

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on November 6.

**Announcements**

**HYMN Let There be Light (v 1, 2, 3)**

**#727**

**CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]**

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

God, our Creator, we gather in this sanctuary at this solemn time, aware of the high cost of war in this world you love. You come to us in Jesus Christ, carrying no sword and calling us to serve as peace makers. In this time of worship, renew in us the hope that you will turn swords into ploughshares and lead the world from war to the promise of peace with justice for all your peoples. God of mercy, we confess that the world around us is in a mess. Countries turn arguments over territory into threats of terror. Old enemies stir up conflict within their tribes and nations. Violence is present within our communities and homes. The threat of violence keeps us all on edge. Forgive us for not learning from past conflicts what leads to peace with justice. We call upon you in desperation rather than remembering your mighty and faithful acts in all times and places. Forgive us, we pray. You have been with us in exile and liberation and we trust you will be with us even now. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

The prophet Micah reminds us that God calls on each of us to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. To all who turn away from hostility and seek reconciliation in kindness and humility, God offers forgiveness and peace. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

**Hymn**

**Valiant Hearts**

**To Hear The Word Of God**

**Prayer For Illumination**

God of wisdom, we turn to Scripture for insight and understanding. Send your Spirit to open our hearts and minds to receive the challenge and the comfort you offer through your Word. Amen.

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

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 11 06

**SCRIPTURE**

Tanakh*	Haggai 2:1-9	[B#878/W#982]
Tanakh	Psalms 145:1-5, 17-21	[B#581/W#643]
Epistle	2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17	[B#206/W#221]
Gospel	Luke 20:27-38	[B#84/W#86]

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

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.

Our worship service began earlier than usual today at the Cenotaph in Clan Gregor Square for the Remembrance Day wreath service. During these first days of November it is common to see the powerful symbol of remembrance-the red poppy. It is a native plant that was visible at the Western Front during the First World War. In a tradition that began in 1921, millions of poppies are distributed by the Royal Canadian Legion each year. The poppy is worn on the left lapel, close to the heart, to recognize the sacrifice of soldiers. The poppy remains an enduring symbol of remembrance in Canada, Great Britain, the nations of the Commonwealth, and in the United States for those who served or fell in service of their country.<sup>2</sup> It is the love of God and humanity that cause many to serve in difficult and horrendous conditions in the fight against injustice, oppression, and tyranny. Intermittently through the year, the Presbyterian History Brief arrives in my email inbox. This month's focus marked the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John McCrae's birth in 1872. He was raised, in Guelph, in a Presbyterian home with a "deep sense of his duty to use his gifts in the service of others."<sup>3</sup> In his youth he served as a cadet and in the militia and then went on to train as a doctor at the University of Toronto and McGill University. His call to military duty took him to the South African (Boer) War in the late 1800's. McCrae returned from the war to work as a pathologist and in clinical work and then as a lecturer in medicine. He wrote poetry much of his life. When World War I broke out in 1914, at the age of 41, he used his connections to re-enter the military. He became a major and brigade surgeon in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. "McCrae believed injustice must be

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/after-the-war/remembrance/the-poppy/>

<sup>3</sup> Presbyterian History email <https://mailchi.mp/wightman/history-brief-august-9763873?e=eb635ab955>

fought against, whatever the sacrifice.”<sup>4</sup> His brigade was stationed in Belgium in an area held by Canadian infantry. They were attacked by the Germans with deadly chlorine gas – it was the first use of the weapon in that war. Half of McCrae’s brigade died over the next 17 days of battle. His poem, “In Flanders fields,” was written during those 17 days as he waited to treat the incoming wounded in his dugout. His poem made the poppy the enduring symbol that it remains today.

While we remember, we are also aware of the ongoing atrocities of war. The war in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, and many others. We question why the conflict, oppression, and tyranny continues. We question how to change the unfolding aggressions.

In her commentary, Nancy Lynne Westfield wrote, “Questions have many functions in conversations. Questions are posed to gain knowledge and comprehension, analyze and assess a situation, challenge authority, shame an opponent, or win an argument or debate. Questions often give an opponent the advantage, as the question sets or reframes the conversation. The one who asks the question has the power. The Sadducees are questioning Jesus about a mystery that they have already considered and rejected. Their questions are not for the purpose of genuine dialogue, but for the purpose of prompting debate, with the hopes of showing up Jesus and showing onlookers that Jesus is not trustworthy or knowledgeable.”<sup>5</sup>

When we look back in history we see that the Sadducees were an elite, Jerusalem-based group who limited their scripture to the Torah, the five books of Moses. They rejected the idea of physical resurrection or denied it could be found in Torah.<sup>6</sup> The Pharisees, like the followers of Jesus, believed in resurrection. According to the Sadducees, life ends in death ... so live life to the fullest. We understand that their social customs were based on the Tankakh which identified widows as deserving special assistance and protection.

Neglecting widows was contrary to the ideal of communal care. The deceased husband’s estate was required to support the family.<sup>7</sup> In this imaginary scenario, the woman’s husband died and each of the remaining six brothers married her, in turn, ostensibly to

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<sup>4</sup> Presbyterian History email <https://mailchi.mp/wightman/history-brief-august-9763873?e=eb635ab955>

<sup>5</sup> Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary - Year C, Volume 4: Season After Pentecost 2 Proper 17

<sup>6</sup> Levine, AJ; Jewish Annotated New Testament p 157

<sup>7</sup> Levine, AJ; Jewish Annotated New Testament p 233, 438

protect her. The question posed by the Sadducees was premised on a complicated scenario that seemed to defy the idea of resurrection. They presumed that life after death would be complex and contrary to the teachings of scripture. How could seven men be married to the same woman?

In this teachable moment, Jesus spoke of the nature of heaven and God's love and mercy. He taught that the ways of heaven and earth are not the same; the ways of God are not the ways of humanity. Perhaps, most importantly, God's judgement is not the same as human judgement. He replied that after their death the concept of marriage dissolves as they are like angels, children of God. Eternal life does not have continuity with mortal life. We are to live our lives fully and do what we are able for the common good, to help those in need, to be good stewards of God's creation, and, to resist evil against ourselves and others. Jesus reinforced that death is the end of many things and it is not the end of everything. Our physical death is not the end. We live as mortal in a certain time. God alone is immortal and unchanging.<sup>8</sup>

God is the God of the living—the God of newness, forgiveness, and liberation. The oppression and suffering on earth does not seep into heaven. Jesus recognized that suffering is often a barrier to imagining new possibilities. He taught and demonstrated that faith is connected with hope. The wisdom of Jesus is coupled with the stories of hope in our faith tradition and this strengthens us and develops resiliency within our lives. Yet, as I wrote this message, I was aware of a deep appreciation for the Sadducees questions. I have questions and I am aware that many of you have questions. Many of those questions are not spoken out loud. We live and we will die ... and we have many serious questions. Our faith instructs us that, in the midst of the challenges of life and the questions that arise, we are to love God and to love one another. The apostle Paul proclaimed that "love never ends" (1 Cor. 13:8). I know the comfort of love that remains after a loved one passes from this earthly life. Whatever else dies, love remains.

In the first century, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians out of concern for their well being. They heard that the day of Christ was imminent. Panic and anxiety had set in for many. Can you think of a time when panic set in? When it seemed the world was upside down and you just did not know what to do. There may have been a shortness of breath, a

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<sup>8</sup> (1 Tim. 6:16 NIV).

clenching stomach, and your shoulders may have been stuck to your ears. There is a great depiction of unnecessary panic in the movie about the October 1938 chaos that erupted when the Orson Welles radio program *War of the Worlds* aired. Paul spoke to their fear and the need to trust in God.

We live in a time of high anxiety. Situations, both real and imagined, undermine the faith and health of many in our community. Economic uncertainty causes deep concern within our homes, our churches, and our governments. It is good to speak the questions that arise and it is good to glean through the facts. When fear is recognized and dealt with, then facts can be considered with appropriate action taken. John McCrae, in the midst of the chaos of war, held onto his faith to care for the men around him. He crafted a poem that has touched hearts and strengthen resolve through generations of war and strife. Elizabeth Barrington Forney wrote, "Our God is a God who makes a way where there is no way. We need not fear, only believe and let our hearts be strengthened "in every good work and word". Praise be to God for the movement of the Spirit among us.

**Hymn**

**Be thou my vision (v 1,3,5)**

**#461**

**THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD**

**QUOTE** Gratitude is the antidote to pride, that life is not our achievement but a gift.

Walter Bruggeman, theologian, Old Testament scholar

On Remembrance Day, we mark the costly offering of life and well-being for the sake of others. What we offer today is just a small gift, something that does not cost us so much. But we can also offer ourselves to make a difference for the sake of others in Christ's name.

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

Loving God, you are present with your people in times of poverty and prosperity, in times of sorrow and joy, in times of war and in times of peace.

We gather at this time of remembrance to recall those who gave their lives in war so that others might live in freedom and peace. May they dwell in peace in your eternal presence. We remember those whose bodies, minds, and souls are scarred by war and whose lives will bear the wounds of trauma, violence and loss. We remember the continuing courage and sacrifice of all who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces and their families. We remember the innocent people caught up in power struggles, those who have

lost their homes and livelihoods, those who seek safe refuge in other countries, and children who have lost a sense of security and hope for the future. We remember those who make and keep peace here and around the world. We thank you, Holy One, for those who tend the common good. May there be peace, God, and let it begin with each of us. 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 Stephani, 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                      Jesus loves me this I know                      #373**

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

Go into the world in peace. Bear witness to the presence of God. And may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and the blessing of God, Source, Saviour and Spirit of Life, be with you now and always. Amen

**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**

1. Let there be light; let there be understanding; Let all the nations gather; let them be face to face.

2. Open our lips; open our minds to ponder; Open the door of concord, opening into grace.
3. Perish the sword; perish the angry judgement; Perish the bombs and hunger; perish the fight for gain.
4. Hallow our love; hallow the deaths of martyrs; Hallow their holy freedom; hallowed be your name.
5. Your kingdom come; your spirit turn to language; Your people speak together; your spirit never fade.
6. Let there be light; open our hearts to wonder; Perish the way of terror; hallow the world God made.

**373 Jesus loves me this I know**

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to him belong, they are weak but he is strong.

**Refrain** Yes, Jesus loves me! (x 3) The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me, this I know, as he loved so long ago, taking children on his knee, saying, " Let them come to me."

Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way, wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live.

**461 Be thou my vision**

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art, thou my best thought in the day and the night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom; be thou my true word, I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord; thou my great Father, thine own may I be, thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my breast-plate, my sword for the fight; be thou my armour and be thou my might; thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower, raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain earthly praise, thou my inheritance, through all my days; thou and thou only, thou first in my heart, high King of heaven, my treasure thou art!

High King of heaven, when the battle is done, grant heaven's joy to me, O bright heaven's Sun; heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.