

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on Sunday May 8th.

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: Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All: The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

One: Blessing and honor is yours, O God.

All: Glory to God forever. Alleluia!

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of the ages, you are compassion and our cup overflows. You lead us into green pastures, you lead us beside quiet streams. You are life and you restore our souls. Morning, noon and night, God, you are the source of our joy. We gather to worship you as one family of your people, honoring you as our Creator, trusting you as our Saviour, and celebrating you as the Spirit who gives us life.

Merciful God, we confess we stray from your ways like lost sheep. We follow the desires of our own hearts as we ignore the needs of others. We judge ourselves more generously than others when we fail to offer others the forgiveness we seek from you. Forgive the ways we betray your love and return us to your paths of truth and mercy.

In the letter to the Ephesians Paul declared that Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. We are rooted and grounded in his love. The forgiveness he offers is a gift of this love.

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

Receive God's forgiveness with faithful hearts and be at peace with God, with yourself and with each other.

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

Hymn Saviour, like a shepherd lead us #485

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination

Shepherd of Souls, you call us to an abundant feast at the table of your word. Open our hearts to feed on your goodness, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we might dwell evermore deeply in you. Amen.

Scripture

Tanakh*	Psalm 23	[B#501/W#553]
Historical	Acts 9:36-43	[B#128/W#133] ²
Epistle	Revelation 7:9-17	[B#249/W#271]
Gospel	John 10:22-30	[B#104/W#107]

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

Hymn With the Lord as my guide #574

Listen to hear

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 be acceptable to you, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

Did you notice the birds singing last week during the worship service? Oddly, we often hear sounds like birds chirping, phones ringing, and the sound of the wind without paying much attention. You may find it interesting to note that the main difference between listening and hearing is our conscious attention. So, how do we listen to hear?

In the mission moment we heard about the impact of taking on the role of leadership in a faith community. One woman said, "I feel like a different woman. Before, I used to live locked in my home with a domestic routine, but now I have new friends, we do creative things." There is so much in this statement. I wonder what each of you experienced when you heard this. When we listen to hear it is possible to pick up on much more than the

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

stated words. In part, this might explain why it can be challenging to write the sermon each week. The printed words on the page provide a portion of the story. Understanding the context of the written words provides another portion. Taking in the information shared in commentaries provides more information. Then I consider how I understand and process the material. The crux of the issue is how you will take in what I say. How will you hear the words that I speak? How will those who read the service take in the written words? I consider how your perspective may impact the meanings and the nuance of the message. Again, what did you hear in the mission moment when a woman shared that she discovered an accepting community that welcomes her leadership?

Scripture encourages us to pay attention, to see and to hear.

In John's gospel, we join Jesus and a small crowd gathered around him as they are walking in the portico of Solomon in the temple. It is at the time of the feast of Dedication—what we know as the celebration of Hanukkah. Hanukkah, one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays, is a festive eight-day celebration that for many people falls during the darkest, coldest season of the year. Hanukkah recalls God's reclaiming of Jerusalem through the heroic faith of the Maccabees. It is also called the Festival of Lights. Light comes with the lighting of a candle each day. Chanukah means "dedication" in Hebrew and commemorates the victory of a small group of Jewish rebels. The rebels were led by Judah Maccabee and his brothers. The Maccabees were victorious over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. Their victory led to the liberation and re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. Modern celebrations of Hanukkah focus on family and friends. It includes the lighting of the Hanukkah menorah, singing, games, and special food. It is at the feast of the Dedication that Jesus spoke to those who had gathered around him. They asked, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe." In his words and actions Jesus lived out the message that he was teaching ... and people had great difficulty getting past their thin understanding of how things should or would be.

There are many ways to consider their question. The tone of the question is fuzzy. Were the questioners seeking a deeper understanding of him? Or were they adversaries, asking, "How long will you annoy us, or vex us?" The preceding verses tell us that "the Jews were divided" about Jesus, so their question could come from either direction. Those

asking the question may or may not have heard or seen much of what Jesus has said and done.

On reading this scripture I was mindful of the complex issues that the church has been working through. Our denomination has struggled to hear and to listen. Miscommunication happens when questions are not encouraged and, for quite a while, questions were not encouraged. Although there has been much said and much has changed there remain questions that have not been asked or addressed in many congregations.

Many have been working on the Healing and Reconciliation efforts. In 1994, the PCC adopted the Confession to God and to Indigenous people for its role in the Indian Residential School System. The church is committed to walking with Indigenous people on a journey toward reconciliation and living out the spirit of its Confession. Yet there are some within our denomination who continue to have little to no knowledge of these complex issues.

In 1994, the PCC recognized that we are called to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving and supportive community and to repent of homophobia and hypocrisy. In 2017, the church formed the special Rainbow Communion committee to listen to the stories of LGBTQI people. Courageous individuals shared their experience of harms done due to homophobia, transphobia, hypocrisy, and hetero-sexism within and by the church. The Rev. Peter Bush, Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, wrote a letter of repentance to LGBTQI people. The Rev. Bush reminded the church of God's call to be a community where we welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us.

In 2021, the General Assembly adopted the final report and recommendations of the Rainbow Communion. The report provides an outline of ways for the church to acknowledge harm to LGBTQI people through public confession and apology. The report provides policies and programs that will help the church include LGBTQI people more fully in all aspects of ministry.

