

Worship on December 19, 2021 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)

(Welcoming Elder: Adele Samuel)

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Light the Candle (Peace) BOP 119 – Hope is Star (Verse 4)
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 139 – Hark! The herald angels sing
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Luke 15:1-7
- Sermon: Advent 4 – Love for the one lost one
- The Prayer for the People of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 159 – O Come All Ye Faithful (vs. 1-5)

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday, December 19th, 2021, the Fourth Sunday of Advent. May the abundant love of our Father God be with you. You are loved by God and the proof of his love is Christmas. Let us praise and worship our Father God through this worship today.

. There will be Christmas Eve service at church @ 7pm. Plan to join the special celebration of the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.

. Thank you for your support with your gifts. As we give our offering to the Lord, let us offer up our lives and our hearts.

As we come into the presence of our God, let us calm down our hearts and minds, and focus on our Lord.

Lighting up the Advent Candle Hope Is A Star (BOP#119)

Vs. 4: Love is a flame that burns in our heart Jesus has come and will never depart

When God is a child there's joy in our song

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong and none shall be afraid

Advent Call to Worship

One: Love is a gift of God.

All: Love burns in our hearts.

One: Love is warmth in a world that is often bitter and cold.

All: In Jesus Christ, we receive God's gift of love.

(The candle is lit.)

One: Let us pray:

All: Source of light, shine in our lives and in your world with your unending love.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 136 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Vs. 1 Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King Peace on earth and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled Joyful all ye nations rise Join the triumph of the skies With the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King	Vs. 2 Christ by highest heaven adored Christ the everlasting Lord Late in time behold him come Offspring of a virgin's womb Veiled in flesh the Godhead see Hail the incarnate deity Pleased on earth with us to dwell Jesus our Emmanuel Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King	Vs. 3 Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace Hail the sun of righteousness Light and life to all he brings Risen with healing in his wings Mild he lays his glory by Born that we no more may die Born to raise the lost of earth Born to give us second birth Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King
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Prayer For Adoration and Confession

O God, our Saviour, with Mary, our spirits rejoice in you this day, for you look with favour on all your children. You have done great things for us. You have scattered the proud and lifted up the lowly. You have filled the hungry with good things, and kept the promises made to our ancestors. Your mercy is known from generation to generation.

And so, we praise and magnify your holy name with hearts full of gratitude, trusting you will do great things once again through Christ our Lord, born for us, born to be with us.

God of Life and Love, the stories of Advent remind us that you are a God of surprises.

You surprised Elizabeth with news that she would bear a child late in life.

You surprised Mary with news that she would bear our Saviour.

Your surprises overturned their lives.

We confess we do not always meet life's surprises with the same courage.

Forgive us when we hesitate to greet you in the unexpected.

Forgive us when we prefer routine over new possibilities.

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, Christina Rossetti declared the truth of God's love for us in a poem:

"Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, love divine. [...] Love shall be our token, [...] Love for plea and gift and sign."

We have made our plea for mercy, trusting in God's gift of love made flesh in Jesus. Now receive God's forgiveness as a lasting token of God's love.

Prayer for Illumination:

Open our ears, O God, to hear your voice speaking to us through the scriptures.

Open our hearts to recognize your presence with us and know your direction for us.

May we say with Mary, "Let it be with me according to your Word." Amen.

Scripture: Luke 15:1-7

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." 3 So he told them this parable: 4 "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

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

SERMON: Advent 4 – Love for the one lost one

Today's title is "Love For the One Lost One."

Today's story is a parable of Jesus. There was a man who had 100 sheep. At the end of the day, when they came back home, he stood at the gate and helped all the sheep come in. One, two, three, four, ... 97, 98, 99... that is all?? He went out with 100, and came back with 99. Problem. One is lost.

If you were the shepherd, what would you do?

Would you leave 99 by themselves, and go after the one lost one?

We need to think about the value of one. It is the matter of money.

