

Worship on July 2, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Deborah Simmerson)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 321 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
- Prayer for worship + Lord’s Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Romans 6:12-23
- Second reading: Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Jeremiah 28:5-9
- Sermon: The proof of prophecy
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 350 To God be the glory

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 sing of God’s steadfast love.

We will offer our praise in songs of joy.

God’s faithfulness is as vast as the heavens.

We will proclaim God’s faithfulness to all generations.

Let us worship God in our prayers and our praise.

We will give God glory now and always!

Praise song – BOP 321 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Creator God, Loving God, how majestic is your name in all the earth. From north and south,
from east and west, drawn by your majesty, we come to worship you.

For the gift of this new day, fresh from your hand, we rejoice. For the renewal we know through
friendship with Christ, we praise you. For the energy of the Holy Spirit, all the blessings poured
upon us in each moment, we honour you.

Creator God, Loving God, Mysterious God, all of life is your gift, so give us glimpses of your splendor and love in this time of worship. Accept our praise offered in word and action. Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit, be worshipped and be glorified here and everywhere, now and always.

Lord of all life and each life, we confess that we sometimes forget that life is your gift, especially when we face struggles or when we feel hardships. We confuse our own desires for your will, and stop listening for your guidance. Forgive any hurt we have caused by action or inaction, and show us how to make amends. May we live with you and with each other in reconciling grace through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Friends, Jesus knows we have fallen short of his intentions for us, yet in his great mercy, he welcomes us back into his embrace. Thanks be to God that we are forgiven, refreshed and restored for the ministry by God's 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

Mysterious God, your love and grace for us is a mystery. There is no reason the Creator God died for mere human beings. Thank you for your great love. With your love, watch over our children and youth. Let them learn your truth from our daily living. Help us live according to our faith, so that they learn righteousness from how we live our lives. We pray for your mercy. As they form their inner selves and their identities, be in the centre of their hearts. Let them put their foundation on your love and your grace. Help them remember that they did not deserve this grace and love, but Christ Jesus poured out everything for them. Even when they turn from God, God is still waiting for them patiently and passionately and compassionately. Loving God the Father, with your love, embrace them and let their spirit and unconsciousness know that they are loved. Build their lives with your power. Keep them safe all through this summer and every day. Thank you Jesus. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, sometimes your Word seems so clear to us, yet at other times it is a puzzle or a challenge. Send your Holy Spirit to guide us as we listen to the Scriptures today. Help us hear your Word for our times and our lives through the grace of Christ. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: Romans 6:12-23

Second reading: Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Jeremiah 28:5-9

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

SERMON: The proof of prophecy

Today’s sermon title is **“The proof of prophecy.”**

Jeremiah is one of the prophets of God.

One day, God told him this. **Jeremiah 27:2, “Make a Yoke out of ropes and wooded boards. Put it on your neck.”**

What is yoke? (Pic) Yoke is a wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull.

Jeremiah had to carry the yoke himself (Pic) to show that they are under the reign of Babylonians. Poor Jeremiah had to live with this yoke and walk around with his yoke when he proclaimed the word of God.

There was another prophet, Hananiah. **Jeremiah 28:1, “The prophet Hananiah... spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and all the people...”**

Hananiah, with the name of the Lord, he said. **V2, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3 Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house, which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4 I will also bring back to this place King Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”**

The Israelites were under the reign of Babylon. They suffered. They desired to become free and restore their own authority again. **So, when Hananiah delivered the message from the Lord, how would people respond to his message of hope and victory?** Hopeful. Cheering.

Welcoming the message. Encouraging each other.

Even Jeremiah said this in **V6, “Amen! May the Lord do so; may the Lord fulfill the words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the Lord, and all the exiles.”**

Even Jeremiah liked the message. He loved this to happen. **Why wouldn’t Jeremiah want the good for his own country? But, he had different message from the Lord. V7, “But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. 8 The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. 9 As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet.”**

If you were there listening two opposite messages of the Lord, how would you feel? **Which one would you choose? And WHY?**

To enhance his message, Hananiah stood up and walk to Jeremiah. He took the yoke (PIC) from the neck of Jeremiah and broke it. He showed the promise of God in action. **“I told you!**

that God will break this yoke of shame and pain and suffering from Babylonians in two years!”

At this, Jeremiah? He left. He went his way. He did not argue. He did not try to prove that his message was the real one. He said it enough already. So, he left without a word.

We, as the audience, are left with two opposite messages.

Who won? It seems Hananiah won the competition. But, is it really a competition? Is this like a popular vote? Are they only focus on how the participants make their presentation more engaging, reading the need of people, and providing what the people want and need?

Hananiah did not look like a false prophet. Rather, Jeremiah was a weirdo.

At that time, the Israelites were getting stronger. Their economy was getting better. Their political position seemed to gaining more power. So, in two years, independence from the reign of Babylon sounded reasonable.

Also, people of Israel learned from their history. God restored their ancestors all the time. They simply had it in their minds. After some time of suffering, God brings back everything. That is a routine. But, when!? Who can tell God’s time? How do we know God’s thoughts?

We simply can’t. That’s why the prophet Jeremiah said that **“When the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet.”**

Hananiah vs. Jeremiah

Who would you choose?

John and Benjamin had a fight in the van while driving home. We were almost there. John said, “we are almost home.” All of sudden, Benjamin said, “No!” John said again, “We are almost home.” Benjamin said, “No.” They kept fighting. Meanwhile we arrived home.

One says A is right. The other says B is right. How do we know what’s right?

When it comes true, then we know what’s right.

When we read our time, what is necessary is a careful analysis of the tradition in which we stand and of the signs of the times that we can discern around us. For example, for building a church building or moving. What if the price of our building went up like three times because someone wants to build a condominium right at this place. Let’s say the current value of our building is 1M, but they want to pay us \$3M. Then, what would we do?

Wow! Such a great blessing! Let’s sell our building and get some extra money in our bank account? OR there are memories and love and dedication of our predecessors. So, it’s more valuable than money. How should we read our time and this sample question?

We cannot know the right answer.

Discernment begins on our knees. Discernment begins in the posture of humility.

When we were the congregant in Jeremiah and Hananiah’s time, it is not wise to choose a side right away. **Instead, such moments compel us to invite God into our discernment, to listen more deeply than we have ever listened before, to pray that we may get far enough out of the way that God’s will may find its way in.**

Instead of trying to figure out what the problem is or trying to resolve the tension between two different ideas, **we are called to dwell in the covenantal love that brings God’s will to life.**

Let us stand before the presence of God and let us stand before the scripture and let us allow the scripture to read us.

Which message we believe is important. But, having God in our hearts, building a relationship with God is much more important for us. We seek proof. We want to see something for sure. But, we cannot see and touch our relationship with God, love of God, grace of God, and intimacy with God. Let us come before God on our knees. Let us go before God and seek himself. Being with God is the best blessing we can ever have.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

Loving God, thank you for your presence upon us now. Thank you for inviting us into this marvellous relationship with you. We choose what is certain or what is tangible. We want proof all the time. But, your love is not seen. Your grace is not touchable. But, still, you fill our hearts with your presence and love. Give us faith to trust you with all our hearts. And help us discern what's happening around us with your wisdom. Give us courage to act upon your will.

Let us not be confused between the messages of what we want to listen and what we need to listen.

This world is racing to the things they want. Gracious God, thank you for embracing the world in your loving arms. Let the world know it. Use us God. We want to spread out your loving message to our surroundings.

We pray for our community of Aurora. For this summer, many will travel. Many will enjoy various activities. Keep us safe. Give us discernment so we know when to stop, what to do and what not to do. Also, there will be a lot of gatherings. In our relationships, may we embrace each other and build healthy relationships. Help us be honest and humble to each other.

There might be some people who try to hurt others. Capture their hearts, God. Fill their hearts with our love, your lavishing love.

And we pray for the environment. Wildfires are in multiple places. It's impacting hugely in our lives. Many people are evacuated. They lost their life. Help them building their lives again.

Provide the firefighters and all the people who are dedicated to put off the wildfires. Also, it burns up trees and the air quality gets worse. Help us protect your creation and help us become good stewards. Help us hand down this earth to our children as good and clean as possible.

We remember our church members. There are people who are struggling with their health issues. Place your hands on the wounds and pains. Heal them. Use their medications and treatments. Use the hands of the medical treatments providers. By all means, you be with them. Also, there are people who have difficulties with their relationships. Redirect their focus from each other's shortfalls to God, so they together walk towards you, so as they come close to you, let them become more like you. Give them loving, forgiving, and humble hearts. Also, we all have different life challenges. Help us bring them up to you with humble and honest and expectant hearts. You are the Lord and you are the almighty God.

Be with us all the time and be worshipped through our daily lives. We praise and worship you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Jesus teaches that the gift of a simple cup of water is a gift worthy of his disciples. Friends, whatever we give to God this day can bless the world in Jesus' name. So give with confidence that your gift matters. As we offer our gifts to God, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 79 Vs. 1)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, what we return to you today has first come to us from you. Bless what we offer so that those in need may taste your abundance which we know already in Christ. Let our gifts be used to spread your love to all the earth. We praise you and love you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 350 To God be the glory

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. There are many many messages around us. What are we going to trust? What are we going to do with them? Let us come to God asking for wisdom. Let us slow down before making choices. Let us ask God and let us walk with him daily. That is the greatest blessing. May God be with you.

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.