

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora, Worship: November 20, 2022

(CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP #246, “This is the Feast of Victory”
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP #570, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

We Listen

- Prayer for Illumination
- Scripture: Esther 3:12-4:14
- Sermon: “Speaking Saving Truth”
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP #571, “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

We Serve

- Benediction

Prelude

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements

*Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday,
November 20, 2022. Rev. Soong will be back next week.*

Worship volunteers are always welcome!

• Call to Worship

One: Say among the nations, the Lord reigns.

All: Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice!

One: The Lord is coming to judge the earth.

All: God will judge the world with righteousness and the people with truth.

One: Come, let us worship God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Blessing, honour, glory, and power be to our God now and always.

Praise Song: BOP #246, "This is the Feast of Victory"

• Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of majesty and mercy, we give you thanks and praise for your commitment to your creation. In Christ, you have turned the world upside down, revealing your strength through weakness, and your power through compassion. In the cross of Christ you taught us that no hopeless situation or frightening possibility is beyond your reach. We praise you for your love at work around us and within us, always able to do more than we can ask or even imagine. Receive our love and our loyalty this day, our Sovereign and our Saviour. God of wisdom and warning, we confess that we often prefer our own plans to your purposes. We shrink from acts of service that seem too demanding. Forgive us when our commitment wavers and we think someone else will take up the challenges we face. Inspire us with the example of Jesus, and energize us with your Spirit to follow him as our Shepherd, wherever he leads.

This time we come to you in the 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

Christ embodied God's love and mercy so powerfully that he offered forgiveness to his tormentors from the cross. In grace he reaches out to us, too. Receive his forgiveness this day, and offer it to others for his sake.

Time for Our Children and Youth

Show artwork, true to convictions, speak the truth to save others

*Prayer: This prayer is adapted from the book *Gathered and Scattered: Readings and Meditations from the Iona Community*, by Neil Paynter*

Lord, may the children and young people in our congregation be protected, nurtured, and encouraged. May they have the chance to learn, the space to have fun, and the room to grow. May they be valued and heard, supported and challenged, and given opportunities to help in the reshaping of the Church and the world. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP #570, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

We Listen

Prayer for Illumination

God of truth and justice, send us your Holy Spirit as we hear the Scriptures read and interpreted. Through your Word, grant that we might see your truth and justice unfolding in the world you love. Amen.

Scripture: Esther 3:12-4:14 (NRSV)

3 12 Then the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's ring. 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, giving orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. 14 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation, calling on all the peoples to be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went quickly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

4 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; 2 he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3 In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. 5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. 6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, 7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman

had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

9 Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." 12 When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, 13 Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: "Speaking Saving Truth"

The Prayer for the People of God

Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks that you reign through love as the power that embraces the world with mercy and hope. Thank you for revealing that to trust is wisdom, to forgive is the best way to deal with enemies, and to serve is the best way to lead. We pray that, through the grace of your kingdom, each beloved creature and citizen will know safety and satisfaction in their homes. Let the vision of your peaceable kingdom take root in our hearts, bringing healing to families and communities, and in every place harmed by violence or destruction.

We give you thanks for reaching out to those on the margins and those others shunned, so that each one knew they belonged in your kingdom. We pray for those who face discrimination or insecurity in our communities, longing for respect. Teach us how to live differently as

neighbours, to acknowledge and work with others we've never worked with before. Lead us by your Spirit to share in your work of mending the world.

We thank you for enduring the pain of the cross and the darkness of the tomb to show us there is life beyond death through your resurrecting love. We pray for those who are grieving a loss this day, the loss of someone beloved, the loss of love or hope or trust, the loss of opportunity or security or future plans.

Be present with all who the sadness and disruption of a loss and bring each one comfort and courage. We pray for your church at work in the world, confronting the challenges and changes of these times. Unite us in witness and service, and encourage us when difficulties arise, for we are your people, committed to the unfolding of your reign among us. Amen.

We Respond

Offering & Dedication

Invitation to the Offering

The story of Jesus offering forgiveness out from the Cross reminds us of the mercy and compassion we have received from God. We offer our gifts in gratitude for this love, so that the world will be continue to be touched by such mercy and compassion.

Prayer of Dedication

Merciful God, you envision a world where the hungry are fed and strangers are welcomed. We bring you our gifts to share in that vision. With your blessing, may our gifts bear fruit in Christ's name, and offer his blessing to those we serve for his sake. Amen.

Song for the Journey –BOP #571, “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

We Serve

• Benediction

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. Amen.

Postlude