

2022 06 26

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 26th of June.

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: It is good to give thanks to God

All: Let us sing praises to God's holy name!

One: We declare God's steadfast love in the morning

All: And God's faithfulness night after night

One: Let us worship God with grateful hearts

All: We give God thanks in our prayers and praise

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

Faithful, fruitful God, you created our minds to grow and our hearts to expand with love. You created our voices to sing your praises. We come to you with joyful praise. We turn to Jesus for grace and guidance. We ask that you fill us to overflowing with your Holy Spirit. We worship you in spirit and in truth, and serve you following in the ways of Jesus Christ. Faithful, fruitful God, you call us to follow you. We confess our preference for comfort and the familiar. You offer us new beginnings, yet we continue to make the same choices. Forgive us, O God. energize us to serve you even when the challenge seems great.

Assurance of Pardon

In Christ, we are made a new creation; the old life is gone and the new life has come!

Know that God loves you and forgives you. Do not be afraid to make a new start!

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

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

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Hymn

Spirit of the living God #400

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination

God of wisdom, by your Spirit, open our minds to your truth, our hearts to your gospel, and our hands to do your will, in the name of Jesus, your Living Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Tanakh*	2Kings 2:1–2, 6–14	[B#332/W#369]²
Tanakh	Psalms 77	[B#496/W#593]
Epistle	Galatians 5:1, 13–25	[B#190/W#201]
Gospel	Luke 9:51–62	[B#70/W#72]

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

Hymn

Bless this house by Jean Walker piano solo

Freedom

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. Amen.

How do you receive the news? Do you listen to the radio, watch tv news, or read the newspaper? The news has been bleak with war, mass shootings, human rights issues, economic uncertainty, and major social issues. The struggle for freedom persists. The people of Ukraine are fighting for freedom from an invading country. The people of Afghanistan are struggling against internal and external threats. The Americans struggle to understand where freedom exists with the use of firearms and reproductive rights. Canadians have struggled with issues of freedom, specifically freedom of speech and freedom of choice. Presbyterians have struggled to understand freedom in issues around human sexuality and inclusivity within our polity and our congregations. Individuals seek freedom from addiction. Freedom is a complicated concept.

The definition of freedom is the ability to do, say, and think without constraint. This, of course, leads to the rights and responsibilities of freedom in its many forms. Freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom from persecution and injustice. There is the responsibility to recognize the rights of all involved. Freedom of speech must not restrict

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

the freedoms of others. A few years ago we prepared for the possible disruption of our worship services by individuals who believe the pulpit should exclude women. We recognize that they have the freedom to hold that opinion, however, their actions could restrict our freedom of worship. The potential issue was discussed and a response was developed. The initial concerns diminished when we worked together to better understand the issues.

In the gospels and epistles we discover that Christ has set us free. In Christ, freedom is rooted in and flourishes within our love of God and neighbour. Paul emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit in community—the binding together of faithful people to create new community as the body of Christ. We enter into the epistle as Paul speaks to a specific situation. After he had left Galatia, other teachers preached the need to follow the traditional law as a form of obedience in their newfound faith in Christ. The letter draws attention to issues around food practices and circumcision. The ‘other’ teachers claimed that the law is God’s Spirit. The law, according to Paul, is a guide, a path toward justice. God breaks into our awareness by providing the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The Spirit transforms people into a new creation—into people who are more loving, gentle, and kind. It is more than physical modification or the food that they eat. Their transformation is holistic.

Paul suggests that those who are free will make themselves slaves to one another. This is not oppressive slavery or indentured bondage. This freedom to serve one another is not based on a political, economic, or cultural system. It is the process of stepping away from the hierarchy of relationships and political agendas, stepping back from a focus on self interest, and stepping into the creation of relationships created with the gifts of the Spirit. It is in discovering the ways of Christ and the faithful love of God that we respond in love. We are loved and we love freely. Paul urged the Galatians to rely on the Spirit for the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, and self-control.

We are to use these gifts when we become involved in our community of faith and develop relationships with one another. In part, we gather in our faith community each week to seek reinforcement of our need to love God and neighbour. Our time in prayer and worship feeds us and encourages us to follow in the ways of Christ. In response to

the challenges posed by individuals and relationships, Carol Holtz-Martin wrote, “There are times when we encounter the sandpaper of fellow congregants’ wearisome ways against the rough edges of our own unholiness. That call impels us to prepare our hearts for worship, so that we must be fed or know sharp hunger; to exist in community with such openness and generosity that our neighbor’s well-being is part and parcel to our own.” Do you recall a moment when a decision to seek peace allowed you to deepen a relationship rather than allow harm to continue? Consider the times when you chose to approach a difficult situation from a perspective of gentleness, love, and peace rather than cynicism and judgement.

