

## **Worship on January 19, 2024**

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

### **Sunday Order of worship**

#### **We Gather**

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 441 Can a little child like me

#### **We listen**

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Isaiah 62:1-5
- Second reading: Psalm 36:5-10 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: John 2:1-11
- Sermon: **Water into Wine**
- Hymn BOP 20 The steadfast love of the Lord
- Prayer for the people

#### **We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 688 As water to the thirsty

#### **We Serve**

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

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### **Responsive Call to Worship**

One: How precious is God's steadfast love!

**All: We will find refuge in the shelter of God's wings.**

One: Come and feast on God's abundance.

**All: We will drink from the river of God's delights.**

One: For with God is the fountain of life;

**All: And in God's light we will see light.**

One: Let us worship God with joy and thanksgiving!

**All: We will bring God our prayers and our praise with hearts full of love.**

### **Praise song – BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise**

#### **Prayer of Adoration**

God of light and life, you shine into our lives in your Son, Jesus Christ. Your Holy Spirit strengthens us to face whatever this year will hold. And so we come to praise you for your love and grace which transforms our days and our lives, and for your wisdom which enlightens truth for our times. Shine through us, we pray, so that we may bear the light of Jesus Christ in this world you love.

To begin again with you and one another, we confess to you our sins.

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

**God of all life and our lives, we gather in worship week by week, seeking your refreshing presence. But we confess sometimes we are discouraged by things happening around us. We don't expect your presence to make a difference for us. Forgive us when we give up on you and end up feeling unfulfilled. By your grace, refresh us when we are weary or worried, and renew our trust in you.**

**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. No power in heaven or on earth can separate us from God's great love. Take heart, and know that you are forgiven. And you are loved.

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

### **Praise song – BOP 441 Can a little child like me**

### **Prayer for children**

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

- First reading: Isaiah 62:1-5
- Second reading: Psalm 36:5-10 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: John 2:1-11

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

### **SERMON: Water into Wine**

If you could tell me one event of your life that you put your most effort into, what would it be? Many would answer about their wedding ceremony. Usually, a wedding is the biggest event of our life. In Jesus' time, it was the same. Their wedding celebration often lasted several days. Their whole community gathered together. It was the celebration of joy, unity, and abundance.

In Cana of Galilee, there was a wedding ceremony. Jesus, his disciples and his mother were invited. On this big day, there was a crisis. The wine has run out. For the host, this would have been a social disaster, a major breach of hospitality.

The Bible does not give us the details of how Jesus' mother found that out. In **v3, "When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."**

Okay. So..? That was the response of Jesus. **V4, “And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.””**

First of all, here, when Jesus calls his mother “woman,” this is a term of respect, not distance. What Jesus is signalling is that his mission is operated according to divine timing. However, Mary’s response is striking. She tells the servants, **“Do whatever he tells you.”**

What would be your response to this? Few servants came to you and they were looking at your lips, waiting for you to give them an order. I would walk away. It’s not my time. I have nothing to do with the host of the wedding. I would just say ‘thank you for the invitation’ and bless them and leave.

But, what if you were the host? What if you were in trouble? Jesus is nothing to do with our troubles? Jesus doesn’t care about what others are experiencing?

With a sympathetic heart, Jesus’ mother, Mary, brought this difficulty to Jesus. Even though it’s not his time yet, because of Mary’s faith, Jesus focused on that matter. With unwavering faith, Mary brought this issue to Jesus. **Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”**

I come back to this promise of God daily. Whenever I face difficulties, I try to come before Jesus asking for his help. Here, from Mary, we learn the specific ways how we bring our troubles to Jesus.

Mary did not ask Jesus to do specific things. **“Son, they have no wine. Go and buy some more wine.” “Son, they are in trouble. Now is the time you can help them.” “Son, you have to do something.”**

Mary did not say any of those. After Mary calls the servants, she disappears from the scene. Mary brought the problem to Jesus and left the matter in Jesus’ hands.

This shows the power of intercession and trust. When we bring our needs to Jesus, we are called to trust his timing and his ways. Many times, they are beyond our understanding. Mary told the servants, **“Do whatever he tells you.”** Isn’t this the lesson we have to take to our hearts? How are we obedient to Jesus? Obedience is the pathway to experiencing the transforming power of Jesus Christ. How does this sound to us? We already know it, but we stop there with the knowledge only.

In this miracle of Jesus, if we were to make it as a play, who do you want to play? If we bring this miracle into our daily lives, which role do you want to play?

I might want to play one of the servants. Here’s why. Jesus instructed the servants to fill large stone jars with water. These jars are used for Jewish purification rituals and symbolize the old covenant.

