

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on Sunday March 13th.

Announcements

The people of Knox Bayfield acknowledge with gratitude the territory upon which we live, work, play and worship. Knox is on the traditional lands of the Anishinabewaki, Attiwoonderonk (Neutral), and Mississauga peoples within Treaty 29, of 1827. We are all treaty people. We acknowledge that The Presbyterian Church in Canada was a part of the residential school system. We seek a new relationship with the First Nations of this land, one based in truth, respect, and reconciliation.

HYMN Let There be Light #727

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

One: God is our light and our salvation

All: Of whom shall we be afraid?

One: God is the stronghold of our life

All: We will wait for God in faithfulness.

One: Let us seek God's face in our time of worship

All: We will honour God's presence in our prayers and our praises!

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

Ever loving God we lift up our prayers of loving adoration. O holy One, when things around us feel chaotic, you are peace. When we are overcome with fear and anxiety, your presence is freedom. When we feel helpless, your love gives us hope. God, you are the Source of all that matters. God of compassion, we find ourselves seeking our own comfort and neglecting others. We turn away from the demands of discipleship and put our own interests first. We seek your mercy. Inspire us with the energy to do your will and serve our neighbours in the ways of Christ. We bring you our prayers and our praise this day, for you reveal yourself to us in the goodness of creation, in the love and mercy of Christ and through the energy and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We worship you, O God, world without end. Amen.

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

Friends, believe the good news. God calls to us with the desire to bring us into the glorious freedom offered in Jesus Christ. Everyone who calls on the name of God will be saved. Thanks be to God!

May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn All things bright and beautiful #435

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination *Gen. 15:4-6*

God of wisdom, your Word brings light to show us the way you would have us follow. As the Scriptures are read and proclaimed this day, send us your Holy Spirit to aid our understanding and guide us in the ways we live out your truth.

SCRIPTURE

HEBREW BIBLE **GENESIS 15:1-12 [B#12/W#13]²**

HEBREW BIBLE **PSALM 27 [B#503/W#555]**

EPISTLE **PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1 [B#198/W#211]**

GOSPEL **LUKE 13:31-35 [B#77/W#78]**

MAY GOD BLESS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS, GOD'S HOLY WORD. **THE WORD OF THE LORD. Hymn**

Hymn Teach me God to wonder

#704

The Fox and the Hen

O holy One, by the power of your Holy Spirit at work in the word read and proclaimed, may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts acceptable to you, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

The Lenten journey is a time set aside to look deeply within to understand our own dark realities. Among these realities are our fears, including the fear of the uncertainties that we cannot control. Psalm 27 offers a rich description of the tension between the reality of human fear and the assurance of divine help.

We are intensely aware of the issues we could not control during the panic shutdowns and the surges of COVID numbers. Just as the pandemic is finally easing the merciless invasion of the Ukraine by Russia jolted the world. We live in a world with broken relationships, personal disappointments, public scandals, political games, and cultural

² Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

disrespect. We live in a world where acts of terrorism are a recurring infection. In the midst of this turmoil it can be difficult to extend trust—even to God. Many of us have experienced know bitter disappointment and crushing pain. We are familiar with the reality of manipulation, the feeling of abandonment, and the sense of being alone. We may wonder ... does God shelter those who experience troubles?

It is not difficult to witness the healing grace of God both near and far. We see evidence of hands reaching out to help others in need in the efforts. We support the missional efforts of Presbyterian Sharing and PWS&D. When tragedy occurs, we lift our voices in collective prayer to offer hope to those who are distraught. We reach out to one another to offer support and nurture to our siblings in Christ, particularly when we are aware of their needs. The plea for help is heard and responded to with our time, our financial gifts, and spiritual gifts.

The Psalmist offers fellowship and guidance to those who are scared, uncertain, and in need of God's care. Whether surviving illness, navigating addiction recovery, or dealing with the impact of trauma and post-traumatic shock.

Our faith and our doubt persist when we ask the difficult questions and seek to understand God. When we examine our fear and doubt it is possible to reflect on our understanding and illuminate our experience of God. We are encouraged to explore our need for authentic connection within the safe space of our faith community. A safe space for all to share diverse views of the world.

The psalmist wrote of the courage that is needed to look deeply into faith and doubt. Those who do so see the world differently as they recognize abundance, grace, and fellowship. It is possible to reject the premise of fear, scarcity, and competition. Yet fear and scarcity seem to drive much of what we do. Abram and Sarai were faced with the fear of not having children. In their fear God called to Abram and promised him an heir, indeed, the promise of many heirs. Abram would have descendants more numerous than the stars.