The freedom offered in Christ flows through the fruit we bear. We have been set free to serve one another in love. We reach out with patient kindness to understand the difficulties faced by our neighbours. One way to learn about such difficulties and significant social issues is through the Presbyterian Church Social Action Spotlight. The current spotlight relates to the opioid crisis. Are you aware that Canada has the second highest rate of opioid use per capita? Between 2016 and 2021, more than 26,000 people in Canada died from opioid-related overdose. During the pandemic there were record numbers of opioid-related deaths and hospitalizations. The General Assembly in 2018 concluded that: “Responses to the opioid crisis need to remove shame and [stigma] and address the suffering of people, caused by numerous factors that are often beyond the control of any one person, community or level of government and will only be effectively addressed when all parties work together to respond to a multi-faceted public health crisis” (A&P 2018, p. 352).” What can we do to respond to the issue of addiction? We can engage in discussions to learn more about the issues. We can pray...seeking God’s direction. We can be open to the gifts of the Spirit as we walk with people who struggle with addiction.

In closing, I urge you to consider an interesting question posed by Carla Works, Professor of New Testament, “So how will the Galatians know that they are indeed a people being transformed—a people of the promise, children of God, clothed in Christ? ... Because they are a people who bear one another’s burdens, love one another, as Christ has loved them. They are a people whose actions are marked by the shape of the cross rather than their own selfish desires. They are fulfilling the intention of the law—to love their neighbors.”

Her question may be one that lingers with us. How do we know when we are following in the ways of Christ? Paul wrote that the law was fulfilled by Christ by the ways in which he embodied the love of neighbor. "For the whole law is fulfilled with, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" This is the new creation of God, to work together for the good of one another. To recognize that our interests are intricately linked with our neighbour ... our neighbours living beside us, our neighbours across town, and our neighbours throughout the world. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Will you come and follow me #634

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE Time spent among trees is never time wasted. Anonymous

The blessings that come from God are rich and abundant like the fruits of summer. With our offerings we give thanks and praise to the triune God, Creator of heaven and earth.

BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us join in prayer:

God of mystery we come before you today with hopes and dreams, and the burdens of our lives. We bring all that is on our hearts and minds to you today, grateful for the goodness, seeking your comfort and strength, listening for your guidance. God of purpose and promise, receive our prayers.

O God, we know you are kind and generous. We bring our gifts in gratitude and joy. Pour out your Spirit on our gifts and on our lives, so that we may bear the fruit of your Spirit in every situation and relationship.

God of life and love, you engage us in the midst of our lives. We pray today for all those who are fearful about their future, and for all who wrestle with challenges at work and at home. We remember before you those weighed down by illness or worry, and all who are care-givers. Help us to recognize and face our fears and our challenges with the love you provide.

God of courage and comfort, help us to sense your Spirit when we wrestle with burdens. May your Spirit guide us with sighs too deep for words. Today we pray for all with burdens that seem too heavy to bear. We lift up: the victims of violence or disaster and their friends and families... the refugees at risk in the world, remembering those who have fled

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Ukraine and Afghanistan... We pray those caught in despair and poverty in our community and in the far reaches of your world... By your Spirit, surround each one with strength and love. Equip us to offer support for those who are near to us. We ask your Spirit to linger with Adam & Christina, Grace, Rudy, Audrey, Betty Lou, and Rob.

God of the world and all its peoples, we pray for our country and our leaders as we prepare to mark Canada Day. Equip Canada to be a force for justice and well-being for all. Equip our leaders with wisdom and integrity.

Open our eyes and our hearts to the opportunities we have to serve you, O holy One. Make us alert to cries for justice and guide us in repairing relationships.

Loving God, we pray for those who know sickness, pain, grief, loneliness, and anxiety. We lift up all those who are on our hearts as they face immense challenges. Before we call, you answer, God. Before we speak, you know our words. Receive all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, as together we pray the words Jesus taught us... **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

Brother, sister, let me serve you #635

To Go Forth In God's Name

Commissioning and Benediction

Allow your life to show the goodness of God as you build up the community around you. May God feed you. May Christ protect you. May the Spirit wash over you with the love of God. Amen

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.

Spirit of the living God #400

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, move among us all make us one in heart and mind; make us one in love: humble, caring, selfless, sharing. Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love!

Will you come and follow me #634

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known; will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same? Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same? Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around, through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you and never be the same. In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

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Brother, sister, let me serve you [Servant Song] #635

Brother, sister, let me serve you; Let me be as Christ to you; Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, And companions on the road; We are here to help each other Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you In the night-time of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; When you laugh I'll laugh with you; I will share your joy and sorrow, Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, We shall find such harmony, Born of all we've known together Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you; Let me be as Christ to you; Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.