

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 10 16

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October.

**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: God promises justice and teaches persistence

**All: God teaches us to care for each other**

One: Let us worship our God of comfort and challenge

**All: We offer prayers and praise to our God of hope and healing.**

**PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON<sup>1</sup>**

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, you breathe life into all things and nourish your whole creation. You are a rock and refuge for your people. You alone bring life out of death and restore wholeness to broken lives. We praise you and rejoice in the hope you offer. For your love is the power at work in every situation, seeking goodness and revealing truth, a love that will never let us go. We offer you our love and loyalty through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. God of our hope and our hearts, you provide the gift of faith. Yet we find the difficulties of life weaken our trust as disappointment tears away at our commitment. Forgive us, we pray. Create in us clean hearts and in your love, teach us peace and perseverance. We pray in the name of Christ, amen.

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Distress? Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Let us rejoice that, no matter what is happening around us, no matter what we have done, God's deep love will never let us go.

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<sup>1</sup> PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

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

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

**Hymn I'm gonna live so God can use me #648**

**To Hear The Word Of God**

**Prayer For Illumination**

Holy One, speak to us by the power of your Holy Spirit and equip us to be messengers of your life-altering, world-changing, blessing-filled Word. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE**

Tanakh*	Genesis 32:22–31	[B#30/W#33]
Tanakh	Psalms 121	[B#571/W#633]
Epistle	2 Timothy 3:14–4:5	[B#213/W#230]
Gospel	Luke 18:1–8	[B#81/W#83]

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

**Persistence**

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.

The ancient scriptures tell of divine persistence. God's persistent, unshakable, everlasting love of creation. God persistently caring for humanity with an unrelenting, unshakable love. Prophets continue to inspire us with stories of how God seeks to bring about compassionate justice with individuals and communities.

In the reading from Genesis, Jacob, having stolen Esau's blessing, is hoping to reconcile with his brother. Jacob sent his wives, maids, eleven children and their flocks ahead to ease the way with Esau. Then, scripture states, Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. The man appears just before two brothers confront a deep rift in their relationship. The account shifts away from two brothers toward a struggle with the divine. Kimberly Van Driel wrote, "What changes when we see our struggles as

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2022 10 16

wrestling, not with one another, not with our "brothers," not with our past, but with God? In the midst of plotting his own survival, Jacob's fear grows; but out of an actual struggle with his real opponent comes blessing. There is good news in that."

Imagery is powerful. When we are able to visualize a concept it takes shape in different ways. Jacob wrestling with the divine in physical prayer. The image of Jacob's persistent struggle is linked with prevailing and being marked by the experience. He is forever changed spiritually and physically in his struggle with the divine.

The theme of persistence and prayer continued with the parable of the unjust judge. The persistent struggle seems relevant to the struggles faced within many faith communities. This is a challenging time. Challenging for many reasons. It is a time of change, which is uncomfortable and difficult. Significant changes are occurring within our culture, our church policies, and the diversity of faith practices. We persist in worshipping, in gathering, in planning the present and the future. It is at this time that we need to be mindful of those who have struggled before us.

Jesus told the disciples about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.

Praying as we wait in this in-between-time. This time between God's promise and its fulfillment. In this time when we keep our hope in what may seem to be a hopeless world. Fred Craddock wrote: "All we know in the life of prayer is asking, seeking, knocking and waiting, trust sometimes fainting, sometimes growing angry."

This goes beyond trusting in ourselves, praying means hopeful trusting in God.

In the parable, the widow returned again and again to the judge. She hoped. This woman who had no rights, no protector. She was persistent and relentless. Scripture speaks of the faithful praying, hoping, determined. Just as we continue to pray, hope, and persist. Each week we join in community to lift up our joy and gratitude, our fear and doubt, our laments to the One who hears and answers. We are assured that our prayers are heard by God. The part we are not thrilled with... the tough part... the answer to our prayers may not be what we want. Response may not be evident in a time frame that we desire. The God of Isaiah reminds us, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways" (55:8).

John Calvin emphasized that we cannot separate who God is and what God does from who we are and what we are called to do. God's presence continues to be ubiquitous within all

aspects of our life. In our readings we are pointed again and again toward seeking justice and persistent prayer.

We look to the ancient stories and find many who struggled in dire circumstances. People who endured persecution, isolation, and death. Yet, we can look back and recognize that they were bolstered by God's loving presence, strength, and resilience. We can count on God to hear those who have no power, no influence, no voice. We can listen for the Spirit moving among us, nudging us to lift up our voices. To lift our voices to ask for the support that we need. To lift our voices in support of those in need. We can choose to live with persistent faith. Praise be to God for the movement of the Spirit among us.

**Hymn Take time to be holy #638**

**To Respond In Faith The Offering of our Life and Labour to God**

**Quote** Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – poet, educator

**BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

God of life, you open our eyes on the world you love to show us your presence and your purpose. We see the beauty and wonder in creation and feel the love and compassion you offer through friend and stranger. For all these gifts we give you thanks.

God of the great and the small, we bring what we have to share, the fruit of our lives.

Bless our gifts and our lives so that generosity and justice will join hands to surprise the world with your goodness in Jesus' name.

We pray for those who cannot recognize these gifts in their lives. Open their eyes to your presence and our companionship so that they may know your steadfast love.

God of justice, you open our eyes on the world to witness the anxiety, struggle and conflict. Many carry burdens in this stressful time. Today we pray for those who struggle with their livelihood; for producers unsure they will receive a fair return, for workers uncertain about employment, and for families weighed down by rising costs. Open their eyes to new possibilities and open our eyes to ways we can work alongside them.

God of wisdom, you open our eyes on the world out of balance and show us its many complexities. We witness the atrocities that put innocent lives at risk. We pray for the millions displaced by current conflicts and natural disasters. May leaders in every country and community attend to the suffering people with mercy and justice.

God of compassion, you open our eyes on the world in pain to show us suffering and despair. We see all the challenges in health care and tired professionals stretched beyond their limits. Allow them rest to renew their strength of purpose. We pray for all who face difficult diagnoses, painful illness, or delays in treatment. Open their eyes to your mercy and open our eyes to ways we can offer support.

God of hope, we ask you to linger with Stephanie, Judith & Gerry; Carol; Grace & Rudy; 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. And so we pray that your kingdom will come among us, in the words Jesus taught ... **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                      What a friend we have in Jesus                      #746**

**To Go Forth In God's Name                      Commissioning and Benediction**

The message of Paul's encouragement to the church in Philippi echoes through the ages to us, here and now. You belong to God. Stand firm in the faith, pray persistently and work for justice. May the presence of God, the grace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit sustain us in faith and service, now and forever.

**Postlude                      Amen**

**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.

**638                    Take time to be holy**

Take time to be holy; speak oft with thy Lord. Abide in him always, and feed on his word. Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak, forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy; the world rushes on; spend much time in secret with Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be; thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy; let him be thy guide, and run not before him, whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, still follow thy Lord, and, looking to Jesus, still trust in his word.

Take time to be holy; be calm in thy soul, each thought and each motive beneath his control. Thus led by his Spirit to fountains of love, thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

**648                    I'm gonna live so God can use me**

I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna live so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna work so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna sing so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

**746                    What a friend we have in Jesus**

What a friend we have in Jesus All our sins and griefs to bear; What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer.

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Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged: Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness: Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge: Take it to the Lord in Prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In his arms he'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.