

Worship on November 7th, 2021 | 150th Anniversary (CCLI: License Number #3156883)

Order of worship

An Act of remembrance

- Laying of the Wreath; The Last Post; Minute of Silence; Reveille
- O Canada BOP #833

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 407 – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Special Song – By Robert Revington and Rita Machnik

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Acts 17:22-32
- Sermon: Speaking in new languages (The Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald)
- The Prayer for the People of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP#65 All people that on earth do dwell

We Serve

- Benediction

An Act of remembrance

. Laying of the Wreath; – Today, we are celebrating the sacrifice and love of those who fought for their loved ones and for the peace of the world. Our congregation proudly commemorate Andy Bikker and Kallus Kizaaward who fought in the war. Let us remember and give thanks for the people who poured out their love and life.

. The Last Post; Minute of Silence; Reveille. O Canada BOP #833

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us. This is Sunday, November 7th, 2021. Today is very meaningful day in two ways. First, we are remembering those who sacrificed their lives to protect our country. We are going to commemorate their love for their country and its people.

Second, today, 150 years ago, our church began. It is 150th Anniversary of our church. God is good and faithful that he was present with us all the time for 150 years and will be with us continually. As we worship God on this meaningful day, may God stir our hearts and work amongst us and touch each of our heart with his grace and love.

. Today, The Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald will give us the message of God for us. Thank you!

- . Worship volunteers are always welcome for Bible readers, ushers, and etc.
- . Thank you for your support with your gifts. May your gifts to God cause godly change in this 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: Happy are those whose hope is in the Lord,

All: For God keeps faith with us forever.

One: Praise our God who brings justice for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.

All: We will worship the Lord who lifts up those who are bowed down, and supports the orphan and widow.

One: God will reign in mercy and righteousness for all generations.

All: Let us praise the Lord and seek to honour God with our lives.

Praise song – BOP 407 – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Vs. 1) Praise, my soul, the King of heaven; to his feet they tribute bring; ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like me his praise should sing? Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, praise the everlasting King.	Vs. 2) Praise him for his grace and favour to our fathers in distress; praise him, still the same forever, slow to chide and swift to bless; Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, glorious in his faithfulness.
Vs. 3) Fatherlike he tends and spares us, well our feeble frame he knows; in his hands he gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes: Praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him, widely as his mercy flows.	Vs. 5) Angels, help us to adore him, ye behold him face to face; sun and moon, bow down before him, dwellers all in time and space, praise him, praise him, praise him praise him, praise with us the God of grace

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of love and grace, God of faithfulness, we are coming to your presence with thanksgiving and gladness for your faithful and continuous love and grace for our church for 150 years. Wow! Today, 150 years ago, our church began. Thank you for the love and effort of your people since that time. We are your precious church and you bought us with your precious blood, with your precious life. Amazing love!

Also, as we remember the sacrificial love and courageous lives of those who acted upon with their faith and love, we gather before your presence with thankful hearts, aware of the costliness of human history.

In the face of hostility between nations and neighbours, O God, you have come to us in Jesus Christ, carrying no sword, calling us to serve as peacemakers.

In this time of worship, renew in us the hope that you will turn swords into ploughshares, and lead the world you love away from the study of war to the promise of peace with justice for all your peoples.

God of justice and mercy, we confess that the world around us is in a mess. Countries turn disputes over territory into threats of terror. Old enemies stir up conflict within their tribes and

nations. Threats of violence keep us all on edge. We confess we have not learned from past conflicts what leads to peace with justice among nations and neighbours. Forgive us and lead us in a better way.

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, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives, I give to you. People of God, through God's mercy, our sin is forgiven. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Special Song – All people on earth do dwell (By Robert Revington and Rita Machnik)

Prayer for Illumination:

O God - help us to hear your word. Help us to understand what you would say to us; not what we think we hear, or what we have been conditioned to hear, but to hear your voice speaking to us through the scriptures today. Amen

Scripture: Acts 17:22-32

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' 29 Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." 32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, "We will hear you again about this."

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

SERMON: Speaking in new languages

About a decade ago Bill Murray starred in a movie called "Lost in Translation." It was a movie about being in a different culture - in this case Japan, where you don't understand the language, where you're on a different sleep cycle (day is your night; and night is your day); and where nothing seems to be what you think. It's really about the shock of finding oneself in a different culture - and shortly after I saw the movie I got to experience one aspect of it; namely not

connecting into another time zone. I was in Seoul, Korea - and indeed, I wanted to sleep during the day, but couldn't get to sleep at night. But - beyond this... I wasn't as dislocated as I might have been, I think because I knew Korea was a different culture. I was prepared.

