

THE BIBLE IN ONE SERVICE

Opening Hymn VU 229: God of the Sparrow (vs. 1 & 6)

- 1 God of the sparrow God of the whale
God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe
How does the creature say Praise
- 6 God of the ages God near at hand
God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy
How do your children say Home

Introduction to service

Over the course of the next hour — we are making a journey through the bible. From Genesis to Revelation, we are going to tease out the highlights of God's story with Creation and with humanity. So let's get started.

Intro:

In the beginning before anything, before trees and oceans, before animals and reptiles and insects and birds and dinosaurs and before lakes and rivers and mountains.... before it all there was God. Just God. And God had an idea and called it into being. God marveled at creation and called it very good. God made us in God's own image and called us very good.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1 - 5, 24 - 27, 30 - 31, 2:1 - 3

When God began to create[a] the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God[b] swept over the face of the waters. **3** Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then God said, "Let us make humans[c] in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

27

So God created humans[e] in his image,
in the image of God he created them;[f]
male and female he created them.

And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for

food.” And it was so. **31** God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Song: River of Dreams Billy Joel - shorten

Prayer

In the beginning before time,
before people,
before the world began,
God was.

Here and now,
among us, beside us,
enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven,
God is.

In the future,
when we have turned to dust
and all we know has found its fulfilment,
God will be.

Intro:

The generations that follow tell a story of God with the people. How God called the people back to God’s love, not just once but repeatedly. We meet Adam and Eve who eat that forbidden fruit are cast of the garden to labour and toil. The generations that followed needed to be called back to God again and again. When it seemed everyone had turned from God, in anger God sent a flood on the earth, sparing only Noah and his family and an ark full animals. God’s set a rainbow in the sky as reminder to people that God will never again turn from the people in anger. As more generations passed, God called Abram and Sarai to follow him to a new land — a land flowing with milk and honey.

Scripture: Genesis 12:1 - 7

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.**3** I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^[a]

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot and all the possessions that they had gathered and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, **6** Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^[b] of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7** Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him

Hymn VU 634 :To Abraham and Sarah (vs. 1 and 2)

1 To Abraham and Sarah

the call of God was clear,
'Go forth and I will show you
a country rich and fair.
You need not fear the journey
for I have pledged my word,
that you shall be my people
and I will be your God.'

2 From Abraham and Sarah
arose a pilgrim race,
dependent for their journey
on God's abundant grace;
and in their heart was written
by God this saving word:
'that you shall be my people
and I will be your God.'

Intro:

Things did not always go as the people hoped. Sometimes wars were lost. Abram and Sarah's children struggled. Isaac's two sons Jacob and Esau struggled for their father's blessing and inheritance. Jacob wrestled with God and was given a new name: Israel. Eventually he returned home — bringing with him wives and children. Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, guided the pharaoh through drought and famine. Eventually he brought his family back together. Generations pass and the Pharaohs forget about Joseph and how he led the people. The Israelites were slaves in a foreign land. Moses, along with his brother Aaron and Sister Miriam led the people to freedom. God travelled with them as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. For forty long years they wandered in the desert preparing to live in the land of promise. In the land of promise, they were governed by Judges like Deborah, but the people longed for a king. The great prophet Samuel listened for God's voice and first anointed Saul as king, followed by David. It was Samuel who reminded the kings who they were when they turned from God's ways. In time, they built a temple for God in Jerusalem. But even with a King, things did not go as planned. Wars came and they lost. The people of Israel were forced into exile in Babylon. They looked back at Jerusalem and longed for home. They wondered how to worship God in this foreign land?

Scripture:

Psalm 137 – By the Rivers of Babylon
By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down, and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.

2
On the willows[a] there
we hung up our harps.

3
For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

4
How could we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?
5
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
6
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy.
7
Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem's fall,
how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it down!
Down to its foundations!"
8
O daughter Babylon, you devastator!^[b]
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
9
Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!

instrumental By The Rivers in the background while reading.

Intro:

In time, they learned to pray in new ways. The prophet Jeremiah challenged them to flourish in this foreign land — seeking the welfare of the city. They built homes, had children. Then one day the war ceased and some chose to return to Jerusalem.

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:1 - 16

At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

2
Thus says the Lord:
The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,
3
the Lord appeared to him^[a] from far away.^[b]
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
4
Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
O virgin Israel!
Again you shall adorn yourself with your tambourines
and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.
5

Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant
and shall enjoy the fruit.

6

For there shall be a day when sentinels will call
in the hill country of Ephraim:
“Come, let us go up to Zion,
to the Lord our God.”

Song: John Denver, Take me Home, Country Roads

Prayer

Bless all whose journey,
that search for faith,
acceptance and identity,
is made more difficult
by circumstance, doubt,
diversions, exhaustion,
stumbles along the road,
and the load they carry.
May they hear your voice,
and see your footsteps,
know how close you are,
lay down their burden,
reach for your hand
and allow you to lead
them into their promised land.

Intro: Over and over God sent prophets to call God’s people to return to God and God’s ways. We think of Elijah, of Elisha, of Isaiah and so many more. Hear now from Micah

Scripture: Micah 6:1 - 8

Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

2

Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

3

“O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

4

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

5

O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

6

“With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

7

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

Redemption Song –Bob Marley - EVAN

Intro:

Generations followed. And God did the most amazing, crazy and miraculous thing. God chooses to take on our human flesh. God comes to us as a tiny baby — frail and helpless.

Scripture: Luke 2:1 - 7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** All went to their own towns to be registered. **4** Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. **5** He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.[a]

Hymn VU 44: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear - SOLOIST

Intro:

Jesus grew and soon became wise. He called disciples to follow. Along the way Jesus told parables that helped us understand more about God, he healed those in need of healing, he fed those who were hungry. He welcomed everyone. Some frowned on Jesus because he ate with sinners and outcasts and tax collectors. He kept drawing the circle wider and wider, a reminder to us that no one is outside of God’s love. Jesus showed us God’s ways of love and invited us to follow.

Scripture: Matthew 5: 13 - 16

13 “Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

14-16 “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Hymn VU 357: Tell Me the Stories of Jesus (vs. 1, 3 & 5)

- 1 Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

- 3 Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee!
And how the Master, ready and kind,
chided the billows and hushed the wind.

- 5 Show me that scene in the garden of bitter pain;
and of the cross where my Saviour for me was slain.
Sad ones or bright ones, so that they be
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

Prayer

Who do we follow...

A teacher?

You were a good teacher,

Full of wisdom,

A moral compass,

Guidance

For the journey.

Who do we follow...

A prophet?

You were indeed a prophet,

Bringing God's word

Of love, justice,

And freedom

For the journey.

Who do we follow...

A friend?

You were certainly friend

To outcast and sinner,

Feeding the weak,
Lightening the load
For the journey.

Who do we follow?
Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life.
As you take the very least of us,
And make the very most of us.

Intro:

But the teachings were too unsettling for the status quo. If abundant life is for everyone, then the world will have to change. Rather than lose their power and prestige, Jesus was handed over to the authorities, hung on a cross and died.

Scripture: Luke 23:44 - 49

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, **45** while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. **46** Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. **47** When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." **48** And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. **49** But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Hymn VU144: Were You There (vs. 1)

1 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble,
 tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Silence

Intro: But death never has the last word. God's love is stronger than death.

Scripture: Mark 16:1 - 6

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" **4** When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. **6** But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told

you.” **8** So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.[a]

Intro: And the story was handed from person to person and generation to generation. We continue to tell the story of the one who promises abundant life for us all. We continue to be the body of Christ today bringing hope, peace, and justice to the broken and hurting corners of our world

Music improv resurrection upbeat

Prayer

Your love
flows like a stream
into the ocean of your Grace.

Your love
encircles this world,
displays your faithfulness.

Your love
is patient and kind,
brings wholeness and true peace.

Your love
is all we desire
to heal our brokenness.

As all things pass
and fade away
love remains
eternally

Scripture: Galatians 3: 27 - 29

27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **28** There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring,[k] heirs according to the promise.

Song: U2 One

Intro: We live into the promise of being one though many. We live in the promise of God’s love for all seeking justice and mercy at every turn. And when all things pass away, God is still there dwelling with us and offering love.

Scripture: Revelation 7:13 -

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” **14** I said to him, “Sir, you are the one who knows.” Then

he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15

For this reason they are before the throne of God
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

16

They will hunger no more and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat,

17

for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Prayer:

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open your hearts to love.
May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet,
and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you. Amen.

Closing Hymn VU 641: Lord Jesus You Shall be my song as I journey (vs. 1 & 2)

1 Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey,
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go:
for our life and our peace and our love is yourself.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.

2 Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.

Benediction:

God bless each step
that you take today,
whether that road
is rough or smooth.
And in God's strength
step out in faith,
step out in love,
step out in peace,
and bless this world
with God's presence
in and through your life.