

**Worship on January 1st, 2023** (CCLI: License Number #3156883)  
(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

**Sunday Order of worship**

**We Gather**

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 712 Arise, your light is come
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 177 Christ, whose glory fills the skies

**We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Isaiah 63:7-9
- Sermon: God's gracious deeds for us
- The Prayer for the people of God

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 172 As with gladness men of old

**We Serve**

- Benediction

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

**Responsive Call to Worship**

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights!

**Praise the Lord, sun and moon; give praise, all shining stars!**

Give praise, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling God's command!

**Give praise, hills and mountains.**

All people together, let us praise the name of the Lord and declare God's glory in heaven and on earth. **Let us worship God!**

**Praise song – BOP 712 Arise, your light is come**

**Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

God of majesty and mystery, like the magi following the star, we come to you in wonder.

Your purposes are beyond our comprehension, your majesty incomparable and your love beyond imagination and your presence always with us. We praise you for your steadfast love, and offer you our trust for the days ahead as we seek to follow faithfully in the footsteps of Christ, our newborn King.

God of light and life, you have come to us in Christ Jesus to open a path to new life, but we fall back on what is familiar. We confess that we are in love with our old ways and our resolution for

change is all too short. Forgive us when our resolve wavers and shine your light on the way we can follow into your future.

**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, If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Be assured of God's forgiveness. Make a new start this year, on this first day of 2023. Be at peace with God and be secure in the knowledge of God's love for each and every one of us.

**May the peace of the Lord be with you.** Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

### **Prayer for children and youth**

God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time of prayer for our precious children and youth. We remember them on this first day of new year. If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. Let our children and youth have Christ in their hearts. You promised newness for them. As they grow and form their inner beings, let them be filled with your wisdom and guidance. Fill their hearts with you. Be at the centre of their hearts and lead their daily lives. Precious God, let them come to you and offer their hearts to you. Teach them your goodness and love. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

### **Praise Song: BOP 177 Christ, whose glory fills the skies**

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

God of love and wisdom, in the law and the prophets, you give us your will and in Jesus Christ you revealed your love. Open our minds by the power of your Holy Spirit so that we might understand what you are saying to the church today and this year. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Scripture: Isaiah 63:7-9**

7 I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

8 For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour

9 in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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

### **SERMON: God's gracious deeds for us.**

Happy new year! It is a great pleasure to see you on the first day of 2023.

May God's abundant blessings fall upon you all through this new year.

Today's sermon title is **"God's gracious deeds for us."**

I chose today's passage to celebrate and remember God's blessings upon our lives and wish God's guidance and blessings throughout this new year.

But, the whole chapter is not about blessing. Only these 3 verses are blessing, but the whole chapter is about God's anger toward God's people, as well as his faithful love for us.

In the context of the whole chapter of Isaiah 63, we will think about God's love and faithfulness toward us.

God is saying in V5-6, **"I looked, but there was no helper; I stared, but there was no one to sustain me; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath sustained me. I trampled down peoples in my anger, I crushed them in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."**

This expresses God's anger toward his people. He looked, but no helper. This means that God's people were not focusing on God. They were not in the presence of God. They went away and were busy doing their own things. Therefore, God's anger was expressed. God's wrath was poured upon his people. This is the punishment of God toward God's people. And this is the Babylonian exile. Israelites had to suffer from the reign of Babylonian empire. They thought God had abandoned them.

**V7, I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.**

What does this v7 tell you? First, anything about us? Yes. We are the recipients of God's benefits. What we did is just being loved. Basically, we did nothing. But, God, with his faithful love, showed his love, mercy, and favour.

**V8, For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their saviour v9 in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.**

God is telling himself. They are my people, my children "who will not deal falsely." This means who will not lie, who will not betray me again, who will not be disloyal, who will not be faithless. This expresses God's determination to trust us. Only because we are God's own people, God trusts us. Because of God's trust, what does he do? God becomes our Saviour in all our distress.

However, read V10, (It starts with BUT.) **"But they rebelled and grieved his holy spirit; therefore he became their enemy; he himself fought against them.**

Sigh... Between v6 and v10, v7-9, our today's passage is the only place God speaking to his own people with positivity, with hope, with determination to love them.

Before v7, God's people were away from God. Therefore, with patience and love, God gathered them and spoke and showed God's faithfulness and love for them. But, immediately after God's love poured upon, God's people betrayed God. That is v10.

That's who we are. That's the sad reality of our nature. That's why we are said to be sinful.

I am sorry to tell you this on the first day of new year. Yet, no one can get out of this truth. We cannot run away from our reality.

Then, are we so hopeless? Are we doomed? Yes and yes.

