

Sunday Worship on March 30, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Dr. Robert Revington)

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace
- Prayer for Worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 201 We come to ask your forgiveness

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Joshua 5:9-12
- Second reading: Psalm 32 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- Sermon: **New day, new you (Not just an upgrade)**
- Hymn BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation!

Thanks be to God for such great mercy.

Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Thanks be to God for new beginnings!

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation through Christ Jesus.

Together we will make a new beginning in Christ!

Let us worship God with joyful hearts, trusting God to renew us and all things.

We will lift our praises to God with hearts refreshed by grace.

Praise song – BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace

Prayer of Adoration

God of Mystery and Mercy, we gather to worship in humility and hope because we trust you have the power to change the world for the better with your love. We gather to worship you, trusting that no person or situation is beyond your concern, or your embrace. Inspire us with a

vision of love that will change the world and our lives through the love and mercy we meet in Jesus Christ, your Son and our Saviour.

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

God of love and mercy, when we pause for a moment in your presence, the daily details of our lives press in on us. We recall things left undone, opportunities ignored. We remember careless words spoken, disappointments that trouble our souls. In silence we offer to you our misspent moments and missed opportunities: *Silence for 30 seconds.*

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

Remember the promise that the apostle Paul declares:

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Distress? Peril or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the God who loves us.

Neither death nor life, things present nor things to come can separate us

from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God for such a promise!

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

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

Praise song – BOP 201 We come to ask your forgiveness

Prayer for Children

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

- First reading: Joshua 5:9-12
- Second reading: Psalm 32 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

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

SERMON: New day, new you (Not just an upgrade)

I would like to start today's sermon by sharing a **Mission moment** for this week from the National Church.

19-year-old girl Evidence is in her final year of secondary school in Malawi. She has endured numerous challenges to reach this milestone, including walking 15 km daily. Despite the long distance and societal pressures to abandon her studies, Evidence remains determined to finish school. The PWS&D-supported Every Youth Empowered project has played a crucial role in motivating Evidence to work harder. Joining the in-school club introduced and led by project

volunteers, she discovered a passion for quiz competitions and gained the confidence to participate in interschool contests. The competitions enhanced her critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, boosted her academic performance and gave her self-assurance. Evidence shares, **“My dream is to become a university lecturer, and nobody will take that away from me.”**

When I read this story, the **transformation of a butterfly** came into my mind. If you have to walk 15 km a day, you are underprivileged. Does anyone have to walk 15 km a day? Very uncommon nowadays. And the image of the lecturer would be something different from a person who has to walk 15 km a day. These two different images are like a crawling caterpillar and a flying butterfly.

One of the important ministries of PWS&D is to support the unprivileged with opportunities. Through these opportunities, young people embrace hopes and dreams like flying butterflies.

In Christ, we are not just improved versions of our old selves, but we are completely transformed. Look at this picture of changes from caterpillar, to chrysalis, and to butterfly.

We live in a world that loves self-improvement. Bookstores are filled with guides on how to eat healthier, be more productive, and develop better habits. People make New Year’s resolutions, hoping to become a better version of themselves.. Many people, during Lent, focus on giving up something we like such as chocolate, watching less TV, or spending more time in prayer or reading the Bible.

However, Christianity is not about self-improvement. **Jesus did not come to make bad people better. Jesus came to make dead people alive.** He came to transform us completely.

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!”

Isn’t this the image of a butterfly?

V16, “From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view.”

Before Christ changes us, we often see ourselves and others through a worldly lens. Success or failure, past mistakes or future possibilities, any type of achievement. Imagine looking at a caterpillar. If you didn’t know better, you would think, “This is all there is. This caterpillar will always crawl. It will always be so limited.” But, we know that this caterpillar is not meant to stay as a caterpillar forever. It is meant for something greater. In the same way, **when we look at ourselves and others, we must see beyond the caterpillar stage.** God sees not just what we were before and what are right now, but what we are becoming.

Imagine a caterpillar looking in the mirror and thinking, **“This is all I will ever be.”** That is a lie! In its right time, it will become a beautiful flying butterfly.

Are you struggling with some repetitive sins? Are you stuck in your past mistakes? You don’t see any changes in your life?

Remember this caterpillar. It's meant to be something greater.
In Christ, the old has passed away. You are not defined by what you think you are right now.
You are not stuck as you are. **You are a new creation in process.**

What will bring about this transformation?

When a caterpillar enters the chrysalis, something unimaginable happens. It doesn't just grow wings. It completely dissolves into a new being. The old body dies. It is rebuilt into something new. It emerges as a completely different creature.

This is exactly what happens when we come to Christ. Christianity is not about adding wings to a caterpillar. It's about being completely transformed.

In order to experience complete transformation, we need to put our old life to death. The old life must die. An upgrade is not enough. **Complete replacement is required to have a new life.**

Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin."

To be a new creation means letting go of the old and embracing the new life God has given us.

V18, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ"

Paul reminds us that this transformation is not our own doing. A caterpillar cannot force itself to become a butterfly. It is transformed by design. All this is from God. It's made that way.

Likewise, we cannot change ourselves. We are made new by the power of Christ. If a caterpillar tries to glue wings onto its body, will this work? Even if it stays, this caterpillar is not a butterfly. It needs complete transformation from the inside out. Many people approach the Christian faith this way. We try to improve ourselves instead of surrendering to Christ. But **God doesn't want to fix old you. He wants to make you new.**

Titus 3:5, "He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

Our transformation is not about trying harder. It's about surrendering to God's work in us.

V20, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us."

A **butterfly (PIC)** does not return to crawling. Now, it has a new identity and purpose of life. When we are made new, we do not live as we did before. We are called to be ambassadors of Christ to this world. If a butterfly refused to fly but kept crawling as it did before when it was a caterpillar, then it would be ridiculous. That's a weirdo. Many Christ followers live in our old identity instead of embracing our new life in Christ.

Are you still living as a caterpillar? Do you consider yourself the same person as before? OR are you embracing the full transformation God has given you?

A butterfly never returns to being a caterpillar. We are not meant to return to our old life. Paul's words remind us that the old is gone. This Lent, I hope and pray that you can embrace who God has made you to be. Embrace your new life in Christ. Stop thinking like a caterpillar. Start fly. Live like a butterfly. Stop trying to improve the old self. Stop trying to glue wings, but embrace

the new identity in Christ. Don't live as a better version of your old self, but live as a completely new creation God has promised for you.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower

Prayer for the people:

God of love and mercy and mystery, the process of a caterpillar becomes a butterfly is a mystery for us. We might have fear when we have to go into Chrysalis. However, a caterpillar needs time of chrysalis stage to embrace the complete transformation. Give us wisdom and courage so that we can discern the right time for what to do and what not to do, and have the courage to practice. We rely upon you alone. Guide us with your truth.

Thank you for making us completely new in Christ. Help us let go of the old self, and embrace transformation. You blessed us abundantly. Like the confession of David, my cup overflows. Ours cups overflow with your love and goodness. Let this be displayed on our faces and in our deeds in our daily lives. You called us as ambassadors of this new life. Help us live this newness.

We remember and pray for the people in Myanmar. There was a strong earthquake and over 150 people lost their lives and more and affected. God, would you protect them with safety? Would you use this time of hardship to show your glory and love? Help us remember them and pray for them. Help us join what you are doing through various things in this world.

And Canada's next federal election is coming up in April 28. King Jesus, you rule and serve your people with love and justice. Give leaders clear minds and hearts for love and justice. As they minister, let them remember their main responsibility is to serve people. Guide them with your wisdom. Also, give us discerning spirits, so help us participate building our society with commitment and love and wisdom.

Lead and guide your people in your ways.

We are your church. In you, we renew every day. In every day, as we start our new day, help us remind ourselves that we are new creation in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Thank you for your love and grace in our lives. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

The Apostle Paul declared that in Christ there is a new creation. Everything has become new! What new things can God do with the gifts we offer today?

With expectant hearts, let us place in God's hands what we have to offer in Christ's name. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

We place these gifts into your hands, O God. Bless them with your transforming grace so that they may become seeds springing up with new life in the world you love. Fill our hearts with that same grace so we can bring hope to weary and worried lives in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. In Jesus Christ, there is a new creation. Every day is new. Every day you become new. You are maybe going through a caterpillar stage. Or you might be in chrysalis stage. But, if you are in Christ, one day, you will become a beautiful butterfly. Place your hope in the Lord and follow his guidance.

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.