

Sunday Worship on May 18, 2025

(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 763 To show by touch and word
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Revelation 21:1-6
- Second reading: Psalm 148 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 13:31-35
- Sermon: **By this they will know**
- Hymn BOP 639 We are marching
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 730 Oh for a world where everyone

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in the heights!

Praise God, all you angels; praise God, all creatures high and low!

Rulers of the earth and all peoples, praise God's holy name!

All people together!

With one voice, let us praise the Lord!

Praise song – BOP 763 To show by touch and word

Prayer of Adoration

Holy God, the first and the last, beginning and end of all things, you are worthy of praise from all your creation. Sun, moon, and stars praise you.

Earth, sea, and sky praise you. Every living thing praises you in its own way. And so, we praise you in our human diversity, joining our many different voices with all your creatures in heaven and on earth.

You fill our lives with the wonder of your love in Christ Jesus. Your Spirit moves throughout the world to reveal your purposes for every living thing. Receive our prayers and praise this day, for

you are the Source of our life and our hope, Holy God, ever Three and Ever One.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*
Loving God, Jesus commanded us to love one another so the world would know we follow him. Yet we confess we do not always love one another, as Jesus loves us. The world has seen our squabbling, our history of hypocrisy, and our lack of compassion for those who are in pain. Loving God, forgive us. Lord Jesus, continue to love us. Holy Spirit, fill us with love, so that the world will witness your love in our words and actions.

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

Jesus taught us that no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. Christ has laid down his life for us and invites us to love one another as he has loved us. Let us rejoice in his forgiving love and share it with each other day by day.

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

Praise song – BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

Prayer for Children

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

- First reading: Revelation 21:1-6
- Second reading: Psalm 148 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 13:31-35

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

SERMON: By this, they will know

It was the night before Jesus went to the cross. Judas had just left the room to betray him. The hour had come. And in this moment of weight and urgency, Jesus spoke words that would define his followers. **V34-35, "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples."**

Jesus didn't give his disciples a political plan or military strategy before he left. He gave a command that would shape Christian identity and mission for all time. That is love.

Jesus speaks of being glorified right after Judas departs. This is not after the resurrection, it was even before his suffering. Jesus sees the cross not as the place of pain and shame but as the place of his glorification. Why? Because it will fully reveal the depth of his love.

This shows us something important. Christian love is not about comfort or convenience. Christian love becomes clearest in the hardest moments.

When betrayal wounds us, when darkness surrounds us, when sorrow fills the room, that's when love matters most. At the same time, that's when it shines brightest.

What does it mean to love others when we feel wounded or weary? In those moments, our love can reflect the heart of Christ. Think of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, including Judas. He loved even those who would hurt him. This is the love he calls us to embody.

Jesus calls it a "new commandment." **V34, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."** Of course, Jesus taught love to his disciples in his ministry. God's people had been told to love before, so what's new?

What's new is the standard. **"Just as I have loved you."**

This is love redefined. Not by the world's expectations, but by Jesus' own example. It's not just kindness or politeness. It's foot-washing love. Cross-carrying love. Forgiving, serving, never-giving-up love.

This love is not merely emotional. It is practical, costly, and intentional. It goes to those who are hard to love. It forgives the undeserving. It serves the overlooked.

For example, think about Stephen, the first Christian martyr in Acts. As he was being stoned, he prayed. **Acts 7:60, Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."** That's Jesus-like love. Stephen exercised the love of Jesus toward his enemies.

In the church, are we showing this kind of love? Are we putting others first, welcoming those who are different, forgiving quickly, and bearing each other's burdens?

John 13:35, "By this, everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus doesn't say people will know we're his disciples by our theology, by our worship style, or by our opinions. He says it's by our love.

Love is our badge of discipleship. It's the signpost pointing others to Jesus. When we love one another in Christ-like ways, the world sees something different, something divine.

What do people outside the church see when they look at us? Do they see Jesus in how we care for each other? Let's make sure our lives match our message.

Love like Jesus? Let's be honest. Loving like Jesus is not something we can do on our own. It's not natural. It's supernatural.

We first need God's Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with the love of Christ. That's why Jesus later promised the Holy Spirit. **1 John 4:7 says, "Let us love one another, for love comes from God."**

If we try to love without first being loved, we'll burn out. Love cannot be squeezed out like orange juice. But if we daily receive Christ's love, if we abide in him, then his love flows

through us to others. We are like a cup which God fills with his love. When we overflow, what we have can be shared.

One powerful example comes from the life of **Corrie ten Boom**, a Dutch Christian who, along with her family, helped hide Jews from the Nazis during World War II. Eventually, they were caught, and Corrie was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she endured unspeakable cruelty and watched her sister Betsie die from the harsh conditions.

Years later, after the war, Corrie was speaking at a church in Germany about God's forgiveness. After the service, a man approached her. She recognized that person instantly. He had been one of the cruel guards at Ravensbrück. Now, he stood before her, smiling, with his hand extended. He told her that he had become a Christian and asked, "Will you forgive me?"

Corrie froze. She could not move. All the pain, the trauma, the memory of her sister's suffering came rushing back. In her heart, she knew she couldn't forgive him on her own.

So silently, she prayed. "Jesus, help me. I can lift my hand. You supply the feeling." And in obedience, she reached out her hand.

She later wrote, **"And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. 'I forgive you, brother!' I cried. 'With all my heart.'"**¹

That moment was not natural. That was not human strength. That was the supernatural power of God's love working through a willing heart. Corrie ten Boom could not forgive, but Christ in her could.

Are you trying to love others in your own strength? Or are you relying on God's power?

Spend time receiving Jesus' love. Let it soften your heart. Let it fuel your relationships. Love is not something we manufacture. It is something we pass along.

The world is watching how we are doing. What do they see?

Do they see a church marked by division, pride, and judgment? Or a church marked by humility, compassion, and grace? Jesus says this is how the world will know when we love each other as he loved us.

So let's not settle for surface-level care or polite kindness. Let's love deeply, sacrificially, and persistently.

Let's be the kind of community where the love of Jesus is not just preached, but practiced. Let's reflect the love that stooped down to wash feet and stretched out his arms on the cross.

Come, again, to the feet of Jesus. Receive his love. Then go and show his love to your family, to your neighbours, and to your church.

Because by this, they will know. Let us first be filled with Jesus' love and overflow with his love to our surroundings.

This is the Word of the Lord for us today. Amen.

¹ Corrie ten Boom with Jamie Buckingham, *Tramp for the Lord* (Minneapolis: CLC Publications, 1974), chapter titled "Forgiveness: The Double Blessing".

Praise song – BOP 639 We are marching

Prayer for the people:

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the message we have received today. In the tender voice of Christ, we heard again his command, “Love one another, just as I have loved you.” What a high and holy calling. Lord Jesus, You did not merely tell us to love, but you showed us through foot washing, through the cross, through resurrection grace. We praise you for this love that is not weak or shallow, but strong, sacrificial, and real. May your love take root in us. May we not only hear it but live it. May your love define who we are and how we live, so that the world may see you and know you through us.

Lord of all nations, we lift up to you the brokenness of our world. We pray for places where hatred drowns out love, where violence overpowers peace. May your peace and love calm down the conflicts and fights. May your grace and mercy fill each heart, so generosity and support and joy flourish in all the earth.

Lord of all creation, you formed the heavens and the earth with wisdom and delight. All that you made was good. We praise you for the beauty of creation. The rivers and forests, the skies and seas, the creatures great and small. Forgive us for the ways we have neglected and harmed what you entrusted to us. Teach us to be faithful stewards of your world. Help us care for your creation with the same grace, love and compassion you show to us. May our stewardship reflect your heart, and may future generations see your glory through healed and restored creation of yours.

We remember those in difficult seasons, those wrestling with loneliness, family tensions, or financial hardship. Lord, remind them they are not forgotten. Help us, as a church, to be a people who surround one another with love, not just in word, but in action. In prayer and encouragement and warm smiles, and handshakes. We are your church. Each person carries your name and your glory. Fill us and let us overflow. **Psalm 23:4, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”** Let this be our life’s confession.

God of love, empower us by your Holy Spirit to live this command we have received. May our lives be marked by love that forgives, love that serves, love that stays when it’s hard. And may the world taste your love through us. In Jesus’ precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

When you look around the change of the weather, we see God’s majestic power and glory. We are amazed by how God provides for us through different seasons, not just the weather, but also the seasons of our lives. May God open our eyes and help us see how God provides in a timely manner. Let us give thanks to God through our offering.

As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, we bless you for your gift of life renewed through Christ's love, and through springtime growth in fields and gardens. Bless the gifts we bring and make them signs of hope and renewal in the world we serve in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 730 Oh for a world where everyone

Now, it is time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be.

2 Corinthians 4:7 says, **“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”** This treasure is Christ. This treasure is love. Love doesn't come from us. We first need to be filled with the love of Christ. Come to Jesus and be filled with his love. Overflow and show his love to the world.

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.