We are so hopeless in our own selves. We are totally doomed with our own strength and power.

However, there is God who calls us his own people. It is God who is pouring out his steadfast and faithful love upon us every day. This is God who cannot give us up.

I feel sorry for God who is pouring out water into a broken jar. But, this God cannot stop it.

**Isaiah 46:3-4, "Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn grey I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save."**

God is with God's children like a mother who carries her children in her womb and then, once they have been delivered, lifts her children up to her hip to keep them out of harm's way.

God cannot help himself dealing with his own children, his own people, tenderly, in an abundance of steadfast love, looking on God's lost children with love and pity.

I was planning to prepare a message filled with hope and love and joy and gladness. But, today's message is showing the opposite natures of God and God's people.

Although we are not faithful to God's love, although we fall, although we run away, although we are not that lovable, our God has a different idea. God is still faithful to us with a motherly love.

Isaiah 46:3-4 again in The Message version, **"Listen to me, family of Jacob, everyone that's left of the family of Israel. I've been carrying you on my back from the day you were born, and I'll keep on carrying you when you're old. I'll be there, bearing you when you're old and gray. I've done it and will keep on doing it, carrying you on my back, saving you."**

God is firm. He is confident on his love toward his unfaithful children. He cannot give up his own children. Whether we are young or old, God is carrying us along. Whether or not we are able or powerful, God is taking care of us.

On this new year's day, God is giving us his firm promise: I will rescue you and I will save you.

I pray that God's guidance and help be with you all the days of your life.

This is the message of the Lord for us today. Let us pray.

**Prayer for the people of God**

O God you are my God. And I will ever praise you. O God you are my God and I will follow you all of your ways. O God, thank you for your faithfulness. You continuously love us whether we trust you or we turn away from you. God, you are more loving than our parents. You get angry, but you never forget us. You never let us turn away from you. You are always holding us. You never stop being too awesome. Thank you for your greatness.

Because of you, we can have hope. Only because of you, we can have dreams. Loving God, open our eyes and ears, so we listen to your love. We are lifting up our new year into your hands. Please accept this new year and fill with your presence.

Lord God, we pray for the world. There have been a lot of sadness and difficulties in past few years. Give us clean hands. Give us clean hearts. Give us strength to overcome our sinful nature. Glorious God, fill each person's heart with the faith that you trust us. Our faith is too weak and unreliable. Fill us with you. Guide the world leaders and help us make peace and love. End the war in Ukraine. End the violence in all the countries. And protect us from any fear or danger. Display your goodness in any circumstances of our lives.

We pray for our church. There are faithful people who remember you and come to you to worship. There are people who try to hold on to you. Thank you for their desire for you. Thank you that they acknowledge your grace and love. Loving God, the Father, embrace them with your unending and unfathomable love. Pour out your love lavishly upon your people. We have people who are going through difficult times. There are sicknesses, depression, powerlessness, loss of loved ones, selfishness, and many other hardships caused by our weaknesses or sinful nature. We bring all our hardships before your feet. Gracious and almighty God, take them and put them on the cross where you solved all our problems. Give us a big hug with your love. Help us be present in your abundant love all through this year. We hear your love from the Bible. We hear your faithfulness from the Bible and from some people around the world.

Then! Why not me! Why not us! Fill our hearts with hope that we experience you day by day. We want to know you. We want to be with you. We want to see your great and mighty works. Give us humble hearts and give us hope.

You, o Lord, are our solid rock foundation. We want to build our lives upon you. Hold our hands and guide our steps. Thank you for being our God and trusting us. Be glorified and be worshipped. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This is the time for offering. The Magi offered rare and expensive gifts to honour the new-born Christ child. We may not bring gold, frankincense and myrrh, but all our gifts are used by God to build God's kingdom in his world. Let us present our gifts and offerings. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God.

**The Doxology (Tune of BOP 830)**

Praise God with songs that never cease, praise God who fills the earth with peace, praise God for love and joy within; the Holy Child is born again!

**Offering prayer:**

God of neighbourhoods and nations, we bring our gifts to you, grateful that you are with us in good times and hard times. We do not know what this new year ahead will hold but your love shines like a star to guide us. Bless these gifts and bless us and use them and use us in the service of your mission in the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Song for the Journey BOP 172 As with gladness men of old**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Out of our desire to change ourselves, we make new year's resolutions. Have you done that? We try to be good. But, our nature stays the same. Our sinful nature does not go away. Our unfaithfulness to God will never change. That's who we are. HOWEVER, our God is faithful and loving. That's God's nature which never changes. There is our hope. This God promises us, 'you are mine, and I will save you.' May God be with you all the days of your life.

**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.