

Worship on November 3, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Christine Tian)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song BOP 639 We are marching
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 475 I am the church! You are the church!
- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Revelation 21:1-6a
- Second reading: Psalm 24 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 11:32-44
- Sermon: Set apart for the Lord
- Hymn 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you
- Communion (No the Apostle's Creed)

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 474 The love of God comes close

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Welcome and Announcement:

Responsive Call to Worship

Praise the Lord, all you saints!

Praise God, all you heavenly hosts!

Let us praise the name of the Lord:

For the name of God is above all names!

Let us praise the Lord as long as we live;

We will sing praises to God now and evermore.

Praise song – BOP 639 We are marching

Prayer of Adoration

God of promise and purpose, in you we live and move and have our being. You are the Fountain of life, and you refresh us. You are the Light of the world, and you show us the way. You are the Spirit of life, and you move in us each new day. So we join our voices with the angels and archangels, with the saints and disciples of every time and place, to worship you as Creator, Healer, and Source of our hope and our joy. Praise be to you, God most holy, ever Three and ever One.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(With the Prayer of confession, let us come to God together)*

God of goodness and mercy, We have heard your call to put our faith into action, but fear holds us back. We stay silent rather than speak up when things go wrong. There is work to be done in Jesus' name, but we often seek an easier way. Forgive us, O God, and give us courage and commitment to serve as your saints in this time and this place, whatever the challenges may be.

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

Children of God, listen to the good news. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Know that you are forgiven by God's great mercy. Have the grace to forgive each other, just as you have been forgiven.

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

Praise song – BOP 475 I am the church! You are the church!

Prayer for children

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

- First reading: Revelation 21:1-6a
- Second reading: Psalm 24 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 11:32-44

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

SERMON: Set apart for the Lord

Today is All Saints Sunday. This is a day we remember the deceased in faith. By remembering their lives, we can be reminded the value of faith and be encouraged to live by faith alone.

First of all, who is a saint? In protestant faith, generally, saints are defined as **all believers** in Christ. For example, the Apostle Paul frequently addressed his letter to “the saints” in various churches, meaning all believers there. **Philippians 1:1, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi.” Ephesians 1:1, “To all saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:**

In addition, there is an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. This means that every Christian has direct access to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are able to live a holy life. Holy means to be set apart, distinguished, and different. So, “God is holy” means God is different. We have sinful and selfish and lazy desires naturally. For example, I have been doing my daily routine for more than 5 years. Reading my daily meditational book, write down prayer, and read the Bible. When I visited Korea having a family trip. I was not able to keep up the Bible reading. When I skipped daily routine, how did I feel? I felt so good. Maybe in the corner

of my heart, there's pressure, but still, the satisfaction of my selfish and lazy desire. Can you relate to this feeling of taking time off from your responsibilities?

Even though, we still have selfish desires in our hearts, the Bible calls us saints. God, our heavenly Father sees us saints. **Philippians 1:6, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."**

Moreover, you know prophet Elijah? Who performed great miracles and who was courageous to stand against 850 prophets of foreign gods. The Bible talks about him. **James 5:16-17, "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth."**

Therefore, please know that, howsoever we are good or bad, we are saints in Christ. Put your hope not in your ability or character, behaviour, success or failure, but in Christ alone. Our ultimate goal is not to display our own glory, but to see and display the glory of God.

In John 11, Lazarus dies. To the death of their brother, Mary and Martha show their responses. On this All Saints Day, John 11 is the chosen passage from lectionary. After reading this passage number of times, I wanted to highlight the reactions of Mary and Martha and teaching of Jesus to them and the people around.

Mary loved to listen to what Jesus said. On the other hand, Martha was busy taking responsibilities to take care of Jesus. Martha was not able to spend time with Jesus when we taught. Therefore, we can make a very generalized assumption that Mary learned the principles of life from Jesus but Martha did not. Therefore, in their responses to the very striking event like death of their brothers, we might assume that Mary's response could be better than Martha. Again, this is very very generalized.

V32, "When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

She believes the power of Jesus. Jesus is the life giver and he has power. But, still, she limits the power of Jesus in space. If you stayed physically with us, then something would happen or something would not happen. She has faith in Christ, but not a complete faith.

John 11:21, "Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Two sisters said the same thing whether they spend time listening to Jesus or not. The faith is not up to us, but faith is a gift. **Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast."**

Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus. **V39, "Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Marth, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."**

Here, we can clearly see that Martha is focusing on the death of her brother. **V40, "Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"**

Jesus is not focusing on the death of Lazarus even though he loved him very much. Jesus already said that his death will reveal the glory of God. **John 11:4, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”**

Jesus looked at this event the life-giving activity of God in the person of Jesus. This story of Lazarus’s death is no longer about sickness or death, but it’s about resurrection and life and the glory of God.