The WORST culture shock I've ever experience happened when I wasn't prepared. I was twenty-one. I was going to the culture that my Father had come from when he emigrated to Canada. I'd been there when I was twelve. I understood English, which was what they spoke. I was used to the accents from hearing my Father and his friends. It was all good...and so I remember looking out the airplane window at the fields of Ontario, and then the fields in Quebec (which are so narrow and different) and all was good...until I looked out the window and saw the fields in England. And they were **so different**. The reality hit me. This wasn't someplace I knew. This was someplace completely different. And for the next few days ...I was in a fog, (the kind Bill Murray was in), trying to understand where I was and where I'd come from, and what I should do, and...well...everything.

When you know it's going to be different, you prepare.

When you think it's the same, sometimes you don't.

When you know everything is in a different language - you know there is translation required.

When you think they're speaking the same language...and they're not.

You've probably heard the saying - England and America are two countries divided by the same language.... well it's true.

Most Canadian congregations are in culture shock.

We haven't moved to a different country.

But...that doesn't mean that everything hasn't changed.

When this congregation was founded - and I do congratulate you on this, your 150th Anniversary, - but when this congregation was founded, things were different.

There are the easy ones to think about - the ones we expect.

Back then, everyone, or almost everyone, would have been a farmer or dependent on agriculture. The technological differences would have been vast- no electricity, no central heating, no cars, or televisions, or internet, or cell phones...

The cultural differences - are more complicated to consider.

And for the church, for this congregation, it would have been a world where everyone was Christian, of one variety or another. Roman Catholics would have been considered almost a different religion, but the different kinds of Protestants, even the different kinds of Presbyterians, would all have been recognizable. Not everyone would have been devout.

There would have been many who would never have darkened a church door....but they would have known about the basics of the Christian tradition, what the Bible was, who the disciples were, and probably have known more than a few hymns...

Fastforward seventy five years - to 1946 just after the war — that would still be the same

Fastforward to one hundred years - 1971 - still the same, but beginning to change

Fastforward to today - a completely different reality.

But, I would suggest, because it seems like we're all speaking the same language, because we're not prepared for it to be as different as it is in reality... the shock is even greater.

We have left Christendom. (That's one way of describing this) We've left the fusion of culture and faith, of religion and government support, that some of us lived with...and just took for granted...and now we're somewhere very different.

So we celebrate - all that has been handed down from the past.

We are grateful to God for the resources we have - for our history, and a building, and the lives of the saints who've gone before us.

We remember and we celebrate.

But - and this is crucial - we can't do what they did; or express faith the way in which they expressed faith. It worked then...but we've essentially moved to a different country, and it won't work for us... we need to learn to speak in new languages.

How do we serve God faithfully today, where we are, in a Canada that is no longer part of Christendom, and to a culture where people may not have any real knowledge of the Christian faith?

That is our challenge. And where we might look for inspiration is the book of Acts. Acts tells us the story of how those early followers of Jesus shared their faith in a culture that didn't really understand what they were talking about. So, they had to learn how to connect to people - and share their faith.

The book of Acts offers multiple examples of disciples doing this. We need to stop pretending that the only thing that happens in Acts is Paul meeting Jesus on the Road to Damascus. Paul's conversion is only one conversion; others come to faith in dramatically different ways, and we in the church need to stop saying that unless you've had Paul's experience, that you haven't met Jesus,...or trying to recreate Paul's experience for everyone. The book of Acts doesn't say that. Indeed it suggests the opposite. It talks of the different ways the people come to faith, and the different ways that faith can be shared.

If we are to effectively communicate the gospel,
if we are to share our faith, if we are to live our faith,
we have to know and understand the situation, the context in which we do this.

The apostle Paul finds himself in a very different place from anywhere he has been before. He finds himself in Athens – specifically, he finds himself speaking to the crowds who are interested in philosophy, and the gods, and the meaning of life, all gathered on the Areo-pagus, or as the Romans would have called it – Mars hill.

Paul finds himself in this situation. And this different situation changes how he presents the gospel.

Did you notice, when we were reading the lesson? Did you see what Paul didn't say? Don't worry if you didn't – it took me a few times as well, and I've looked at this passage more than once.

Paul doesn't mention – the word Christ, or Messiah, or even the name Jesus.

It's not there. Nor does Paul mention what the scriptures say....

At the very end of the passage (beyond what we read) he does mention “a man” whom God had raised...but it's so understated.

Paul's message is different in this place, because what he would have said in a synagogue to Jews like himself, and to the Gentile sympathizers with Jewish faith, wouldn't have made sense here, in this place, in this situation.

Paul understands this context. He understands he's in a city where people love to debate philosophy. He talks to them about things they would understand. He finds common ground.

He finds common ground in what's around him, in their making of an inscription – to an unknown God – and he grabs on to that and he says, look, I know you're religious, you've made this inscription, let me tell you about this unknown God.

He finds common ground, a point of contact. And he continues to find common ground.

“For he is not far from each one of us. For ‘in him we live and move and have our being.’

He quotes what one of their own poets would have said, “For we too are his offspring”, as a way to point the crowd to a common belief in one God, a belief that was central to Judaism, but present among some Greek poets and philosophers.