If we think about the price of the sheep, how much would a sheep cost? We calculate profit and loss.

Or if the sheep are like the family members for the shepherd, it's not the matter of value, but it is the matter of relationship. Usually, when you have a pet, male person becomes daddy and female person become mommy. Right?

So, for the shepherd, he has 100 babies, 100 beloved baby sheep.

One is missing. Not good. Actually, shepherd daddy is terrified. A sheep is not smart. If it falls down, it cannot stand up by itself. It is in danger from other animals, like wolves or bears. Because of the precious relationship between the lost sheep and the shepherd, he leaves 99 and hurried to go out after the one lost sheep.

If we value something like this shepherd, we would search the thing like this shepherd did. When I was about 6 or 7 years old, my family went to an amusement park. I don't know how it happened, but I was lost for few hours. I don't have much memory about that time.

Thankfully, I was found by my parents. They told me when I was found after few hours, I bit my mom's hand out of my anger and stress. I guess I was too terrified by myself. So, I had to release my explosive emotion in some way.

Maybe, because of that experience, I am so afraid to lose my children when we go to some crowded places.

If the shepherd could consider the emotion of the lost sheep, he would be so terrified as well, out of the love for the one lost one.

So, he looks for the sheep until he finds the lost one. He does not give up. Would you give up your own baby? NEVER. We will look for our precious baby until we find them.

When the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he becomes so glad and embraces the sheep with overflowing joy and lays the sheep on his shoulders as he comes back home.

What is this picture? Why is Jesus telling this story to the audience, eventually, to us?

He is picturing the image of the Father God.

Let's think about this story in this way. We are doing good job most of the time. We are okay with what we do. But, sometimes, we make mistakes. It's not everyday event. The mistake that affects our lives does not happen too often, but it does happen.

When something happens to us, most of the time, we don't know what to do. We don't know where to go. We don't know whom to talk to.

That's why Jesus is telling this story to us. When you are miserable, come to me. When you are lost, wait for me, I will come to you. When you don't know what to do, I will teach you what to do. When you don't know the next step, relax, I am with you. When you are too weak, I will be your power. I will give you strength. I am your shepherd. I am your Father. I am walking with you. I am holding your hands helping you in every moment. When you don't have confidence, that's okay. I will be your confidence.

That's the promise of God through this story.

I heard that the word “Christian” stands for some geeks or too churchy or who likes rules, or cannot be relaxed, who doesn’t know fooling around with friends. The term “Christian” is used just like Pharisee. Very negative. So, these days, many people don’t want to use the term Christian anymore, but they use Jesus followers.

When we say Jesus Followers, what does that mean? What does it mean to follow Jesus like sheep follow their shepherd?

This means to trust the promise of God.

What if I say, to build relationship with Jesus is following Jesus...?

Jesus is not seen, he’s not tangible, he doesn’t seem to be real.

But, what about this lost sheep and the shepherd story? It’s pretty tangible, isn’t it? So, let’s imagine this relationship with Jesus.

God is more joyful when a sinner repents and comes back to his arms than 99 faithful Jesus followers. Does this mean, Jesus is not valuing his followers? No. 99 had their moments already.

We were all lost ones one time. This is like the birth of a Jesus Follower. We celebrate Christmas, why? We remember and give thanks to God for sending Jesus Christ. We say Merry Christmas. Can’t we say Merry Christmas any other times celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ? Yes, any time, we are welcome to say Merry Christmas year around, but it’s kind of awkward, so we don’t usually do it. In the same sense, we celebrate our birthday. It’s only one day in one year. Then, can’t we say that we are glad for one’s birth or one’s being in this world in any other days, celebrating, recognizing, and thanking of the birth of that person?

Why not?

The joy God is telling about when a sinner comes back to him is like the birth. When the lost sheep is found, it’s like its new birthday. We celebrate its return with joy. It’s a dramatic moment. But, 99 had their own moments already. Their being is great, but not as dramatic as the birth happening right now.

