence surrounds us here and everywhere we go.
Your purpose holds the world in its place;
Your imagination engages us each step of the way.
In our time of worship, show us how we can serve you,
and open our imaginations to the future you create,
for we seek your guidance and your grace now and always..

God of time and eternity, we confess that we have long memories, especially for things that hurt us, for moments we resent or regret. Week by week we seek your forgiveness for our mistakes, but we confess we do not forgive others so faithfully. Sometimes we seek opportunity to even the score. Confront us with your mercy, O God, and open our hearts to its cleansing power.

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, From now on, apostle Paul declared, we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away; and everything has become new. Through Christ, God has reconciled us and given us a ministry of reconciliation. Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start, this day and every day!

Prayer for Illumination:

God of Wisdom, the Psalmist tells us your law is perfect, making the simple wise.
Send your Holy Spirit to quiet any distractions within us, so we may hear your voice and grow wiser as we learn to follow you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:16-32

16-21 God's Message came to me: "Son of man, when the people of Israel lived in their land, they polluted it by the way they lived. I poured out my anger on them because of the polluted blood they poured out on the ground. And so I got thoroughly angry with them polluting the country with their wanton murders and dirty gods. I kicked them out, exiled them to other countries. I sentenced them according to how they had lived. Wherever they went, they gave me a bad name. People said, 'These are God's people, but they got kicked off his land.' I suffered much pain over my holy reputation, which the people of Israel blackened in every country they entered. 22-23 "Therefore, tell Israel, 'Message of God, the Master: I'm not doing this for you,

Israel. I'm doing it for me, to save my character, my holy name, which you've blackened in every country where you've gone. I'm going to put my great and holy name on display, the name that has been ruined in so many countries, the name that you blackened wherever you went. Then the nations will realize who I really am, that I am God, when I show my holiness through you so that they can see it with their own eyes. 24-28 "For here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You'll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You'll be my people! I'll be your God! 29-30 "I'll pull you out of that stinking pollution. I'll give personal orders to the wheat fields, telling them to grow bumper crops. I'll send no more famines. I'll make sure your fruit trees and field crops flourish. Other nations won't be able to hold you in contempt again because of famine. 31 "And then you'll think back over your terrible lives—the evil, the shame—and be thoroughly disgusted with yourselves, realizing how badly you've lived—all those obscenities you've carried out. 32 "I'm not doing this for you. Get this through your thick heads! Shame on you. What a mess you made of things, Israel!

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

SERMON: I will pour pure water

Today's sermon title is "I will pour pure water."

In the eyes of God, the people of Israel lived bad life. They sinned too much. They defiled God's name. They gave bad reputation for God's holy name. God was very very angry.

This week's chapter of The Purpose Driven Life is about becoming like Christ. God's ultimate goal for our lives on earth is not comfort, but character development. God wants us to grow up spiritually and become like Christ. Becoming like Christ does not mean losing our own personality or becoming a mindless clone. God created our uniqueness, so he certainly does not want to destroy it. Christlikeness is all about transforming our character, not our personality.

Someone says personality is who we are and what we do when everybody is watching and character is who we are and what we do when nobody is watching.

The people of Israel, God's own people, was totally polluted inside and out. Their personality as well as their character turned away from God. And the people from other countries looked at them saying, "These are God's people, but they got kicked off his land." This means that God's holy and powerful name was not displayed by his own people. His name was dishonoured his own people. God agonized, "I suffered much pain over my holy reputation, which the people of Israel blackened in every country they entered."

God could not take it anymore. **V22, "Therefore, tell Israel, "Message of God, the Master: I'm not doing this for you, Israel. I'm doing it for me, to save my character, my holy name, which you've blackened in every country where you've gone. I'm going to put my great and holy name on display, the name that has been ruined in so many countries, the name that you blackened wherever you went. Then the nations will realize who I really am, that I am GOD, when I show my holiness through you so that they see it with their own eyes."**

God was heartbroken. God is HOLY. BUT because of God's own people, his holiness became a joke. His holy name was mocked. God decided to fix it. Therefore, from **v24, "For here's what**

I'm going to do: I'm going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You'll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You'll be my people! I'll be your God! I'll pull you out of that stinking pollution."

God is going to change their lives. God is going to be our help again. God will help us achieve our goal in our lives. He will make us like Christ. God will develop Christ-like character in us.

Genesis 1:26, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness." As we are created in the image of God, he will restore his own likeness in us! This is God's desire for us, all God's created people.

