

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 6th Sunday of Easter May 22.

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, Attiwonderonk (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: Let the peoples praise you, O God

All: Let all the peoples praise you!

One: Let the earth rejoice and be glad

All: We come to worship with open hearts, to raise our voices with thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of faithful promise we gather with thankful hearts. The beauty of your world lifts our spirits in praise. We are humbled and awed by your diverse creation. We yearn for you to draw close to us in this time of worship and show us the promise and purpose in our own lives. May we move into the future, renewed by the energy of your Holy Spirit.

God of diversity and detail, the wonders of your creation amaze us. Yet we confess we often fail to honour its beauty and variety in the details of our own lives. When voices differ in opinion, we listen to those we agree with and fail to hear the concerns of others. We fail to honour experience different than our own. We resist calls to honour the earth. Forgive our narrow perspectives and our focus on self interest. Open our eyes and our hearts to the pain and perspectives of others. Renew all people with your healing grace.

Amen

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

construction and the cell reception can be spotty at times. You may think the route is well planned but detours and re-direction are common place.

We are all familiar with the impact of detours with driving and in life. The most obvious would be the impact of the pandemic. The many variations of restrictions and shutdowns which oddly almost became normalized. Then there is the impact of job loss, financial instability, the housing shortage, relationship difficulties, and health concerns.

Paul faced many challenges in his life and in his travels. He did not have a mobile phone with a map app telling him that he would be turning left off the main road in 500 metres. His career path hit a major shift when he experienced the impact of the Spirit of Christ. Paul came to rely on the Spirit to direct his journey. He also trusted that where-ever he was, that was where he was intended to be. In the reading today I wondered whether Paul was surprised when the Spirit re-directed his journey...twice. They were re-directed from preaching the word in Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, the Spirit would not allow them to enter so they went down to Troas. Twice the Spirit prevented Paul from going the wrong way. When Paul saw the vision of a man pleading for help he was led to Macedonia.

When we read the stories in scripture it may seem that visions happened as a matter of course. Yet, it is important to recognize that visions were surprising then and continue to be so now. I wonder how receptive we are to the nudging of the Spirit? How does it feel for you as you hear this question? What do you hear when we speak of being attentive to the Spirit? Are you curious about God's vision ... of new possibilities? Or, is it simpler to think in terms of traditional planning and setting up feasible goals based on proven methods? Visions move us in ways that are enlightening and insightful. Suddenly, the old way of seeing drops away as the new vision becomes clear.

This passage from the book of Acts speaks of the Spirit directing Paul in a particular direction for a particular purpose. This is not Paul's first experience with the divine. Which helps us to comprehend that God moves us toward that which is good and we often resist. Perhaps this text fits particularly well with Healing & Reconciliation Sunday. In the Presbyterian Church materials, the social action spotlight directs our attention to the Doctrine of Discovery, Treaty Rights and Land Acknowledgements. We are reminded that

the 2019 General Assembly responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 'Call to Action' item #46 with the important action of repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. You may be wondering ... what is the Doctrine of Discovery? It is the central concept that formed the premise of colonialism and it was developed around the 15th century. This doctrine provided a theological justification and legal backing for European powers to seize land held by people who were not Christian. It went hand-in-hand with the concept of terra nullius, Latin for "empty land." Terra nullius meant that land could be taken when it was considered empty or held by non-Christians ... regardless of who lived there. This concept led to the denial of legal rights and heavily influenced legislation and institutions in Canada. It also shaped the system of Residential and Day Schools in which the church was complicit.

Since 1991, the PCC has held that Indigenous peoples in Canada should have a constitutional guarantee to the right to self-government and to an adequate land and economic base. The church acknowledged that these rights arise from Indigenous rights and from treaty rights³. Yet, the devastating harms created by the Doctrine of Discovery and from not respecting treaties continue. Our efforts here at Knox Bayfield have started. We begin worship services with the land acknowledgement. This is important as Indigenous land acknowledgements recognize that the land was not empty when European settlers arrived. In this action we learn and acknowledge the traditional territory we live and work on. There is more to do. It will be good to learn about the treaties and whether those treaties are respected. Perhaps you are interested in learning how the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are being implemented. Our journey into healing and reconciliation has only just begun.

We learn much from the scriptures about the journeys that people take as they follow the lead of the Spirit. Paul's vision convinced him and his companions to travel to Macedonia. They were convinced that God called them to share the good news in that place. From the very beginning in this library of books, from Adam and Eve right through to Revelations, God connects with humanity. God gets our attention and we are transformed. Doesn't that sound wonderful? God gets our attention and we are transformed. It sounds easy

³ A&P 1991, pp. 289–292

when simplified and ... it is often filled with challenges, and difficulty, and sometimes it is painful.

Perhaps that explains the tendency to create a structure of pre-planned actions around change. Perhaps, that explains why we tend to turn away from change. We prefer the comfortable and the familiar. When the Spirit of God moves among us the unpredictable happens. Great bodies of water part. People wander for decades in the wilderness. They find freedom, faith, and confusion. Maybe we could try to let go of the idea that God is predictable and controllable while we remember that God is faithful. Perhaps we can remember the part about finding freedom and deep faith in the midst of the confusion. I imagine it was confusing for Paul's journeys. Lets take a moment to look at a map. Take out your pew bibles and turn to the map. In the white edged books the map is in the very back ... map 4. In the blue edge bible, the map is at the beginning of the book of Acts. You will find Troas on the shoreline near Jerusalem. Then, if you can find Samothrace, I could not. Neapolis is on the shoreline just before Macedonia. That was quite the journey 2000 years ago. Paul and his companions then remained in Philippi for several days waiting for the sabbath. They visited with devout Jews and introduced them to the ways of Christ. Paul met with the women gathered where he spoke. Scripture provides only a little information about one woman, Lydia.

When they were in Philippi, they met Lydia, a woman who had a successful business, and she was willing to listen to Paul. Lydia was a worshiper of God ... and a dealer in purple cloth, a Gentile who was interested in Judaism. The nature of her business tells us that she dealt with the elite of Philippi, since only the elite were allowed to wear the color purple. Lydia is a businesswoman in charge of her own household. We discover that God opened her heart to listen eagerly, which moves her and her household to be baptized. She then generously offered hospitality to Paul and his group.

Diverse individuals are brought together in the book of Acts. The barriers of language, culture, and geography dissolve as they develop community in faith. This passage tells of the faithful Paul and his companions travelling outside their comfort zone. They went on an extended geographical journey far from the familiarity of their home.

In closing, I would like to share a bit of research. In his commentary, David G. Forney wrote, "Visions from God are surprising things, for they utterly transform us and alter our

course. In the early 1990s, George Gallup Sr. asked Presbyterians whether they had ever experienced a vision from God. Surprisingly, half of the church members he asked said they had had a vision from God, and even a higher percentage of clergy said the same thing. Perhaps one reason this statistic is surprising is because we simply do not talk about our visions from God—and maybe for good reason. If we were to talk openly about God's involvement in our lives, we could not control the plan, as we do in strategic planning. On the other hand, if we did share our visions from God, we might find ourselves with open hearts that readily receive the gospel that forever changes us, even to the point of providing hospitality to foreigners and those just freed from prison." Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn God is love: come, heaven, adoring #314

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE No single act of generosity remains in isolation. The ripples are many. Sarah Winman, writer, actor

God has created a world of great diversity, full of wonder and potential. We honour God's gifts to us in Christ and in each other with our offerings that support God's purposes in the world.

BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us join in prayer:

God, the earth and all its peoples belong to you. We come before you in prayer, aware that the earth is at risk with the ways people live on it and the conflicts we provoke among each other. We seek your healing and hope this day, for the earth and all its creatures, and for your people of every nation.

Generous God, we thank you for your gift of new life in Christ Jesus. Receive and bless each gift and each giver. Use our gifts of time, talent, and financial resources to witness to your purposes through our congregation and throughout the world you love.

Almighty God, we pray for peace and justice in places torn apart by war and conflict. May your Spirit of wisdom and compassion break open the hearts of the powerful that they may work with each other to protect the innocent and restore order for the wellbeing of all. May your ways of truth and justice prevail In every heart and in every land.

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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

#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**

620 Go now in peace

Go now in peace; though friends must part, You presence lives in every heart.

Your gifts to us no words can tell: Go now in peace in Christ go well.

Go now in hope, and hopeful stay, Though shadowed valleys hide your way;

Through good and evil, joy and pain, With God, in Spirit, you remain.

Go now in faith, through time and chance, Until we join the wedding dance

As partners of the Three-in-One, Where all is ended and begun.

#358

There is a redeemer

There is a redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy one.

Refrain: Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit till
your work on earth is done.

Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
oh for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory,
I will see his face,
and there I'll serve my King forever,
in that holy place.



314 God is love: come, heaven, adoring

God is love: come heaven, adoring; God is love: come earth, rejoice.

Come creation, voices soaring,

Sing exulting with one voice.

God who laid the earth's foundation,

God who spread the heavens above,

God who breathes through all creation--

God is love, eternal love.

God is love, whose arms enfolding All the world in one embrace,

With unfailing grasp are holding

Every child of every race,

And when human hearts are breaking

Under sorrow's iron rod,

All the sorrow, all the aching

Wrings with pain the heart of God.

God is love, and though with blindness Sin afflicts all human life,

God's eternal loving-kindness

Guides us through all earthly strife.

Sin and death and hell shall never

O'er us final triumph gain;

God is love: so love forever

O'er the universe must reign.

706 Come, let us sing

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love, tender and true, tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell joyfully came, joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame:
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; why do they roam? why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love; come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.