

Worship on May 14, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Robert Revington)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling
- Prayer for worship + Lord’s Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 474 The love of God comes close

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22
- Second reading: Psalm 66:8-20 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 14:15-21
- Sermon: The promise of the Holy Spirit
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 425 We praise you, O God vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

We Serve

- Benediction

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

Let us see you this day, O God;

Come to us as light.

Let us hear you this day, O God;

Come to us as truth.

Let us sense your presence, O God;

Come to us as love.

Come and let us worship, God.

We have come to rejoice in God, our Saviour.

Praise song – BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of life, we praise you this day for the gift of your creation as new life rises around us in
flower beds and farmers’ fields, in the nests and burrows of your creatures.

We praise you for the gift of our lives, and for all those people – from our parents, grandparents
and great-grandparents to our teachers and coaches and good friends – who have encouraged us
along the way.

In this time of worship, encourage us in the present moments of our lives, challenging as they may seem. Refresh us with the new life you promise us in Christ Jesus in whose name we praise you as the Holy Spirit prays within us.

God of love, we are grateful for the love you bless us with in our homes and families. Yet you know family life is not always easy. Our love for each other gets strained some days. Forgive us if we have taken our family for granted. Give us grace to repair relationships where strain is showing.

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

Church! The body of Christ, Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ – And Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free to love more fully by God's generous grace.

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

Prayer for children and youth

God of love and grace, thank you for this time of prayer. As we come and offer up our children and youth into your hands, please accept them and capture their hearts. You are the only hope. You are the only God and you are the only truth we can hold on to. You are the only eternal. Help our children and youth establish their lives upon you, the solid Rock, the only truth, and the only way, and the only life. We are praying for Anne. She's teaching your word to our children and youth these days at church school. Give her wisdom and attentive ears to you, so our children and youth may experience your great love and everlasting truth at Sunday school. Also, give Anne energy and good rest. Take good care of her physical health and her spirit. As she serves you with love and passion, Lord, pour out your blessings upon her. Lord, bring our precious children and youth to the place of worship. If they could come and join our worship, that's great. If cannot, lead and guide them to the most suitable church, so they can grow within your people, in love and harmony. Guide our next generations and be glorified through them. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 474 The love of God comes here

Prayer for Illumination:

Spirit of Truth and Love, move in us and among us as we listen to the Scriptures read and proclaimed. Open our minds and hearts to God's Living Word so that we may know it more fully and follow it more faithfully day by day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Second reading: Psalm 68:8-20 (refrain 1)

Third reading: John 14:15-21

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

SERMON: The promise of the Holy Spirit

Today’s sermon title is **“The promise of the Holy Spirit.”**

In today’s passage, Jesus is in action. He is telling his disciples that he would leave them soon. For the whole time, the disciples do not understand what their teacher was talking about. But they had the feeling of anxiety.

“Oh, Jesus is going somewhere. We cannot go with him. Then, what’s going to happen to us?”

Knowing what they are thinking, Jesus comforts them. Today’s passage as a whole, Jesus is giving them assurance of the continuation of his presence in their lives by promising the Holy Spirit.

When we think about the Holy Spirit, what is the picture in our minds?

Of course, no one can see the Holy Spirit, so we might not have a clear image of him. But, we kind of have some feelings when we think about the Holy Spirit. Warm, personal intimacy, security, and connectedness. **Then, are these all? Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit so that we can have good feelings?**

The Holy Spirit has different names in our passage. Advocate, Paraclete, Spirit of truth. When we think about the meaning of **Advocate, in Greek, Paraclete, it is someone who has been called to our side to stand up for us.** In today’s language, who is this? I immediately thought of a lawyer. I am not hearing all the good stories about lawyers, but lawyers are supposed to stand up for us and support us and help us. The Advocate for us is the Holy Spirit. **V16, “And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.”** We are given the Holy Spirit to be with us. In this promise, we find that Jesus refers the Holy Spirit **ANOTHER ADVOCATE.**

The first Advocate or the original Advocate is Jesus himself. Think about what he did. Sharing meals with outcasts and sinners. Healing the sick. Raising the dead. Chasing away the money changers at the temple. Preaching. Traveling. Making relationships. The stories of Jesus are not private feelings or emotions. Jesus was in action. He was on the move. Jesus was engaging, building relationships.

The disciples are nervous because they might lose the connectedness with Jesus. They always want the engagement with Jesus. So, Jesus is giving them the promise of the continuation of the intimate relationship with him through the Holy Spirit, who is to stand by us and for us.