Love from our parents is great, but not breathtaking every day. But, when they forgive us after a mistake with a huge consequence, we feel like their love is so impressive. Some people experience the love of God through the love of their parents. Some of us will experience God in different ways. That is totally okay. We might not become the lost sheep or not make any terrible mistake. But, many of us will have the moment of feeling lost. Feeling alone. Feeling miserable.

At that time, look upon God. Our Father God will come to us. He will find us.

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The theme is LOVE. What is the love of our Father God? Did God calculate the value of each person by our productivity or ability? NO. If that’s the case, God is not for everybody. God would be for few highly talented people, only. But, God did not consider our ability, but he cherished the relationship with us, like the shepherd in today’s story.

God calls us his babies. God cherishes us. God takes care of us. God came to us when we were hopeless and God became one of us. God took our shame and guilt, God cleansed us. God took our death and made us clean and gave us life. That is the message of Christmas. This is why Jesus was born for us.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, you cherish our relationship. When we were hopeless, you became our hope. You did not measure us with world's standard. But, you valued us and you cared for our relationship with you. Therefore, we have confidence facing this world. You love us and you care for us, so what shall we be afraid of? Because of your care and love, we have peace and joy in our hearts. Thank you for your great love. Thank you for coming to us, thank you for living for us, thank you for suffering for us, thank you for dying for us, and thank you for rising for us! You are our Lord and you are worthy of all our praises and love. Thank you.
In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer For the People of God

Glorious Jesus, Loving Father God, soft and gentle Holy Spirit,
Thank you for bringing us into your presence. In your presence, we rest. We rest with peace and stillness. Because you are rock, our foundation, we can build our lives upon you.
Receive our prayers and answer us with the right timing and right ways for each of us.
You are the Lord and you know us more than ourselves.

We pray for this world. This world is filled with chaos. Natural disasters, variants of corona virus, climate crisis. Moreover, hatred is widely spread in our relationships. Money became our first priority. Money became the life's purpose. With all these, we lose focus from you.
We make ourselves blind. The world needs you. The world is desperate for your love. Lord Jesus, pour out your love upon us. Open our hearts so we may experience you. There are endless excuses causing us to turn away from you. Whether our situation hinders us to come to you or anything, help us overcome all our situations. You are bigger than situations.

Lord, as of today, there are more strict safety restrictions. Indoor gathering is no more than ten. It feels like Lockdown again. The confirmed cases are increasing rapidly.
Help us. We are weak. We have no power. We need you, Lord. Come and guide our steps.

We pray for our congregation. Protect us safely. At this Christmas season, help us be safe. Give us wisdom and courage so we do what we need to do and we stop when we need to stop.
Always protect all our members with your love and peace.
In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering.

We make our offering this day with hearts full of love, filled with the hope and joy this season brings. When we give knowing God's love, our gifts will spread far and wide through what we offer in Jesus' name. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

God of Life and Love, receive our gifts this day as tokens of our love for you and signs of our willingness to share that love in the world around us. Bless our lives as well as our gifts, so that we may be a blessing to others for the sake of the Christ Child, our Saviour and our friend. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP#159 O Come All Ye Faithful

Vs. 1 O Come all ye faithful Joyful and triumphant O come ye o come ye to Bethlehem Come and behold him Born the King of angels	<u>Chorus</u> O Come let us adore him O Come let us adore him O Come let us adore him Christ the Lord
Vs. 2 God of God Light of light Born unto Mary the virgin blest Very God begotten Not created	Vs.3 See how the shepherds Summoned to his cradle Leaving their flocks draw night with holy fear We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps
Vs. 4 Sing, choirs of angels Sing in exultation Sing all ye citizens heaven above Glory to God in the highest	Vs. 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee Born this happy morning Jesus to thee be glory given Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Because of the love Jesus has for us, we are saved. Because Jesus cares for us, we have peace. In this Christmas season, let the love of Jesus for us overflow in our hearts and our 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.