

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

November 28, 2021

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on this first Sunday Advent, November 28.

**Announcements**

The people of Knox Bayfield acknowledge that our community worships, lives, plays, and works on the traditional lands of the Anishinabewaki, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and Mississauga peoples within Treaty 29, of 1827.

**HYMN Let there be light #727**

**CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]**

Deb Cosford will lead us in the responsive reading for this First Sunday in Advent: HOPE

**PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON<sup>1</sup>**

God of light and love, our praises overflow as the season of Advent begins. You come to your people to dwell with us. You come with power—not to dominate, but to transform. Your truth shatters lies and half-truths, setting your people free. We offer you our worship in gratitude and anticipation. O God, you show us how to hope in the face of all that is discouraging, for we gather in the name of Hope made flesh, Jesus Christ.

Surprising God, forgive our sleepiness in the presence of your splendour. Forgive us if we yawn when you present us with life-changing possibilities. Forgive us for underestimating your power to do a new thing. By your grace, awaken us to your holy, hopeful presence. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

The One who comes with justice also comes with mercy. God offers you forgiveness in the hope you will receive it. Do not be afraid. Rejoice in the God of love.

May the peace of Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

**Hymn Tell me the old, old story #499**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

*Psalm 25:1–10*

Join me in the prayer for illumination

Spirit of God, move within us and among us today, to open God's Word, read and proclaimed, for us. Shine a clear light to guide us to your truth. Just as we read the signs

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<sup>1</sup> PCC Worship Planner First Sunday of Advent November 28, 2021 Year C

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Resources include: PCC Worship Planner, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/> Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, and Feasting on the Word Companion, NRSV Bible

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of the seasons, help us to discern and understand the signs that are in your Word, pointing us to Christ, your Living Word. **Amen**

**READINGS**

**SCRIPTURE**

Thank you Deb, Lois, Judith & Brenda for responding to the call for readers!

HEBREW BIBLE **JEREMIAH 33:14-16** [B#738/W#821]<sup>2</sup>

RESPONSIVE **PSALM 25:1-10** [B#502 /W#554]

EPISTLE **1THESSALONIANS 3:9-13** [B#204/W#218]

GOSPEL **LUKE 21:25-36** [B#85 / W#87]

May God bless our understanding of this, God's holy word. **The word of the Lord.**

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God.

**Be alert**

Our hope, our struggles, our disappointments and our dreams are reflected in the stories of Advent. Advent is an unpredictable time of transition. During this time that marks the beginning of our church calendar, we wait for the child that we know was born so long ago as we know that God is alive among us and we wait for the time of Christ's return.

The scripture readings shift from one age to the next. In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet urges the people to hold onto hope with God while they live in the midst of exile.

The gospel of Luke tells of the impending resurrection, a parable of the fig tree, and the need to be alert to the signs of God. The signs of the divine that reach out to humanity throughout time. 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.'

How often do we express our surprise at the passage of time as the seasons fly by? This autumn it seemed we shifted from a heat wave into scheduling the seasonal tire change on the car. The movement of time through the seasons, the sprouting of leaves, the changing fall colours ... all are witness to the presence of God. The kingdom of God is near. Do you sense the ubiquitous presence of God – the awareness that God is

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<sup>2</sup> Page numbers shown for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

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everywhere. Do not let your hearts be weighed down. Be alert to the signs of God within your life. The divine Spirit at work in the mission efforts of PWS&D as children are cared for in the midst of tragedy and trauma. The Spirit at work as the Red Cross carries out relief and recovery during the fires and then the flooding in British Columbia. The Spirit active within our hearts when we aid those who are touched by tragedy and we take action to provide necessities for those in need. Luke reminds us that the faithful word of God stays firm.

Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann wrote of his book *Theology of Hope*, ‘... I tried to present the Christian hope no longer as such an 'opium of the beyond' but rather as the divine power that makes us alive in this world.'"

The prophet Jeremiah reminded the exiles of God’s promised faithfulness. In the midst of a conquered and dispersed people, God's faithfulness remained written in their hearts. They were to hold onto the hope of the ways that God would be present among them.

On this first Sunday of Advent, we long for the joy of the birth story and are attentive to Jesus speaking of his second coming. We are told to prepare and be aware during this time of transition, this in between time of Jesus who was, who is, and who will be. We are to be aware of what was, what is, and what will be as we live within the reality and the promise. Just as the fruit of the tree ripens and the leaves drop in the autumn, the buds will blossom to produce fruit in the spring. Within this rhythm of life, we are to let go of our desire for control and predictability. In recognizing that there is both good and evil we are alert to the signs of God, especially during this time of Advent. A commentary noted that Vincent van Gogh captured the complexity of Advent in his painting, *The Starry Night* (1889). Van Gogh, the son of a Dutch minister, painted an apocalyptic blue and black sky with swirling clouds in yellows and white with a church steeple and flame reaching between heaven and earth. Is it a frightening sky? Perhaps. Is it bold and beautiful, a glimpse of a divine event? Perhaps. How the painting is seen and understood depends on your perspective and experience. Our understanding of the scriptures are also influenced by our perspective and experience. Are we frightened or in awe of our glimpses of the divine? Frightening, bold, and beautiful glimpses of God. Do you hear the challenges offered by Jesus when he says to look up, pay attention, and be ready?

Advent, which means coming or arrival, tells of God embodied in infant Jesus and the

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return of Christ. We are told to stay alert, to put our hope in the loving God, who comes to us in Jesus Christ.

The good news of Advent is the realization of Jesus and that we are able to continue with hope in the midst of struggle in our lives, struggle in our community, and struggle in the world around us. We remember the parable of the fig leaves offering hope of summer. We recall Jeremiah's reminder of God's faithfulness. We look to the promise of new life in the ways of Jesus. Amen.

**HYMN Come, you thankful people #803**

**THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD**

**QUOTE** The church is not a group of people who believe all the same things; the Church is a group of people caught up in the same story, with Jesus at the center.

Rachel Held Evans (1981-2019)

We make our offering today with hopeful hearts, trusting that the Holy One will bless our gifts and our lives, to make us signs of hope in the world God loves.

**BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Let us join in prayer:

O Spirit of Hope, when the world is confusing and bleak, you pierce the despair with your Word to renew our vision of the Divine possibilities for our lives. Thank you for lessons learned, for changes of heart, for new discoveries made and hope restored, even as the pandemic stretches on. As the world around us prepares for the long, cold sleep of winter, we pray for those who feel the burden of loneliness and isolation. We remember those without homes to shelter in, and those forced to leave their homes through conflict, natural disaster or political upheaval. Spirit of Hope, shelter all these under your wings.

(silence)

God of Peace, conflict and disagreement seeps into our own lives and relationships, our nations and neighbourhoods. We pray for places where violence and cruelty persist. We lift up the peoples of Afghanistan and Haiti, and situations that we carry on our hearts. May justice and peaceful resolutions prevail. (Keep a brief time of silence)

Holy, faithful God, we offer our gifts with humble hearts, knowing the need in your world is great. O Creator of Joy, we give you thanks for moments of joy and celebration in our lives, for pleasure given and received, for quiet times of reflection and conversation. We

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are grateful for the many ways that allow us to connect with those we love. As the days grow colder, we remember those who feel bitter while others rejoice, those who grieve the loss of loved ones, and those who face a bleak winter.

O Love divine made flesh in Christ, You call us into communion with you and community with one another. We pray for your church and our congregation, that love will guide all your people as we plan for our life and mission. We remember before you our families, whether we are close or estranged; for our friends, whether nearby or far away. Love divine, bless each one with your love and help us express our gratitude and concern for each other in word and action. God of hope, we lift up those who travel the long journey of grief and mourning: Sandy and family, and David and Sharon. Holy God, we bring before you the names of people on our hearts this day: Rudy and Grace; Bonnie; Rob; Courtney and Kyla. We lift up all those who prefer to remain un-named as they face immense challenges of health and finances. We wait for you, Lord, in your word we hope. Merciful God, accept our prayers, spoken and unspoken, and strengthen us to do your will through Jesus Christ. Amen

**Invitation to the Table**

The unity and love we find in communion with Christ encourages us to reach out and find unity within the church. We seek communion with Christ and with our siblings in Christ. This is the communion table where all are invited and welcome to share in the feast. O taste and see that God is good.

**Hymn #534 All who hunger, gather gladly**

**Affirmation of Faith**

**#539 The Apostles' Creed\* [in unison]**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving [Responsive] #564**

As we are called to come to The Table, we remember that this is the table of Jesus Christ, who has prepared a banquet for everyone.

All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, and all who walk in love and charity with your companions on the Way are called to gather around the Table.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed and holy are you, O God, creator of all things. In the beginning, you spoke... and at your word your Spirit moved over the waters, bringing order, light, and life out of chaos. You knit together our inward parts, made us in your image and breathed breath and life into us. When we turn away from you and our love fails, your love remains constant. When we wander off and follow ways of sin and death you call us from our scattered lives to repentance, unity and peace. Therefore, with choirs of angels and archangels and with those of every time and place, we give you praise and glory. We join with the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy, mighty and tender God, in time you sent word to Mary that she would conceive a son and call him Jesus and in him we saw your promises made flesh. Dwelling among us we heard and saw Good News. Jesus preached reconciliation and the Kingdom of God. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. In his suffering, death, and resurrection, he delivered us from sin and death. He revealed your living and redeeming hope for all people. When he ascended into heaven, your Holy Spirit came to be our Counsellor and Comforter. And so, remembering Christ's life, love, death, and resurrection, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ was promised. Christ was born. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

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Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we share may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, world without end. And the people join their voices together to say: **Amen**

O Holy One, we join our voices together across space and time to speak the words that Christ taught his disciples ... **Our Father who art in heaven, hallow'ed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

#### **Words of Institution and Invitation**

Jesus, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you: do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood: as often as you drink of it, do this in remembrance of me.' We break this bread, the communion in Christ's body once broken. We drink this cup, communion in Christ's blood once shed. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

#### **Prayer after Communion**

Let us join in prayer...

Eternal God, we thank you for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us and we praise you for breaking into the world. Send us out in peace for we have seen, have heard, and been fed by your grace. Keep us faithful and alert for signs of Christ's coming and lead us to live lives marked by truth and light, in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

**Hymn # 556      Now let us from this table rise**

**To Go Forth In God's Name**

#### **Commissioning and Benediction**

May the God of mercy keep you, the Holy Spirit comfort you, and the love of Christ nurture you, this day and forevermore

**Postlude #623 Holy, holy, holy**

**#727 Let there be light**

Let there be light; let there be understanding; Let all the nations gather; let them be face to face. Open our lips; open our minds to ponder; Open the door of concord, opening into grace.

Perish the sword; perish the angry judgement; Perish the bombs and hunger; perish the fight for gain. Hallow our love; hallow the deaths of martyrs; Hallow their holy freedom; hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come; your spirit turn to language; Your people speak together; your spirit never fade. Let there be light; open our hearts to wonder; Perish the way of terror; hallow the world God made.

**623 Holy, holy, holy** Words: traditional Music: F Schubert

**Refrain:** Holy, holy, holy, God almighty Lord!  
Holy, holy, holy, everywhere adored!

God without beginning, God eternal One reigns and rules forever all beneath the sun

**Refrain**

Power and love and wonder, circling round God's throne, Praise our God most holy, Lord of Life alone **Refrain**

**499 Tell me the old, old story**

Tell me the old, old story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. Tell me the story simply, as to a little child, for I am weak and weary, and helpless and defiled.

**Refrain:** Tell me the old, old story; tell me the old, old story; tell me the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in, that wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin. Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon; the early dew of morning has passed away at noon. **Refrain**

Tell me the story softly, with earnest tones and grave; remember I'm the sinner whom Jesus came to save. Tell me the story always, if you would really be, in any time of trouble, a comforter to me. **Refrain**

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Tell me the same old story, when you have cause to fear that this world's empty glory is costing me too dear. Yes, and when that world's glory is dawning on my soul, tell me the old, old story: Christ Jesus makes me whole.           **Refrain**

**803 Come, you thankful people**

Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home. All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin; God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied. Come, to God's own temple come: raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit unto God's praise to yield; Wheat and weeds together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown; First the blade and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear. Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be. For the Lord our God shall come and shall take the harvest home; From the field shall in that day all offences purge away, Give the angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast, But the fruitful ears to store in God's storehouse evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest home: Gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin; There, forever purified, in thy presence to abide. Come, with all thine angels, come: raise the glorious harvest home.

**All who hunger, gather gladly           #534**

All who hunger, gather gladly; Holy manna is our bread. Come from wilderness and wandering. Here, in truth, we will be fed. You that yearn for days of fullness, All around us is our food. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers, Seeker, be a welcome guest. Come from restlessness and roaming. Here, in joy, we keep the feast. We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, sing together; Jesus Christ is living bread. Come from loneliness and longing. Here, in peace, we have been led. Blest are those who from this table. Live their days in gratitude. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

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#556

**Now let us from this Table Rise**

Now let us from this table rise  
Renewed in body, mind and soul;  
With Christ we die and live again,  
Whose selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,  
To spread the Word in speech and deed,  
We follow in the steps of Christ,  
At one with all in hope and need.

To fill each human house with love,  
It is the sacrament of care;  
The work that Christ began to do  
We humbly pledge ourselves to share.

Then give us grace, companion-God,  
To choose again the pilgrim way,  
And help us to accept with joy  
The challenge of tomorrow's day.