This Paraclete, this Advocate, Jesus promises, will be with us and in us. **Jesus himself will be in the disciples, as he is in the Father, and as the disciples will be in Jesus.** This is the movement of life. God’s life is in Jesus, and in the Holy Spirit. The Godhead Three in One, the Holy Spirit shares the life of God within the Triune God. And God is sharing his life to us. First through Jesus and then through the Holy Spirit now. Therefore, after the ascension of Jesus

Christ, **we are now living in the age of the Holy Spirit.** God continues to present among us in his Spirit.

V17, “This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you and he will be in you.”

Some other translations allow **among you.**

This implies that the Holy Spirit is not only for individual relationships, but also the communal relationships. Like God exists in Three, in other words, like God exists in community, we are to live and exist in community. So, **when we pray for our church, please remember that the Holy Spirit dwell within our community.** May God fill our church with his Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is exclusively for those who are in Christ. For example, **Jesus stood before the court of Pontius Pilate.** Standing right in front of Jesus, Pilate asked, **“What is truth?”** Jesus stood there in silence. **Why did Jesus not answer?**

The answer was right there! Jesus was standing right in front of the two eyes of Pontius Pilate. Jesus is like, **“You are looking at the truth itself, Pilate! The truth is standing right in front of your very eyes right now. Watch him, and you will find out what truth is.”**

V18-19, “18 ‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.’”

This is not Jesus giving them hope of a distant future in which he will return, but an immediate confirmation of continuing to know Jesus even after Jesus left them physically. The true life, the fullness they experienced in community, will continue through the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.

This can be done in love. **V15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.**

V21, “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.

It sounds like we need to keep the law, but it’s other way around. It is out of love. For example, if you love someone, then you would want to make the person happy. You would do what the person likes you to do. Not only when you are with the person, but also when the person is absent, you would continue the things the person likes. If your spouse don’t like you to drive too fast, you would try to slow down whether you are with your spouse or not. When your children want you to quit drinking, even though you love to drink, you would consider quitting. So, if we love our Lord Jesus Christ, we would listen and obey him out of love, not because we should.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta famously left her record of a lifetime of struggle. This struggle is about the darkness annoyed her for more than half of her life. She did not feel the presence of Christ. Nevertheless, among Christians she has been generally accepted as **a modern saint.** Some consider her an even greater saint because in spite of her dark she continued to be faithful. Even though she had not been gifted with spiritual certainty, she steadfastly pursued the mission to which she believed she had been called. The Christian community recognizes and affirmed that mission.

Jesus certainly promised his presence and the presence of the Holy Spirit to those who keep his commandments to love and serve one another. The love Jesus commands is not a feeling. It is not even a feeling of certainty about union with Christ. The love Jesus commands is about a master washing the feet of his disciples, and a king dying the death of a criminal.

It is our greatest encouragement that this promise is not about our feelings. It is about love which Jesus gave us as the promise to continue to be connected to the life of our God the Father.

Believe that we have received the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit in us and among us, we continue to have the life of God. Remember the true life we have and share the life of God to our surroundings and loved ones.

This is the word of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God:

God of love, we thank you for your promise of the Holy Spirit. We have our personal life coach with us all the time. Open our hearts, our eyes and ears, so we may listen what the Holy Spirit speaks to us and see what the Holy Spirit shows us. We long to live with you. Help us be in your presence all the days of our lives.

We pray for this world, current generations we live together. We hear too many sad stories. Too many violence including shootings. Now it's all around. We were saddened with the news from Texas, and here. Due to shootings, one boy lost his entire family. We lost number of police officers. Gracious God, is this really necessary? Aren't there too many tragedies under the name of self-protection? Holy Spirit, this is your time. Work in us and among us. Let your love and presence be overflowing everywhere your gospel is preached. Let us become the channel of your love. Give us courage to act. Help us follow your teachings and give us courage to live accordingly.

We pray for our church. Help us remember those who need our prayers. We pray for those who are physically ill. Be with them and heal them. Embrace them with your love. We pray for those who are struggling with their relationships. We are created to live in community, in relationships. Give us wisdom and courage. Help us experience the fullness and abundance we are supposed to experience in our relationships. And we remember those with other issues. Although we cannot know all the desires and hopes, you are able. You know and hear all our prayers. Gracious God, bring our hearts close to you and align our hearts' desires to your will. We are yours.

Through our worship, be worshipped and glorified. Take pleasure in our worship. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. The Apostle Paul declared that in God, we live and move and have our being. We offer our gifts to God in thanksgiving for all we enjoy in life, praying that our generosity will become a blessing throughout all God's precious creation. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 425)

Offering prayer:

God our Creator and Redeemer, you made us in love to share that love with neighbour and stranger as Jesus commanded. Take our gifts and make them tokens of your love we can share throughout our community and in the world you love, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Live in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Open up your hearts and let him speak to you. God's life is in us and among us. Let the Holy Spirit work in us and among freely.

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.