

Worship on January 30, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)

(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 324 Great is thy faithfulness
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Psalm 71:1-16
- Sermon: I run for dear life to God
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – Still (by Hillsong)

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday, January 30th, 2022. God is our hope. God is our refuge. God is our fortress. Let us go to him and rest in him as we worship and praise God.

. The Session of St. Andrew's decided to resume in-person worship from Feb. 27, regulations permitting.

. The Rev. Soong will have his office hours on Wednesday mornings and Saturday mornings.

. The Rev. Soong will take two week vacation from Feb. 7 to Feb. 20. The Rev. Robert Royal is the emergent pastoral care.

. There is the Lord's Table next week. Please prepare your own elements.

. 150th Anniversary Coffee Mug, 2022 PCC Calendar are on sale. Please message Anne or Soong or your district elder.

. Thank you for your continuing support with your gifts. As we offer our gifts to the Lord, let us give our hearts and our lives to the Lord as well. May God be in the centre of your hearts.

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: O Lord, in you we find refuge;

All: Let us never be put to shame.

One: Turn your ear to us, O God, and save us.

All: For you are our rock and our fortress.

One: god has been our hope and our trust from our earliest days.

All: God has been with us since we were born from our mother's womb.

One: Let us sing out our praise of God's steadfast love.

All: We will offer God all glory and honour this day and always!

Praise song – BOP 324 – Great is thy faithfulness

<u>Vs. 1</u> Great is thy faithfulness O God my Father There is no shadow of turning with thee Thou changest not Thy compassions they fail not As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be	<u>Vs. 2</u> Summer and winter and spring and harvest Sun moon and stars in their courses above Join with all nature in eloquent witness To thy great faithfulness Mercy and love
<u>Vs. 3</u> Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow Blessings all mine with then thousand beside!	<u>Chorus</u> Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I see All I have needed thy hand hath provided Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Almighty and everlasting One, your power is incomparable, your majesty infinite, and your love beyond our imagination. You are hidden in mystery, and yet so present. In a hectic world, you are peace and rest. In a harsh world, you are tenderness and mercy. In the cold and dark of winter, you are light and comfort, and so we bring you our worship, for you are the One who created us, the One who redeems us, and the One who gives us life, our one and only God, to whom we offer all love and loyalty, now and always. Amen.

God, whose name is love, we confess our faults and failings, knowing you know us through and through. You tell us that love is patient and kind, and you know when our patience and kindness fell short. You tell us that love is never rude or selfish, and you see the times we insisted on our own ways. Forgive us the excuses we make to ourselves when our love falters. Strengthen us by your Spirit so that our love is genuine and reliable.

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, God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is God's love;
as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our sins.

Thanks be to God whose love and forgiveness are steadfast.

May we be steadfast in our forgiveness of one another.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, we long to hear your holy Word in new and fresh ways.

Open our ears to hear your call.

Open our minds to understand your truth.

Open our eyes to the work of your kingdom and equip us to take our part. Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 71:1-6

1 In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

2 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

3 Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

5 For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

6 Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

7 I have been like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge.

8 My mouth is filled with your praise, and with your glory all day long.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent.

10 For my enemies speak concerning me, and those who watch for my life consult together.

11 They say, "Pursue and seize that person whom God has forsaken, for there is no one to deliver."

12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!

13 Let my accusers be put to shame and consumed; let those who seek to hurt me be covered with scorn and disgrace.

14 But I will hope continually, and will praise you yet more and more.

15 My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all day long, though their number is past my knowledge.

16 I will come praising the mighty deeds of the Lord God, I will praise your righteousness, yours alone.

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

SERMON: I run for dear life to God

Today's title is "I run for dear life to God."

In the Message Bible, v1 starts, I run for dear life to God.

This sets the atmosphere of this Psalm. This Psalm is a prayer to God. The tone of the prayer is urgent. The psalmist is in trouble. He needs to be delivered from this difficult situation. The Lord is the only hope for this person. He runs to God for his life. She runs to God for her life.

Desperateness. This one word is stuck in my head for a few days. Last week's message was about the rescue mission of Jesus.

He came for us.

For a short moment, think about your heart.

Do you need rescue? Are you in need of being rescued?

Well. Well. Do you? Are WE facing life and death situation right now?

Jesus is telling us that **“Listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat.” (Luke 22.31)** The Message Bible writes, **“Satan has tried his best to separate all of you from me, like chaff from wheat.”**

Satan is at work in his full power. He attacks us to separate us from Jesus.

But, what are we doing? What are we focusing on?

This psalmist focuses on God alone. V1-3, **“1 In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. 2 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me. 3 Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.”** He expresses his trust in God. He shows his desperateness. Honest confession. He knows that God saves. He puts every hope on the Lord alone.

Through his confession, we can think that he had experienced God’s rescue before. He knows that if he comes to God, he will be saved.

V4-6 supports his past experience of God. And for God’s power and love and saving him, he praises God. **My praise is continually of you.** I will never run out of praise. That’s the relationship with God. This is the intimacy with God.

That continuing intimacy with God is what we want.

In troubles, life threatening situations, this psalmist remembers God’s grace and love first.

Do you have the memory with God? Have God shown you his mercy, his love, his power, his healing, his awesomeness, his joy, his salvation?

If yes, I hope and pray that you restore the intimacy with God again.

If not, go to him. There are clouds of witnesses who experienced God personally. Hang in there, you will have your timing. God is faithful and God is never changing. Whether you experienced God’s love or not, he still loves you and he is waiting for you for the right timing.

V7-16. The psalmist continues asking God for help. But, he never stops praising God.

V7, I have been like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. People think of me as something evil, but you are my mighty protector. I have become an ominous sign to many, but you are my strong confidence.