Colossians 1:27, "For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory."

God never neglects anyone. God embraces all the people. All are sinful. Too bad. But, God is at work for all people. This is our only hope. For Christ lives in us, this becomes our assurance and confidence of living in God's glory.

This is teaching us who we really are. We seem like we are in darkness. We fall all the time. We are selfish and weak. But, listen to the message of God! **"I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands."**

We cannot fail. We cannot stay in darkness. We cannot turn away from God.

Paul declares, **Philippians 1:6, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."**

God is holding us not only out of his love, but also for his name's sake. We cannot not have the Christlike characters. Not having the characters of Jesus Christ? It's not an option for us. Too bad, we cannot run away!

But how comforting is this! The Holy Spirit will never let us go. God is pouring our pure water to clean us and pour out His own Spirit upon us to guide us.

I hope and pray that we all can listen to the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. God uses everything in our lives. He speaks to us through our work, people around us, and circumstances we are at. He is developing Christlike characters through all the things in our lives.

Although we are too eager to be like Christ, it won't happen one night. It is a slow and life-long process. What we are to do is to hang in there. We will lose our focus. We will be tired. But, God knows that we will fall away from him. That is why apostle Peter said this. **"1 Peter 5:6-7, "6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. 7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."**

Let us pray.

Gracious and loving Father God, what a great love we are receiving from you! It's amazing that we cannot fail because you are holding us. Because you are with us, we cannot run away from you. Thank you for holding us and thank you for your patience. It is too easy for us to give up. It

is too easy to go our own ways. Lord God, because you are with us, because of your power in us through the Holy Spirit, we will stand up again. We will give one more try. Thank you for your encouragement. Thank you for your assurance. Thank you for being our confidence. Help us live this life like who we truly are. We are the children of God and we are to lift your name on high in the whole world. Let us display your greatness through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

The Prayer for the people of God

Gracious and loving Father God, you are our only hope. We come to your feet with our whole hearts. Please open up our hearts and minds, so we can listen to your voice. Give us willing hearts so we can align our hearts to yours.

Finally, we are going to reopen our church building for in-person worship. We still have worries and fear of Corona virus. Help us be cautious and protect us. Help us trust each other and care for each other. We desire the feeling of our regular Sunday church experience. Help us be patient for few more weeks and when we get back in our usual worship space, let our hearts be poured out to you with thanksgiving, praise, and honour to you alone. Give us wisdom and courage, so we are equipped with all the things we need and be ready in and out of our hearts and body.

We pray for Canada. We are getting ready to elect our political leader. Let us be careful exercising our right to vote and give us wisdom, so we can elect God-fearing leader. Lord of all, powerful and almighty God, we lift up our country into your hands. Guide and lead our future, so we are able to glorify your name and hand over clean environment to our children.

We also pray for the people in our congregation. If they are experiencing any type of hardship, give them strength to hang in there. In the time of difficulties, staying in your presence and waiting for you is the best way. So, Lord, give them ears to listen to you and let them focus on you alone. You are love, you are hope, you are solid foundation, and you are the source of life. Let us look upon you and let us see you working in our lives even when it looks discouraging and hopeless.

Because you cannot take your name be abused and discredited, you will give pure water to your own people, so that we can become clean, so that we can display your greatness through our lives. Thank you Lord that we cannot fail and we cannot live in hopelessness. Thank you for your love for us that never fails us. You will never give us up. Thank you.

Watch over us through the week. And prepare our hearts so we can have you in our hearts and we can show you through our lives. You are our Lord and you are our Light. We love to be in your presence. Be lifted up through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Jesus asked his disciples what could anyone give in return for the gift of life? He challenged us to take up our cross and follow him. Whatever we offer him speaks of how we take up his challenge. So, give with grateful, loyal hearts. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

Generous God, you poured out your love for us through Jesus Christ, who gave up everything on the cross. We bring what we have to offer you in love and loyalty. Receive our gratitude and bless all that our gifts can do to share your love for Christ's sake. Amen.

Praise song – Christ in me

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God is holy and he will not endure his name to be dishonoured by his own people. That is, he will pour out pure water to clean us. He will restore his own image in us. He will make us like Christ. Be hopeful even though we are weak and we fall. Our faithful Father God is holding us.

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. Do I ever experience the help of God to display God's own character?
2. What is my favorite character of myself? What is my favorite character of God?
3. In what area of my life do I need to ask for the Spirit's power to be like Christ today?