

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 11th day of September .

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: Rejoice with me, people of God.

All: God has gathered us in from the wilderness.

One: Rejoice with me, people of God.

All: God has swept away the darkness of the night.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON Jer. 4:12, 22; Ps. 14:1; Luke 15:5

Creator of the universe, we gather in this familiar and safe space thinking that we know what to expect of this hour, that we will leave much the way that we came. Do not abandon us to our foolishness. In your mercy, nudge us to recognize your presence wherever evil is confronted, truth is spoken, and life is restored. Amen

Hear the good news! God's forgiveness shines into the world and the darkness scatters. Jesus knows our every strength ... our every weakness, and loves us still. We are called to the promise of God's amazing grace. Thanks be to God. Amen. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

**Hymn Come, let us sing #706
To Hear The Word Of God**

Prayer For Illumination

Mighty God, you spoke the world into being; speak now to our hearts. By the power of your Spirit, make these ancient words live, that we might be shaped into your people, eager to bear your claim in the world and to give flesh to your future. For we pray in the name of Jesus, who leads us into life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Tanakh*	Jeremiah 4:11–12, 22–28	[B#702/W#781] ¹
Tanakh	Psalms 14	[B#495/W#546]
Epistle	1 Timothy 1:12–17	[B#208/W#223]
Gospel	Luke 15:1–10	[B#78/W#80]

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

Lost and found

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.

Each week we seek divine guidance with our prayer for illumination. We pray that God will allow the Spirit to move within us, to open us up so we are able to hear the living Word. Well known parables and stories can be the most difficult to hear with fresh understanding. It may be that we shift into a neutral zone and only hear the version of the story that we heard in the past. When we do this, we essentially block the Spirit from providing insight and understanding. Jeremiah prophesied of the need to follow the ways of God, Paul spoke of the intense need for nurturing relationships, and Christ spoke of the relentless presence and care of God.

The prophet Jeremiah was faithful to his divine call during extremely difficult times. His prophecies provide insight into the history of the Hebrew people, the land of Israel, rituals, and his own faithfulness to God. He spoke of the house of Israel as no longer defined by geography, religious practices, and tribal traditions. There was the integration of new ideas into existing assumptions and traditions. A challenging transition from one way of being into another.

In our reading, Jeremiah is a young prophet, early in his ministry. Jeremiah reports that YHWH's fierce anger will be like a hot wind scorching all that lies before it—people, flora and fauna, even cities. God will bring destruction because the people have ignored their covenant with God. They neglected their responsibilities. Throughout his prophecies Jeremiah grieved, experienced shock and horror. He was plunged into doubt. He doubted himself and God. He wrestled with the insight provided by God.

¹ Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

We may sense a connection with Jeremiah's struggle. When people have been forced by circumstances outside their own control to consider alternative views, they often struggle. This experience can create a sense of being lost as they seek a sense of context and try to regain their bearings.

Jeremiah warned the people of Israel that God found them wanting. The language is blunt and unpleasant. The people are called "stupid;" they are "foolish;" they "do not know how to do good." We find similar language in Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. Jeremiah provides insight into what God is saying. The people and their leaders were afraid. In their fear, they turned to their own human power rather than trusting in God. Jeremiah recognized the root of their failure. It was their unwillingness to be faithful to their Creator when they refused to remember, to hope, and to obey. Israel negotiated with the enemy and collectively regressed into spiritual adolescence; they became stupid children.

In contrast to Jeremiah's story, Paul wrote of gratitude for God's mercy. This passage brings to mind the life of Martin Luther (1483-1546). Luther recognized the mercy of God. In his early years, Luther suffered from severe anxiety with the belief that he was unable to live up to God's righteous standards. When he studied the Scriptures, he was moved to the realization that righteousness was not a standard to be met but a gift from God. Paul, the experienced pastor, wrote the letter to Timothy, a young pastor at the beginning of his ministry. Paul provided guidance in a life of discipleship as he shared his confessions of faith, his early role in persecuting Christians, and his practical advice to the younger man. Paul described how his life was marked by deep flaws and how his life demonstrated the generous grace of God. Paul's testimony is personal. He was blinded and shattered on the way to Damascus. His entire life was turned inside out. He shared his experience to help others understand the divine impact on his life. Paul welcomes us into his heart by sharing his experience and the experience of others before him. We discover Paul's beautiful understanding of the ways in which we need each other. He writes of the immense value of understanding the journeys of those who went before us. Luke wrote of Jesus sharing meals, eating and drinking, with all people. The tax collectors, the marginalized, the authorities. Some spoke against the company he kept. In response to their muttering, Jesus shared the lost-and-found parables. The stories weave through those who are in favour and those who are out, those who are lost and who is found, what

it means to be saved by Christ, and what it means to be the community of Christ today? We might imagine ourselves as the shepherd looking for the sheep or as the woman looking for the coin. We also might imagine that these parables encourage a search to find what we have lost. Is there another way to understand the parable? Could we be the lost object? Is someone seeking us ... as the lost object?

The parables provide insight into the lost and the found. Jesus challenges the hearers, both then and now, to consider what it means to be community and what boundaries define their community. The crowds of diverse people were pressing in to hear the teachings from Jesus. As they listened they experienced diverse understandings of parables. Some heard instructions on how to follow in the way of Christ. Some were keeping track of the radical teachings in order to persecute Jesus. Others were grateful to simply listen and they were soaking his words up. I wonder what the ones who lived on the fringes heard. The people who could not fit within the community, those that no one else wanted to be around.

Jesus spoke to them about the nature of the divine God in terms they could understand. He spoke in economic terms, about things that they valued. The shepherd who values the safety of his flock; the woman values the hard-earned money she has saved for her family. God is like the shepherd who values each sheep in the flock, like the woman who accounts for every coin in the purse. God treasures every individual, regardless of age, profession, health status, or religious group.

Jesus taught that those on the fringe are lost, isolated from the community. The community is missing an integral component. Those on the fringe are missing the sense of belonging. Until they return, the community is incomplete. Perhaps the parable helps us to understand the importance of seeking others, to forgive and restore.

These parables call the community to open its doors and rejoice. This call to build community and seek reconciliation repeats again and again in the scriptures. When one in our community goes missing, we are all affected. When one is restored, we are all better off. The sheep who wandered off from the rest of the flock, lost in the thicket, is now safe and sound! The coin that fell through the cracks was retrieved. We can feast! Hope is restored! Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn

Softly and tenderly

#640

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

Time and again, God clears a path for us to seek the way of life, to do good and become a refuge for the poor. That path lies before us. With joy, let us offer our gifts and our lives in trust. Ps. 14:2, 6; Jer. 4:22; Luke 15:10

BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us join in prayer:

Holy One, enliven us with your breath and make your purposes known that our lives might show forth your glory. Spirit of Life, in the beginning you hovered over creation; still you brood over the world. We pray for the earth; for rivers filled with waste and ground stripped and ravaged. Teach us, who are foolish, what it means to do good. We pray for your scattered children: for the people of the Ukraine, Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti, and the Congo.

Generous and faithful God, you abundantly provide for all your creation. Receive our offerings as you receive our lives. Gather our false starts and uncertain efforts, our generosity and our reluctance to use for the good of your creation.

We pray for all who cannot rest in safety, who must remain alert to signs of danger because their countries are riven by war or because their homes are torn by violence or because they have no shelter but the street. Help us to move with compassion toward those who are in need.

O holy God, we are grateful for the exceptional leadership of Queen Elizabeth. We lift up our prayers and ask that your Holy Spirit linger with the King and the extended royal family as they mourn the loss of a mother and grandmother, a friend and monarch. We lift up our prayers for national leaders of this world at this time of uncertainty and change –in the corridors of power, may your Spirit guide them with your heavenly wisdom.

Almighty God be with all who mourn their friend, their monarch, and their protector. We remember with thanksgiving the life of Elizabeth, your faithful servant, that she may rest in peace.²

² inspired by the Revd David Scott <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 09 11

We pray for neighbors who are troubled in mind or body or spirit. In the silence of this room we lift the names and faces we know into the light of your love. Search them out; bring them home. God of holy love, of power and truth, help us to work through our fear and to give voice to the those who are silenced. Move us toward those in need until we share the mercy we have discover in you. Holy God, we are thankful for your grace and mercy which overflows into our lives. We lift up our prayers for those who are close to us. God of hope, we lift up Jim and his family as they travel the long journey of grief as they mourn Brenda's death. We lift up Ernie and his family as they mourn Leslie's death. May they sense your Spirit with them. We ask you to linger with Jenny, Stephanie, Judith & Gerry; Adam & Christina, Audrey, Grace & Rudy; Lois, and Rob. 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. Merciful God, accept our prayers, spoken and unspoken. May we sense your overflowing love 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

Amazing grace

#670

To Go Forth In God's Name

Commissioning and Benediction 1 Tim. 1:12-17

Go now in the strength of Jesus Christ, who calls us to faithful living. May the Creator, the immortal and invisible one, go with you, this day and every day.

Postlude

Amen

#766

64 Be still and know

Be still and that I am God x3

I am the Lord that health thee x3

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust x 3

#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.

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.

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**

670 Amazing grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me: This word my hope secures; God will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.

What thanks I owe you, and what love— a boundless, endless store—Shall echo through the realms above When time shall be no more.

When we've been here ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun.