

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 10 30

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 30th day of October.

Announcements

HYMN Let There be Light #727

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

One: We have gathered today in search of reformation.

All: We stand at the edge of change.

One: Be still and know that God is in our midst.

All: God is our rock and our redeemer.

Special music Know That He is There Linda Street

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of our everyday lives, we praise you for your guidance and care through every generation. In the great mystery of your love we know the saints gather to praise and adore you. Your wisdom instructs, your grace redeems, and your Spirit who guides us. We claim comfort and hope in the knowledge that neither death nor life can separate us from your love in Jesus the Christ Jesus. Gracious God, you have been faithful, yet, we confess that we are not. We find ourselves shrinking from costly discipleship as we seek cheap grace. Forgive our fleeting enthusiasm and shallow commitment. We seek your guidance always with the love and mercy. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Friends, while it is true that each of us is flawed ... it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ. Be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another.

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

HYMN Tell me the stories of Jesus #348

To Hear The Word Of God Prayer For Illumination

God of the prophets and poets, the seers and storytellers of Scripture, thank you for the ancient visions of your truth which still guide us. Send us your Spirit this day to open our

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

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minds and hearts to the word you have for us in our times, in the name of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

TANAKH* Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4 [B#871/W#974]

TANAKH Psalm 119:137-144 [B#570/W#631]

EPISTLE 2Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12 [B#/W#221]

GOSPEL Luke 9:1-10 [B#69/W#70]

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

Special music I See The Love of God in Every River Linda Street

Words and Music by David Ouchterlony

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 gospel reading this morning builds on earlier readings. Earlier in this gospel, Jesus blessed the poor and warned, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation". In chapter 12, he shared the parable of the rich farmer who hoped to build bigger barns in which to store all his crops, but that very night he was called to account by God. In today's reading, Jesus was travelling to face his death in Jerusalem when he encountered Zacchaeus.

Amy-Jill Levine wrote, that the tax collector, "does not, as a few commentators insist, occupy "a marginal position within society." His problem is not that he was 'without power, wealth or status...sinned against, oppressed, and marginalized"; his problem is that he is a sinner, probably rich, an agent of Rome, and, as a tax collector, has likely shown no mercy to others."

There were obstacles that prevented Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, from seeing who Jesus was. The crowd likely shunned him because of what he did for a living. The chief collectors were known for colluding with Rome and for taking advantage of others to make a good profit for themselves. He is described as having a short stature which would have made it difficult to see over the crowd. It is unlikely the crowd made room for him so he chose to climb a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus.

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Zacchaeus provides a wonderful visual image of searching to see Jesus. He climbed the sycamore at the crossroads in Jericho. The Sycamore tree has become an important part of the pilgrimage through Palestine. I had the opportunity to travel to the Middle East when I was a student in seminary. We stopped in Jericho during the Study Tour of the Holy Land. Many visitors travel to Jericho, which is about 10 km north of the Dead Sea in the Palestinian Authority lands of the West Bank to see this ancient tree. The tree stands at a major intersection in Jericho. It may not be the original tree that he climbed, however, local tradition has named it the Zacchaeus tree. Tests carried out on the tree have shown that it is over 2,000-years-old.

When Jesus looked up into the tree, he saw Zacchaeus and called him down. Jesus told him to hurry and invited himself into the tax collector's home. Jesus selected an individual from the crowd, extending a personal invitation to become a follower. This story speaks of the grace of God in calling to each of us. We are provided with the opportunity to respond with faith and gratitude. Karl Barth writes that Jesus, the "One," is the initiator and sustainer of our calling and vocation.

And, the crowd 'grumbled' that the worst among them had been chosen. I wonder if they were upset because they did not have an opportunity to host Jesus in their homes. They saw only the sin of the tax collector, not the possibility of redemption and growth.

When Zacchaeus responded to the call, he vowed to change his ways and Jesus affirmed that salvation had come to the home of Zacchaeus. God calls us into a relationship and we have the opportunity to respond. Calvin says that Zacchaeus is "changed from a wolf not only into a sheep, but even into shepherd." Zacchaeus aligned with the word of God as a new creation. Zacchaeus responded to the call of the Messiah by leaving the tree and changing his life. He would share his wealth with the poor and repay four times the amount to those he defrauded.

The story of Zacchaeus may help us to understand the complexity of turning toward God with commitment and joy. Zacchaeus went looking to see this holy man, Jesus, and discovered a new way of faithful connection with God, a new way being within himself, in relationship with others.

Jesus seeks us out and each of us can respond to this call of faith and faithful living. It is comforting to remember, "For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost".

Each of us will experience moments and for some, a lifetime, of being lost. When we turn around, or look up, or climb a tree, we discover that God is has been looking for us and is right there... Praise be to God for vision and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Holy, holy, holy (v 1 & 4) #299

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

QUOTE When you invest your time, talent and treasure in the eternal, your investments have a divine return. Tony Evans – pastor, author

When we gather as God’s Church, we celebrate the gifts contributed through the centuries. We join our gifts to theirs, so that God will be praised and the love of Jesus will be shared in this generation and those to come.

BLESSING OF GIFTS & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God who calls throughout the ages, we give thanks that you have spoken to your people in every generation. You continue to call us to paths of justice and guide us into freedom. In every age, you have called leaders to guide your people with courage and insight, speaking through them to offer comfort and challenge. We give you thanks for your Holy Spirit, who offers the gift of faith.

As we give thanks for all that we have received, remind us that we are but a small part of your creation, its history, life and love. May such a reminder keep us humble in our mission, even as you call us to take up our place in the ongoing story of your love with courage and creativity.

Generous God, you are faithful and fruitful in every generation. Bless our gifts to be fruitful beyond our imagining in the work of your creation. Keep us faithful in this generation so we can offer the inheritance we have received in Christ to the generation that comes after us.

Hear our prayers, O God, for your church in this place and around the world. We seek your help where the church is in physical danger. May you protect it with your Spirit. Where the church is facing division, unify it through your love. Where the church lacks courage to stand up for justice, embolden your people by the example of those saints who have gone before us. Where the church lacks energy or vision, renew its hope in the presence of Christ who is with us always.

God of the past, the present, and what is still to come ... We thank you for all those saints who have shown us how to love each other. We thank you for those who continue with tenderness to care for the sick, cheer the lonely, and help the poor.

God of hope, we lift up all who travel the long journey of grief. May they sense your Spirit with them. We ask you to linger with Stephanie, Judith & Gerry; Rob; Audrey, Grace & Rudy. 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 Shall we gather by the river #797

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

May the grace of Christ be with you, the love of God surround you, and the Holy Spirit keep you, this day and forevermore.

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.

797 Shall we gather at the river

Shall we gather at the river, Where bright angel feet have trod, With its crystal tide forever, Flowing by the throne of God?

Refrain Shall we gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river,
gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

On the bosom of the river, Where the Saviour King we own, We shall meet, and sorrow never 'neath the glory of the throne. **Refrain**

Ere we reach the shining river, Lay we every burden down; Grace our spirits will deliver, And provide a robe and crown. **Refrain**

Soon we'll reach the shining river, Soon our pilgrimage will cease; Soon our happy hearts will quiver With the melody of peace. **Refrain**

#299 Holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty! early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea, cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee, though our eyes in sinfulness thy glory may not see, only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty! all thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

#348 Tell me the stories of Jesus

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear, Things I would ask him to tell me If he were here: Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First, let me hear how the children Stood round his knee, And I shall fancy his blessing resting on me: Words full of kindness, deeds full of grace, All in the lovelight of Jesus' face.

Tell me about the disciples from far and near, And I will listen among them eager to hear. Whose loaves and fishes did Jesus bless, Showing the people God's tenderness?

Tell me, in accents of wonder, How rolled the sea, Tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee, And how the Master, ready and kind, Chided the billows and hushed the wind.

Into the city I'd follow the children's band, Waving a branch of the palm tree High in my hand; One of his heralds, yes, I would sing Loudest hosannas: Jesus is King!