There is a problem, but God is beyond the problem.

This is the attitude of the psalmist asking God for help.

What is our praise? Daily, what is our attitude asking God for help?

What are our problems? How big are they?

And what is our God like to us? And how BIG is our God?

Does our God hide our problems and give us peace and confidence?

OR does our problem hide God and give us worry and annoy?

My deepest desire as Christian is to **live with God daily.** But, am I? This is a big question.

In my daily life, where do I find my entertainment, fun, satisfaction, and where does my joy come from?

Where does my joy come from?

I watch Netflix to rest. I eat and drink good food to finish my long and tired day with satisfaction.

I pray daily. I read the Bible daily.

Sometimes, my daily reading and prayer lasts all day long, but many times, only then. It does not last long. Like a candle light, it brightens my soul. But, when I close the Bible, candle light is gone too.

Why doesn't the intimacy with God disappear so quickly?

On Sunday morning, we gather together and worship God. God promised us that he will be with us. But, my question is not about God. My question is about us. Are we with God?

This is my daily reading from Charles Stanley.

A Lesson in Pruning

Years ago I lived in Fruitland, North Carolina. It was apple country, and several of my parishioners were growers. When I stopped by to visit one of them, I found him mercilessly cutting branches from one of the trees. He told me that to produce an abundant crop of the best fruit, he had to prune the branches. It might look as if the tree was going to die, but new growth would spring from the wounds.

Our conversation helped me understand why the Lord sometimes acts as a pruning knife in our lives. To get a plentiful crop of spiritual fruit, He must remove anything that hinders us from becoming the person He designed us to be. The process is often painful as God cuts away fleshly habits and worldly attitudes, but His pruning results in us becoming a more accurate reflection of Jesus Christ.

Being loved by God doesn't mean being coddled. Our comfort is not His primary interest. Just as a grower prunes an apple tree to get a bountiful harvest, so God must sometimes cause us pain in order to bring forth greater spiritual growth, Christlike character, and abundance.

What are we desperate for? Are we desperate for God?

John 15:1-5, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."

This psalmist knew this. Apart from God, he was nothing. That's why he ran for dear life to God. God is the source of life. Let us run to God for our lives.

Let us pray.

God of life, we are coming to you for life. As the deer looks for water so desperately, we are seeking you. We have hunger for you. We are thirsty for you. We desire to live in your presence in our daily lives. Help us focus on you. Help us restore the close relationship with you. We

desire the intimate relationship with you. Like this psalmist, Lord, fill our mouths with praise and worship. Like this psalmist, we want to be with you. Father God, hold our hands, and help us hold your hand as well. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Father God, you are holy. You are different from us. You are faithful. You are patient. You are rich in love. You are just. You are merciful. You are forgiving. You are kind. You are present. You are healing. You are giving. You are love.

How great it is to be in your presence.

Father God, we want to spend time with you. Not because of our responsibilities, but because of our desire to be together with you, we want to waste time with you.

Help us pour out ourselves before you.

Help us find time for you. Fill our hearts with desperateness for you.

We are coming to your presence with humble hearts. Our mistakes, our sinful desires, our selfishness is endless. Nameless tombs are found again. We look back ourselves, our history. Gracious Father God, in the name of religion, we were selfish. We only judged others without love and grace. Help us restore our mistakes, selfish desires. With your guidance, with your strength, overcome our brokenness. Help us do things representing your love. Help us shine your light, not our own selfishness. Restore the brokenness of the First Nations. Fill their hearts with dreams and hopes. There are disconnectedness between generations. Help them build loving family. Restore the family relationships. Restore their communities. Restore their cultures. Restore their own uniqueness created by you Lord. You are the Lord and you are the Creator of all nations.

We pray for Ontario. From tomorrow, the COVID restrictions will be lessened. Can we not avoid this virus? Businesses are having hard times. Families are having hard times. Church are facing difficulties. Everything in our life is changed because of this virus. Lord, give us wisdom. Fill the leaders of Ontario wisdom and the hearts fearing you, so they are standing before you as they carry out their authorities. May their hearts be inclined toward you, so your will be done in our lives.

We are praying for our church. We decided to stay online for few more weeks. There are people desiring to come back to in-person worship service. Help us continue to be careful for everyone's safety. And as we worship you both in-person and online at the same time on Sunday morning, fill each heart with the same grace and love, so we know that you are working in all kinds of circumstances and help us to be connected through our hybrid worship services.

Also, there are people suffering with their physical pains. Remember them Lord. Put your hands upon their bodies at this time, and heal them. Remove their pains.

Time flies, Lord. We lived the first month of the new year already. We are given one week until we gather together and worship you. Teach us to number our days so that we live wisely and well. Help us value our time and help us use our time in your will. We praise you and we lift you up through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

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

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the greatest of gifts is love. The blessings we enjoy in life speak of God's love for us. What we offer to God speaks of our love for the One who has

reached out to us in Jesus. May our gifts share that love with God's world. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

God of life and love, we are grateful for all you have given us in Christ and in creation, in community, and in the Church that bears Jesus' name. We offer our gifts to you in love, trusting you will bless them and us. May all that we offer become tangible expressions of your love at work in the world for Christ's sake. Amen.

Song for the Journey: Still

Vs. 1 Hide me now Under Your wings Cover me Within Your mighty hand	Chorus When the oceans rise And thunders roar I will soar with You Above the storm Father You are King Over the flood I will be still and know You are God
Vs. 2 Find rest my soul In Christ alone Know His power In quietness and trust	

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus teaches us his ways. God is desperate for you. God longs for the intimate relationship with you. God is faithful and he is still there waiting for you. Answer God. Hold his hand. Let us come to God for 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.