

Sunday Worship on October 6, 2024 (World Communion Sunday)

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

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 651 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer

We Listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12
- Second reading: Psalm 8 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Job 1:1, 2:1-10
- Sermon: Life of integrity
- Hymn 528 Jesus calls us here to meet him
- Communion with the Apostle's Creed

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 637 Take my life, and let it be consecrated

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Welcome and Announcement:

Responsive Call to Worship

The banquet table is prepared: God calls us to feast together.

We have come from east and west, from north and south, to sit together at the Lord's table.

Compassion, love, and grace pour out like fine wine.

God's Word is bread for our journey.

Let us join Christians around the world to share in God's gifts.

Let us taste and see that the Lord is good!

Praise song – BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly

Prayer of Adoration

Eternal God, as we come to your table today, we recognize that, here, heaven and earth join hands. Around this holy table, we join with your Church which stretches around the world, and across many generations, to meet you in our midst. As we remember Jesus this day, unite us to those who have served you over the centuries, and to all who serve you in so many different situations today. We praise you for your amazing love which embraces this countless

congregation and invites us into a future you are creating. Here, O God, let us join hands with heaven and earth to celebrate your holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the Prayer of confession in Unison)*

When you invite us to your table, you ask us to come with clean hands and clean hearts. You ask us to come in peace, seeking reconciliation with you and with one another. We confess that the Church has not always sought reconciliation within or beyond its walls. In this silence, we hand over to you the broken relationships, disagreements and disappointments that keep us from living in your peace. Free us from the burdens we carry, so that we may be a source of peace in this troubled world in the name of Christ who is our peace. *(Let us come before God with our personal prayer of confession in silence.)*

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

From now on, St Paul declared, we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! Know that you are forgiven and in your heart, you have the courage to forgive one another.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 651 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer

Prayer for children

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

- First reading: Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12
- Second reading: Psalm 8 (refrain Psalm 8)
- Third reading: Job 1:1, 2:1-10

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

SERMON: Life of integrity

When we think about Job's life, although he was greatly blessed by God, we might think of him pathetic. He had to go through unnecessary sufferings because of his faith. God saw him and God was very pleased with him. God told the Satan, “You know Job? I am so proud of him. **V3, “There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity.”**

After Job lost all his children and possessions in Chapter 1, Job still believed in God. Job did not give up his faith in his suffering losing all his children and possessions.

There is a book called **The Shack**. Main character Mackenzie experienced a tremendous sadness after losing his youngest daughter. God sent him an invitation to come and spend time together

in The Shack. This is a story about a man who was disappointed with God spending few days with God.

Mackenzie asked himself a question why he should believe in God. He blamed God for what happened to his daughter. To the ridiculous invitation, he could have just ignored it. Like the advice of Job's wife, Mackenzie could have curse God and die. But, because of his deep sadness, the desire of understanding why, he was drawn to God and went to the shack to confront God.

From the shack, Mackenzie was able ask so many questions to God and realized God's presence in his life both in good times and in challenging times. In sadness, God did not leave him alone. One time, Mackenzie had a chance to help out the Holy Spirit gardening around the shack. To his eyes, it was very disorganized. Colour does not match, the location of same species are here and there. So, Mackenzie asked the Holy Spirit, **"Why is your garden so chaotic?"** The Holy Spirit answered him, **"This garden is your soul. This mess is you! Together, you and I, we have been working with a purpose in your heart. And it is wild and beautiful and perfectly in process."**¹ That chaos symbolizes the complexity of the emotions that we experience, including something we want to avoid like fear or suffering and something we desire joy and pleasure. When we come to the light of God, we finally come to know who we truly are. Finally, we are able to see the beauty and hope in our mess.

In the similar way, Job was experiencing great sadness and misery. In this situation, Job continued to have faith in God. Job didn't blame God. Job faithfully trusted God. He still persists in his integrity. In other words, he was able to see himself through God. His life was a mess and blessings blended together.

In Job's story, where do we focus on? Don't we question about **the connection between faithfulness and blessing or unfaithfulness and suffering**? This seems so natural. This is the logic we are used to. What other ways!? However, the reality is that sometimes faithfulness does yield blessings indeed; but sometimes faithfulness yields only suffering. Theologian Randolph Harris mentions that **"The inclusion of the book of Job in the [Bible] stands as a reminder to the church that things are not always as simple as we may want to believe – but amid the complexity, God is present."**²

Here, what we need is to see ourselves with the eyes of God, like Mackenzie did. This messy garden is us. Unorganized. Unfinished. But, still perfectly in process according to his good plan.

Jonathan Kozol, in his book, **Amazing Grace: The lives of children and the conscience of a nation**, stares fearlessly and unwaveringly into the deep pain and suffering of impoverished children living in the South Bronx of New York City. Drug abuse, violence, and hunger were saturated the area where young children grow up. Kozol wrestles with his own despair as he reflects on these bitter and painful realities, which have no easy solutions. Going to church and listening to hopeful messages didn't seem realistic. He asked himself, **"Then where is God? What is he waiting for? Come on God! Let's get moving! Do something!"**

When we witness tragedies or disasters, we ask God the same. Flood, outbreak of disease, and global warming or global boiling. Out of human hands. What is God doing?

¹ Young, William P., The Shack. Pg. 140.

² Harris, Randolph, Feasting of the Word, Year B, Vol. 4. Pg. 125.

At the end of the book of Job, God appears to Job and his friends. God concluded their debate. It is not the matter of who's faithful or who's disobedient to be blessed or to experience suffering.

Job 38:1, "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding."

God teaches Job and friends and us that we don't have the understanding of what God is doing. Like the messy garden from the book *The Shack*, we don't even realize what we see until God illumine us even if it's our soul. We see it, but we don't see the reality in it. Like we put on sunglasses to avoid sunlight, we need the right filter to see the truth. The book of Job inspires us to have THEOCENTRIC faith.

One of today's readings, Psalm 8 sings God's creating power and might. **God is BIG, we are so small.** But the BIG GOD cares for small us. **V3-4, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"**

Furthermore, **Hebrews 2:9, "... now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."** This is the crucifixion of Jesus. **V10, "It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."**

Jesus is leading us to worship God together. So, life of integrity which Job lived and which made God so proud of is to have God in the centre of our hearts.

On this **World Communion Sunday**, let us remember and think about the true meaning of communion. Communion is to share intimate thoughts and feelings. It is a spiritual union with Christ.

As we take the bread and wine which our Lord Jesus Christ prepared for us, **let us restore God's image in us.** God created us in his own image and in his own likeness. Let us remember who has the Lordship of our life and let us turn to God.

As we consume the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, through union with God, let our body and blood come to God with this confession.

As we consume the body of Christ, let every single cell of our body shout out the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As we drink the cup of Christ's blood and life, let every drop of our blood cry out the praise of our God.

In a messy world, with a messy heart, we cannot understand what God is doing in this world or in our hearts. We can only trust God's goodness and God's mighty power and God's delicate care and love for each of us. Let us come to God with all our hearts.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 528 Jesus calls us here to meet him

Communion At The Lord's Table

Christ's table is set, Christ's table is set for all; around it there are no divisions.

Just as one loaf is made from many grains, and as one cup is filled from the fruit of many grapes, so we, though many, are made one in Christ, nourished by him to nourish the world. Jesus calls us to this table and all are welcome here. Taste and see that the Lord is good. 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 our greatest calling and joy to give you thanks and praise, O God, Creator of heaven and earth. You spoke, and all things came into being: Your Spirit swept over creation, and brought order out of chaos, life from the formless void. From the elements of the earth you created humankind, each unique, all made in your holy image. Your breath gave us life and called us to live with you in loving service to neighbour and stranger alike.

Even though we turned away from you, you never turned from us.

Through the prophets, you called us back to your ways. You sent Jesus, your Son, born of a mother's flesh, to reveal the full extent of your grace and love. Again and again you welcome us to your side with the open arms of a loving father. Therefore we join our voices with those from every time and place, to proclaim your glory in the unending hymn. **We lift out hearts in joyful praises.**

(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 is your son Jesus, O God. Walking this earth, feeding the hungry, calling the lost and lonely, he brought healing and wisdom to those who sought him out. His life revealed your kingdom taking shape in this world. As we break bread and share wine in his name, with your people here and in every place, **we recall the mystery of our faith:**

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

L: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, as we remember Jesus, poured out for our sakes. Gather your Church together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom where peace and justice are realized, and joy will be shared at the banquet you prepare for us when heaven and earth join hands. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

(The minister breaks bread in the presence of the people, saying:)

The Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(The minister may pour wine into the cup, lifting it while saying:)

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in remembrance of me."

(Distribution of the elements)

Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Take some time for personal prayer)

Prayer after Communion:

Lord Jesus Christ, you have nourished us, body and soul, in this meal. We have heard your love proclaimed, now send us out to speak it to others. We have seen your love poured out, now send us out to show it in everything we do. We have been fed by your love at your table, now send us out to share it so the world may believe. And let all things be done for your glory.

God of love and grace, we stand before your feet with humble hearts. We confess that we are messy, but in your eyes, we are perfectly in progress. Help us come to you with our whole hearts. Especially, on this World Communion Sunday, we long for the union with you. Through the bread of your body, awaken every single cell in our body. Let all the cells pour out its energy for your glory. Through the life you shed on the cross, as we drink this cup, may every drop of our blood shout out to the whole world that you are the living God. We want to live for you. Raise us up. Discipline us. Let us live the life to the fullest.

Help us remember those who need our prayers and care and love. Give us power to stand firm and restore your image in us and fill our hearts with the joy of your salvation. We praise you and we worship you with our whole hearts. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

World Communion Sunday reminds us that we are part of a global family, committed to serve our neighbours in Jesus' name. The gifts we offer join the gifts of many others to bring the love and compassion of Christ into places of deep need. Let us bless others as we have been blessed in Christ. As we praise and worship God with our gifts, let us glorify him with all our hearts. BOP #830, Doxology.

Offering prayer:

Gracious and generous God, we offer you our gifts with humble thanks for all you have provided. Bless them with your Spirit and use them to bless those in deepest need with love they can taste and justice they can celebrate in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 637 Take my life, and let it be consecrated

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Even though we are faithful, there might be a chance that we only experience suffering. Whether we are flourishing or suffering, our God is walking with us with his everything. Romans 8:32, "Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?" God loves you that much.

Commission and Benediction

Hold God's steadfast love before your eyes, and walk in faithfulness as you go.
And may the God who made you, the Christ who mends you, and the Holy Spirit who brings you life
bless and keep you evermore. Amen