

Order of worship on January 7, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 291 Thou whose almighty Word
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 15 The Lord's my light

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Genesis 1:1-5
- Second reading: Psalm 29 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Mark 1:4-11
- Sermon: The Manifestation of Jesus
- Praise song – BOP 563 Let us talents and tongues employ
- Communion
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830 with modified lyrics) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 401 O Spirit of the Living God

We Serve

- Benediction

Responsive Call to Worship

The time has come!

The time is now!

The reign of God has drawn near.

The kingdom of heaven is here.

Let us turn our lives around and accept the good news.

We will follow Christ and worship in his name.

Praise song – BOP 291 Thou whose almighty Word

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of possibility and power, on this first day of the week, you began creating, bringing light to shine and bringing order out of chaos. On this first day of the week, you began your new creation, raising Christ out of death, breathing new life into the world. On this first day of the week, you call us to waken from sleep and gather in your holy name. So we come to listen and wonder, to sing, pray, and be fed.

By the gift of your Holy Spirit, make us your instruments of hope in this hurting world. Show your goodness and love in answer to the prayer and praise we offer this day in Jesus' name.

God of majesty and mercy, we confess to you our wrong-doing: things we have done knowingly and things we have left undone; hurts we inflicted unintentionally and hurts we have tried to disguise. Selfish things we have done just to please others, and those just to please ourselves. Forgive us. Have mercy upon us. In the year ahead, help us choose a better way for Jesus' sake.

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

Hear the good news of the gospel! 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 make a new start.

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 15 The Lord's my light

Prayer for Illumination:

Creator God, your Word set creation in motion. Send your Holy Spirit to set our minds in motion as we listen to the Scriptures today. Add to our insight and challenge our assumptions, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

- First reading: Genesis 1:1-5
- Second reading: Psalm 29 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Mark 1:4-11

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

Sermon: The Manifestation of Jesus.

Happy new year everyone! I hope and pray that the love of God will fill your life and guide your every day with his wisdom.

Today's sermon title is **"The Manifestation of Jesus."**

Today is Epiphany Sunday. We remember and celebrate the appearance of Jesus Christ in human history. The manifestation of Jesus changed everything. May his presence be experienced in our daily lives.

When someone joins in our discussion, sometimes everyone goes silent. Sometimes, when we encounter somebody, we are just so glad and feel encouraged. The manifestation of So-And-So gives us great feelings. OR the manifestation of so-and-so #2 gives us difficulties. We can easily think of these people.

What about us? When we come into a room, how others feel about our presence?

It is up to the relationships we have built with others.

When Jesus appears, in other words, when we meet Jesus, everything changes. PERIOD.

When we truly meet Jesus, we are changed by his presence and in his presence.

For example, in today's scripture, Genesis 1, God created the light. God separated the light from the darkness. God created an order from a chaos.

And, when a blind man who was born blind came to Jesus, Jesus opened his eyes.

And, when Jesus proclaimed the good news, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news," people believed the gospel, and they were saved or some of them refused. Jesus brought a life-changing change.

In the presence of Jesus, we are pushed to the corner to make a choice.

To accept the change or not, that is the problem.

When Jesus was crucified and was risen, what did the disciples do? They were gathered in a room and trembled in the fear, not knowing what to do. Jesus came to them and comforted them. Twice. When Thomas was away and the other time, when Thomas was there with them. But, after meeting risen Jesus Christ, twice, what did the disciples do? They went back to fishing. They didn't know what to do, so they went back to their old habit.

Are we so different from them?

Jesus comes to us and touches our hearts. We are moved by the Holy Spirit. We sense that God is calling us to live out the gospel. God is calling us to spread out the good news and shine the light of Jesus to our surroundings. This is good, but after some time, it becomes too difficult to keep going. So, we go back to our old life.

2 Corinthians 5:17, So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

18, All this is from God, whom reconciled us to himself through Christ.

In the presence of Christ, through Christ, we become new.

Once we have Christ, we are new. We have experienced the newness of ourselves when we encounter Jesus and when we stayed in the presence of Christ.

But, we also experience backsliding.

To me, I sometime imagine myself climbing up the empty cross, looking for the things Christ has removed already. **"Oh where is my selfish pleasures? Where is my darkness? Evil desires? Where is my hatred?"** You know, when we hate somebody, we hate that emotion, but at the same time, we kind of enjoy it. Don't we? We sit in the negative emotions. We stay in it and we are struggling because of it, but, at the same time, we take some kind of contentment.

But, imagine this with me. When we work out in a hot summer day, what's going to happen? We sweat. Sometimes, when I wear dark T-shirt, there's white sweat stain all over the shirts. It's sweat soaked.

Then what do we do? We take that off and take a shower and cleanse ourselves.

After taking a shower, after making ourselves clean, what do we do?

Do we pick up the sweat-soaked-t-shirts again and wear it OR do we get a clean shirt?

Romans 13:11, "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the

armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

After we take a shower, we want clean shirts, not sweat soaked shirts again.

Mark 4:9 states the baptism of Jesus. When John the Baptist was giving baptism to the people, Jesus joined the line-up. Their baptism was not just sprinkling few drops of water like we do. But, they immersed themselves completely into the water. When you go down under the water, can you breathe? Can you survive in the water without breathing? This going down under the water stands for the death. When we are baptized, this symbolized the death with Christ. This stands for the passing away of our old selves. And after few seconds, from the water, Jesus comes up out of the water. This stands for the new life. We are rising up with Christ with our new life. **“Behold, if anyone is in Christ, she or he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new is here.”** The sweat soaked t-shirt is gone into the laundry basket, we are now going to clothe ourselves with a new clear t-shirt.

How do we become new? Who brought the newness?
Jesus Christ, by his death and resurrection.

Whenever we do the laundry, whenever we take off our dirty clothes, think about our old selves. Whenever we take a shower and dress ourselves with the new and clean clothes, think about the newness that Christ brought to us.

The manifestation of Jesus brought this change.

V10, “And just as [Jesus] was coming up out of the water, he saw the heaven torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’”

Please imagine this scene with me. Jesus was standing in the water, from heaven a dove coming down toward Jesus. And the voice of God saying to Jesus. Jesus brought the Triune God out of the Heaven to earth. On earth, where we live, Jesus is there, the Holy Spirit is there, and God the Father is present with his voice. Jesus brought heaven down to us. In the presence of Jesus Christ, let us have heaven in our hearts. We became new, so the Kingdom of God is ours to enjoy.

The first question and answer of the Shorter Catechism are well known. “What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

In the presence of God, let us accept him, let us glorify him and let us fully enjoy him.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 563 Let us talents and tongues employ

Communion At The Lord’s Table This is the time for Communion at the Lord’s Table.

Here at this table, let the Divine Spark enter our lives. Let the Holy Light guide us see the Lord Jesus Christ in our midst. Let the light of Jesus Christ illuminate our way and the radiance of

Christ will warm our hearts. As we join the Lord's Table, let us confess our faith with the Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed (BOP 539)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) (Please say BOLD print together)

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

L: It is right and meet, beautiful and holy that we should, in ceaseless joy, give our thanks and praise to you, Holy and merciful God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. In grateful procession of endless praise with the church that is, was, and shall be forever, we glorify you, joining this unending praise. **We lift our hearts in joyful praise:**

(Sanctus) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: Holy are you, Eternal One. You sit above, through, and within the circle of the earth, setting light into being, casting the stars in the sky, founding the evolving earth, and all that dwell within it.

Limitless is your power. Great is your wisdom. You look upon the lowly as your most cherished creatures. You come down to us when we are troubled. With presence, grace, and the promise of eternal restoration.

You sent to us your own child, Jesus, who reached into unexpected places, calling women beyond the limits of their times, equipping men for nurturing love, welcoming children into your holy embrace. With this amazing grace and love, **we proclaim the mystery of faith:**

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: O God, you transform. You transform all that is before you, so that at the touch of your grace, we are never the same. O God, you illumine. You bring light to all peoples. Light to the nations, light into our hearts. Light on your Way. Holy Spirit, make these ordinary gifts of bread and cup into the extraordinary presence of Christ with us. Through Christ, by Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE – prepare your Bread and Wine

“This is the **body** of Christ, broken for you.” (BREAD)

Take, eat, remember, and believe that the precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. (Let us take it)

“This is the **blood** of Christ, poured out for you.” (CUP)

Take, drink, remember, and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. (Let us drink it)

Prayer for the people:

Glorious God, thank you for calling us here to worship you in your presence. As we stand before your presence, open our hearts and minds, so we may experience your glory and grace and love. Shine your light upon us and transform us, so we may love each other.

We ask for the new year’s blessing for each person. Lead and guide each of us with your wisdom and power. Give us good health. May the peace of Jesus Christ be in our hearts and in our relationships. Heal the sick and recover our health.

Protect us from all dangers and lead all your churches around the world become the hope and safe haven for this world. Let all the churches display your goodness.

Be glorified and be worshipped through our lives. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: In the season of Epiphany, God’s gift to us in Christ is revealed to the world. Our gifts to God in Christ’s name reveal our commitment to the love and mercy, the forgiveness and hope we receive from him. Let us give with generous and hopeful hearts. Let us praise God and honour him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Doxology 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 our Maker, we offer our gifts to you in thanksgiving for your gifts to us in Christ and in creation. Bless what we bring and who we are, so that our gifts will bless the world you love. In Jesus Christ, the most wonderful and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 401 O Spirit of the Living God

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. In a song *What a beautiful name it is*, there’s a lyric goes like this. “You didn’t want heaven without us, so Jesus, you brought heaven down. My sin was great, but your love was greater. What could separate us now?” When Jesus first came to us, he brought everything to us. Let us come before his presence and let us live with him.

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.