

Sunday Worship on July 14, 2024

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

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 787 The kingdom of God is justice and joy
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 717 We cannot own the sunlit sky
- Prayer for children

We Listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
- Second reading: Psalm 24 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19
- Sermon: Dance before the Lord
- Hymn – BOP 630 When we are living
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 461 Be thou my vision

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it.

The world and those who live in it belong to God.

So hear what God will speak:

God will speak peace to those who turn to him in their hearts.

Then faithfulness will spring up from the ground,

and righteousness will look down from the sky.

God's salvation is at hand for those who honour him.

May God's glory and justice dwell in our land.

Praise song – BOP 787 The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Prayer of Adoration

Gracious God, you are the Source of life and love in all creation, in a world marked by bitterness, you are compassion. In a culture marked by confusion, you are the truth that sets us free. Your strength is comfort when we are fearful. Your wisdom is guidance when we lose our way. For all that you are and all that you give, God, our Maker, Christ, our Saviour, and Holy Spirit who leads us into life, we offer you all honour, praise, and worship, now and always.

Prayer of confession (Unison) (Let us come to God with the Prayer of confession in Unison)
Loving God, in a selfish world, you are generous to those in need. In the face of injustice, you speak as our conscience. Instead of vengeance, you call for mercy and reconciliation. Forgive us when we follow the instincts of the world, rather than the faithfulness you teach. Strengthen our resolve to live generously, in action and in attitude.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (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! 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 by God's generous grace. **May the Peace of the Lord be with you.**

Praise song – BOP 717 We cannot own the sunlit sky

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
- Second reading: Psalm 24 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19

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

SERMON: Dance before the Lord

Thank you for your support and prayer while I was away. And thank you for your support making church possible with Rev. Tim Walker last week.

Last week, in my vacation, my family went to a Christian **family retreat (PIC)** with 7 other couples. Of course, we first met there. It was a retreat centre in a small village Combermere, Ontario, run by Madonna House. Madonna House is a Catholic Community of laymen, women, and priests living together. They built their own town, farms, and workplaces. They work together to make living and share all the belongings with each other and build a healthy and loving Christian community.

Their main focus of living is restoration in Christ. They focus on poverty, chastity, and obedience. First, poverty. We had daily gatherings. A leader of the retreat explained poverty. She said, they not only help the poor, but they themselves become poor.

I was so shocked by her first words. Becoming poor? I never thought of this concept. No, I don't want to be poor. That was my first reaction.

Remembering the poor, they try to use minimal resources. For example, this is their everyday washroom and our washroom for the week. **(PIC)** In order to join the poverty and suffering of the poor, they do not use our usual washroom. Outside the toilet, there is a **bucket(PIC)**. They put clean water. Using scooper, they use a basin as their sink to wash their hands. Furthermore, to remember the unprivileged, they limit themselves having some food. **White bread and butter**

(PIC) are only allowed on Sundays. They have resources. They have farm and livestock. But, they limit their lifestyle to make themselves poor in the way of helping poor. They maintain humble and modest lifestyle in following the path of Jesus Christ.

Second, **chastity (PIC of chapel)**. Because it's a Catholic community, they do not get married. They desire to give their full attention to God alone. On the lake, when they swim, they divided men side and women side. Third, obedience. When they were asked for help, they do not ask a question, but go and help. When they are asked, they obey. They try to live the lifestyle of Jesus.

Another leader shared his story. He has been living in Madonna House for 38 years. One day, when we was early 20's, he asked God. **"God, what can I do for you with my life?"** Then, he felt that God wanted him to give his life to God. His life. So, he gave his life to God. This means, he gave up the career he could have had. He gave up his own family he could have had. No marriage. No children. He gave up possessions, positions, achievements, and other experiences we enjoy daily. He truly embraces the presence of God with his whole life.

This shocked me. I thought I gave my life to God becoming a minister. Yes, in a way, I gave my life to God. We all have given our lives to God in our own ways. But, what he shared was just too much for me, to put me in his shoes. Will I be able to give up what I am enjoying right now? Comfort of the washroom? Daily available white bread and butter? Wife? Kids? Can I become poor like that? Can I be pure like that? Can I embrace God with my whole heart, like him?

In today's 2 Samuel passage, we are talking about **King David**. A King. This implies that the king lacks nothing. He has all the things he needs and wants. He can have everything he wants whenever he wants. In the middle of the night, if he wants to eat a juicy medium rare steak, then his cook must get it ready for him. If he woke up at 4 o'clock in the morning, there should be someone who could attend for him. That's King's life.

Today, King David is bringing the Ark of the Lord to the temple. The Ark of the Lord stands for the presence of God. But, it was taken away in a battle before. Now, finally, Israelites are able to restore the presence of the Lord amongst themselves by bringing the Ark of the Lord back to Jerusalem. So, it was a joyful and celebratory day.

V5, "David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might."

This shows the joy and happiness of God's people when they embraced the Lord with their whole hearts.

This is great. But, there was an issue of David's outfit of the day. The Bible states that David was girded with **a linen ephod**. **On this picture**, there are three kinds of clothing. It is a general understanding that a linen ephod is **"loincloth."**

So, David was almost naked (PIC) when he welcomed the ark of the Lord with his own people. The Bible does not explain why David was clothed in this way.

All we can infer from our scripture is that David was not dancing and playing before the people but the Lord alone. Like a child, with an overwhelming joy, David danced with all of his might to express his love and loyalty to the true King, God. **Does anyone know David's nickname?**
A man after God's own heart.

After David died, when his descendants became kings, God keeps asking them to be like David. For example, **1 King 11:38, "If you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David**

my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you an enduring house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.”

If we focus only on how David was dressed, then we are missing the whole point. How David was naked is not an issue for God. But, God looks at his heart. As King, David did not look for some public admiration. If he did, he wouldn't be able to dance with all his might. He would have to learn some steps and movements to show the best dancing skills as king. My guess is David stripped off all of his positions and all of his expectations from the people. But, at this time of worshipping God, David was only offering himself to God. He only focused on God. On this joyful and glorious day that the ark of God was coming back, David was simply welcoming the presence of God with his whole heart. His heart was filled with the presence of God. He does not have any space for something else.

On the other hand, in v16, David's wife, **Michal looked out of the window. She saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.** Her heart was filled with scorn against David. She was filled with contempt for David.

The Bible writes *King* David. The Bible specifically highlights David's social position. King David was leaping and dancing. But, when the Bible writes about Michal, it refers her daughter of Saul. Michal was the queen, the wife of David. But, the Bible makes sure that Michal was on different side from David. There is an imaginary line between David and Michal.

V20, David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, “How the king of Israel honoured himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants’ maids, as any vulgar fellow might shamelessly uncover himself!”

In this statement of Michal, the daughter of Saul, what is the focus? What does she focus on? She focused on David's position. David's honour. David's fame. David's reputation. How people would think of David as king.

When was this happen? On the day of great joy before the presence of God. The Ark of the Lord is coming back today! In the presence of God, what is Michal focusing on? Other people. Self-admiration. Her own security. NOT GOD.

When we worship God, are we like David or Michal?

What are we holding in our life?

Remember the leader from my family retreat who gave his life to God, giving up the things we could have had? When we worship God, what matters the most? Can we focus on God alone like David? Can we focus on God, not the things we enjoy daily?

Ask God for joy of your salvation and worship God freely like dancing in your own ways. I hope and pray that during the week, on your own time of worship, dance before the Lord in your own way of worshipping God. May God restore the joy of salvation in your hearts.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 630 When we are living

Prayer for the people

God of salvation. God of joy and glory. Thank you for calling us to your presence. We stand before your presence. Humble our hearts. Help us realize how great your love is for us. You did not spare your own son Jesus Christ to give us life. When we do not deserve your love or your kindness, you call us and you came to us. Even though we keep run away from you, you still come to us and you still love us. You never give us up. You never let us go. You never stop loving us. We are so used to receiving your love. We take your love for granted. Faithful God, help us see how much your love cost you. What price you had to pay to love us.

We pray for strength, confidence, and focus. We want to worship you with all our hearts like David did. We want to follow the steps of Jesus and some people who gave their lives to you. We want to give our time for you. We want to give our opportunities to you. We want to give our wealth to you. We want to lower ourselves for your sake. Because you humbled yourself, we want to walk your path. Give us wisdom how to do so and give us courage to live out our faith.

We pray for our church people. If there are sicknesses, grant them healing. Use the medicine they take and use the medical assistants including doctors and nurses. Place the true hope in the centre of their hearts. We pray for the people with conflicts and brokenness. Pour out your love upon them. Give them strength to love you. Help them love themselves. Let them fill their cups first, so that they can experience overflowing of your love in their lives. Let them overflow. There are people with prayer needs. Listen to their prayers and work in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

In all we do, be glorified and be pleased. We love you and we worship you. In Jesus' precious and wonderful and powerful and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

The Book of Ephesians tells us that we have received an inheritance in Christ. God's gifts to us in Christ and in creation allow us to be generous in response to the needs in God's world. What we give to God speaks to the world of God's generosity, as well as our own. Let us praise God and glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, growth in gardens and fields this summer speaks of the generosity you have planted within your creation. Bless the gifts we bring, that they too may grow in fruitfulness, and touch lives in need with your generous love, in the name of Christ, our help and our hope. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 461 Be thou my vision

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Do you have your favorite dance move? Be free in the Lord. Don't be afraid of becoming your true self in the presence of the Lord. Our God is our Father. Our God knows everything. Our God accepts our worship. Whatever we have done, wherever we have been, all that matters to God is right now. Turn to God and give your present moment. Worship God freely and dance with the Lord.

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.