The transformation of water into wine signifies the newness and abundance of God’s grace and love. It points to Jesus as the one who fulfills the old covenant, as well as the one who surpasses the old covenant. The jars used to be the symbols of purification under the law, but now they hold the wine of celebration. In times of trouble, especially with the lack of wine at the wedding feast, God shows his abundant love, grace, and joy. The servants are the only ones who know what’s really going on. Right before their eyes, the water they brought was transformed into wine. Do you want to witness the miracles right before your eyes? The obedience to the Lord is the pathway to experiencing the transforming power of Jesus.

I don't know about wine, but people say that it's been how many years, what kinds of grapes, where they are from, and what kind of temperature they were harvested. These are the factors determining the quality of wine. Jesus changed water into wine. What would be the quality of it? **V10, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."**

Imagine the wine Jesus produced. The best of the best quality. This is the foretaste of a heavenly feast. Quantity wise? It was the overwhelming abundance of the generosity of God. This picture shows the size of the stone jars at that time.

We are going through the season of Epiphany. The birth of Jesus Christ, the baptism of Jesus, and the first miracle of Jesus Christ. These are the important events of the revelation of who Jesus is. Through the first miracle of Jesus at the wedding feast, Jesus also shows his mission to be with us and to rescue us.

Jesus' first miracle was not at the synagogue or mountains where he taught and preached. It was at a wedding ceremony where people gathered. He performed his first miracle when there was a person who's experiencing a hard time. This is very encouraging for us because this one person who's having difficulty could be me. In times of trouble, Jesus comes to us. In times of hopelessness, Jesus holds our hands. He shines his light upon us. Jesus comes to us with hope. Jesus is with us so that we can live. Do you know the feeling that you can finally breathe after a difficult situation? Do you know that relieved feeling? Jesus is with us with peace, encouragement, and support. Jesus turned the desperateness into joy. The transformation of water into wine points to the ultimate transformation that Jesus brings. The transformation of sinners into saints, the transformation of death into life, the transformation of brokenness into wholeness. This miracle highlights Jesus as the source of true joy. Of course, too much wine can be harmful to your health. But, this wine symbolizes celebration and gladness, so Jesus offers us a joy that is deep, lasting, and rooted in his love and grace. This joy is not dependent on our circumstances, but this joy flows from the abundance of his presence in our lives.

Jesus is inviting us now to believe in him. **V11, "Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him."**

Let us believe in Jesus and be the disciples of Jesus Christ. Obey him and experience his miracles and tell the good news throughout your life.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

### **Praise song – BOP 20 The Steadfast Love of the Lord**

#### **Prayer for the people:**

Jesus, you are our Hope and our Saviour. We hold on to your name in times of trouble and difficulties. You are the Answer and you are the Help and Guidance. You are our True North. When you changed water into wine at the wedding, you filled the feast with joy and abundance. And you filled the servants' hearts who obeyed you with wonder and amazement. And you gave faith to the disciples. We want to experience your abundance, wonder, and power in our lives. Give us discerning wisdom and courage, so we can walk with you in obedience.

We still pray for the wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Powerful God, help them. Have mercy upon them. Give strength and enduring power and patience to them. Especially, be with the first

responders as they put off the fires and help the people. Embrace the people who lost their loved ones or places of living.

Also, tomorrow is the inauguration of the President of the United States. Guide the steps of Donald Trump. Give him a humble heart to listen and discerning wisdom. On their money, it says, "In God we trust." Like the faith confession, help the country. Also, be with Canada too. Give the leaders clear minds. Let all of Canada know God's love and amazing power. Let all of Canada fear the Lord. Raise your church to shine your light and show your great power. Help your church, revive our faith, and help us commit ourselves to you again.

Be with our church members. Provide their needs. Restore their health. Pour out your love upon us, so we may reflect your love in our lives. You are the Lord and King. Fill our lives and use us for you, and for your people. We will follow your steps and we will always worship you and love you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:**

God offers us many gifts through the same Spirit so that, together, we may serve in Jesus' name. Trust that what you have to give, God will bless in faithfulness and fruitfulness.

As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #79, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

**Offering prayer:**

God of grace and mercy, receive all our gifts, offered in thanksgiving. We share the fruit of our labours with you, asking that you will multiply their effects in and through the Church. And we share the fruit of our time and talent, seeking to know how you would have us serve in Jesus' name. Through our lives, shine your light. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 688 As water to the thirsty**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. We say Jesus Christ our LORD, Master, King. We confess that he is our Saviour, Life-giver. Jesus Christ is the only name we commit to ourselves in obedience. Like the servants who filled the stone jars with water and served the water as if it were wine, let us follow and obey our Lord Jesus Christ in our daily lives. May his abundant grace and love be with you.

**Benediction:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.