Richard Niebuhr, Professor of Christian Ethics at Yale Divinity School, wrote that the first response of humanity toward God is that of distrust. Why is it that God is good to us, yet we do not trust God? Perhaps we can look to Abram for the answer. Like most of us, Abram knew that he was far from perfect. It was difficult for Abram to accept that he

could be blessed beyond measure. Rather than being grateful, Abram was fearful at times. He was willing to wait on God's promise and he asked for a sign of the promise. He asked for something to hold onto, some thing to fan the flame of his hope. Abram learned of the suffering of his descendants, along with their vindication, and the fulfillment of blessings. With this revelation, Abram was convinced of God's promise and he was saddened by the knowledge of the suffering that would occur.

When Jesus moved closer to Jerusalem during the final weeks of his life he was aware of the prophets who had gone before him. The prophets who were ignored or killed. The prophet Jeremiah was left to die in a muddy cistern after speaking words of discouragement to the people. Not even the threats coming from the "fox," Herod Antipas, the one who ordered the execution of John the Baptist, could distract Jesus from his final destination. Although the fox is linked with slyness and destruction, Jesus affirmed his work and journey to Jerusalem would continue. Herod did not stop him. Jesus spoke of gathering God's children "as a hen gathers her brood under her wings". This text recalls the words in Genesis when God "brooded" over the waters, as a hen might brood over her young. The prophets Isaiah and Zechariah used similar imagery... the scattered children of Jerusalem being gathered together to speak of God's love for Israel. There is the recurring image of God sheltering Israel under God's wings . When Jesus began his ministry he identified the connection between his work and the prophecy of Isaiah as he declared the good news would change lives and transform societies. He urged the people to recognize his divine mission and he lamented their failure to do so.

The gospel of Luke writes of the messianic message, the intentional mission to bring those cast to the outer edges into the safety of the love of God. Luke includes the story of the prodigal son, of the good Samaritan, and the thief who discovered forgiveness and love while dying on a cross next to Jesus. When we sense God's presence our fear dissipates and hope is abundant. When God seems hidden, hope requires faith of "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". The Spirit of God declared the good news that lives would be changed and societies transformed. God gathers us as a hen gathers her chicks to protect against the fox in our midst.

Praise be to God.

Hymn Softly and tenderly #640

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE Now thank we all our God, with heart, and hands, and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices. Martin Rinkart, clergy, hymnist

BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us join in prayer:

O holy and loving God, we lift up prayers for the nations of the world. Wherever there is poverty, war, or oppression, may all people repent of the evil they do.

We are thankful for the gift of the amazing beauty and resourceful Earth. May we prevent exploitation and tend it with care so that all may share in its abundance.

O God, we behold your goodness to us and with deep gratitude we offer the dedication of our lives that we may minister to the world in the name of Jesus. Accept the offering of the work of our hands, we pray.

For the leaders of the nations we pray that they may work for the common good of all people and refrain from arrogant nationalism. For those who are sick or in trouble, for the defenseless, the weak, and the poor, may the people of your church hear and respond to their cry. Loving God hear the prayers of your people for the sake of your world.

God of love, we lift up those who travel the long journey of grief and mourning. Holy God, we bring before you the names of people on our hearts this day: Ruth Talbot, Lois, Rudy and Grace; Bonnie; Rob; Courtney and Kyla. We lift up all those who prefer to remain unnamed as they face immense challenges of health and finances. Merciful God, accept our prayers, spoken and unspoken. May your love overflow more and more in our lives, in your church, and in all the world.

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.**

Hymn I have decided to follow Jesus # 570

To Go Forth In God's Name

Commissioning and Benediction Phil. 4:1

Sisters and brothers, siblings in Christ, stand firm in your faith. When you falter, reach out to gain strength and nurture from God and one another. May the God of reconciliation bless you, May the grace of Jesus Christ keep you, May the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you this day and forevermore.

Postlude Holy, Holy, Holy # 623

#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**

435 All things bright and beautiful

570 I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus; I have decided to follow Jesus; I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me; the world behind me, the cross before me;

the world behind me, the cross before me, No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow; though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow; No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus? Will you decide now to follow Jesus? Will you decide
now to follow Jesus? No turning back, no turning back.

640 Softly and tenderly

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me: patiently Jesus is waiting
and watching, watching for you and for me.

Refrain "Come home, come home, ye who are weary, come home";
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, "Come home!"

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we
linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me? **Refrain**

Oh for the wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me; though we have
sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. **Refrain**

704 Teach me God to wonder

Teach me, God to wonder; teach me God, to see; Let your world of beauty capture me.

Refrain Praise to you be given: love for you be lived, Life be celebrated; joy you give.
Let me, God, be ready; let me loving be; Let your world of people speak to me. Refrain
Let me, God, be open; let me be awake, In your world of loving, my place take. Refrain
Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak, See you in my neighbour when
we meet. Refrain