John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

Jesus said this and asked a question to Martha. **V26 “Do you believe this?”**
She answered, **“Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”**

Like Martha, we love to listen to Jesus and we confess our faith to God. But, when we actually encounter events like this, then we do not focus on our faith, but on the situations or environments.

Through the death of Lazarus, Jesus is teaching us the importance of our focus, which is our faith. When things happen in your life, where do you focus? How do you respond?

I believe in the work of the Holy Spirit. We listened to this lesson and it will stay in us, in our body, memory, mind, or brain. When we experience difficulties and shifted our focus from Christ to something else, then the Holy Spirit will make this memory pop up in our mind. When we need to readjust our focus, God will speak to us and bring our focus back to him.

In this All Saints Sunday, let us remember that there is no special individuals on the earth except Jesus Christ. Saints are the ones who set apart their lives from the world and to live their lives in Christ. May God help you and guide you to have him in the centre of your life.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

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

Communion At The Lord’s Table

Join me today at this table to a feast prepared by our Lord Jesus Christ. Sisters and brothers in Christ, join me today for a feast which will comfort our souls. Through this sacrament, know that we will grow close to God, close to our neighbours, and close to our own self. This is the Lord’s table. All are invited.

(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 to give our thanks and praise to the God of our ancestors. Abraham and Sarah, Miriam and Moses, Joshua, Ruth, David, priests, prophets, Mary and Joseph, apostles, martyrs, numerous people who kept their faith sincerely and dearly. Not only the people in the past, but you are God of this generation and the next. You are faithful and you are everlasting. Whether we are faithful to you or not, you are unchanging. You still love us and you still hold us in your

almighty arms. Thank you. We praise you joining our voices with all the people of faith of every time and place who forever sing to the glory of your name. **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: Blessed are you, most gracious God, for the gift of your child, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived in accord with your will to the point of laying down his life for the good news he preached and passed on to us. On the night of his arrest, he taught us how to serve one another in love with a ritual of table fellowship enjoyed by Christian saints of all time and places. So, in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves with thanksgiving as a living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we live out **the mystery of the faith we proclaim:**

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

L: Spirit of the living God, make us one as we partake of these your gifts to us so we might be in communion with you and one another. As we break bread together, may our eyes be opened to see your glory shining through all the saints of times past. As we lift the cup of salvation, may we be strengthened to follow your way even to the point of death, mingling our praises with the blood of martyrs who offer themselves for God's new day of justice, peace, and harmony in Jesus Christ our Lord. Until Christ comes in final victory and we feast together at God's great family reunion with all the saints, keep your church one in service to the world here and now. Work with who we are and where we are to form these clay pots into vessels of living praise, that our lives may participate in the same unending song of the universe raised by all the saints. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour and praise 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) <<wait until everyone goes back to their pews>>

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:

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God and our Shepherd. We remember you here and now and we also remember all your saints in the past, present. And we hold our true identity in our hearts. Thank you for calling us your saints in Christ Jesus our Lord. Also, we hope for our future saints in you. Help us keep our faith and hand down your faith to our next generation. Let your faith be remembered not just in this sanctuary but in our homes and schools, in our cars and offices. And help us know that we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses united by your love.

Help us see ourself with your eyes. Help us encourage ourself with your love. Help us have patience for ourself like you are waiting for us. We do not put our faith in us, but you alone.

We encounter numerous things in our daily lives. Help us set ourself apart from our past experiences. Give us strength to respond not with our selfish desires, but with your truth.

We remember our people. Heal the sick. Restore brokenness. Provide our needs. Give us peace. Help us be filled with you. Let us embrace the image of overflowing. We are blessed to bless others. We cannot squeeze out what we barely have. Make us overflowing, so that your blessings be spread out from us. Help us display your goodness through our daily lives. In Jesus' precious and wonderful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

When we gather together as God's Church, we celebrate the gifts of so many others, for so many centuries, offered in Jesus' name. Now is our opportunity to join our gifts to theirs, so that God will be praised and Jesus' love will be spread in this generation and those to come. As we praise and worship God with our gifts, let us glorify him with all our hearts. Let the offering be received. BOP #830, Doxology.

Offering prayer:

God of all the generations, we offer our gifts in gratitude for the inheritance of faithfulness we have received as followers of Jesus Christ. Bless these gifts so that today's ministries may flourish and provide an inheritance for those who come after us, as you guide us all into a future only you can see. Give us faith and help us walk with you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 474 The love of God comes close

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. What if I call you saint. Saint John, Saint Soong. We will laugh. We are so used to evaluate or judge ourself with our appearance, with what we have. Because we learned that Elijah did great works, we have no hesitation to call him saint. But, the Bible says, Elijah is just one of us. God calls us saints not because of who we are, but because of our faith in Christ. Be bold and be confident. You have faith in God and you are a saint. You are set apart for the Lord.

Benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen.