

Sunday Order of worship on October 15, 2023

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 497 Word of God, across the ages
- Prayer with children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Isaiah 25:1-9
- Second reading: Psalm 23 (BOP 11)
- Third reading: Philippians 4:1-9
- Sermon: Keep up the good work
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 267 Rejoice, the Lord is King

We Serve

- Benediction

Responsive Call to Worship

We gather in God's holy presence, where God embraces us with grace.

Here God will transform us into disciples.

We glorify God, who yearns for justice for the last and the least.

Here God will write compassion on our hearts.

We give thanks to God for God's persistent love that seeks us out.

Here God will breathe the Word of Life into our lives, and so we will praise our God!

Praise song – BOP 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of all time and space, You have called people to meet you over the centuries, in many different places, in many different ways. We praise you for welcoming us, receiving us as just the way we are. You hear our prayers and claim us as your own. In this hour of worship, send your Holy Spirit upon us to revive our faith and guide our footsteps in the way of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Saviour.

God of all life and each life, you know all about us, our deepest concerns and our fondest hopes. We confess that we are often anxious to see results. We lose patience when we cannot see

progress. We blame others rather than seek solutions. Forgive us. Help us claim your peace when our hearts are anxious. And fill our hearts with confidence and gentleness because you are with us.

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

While it is true that we have all sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ. So be at peace with God, be at peace with yourself and be at peace with one another.

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

Praise Song: BOP 497 Word of God, across the ages

Prayer with Children

Prayer for Illumination:

God of prophets and parables, we gather to listen to the Scriptures read and proclaimed. By your Spirit, grant us fresh understanding, and challenge us to live according to your transforming grace. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

- First reading: Isaiah 25:1-9
- Second reading: Psalm 23 (BOP 11)
- Third reading: Philippians 4:1-9

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

SERMON: Keep up the good work

Today's sermon title is **"Keep up the good work."**

When you first hear the title, what's your first thought?

Everything seems fine and everything is going well. So, we just maintain what we are doing.

However, in the first part of today's passage, they seem to have some struggles.

Knowing what's happening, Paul wrote this letter to the people in Philippi, he was joyful.

But, there were some struggles. Some problems to solve.

But, without giving them some kinds of solutions or guidelines, he concluded this section with hopeful encouragement.

V8-9, NLT, "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. V9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me – everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you."

Paul did not mention what the problems were. He just called out names who were involved. And say one thing. **V2, “I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.”**

And Paul reminded them that who they were. Their identity was recorded in v3, **“Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.”**

Their identity was Paul’s loyal companions, co-workers of Paul in the work of the gospel, and whose names are in the book of life.

Paul shifts their focus from the struggles to who they are.

When reading this passage, I thought of our church.

When I meet my pastor friends, they ask me how I am enjoying my church.

Then, I say, I am enjoying. And I boast about how generous we are in help communities. Of course, we have Martha’s Table and involvement with Welcoming Arms, But, the one thing I am shockingly proud is our renting price for renters. We are renting our space to others with ridiculous cheap price, in my common sense. About 20 years ago, my pastor asked me to look for some church rentals. So, I went around many different church buildings. At that time, in early 2000’s, the usual cost of rental fee was from \$300 per use to \$600 per use. Then, the monthly rental cost would be around \$1500 to \$2500. This range was the usual cost of monthly rental 20 years ago. I wonder how much they charge now. Our church is so gracious and generous, in my opinion, and we charge much less. Incredibly affordable rental fees for small churches. We only had one afternoon Korean church for a long time. One day, I went to lead afternoon worship at a different Korean church for pulpit supply in their English speaking ministry. In the fellowship time, I heard their worry about their pricy rental fee. So, I told them how awesome our church was. Then, few weeks later, they contacted me asking if they could have their worship service in the morning in our church building. Our session and the rental committee graciously allowed them to have worship service in the morning before we come it. Today also, I met the morning church group. This is how we have two churches, before and after our church. When I pray for our congregant members, I pray for their churches too. They may glorify God in this space, so God’s name be lifted up and God’s love be spread out to each worshipper. Through sharing our building, we are doing a great work for the Kingdom of God.

So, when someone asks you about our church, brag how we are awesome in helping other churches for the Kingdom of God, for the gospel work.

Also, thankfully, we have Welcoming Arms in Aurora feeding the hungry and providing a safe space for fellowship. We have Martha’s Table every Thursday except few weeks during the summer break. For me, Sunday comes back very very quickly. For those who are serving the community of Aurora through Martha’s Table, Thursday comes back so quickly. Committing one morning weekly for the Kingdom of God is a great pleasure to the Lord. Thank you and bless you those who are giving their time and effort for this precious work.

What about coming to church every Sunday? When I was 7 or 8 years old, Sunday morning was my favourite time. On TV, there was Disney cartoons. It was always battle for me, church or cartoons. For some, Sunday morning might be the only morning they could sleep in. Coming here to worship God might not be the favorite activity during the week. But, by coming to the

community of faith, you are showing your faith in action. This way, you are able to experience a small success. You have faith and you succeeded to take an action with your faith. This is beneficial for you because it builds you up in faith. There are many aspects of coming to church and having faith, but I just want to talk about this one aspect only today, it is one of numerous small successes in our lives which helps us build ourselves.

In community wise, if you are committed and joined in worship here, then the whole community senses the support of each other and for each other. Then, the community gains strength.

Your smile to each other. Sharing peace during worship. Your warm wave, firm handshakes, gentle tap on the shoulder. Your presence matters. Bulletins are always here due to the faithful volunteer service of one person. Church is always clean and neat. Garbage bins are empty. Washrooms are clean. After worship, we have something to eat. Tables and chairs are set up. There are somebody behind the scenes.

As I pray for our church and prepare today's lesson, I wanted to encourage our church members. We are small and someone might be discouraged by the small number of people gathered here, but what about God? How does God see us? Where does God focus?

V4. Can we read it all together? “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Why is so? V5, “Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. V6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. v7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Why rejoice? Because **V5 “The Lord is near.”** And **V9, “God of peace will be with you.”**

If we know that God is near, we are able to be thankful and we are able to become gentle. We can become gentle only if our inner beings are satisfied. So, gentleness only comes from inner confidence. And the confidence comes from the power. Whose power do we have in us? The Lord's. The Lord is near. The Lord is with us.

Affordable rental fee, service for church in behind scenes, struggles to live out the faith for the Lord, no one knows what you are going through, but the Lord knows and he is with you.

In struggles, in problems, in sufferings, in hardships, in conflicts, remember this, the Lord knows, the Lord is near, God of peace will be with you. So, we are able to rejoice in any circumstances.

Through our good works, let others rejoice the presence of the Lord and let them experience our gentleness coming from our Lord.

In the next paragraph, Paul continues, **V12, “I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. V13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”**

Keep up your good work even though nobody recognizes you. But, the Lord knows. The Lord is with you. The Lord is holding you with his strong and powerful hands. So, rejoice in the Lord.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people:

God of love and grace, we thank you and we praise you for you are with us, for giving us your power and presence in our hearts and in our daily lives. As Paul confessed, you are greater than any of our circumstances. That is why we are able to be confident. Glorious God, help us live out the faith, help us experience your power in our lives, so Lord, fill us with confidence and help us display gentleness to our surroundings.

With you power, we believe that you are holding the whole earth in your hands. We pray for wars in the world. There are strong tensions between Israel and Palestine, Ukraine and Russia. Some are attacking innocent civilians. God, be with them. Cry with them. Endure this hard time with them. Be the Lord and help them have you in the midst of fear and danger. You said that you are the Shepherd protecting us, providing what we need, and giving us comfort. Upon all this mess, shine your light. Help us see you and know you and come close to you through these difficulties. Lord, give the leaders humble hearts and let them come before you and do the right things.

God of love, we pray for our renters. Teach them your love, your grace, and your awesomeness. Let them flourish in their ministries and let them pour out their hearts before you and live out their faith. Also, give us humble hearts. Help us know the value of sharing and teach us how wonderful it is to be with you. And, as we remember each other and pray for each other, let your love overflow within our community, and let this love overflow to our daily lives and build us up with confidence and gentleness.

With all our hearts, we want to worship you and praise you and love you. Be glorified through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: The Apostle Paul urges us to think on things that are honourable and just, commendable and true. To share what we have is honourable. Our gifts can help create justice and work for truth to prevail. So trust your gifts to God and know they are pleasing to God. Let us praise God and honour him with the Doxology BOP #830.

Doxology 830 & Offering prayer:

Generous God, we offer to you part of the abundance your share with us. Bless our gifts and work through them, so that others will know your generosity and be touched by your love through the kindness we can offer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 267 Rejoice, the Lord is King

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God is near. The Lord is with you, in your heart. Let the Lord speak to you in your daily life. Let the Lord build your inner being, so you have confidence with the power of God who created the whole universe. So, with the power and confidence, let us help each other and let us show gentleness to everyone.

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.