For decades the PCC studied and discussed questions related to sexuality, in particular the questions related to same-sex marriage and the roles of LGBTQI people in ministry.

During the 2021 General Assembly, the PCC made changes to its theology and practices regarding marriage. It was recognized that people may define marriage either as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or as a covenant relationship between

two adult people. These decisions provide Presbyterian ministers with liberty of conscience and the freedom to choose to officiate, or not, at the marriages of same-sex couples. The ruling elders of this church, Knox Bayfield, support the inclusive practices that recognize the covenant relationship of adult people. The church agreed that LGBTQI people are welcome to be ordained to serve as ministers and ruling elders.

There have been a number of articles written in the national newsletter, educational material included on the national church website, posters and bulletins sharing information in this church, plus the issues have been included in sermons from this pulpit. And, discussion needs to happen to explore and discover the complexity of these and other issues within the context of our faith.

The stories in scripture teach us to respond and take action against injustice. We are called individually and the church is called as a body ... to be attentive, to be aware, and to take action against systemic injustice. Listen to hear how God is moving within and among us. Listen to hear how God is moving you to a new understanding of your purpose and place within God's creation. Praise be to God.

Hymn All the way my savior leads me #699

To Respond In Faith

The Offering of our Life and Labour to God

Quote Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude. A. A. Milne, author

In our offering of time, talent, and financial resources may our generosity reflect God's goodness to us, and the hope we have in Christ Jesus, even in these troubled times.

Prayers of People, Blessing of Gifts

Let us join in prayer:

Generous God, we thank you for all we have received in Christ and in your creation. Bless the gifts we bring and use them in the service of your justice and peace.

We turn to you with our hopes and concerns in these uncertain times. Draw near to us and to all those for whom we pray, so that your love will be known in our world this day. On this Christian Family Sunday, we pray for the families we belong to. We thank you for parents, grandparents and great-parents, for the generations who started our families and all they gave to us. Today we thank you for all those who mothered us, grateful for their

care and guidance. We pray for mothers throughout the world, thinking especially of mothers in Ukraine and other places of conflict.

May your Spirit strengthen the hope and courage of care-givers. We pray for families in our community and around the world. We remember families in need ... those struggling with economic upheaval and the high cost of living, those who know the sorrow of death or abandonment, those who live in pain or fear, and those who face discrimination. We pray your Spirit will surround these families with your love and courage.

We pray for nations in conflict. Change the hearts of leaders bent on destruction or conquest. Give wisdom and courage to those who seek justice through negotiation, and protect all those who offer themselves in advocacy work. Bring peace with justice to this troubled world, o Holy One.

We pray for each other and for our church family. We give your thanks for the friendship and fellowship we share and the unique gifts each one brings to our life together. Rekindle our energy for ministry and mission and show us our path into the future.

Good Shepherd, you guide us through dark valleys and green pastures. We thank you for your presence with us in all times and situations as we offer together the prayer you gave us as one family of followers ... **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 He leadeth me #650

To Go Forth In God's Name

Commissioning and Benediction

Go out into the world seeking peace and justice. May God's goodness and mercy follow you as you serve the risen Christ. May Christ the Good Shepherd bless and guide you this day and always.

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**

He leadeth me #650

He leadeth me: oh blessed thought! oh words with heavenly comfort fraught! Whate'er I do, where'er I be still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

He leadeth me! He leadeth me! By his own hand he leadeth me! A faithful follower I would be, for 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom, by waters still, o'er troubled sea, still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine, nor ever murmur nor repine, content, whatever lot I see since 'tis my God that leadeth me!

And when my task on earth is done, when by thy grace the victory's won, e'en death's cold wave I will not flee, since God through Jordan leadeth me.

With the Lord as my guide #574

With the Lord as my guide I will walk through the desert, rest by the water, run in the wind. With the Lord by my side I will stand on the mountain, drink from the fountain of love deep within.

With the Lord as my guide I will see all the talents, accept the balance of who I am. With the Lord by my side say yes to the calling, fear not the falling, trust in God's plan.

With the Lord as my guide I will work with my sister, care for my brother, bend with their pain. With the Lord by my side we will rise up together, strengthen each other, courage regain.

With the Lord as my guide I will rise in the morning, praise for the dawning beauty of day.

With the Lord by my side I will sing, sing forever, always a lover, seeking God's way.

Saviour, like a shepherd lead us #485

Saviour, like a shepherd lead us: Much we need your tender care; In your pleasant pastures feed us, For our use your folds prepare: Blessed Jesus; blessed Jesus! You have bought us; yours we are. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! You have bought us, yours we are.

We are yours; in love befriend us; Be the guardian of our way; Keep your flock from sin, defend us; Seek us when we go astray: Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear your children when we pray. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! Hear your children when we pray.

Let us always seek your favour; Let us always do your will. Jesus Christ our only Saviour, With yourself our spirits fill: Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! You have loved us, love us still. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus! You have loved us, love us still.

All the way my savior leads me #699

All the way my Saviour leads me—What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy, Who through life has been my Guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell! For I know, whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well;

All the way my Saviour leads me— Cheers each winding path I tread, Gives me grace for every trial, Feeds me with the living bread. Tho my weary steps may falter And my soul athirst may be, Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! A spring of joy I see;

All the way my Saviour leads me— O the fullness of His love! Perfect rest to me is promised In my Father's house above. When my spirit, clothed immortal, Wings its flight to realms of day, This my song through endless ages: "Jesus led me all the way!"