As a faithful Jew, the various idols around him were distressing; but he realized that for many of the Epicureans and Stoics, they wouldn't have taken these too seriously, so he points beyond them, again, to the one God.

He finds points of contact to communicate his faith – but when it comes time to communicate that in language they will understand, he nevertheless states precisely what is central. He calls on them to repent, and he points to the resurrection. In the verses beyond our lesson Paul says

“...now he calls all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17: 30-31. NRSV)

Paul is still preaching the Gospel, but he's finding a new way - a new language - to express it so others can understand.

The response is not universally favourable – quite the opposite.

The resurrection in particular offends many, and they scoff.

Others, think it's interesting, and might listen again.

But a few believe.

Those few believe because Paul was able to communicate, to speak to his context.

He knew where he was, and shared what he believed.

And that's what God calls us to do.

We are in a different place, a different situation, a different culture. That can feel extremely discombobulating. Nevertheless, this is where we are.

And God's call to us - is to share the gospel here - in this time, in this place, in ideas and ways that those around us can understand.

Just as Paul did - speaking in Athens.

May God be with us - as we seek to live as God's people and share our faith in new and exciting ways.

Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald

Prayer for the people of God

Eternal God, we are fortunate people. We have been blessed with many things, and we offer our thanks to you.

We have shelter, homes in which we live; which keep us dry and warm.

We have food and clean water, that nourishes our bodies, and sustains our lives.

We have clothes to wear, and books to read, and opportunities, and resources to spare.

O Lord, we are truly blessed. Help us to see all that we have. Help us to appreciate our material blessings. Help us to notice those in our community, in our country, and throughout the world, who do not have the basic necessities, let alone all with which we are blessed.

O God, we thank you for your teachings. You came to your people long ago, to prophets and to poets, and in the Bible we hear your word to us today.

You came in Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Help us to listen to his teachings, understand them, and live them in our lives.

We thank you for those disciples who came to this place, founded this congregation and are our mothers and fathers in the faith, and those who followed them.

We are grateful for 150 years of worship and witness. We are grateful for the leadership of ministers and elders, for those who have shared their faith in song and activity, and for all who have been part of this congregation. Be with all in this place, those able to gather physically, those able to gather through technology. Be with the minister, the Rev. Soong Huh, the elders, all in leadership, as we navigate these challenging times.

Make us true disciples. Help us to live our faith in this time and this place, and to be the church that you would call us to be, and to find new ways to express our faith in our community today.

Hear us now, O God, as we turn our attention to the needs of our world, the needs of our community, the needs of ourselves.

We do pray for those in our world who have so little.

We think of the places of violence and war. And we remember - as the nation of Canada will on Thursday - the lives lost in two World Wars, Korea, and the other conflicts - peace keeping missions and the war in Afghanistan - in which Canadians have sadly, more recently lost their lives.

O God be with those who mourn on this day. And for those of us who have been spared the horror of war, may it be a day of reflection, a day when we are grateful, and a day when we recommit ourselves to find ways to deal with injustice, and to resolve conflict, that do not involve war.

O God help us remember.

Eternal God, we have been reminded this week of our bad stewardship of this planet. In our haste to expand our economies, we have not taken the cost of all of our activities - burning oil and gas, and coal, creating plastics and so many other disposable items - into account. We see the consequences - wilder weather that brings more destruction. We know the arguments and debates - and we see those calling for change.

O God, help us to be good stewards of your creation.

Help us to join with others of all faiths and no faith, to work to change our ways, and restore health and balance to this good earth.

O God, we pray for your help to fight climate change - and in other ways, take care of, and share more equitably, the gifts you have given to us.

Hear our prayers for all who are in need this day

Eternal God, hear our prayers.

May we not only pray, but work and act, that your kingdom may come a little closer, in this the world you created and love. All these things we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Today, we celebrate our 150th Anniversary as God's precious church. At the same time, we are remembering the sacrifice of people for peace. Let the legacy of people in our own history and this country inspire us to ponder upon what we have now. At this time of offering, through our giving, let us offering up our whole lives to God's hands. To keep everyone safe, the offering plate is located at the right hand of the exit. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

Beautiful Lord, we remember your sacrifice and love today. Receive our gifts, O God, and bless them with your love and power. Use them in the struggle for justice and the work for healing and peace, undertaken by your faithful people here and everywhere, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP#65 – All people that on earth do dwell

Vs. 1: All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth; his praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice.	Vs. 2: Know that the Lord is God indeed; without our aid he did us make; we are his flock, he doth us feed, and for his sheep he doth us take.
Vs. 3: Oh enter then his gates with praise; approach with joy his courts unto; praise, laud and bless his name always, for it is seemly so to do.	Vs. 4: For why , the Lord our God is good; his mercy is forever sure; his truth at all times firmly stood, and shall from age to age endure.

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. The Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald will give us the benediction today for us.

Benediction (The Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald)