

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2022 12 11

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 3rd Sunday of Advent December 11.

Announcements

The mission moment originates in Nepal, a South Asian country that lies between China and India. Nepal has the greatest altitude change of any location on Earth. The lowlands are at sea level and the mountains of the Himalaya are the tallest in the world. Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, sits between Nepal and Tibet. When 70-year-old Dhani Gharti sought treatment for a boil on her foot she was diagnosed with leprosy. Even with medication the wound kept coming back. One day, Dhani's friend told her about the PWS&D-supported Shining Hospital, a Christian hospital run by the International Nepal Fellowship, where she thought Dhani could get more successful treatment. "Every time I visit the Shining Hospital with my wounded foot, the nurses always welcome me and give the best medical care. They always show love and care while dressing my wounds," shared Dhani. The contributions from this congregation help to support PWS&D initiatives.

Remember... to bring your **used postage stamps, clean outer milk bag, egg cartons,** and unwanted **eye glasses** into church. Printed faith materials, such as bibles, Connections newspaper, and, Our daily bread.

There are some remaining copies of the **Knox Bayfield Cookbook** They are a wonderful idea as a Christmas gift.

We are making a list of your **favourite hymns** to be shared in worship. Please speak with either Jean or me to have your favourites added into the rotation.

We will have 2 evening worship services with special music. Dec 21, the longest night, will be led by the amazing Solace Singers. The Christmas eve service will include the talented Linda Street.

Remember to bring in your **warm, new sock donations** those in need in our area. The socks and foodbank donations are being collected under the Christmas tree.

Prepared for Knox Presbyterian Church, Box 565, Bayfield, ON N0M 1G0

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Minister: Rev. Lisa Dolson 519-955-2158 revlisa dot knoxbayfield@icloud dot com

Resources include: PCC Worship Planner, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/> Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, and Feasting on the Word Companion, NRSV Bible

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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. There is much for us to learn as 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]

Insert

Hymn Hope is a star [v 3] #119

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

Creator God, we praise you for the wonders of this world and beyond it. You make deserts bloom and refresh the earth with snow and rain. We praise you with joy and song. Our God, who is the Source, Saviour and Spirit of life, in all unity, splendor and truth. Gracious God, there are many times when we feel overwhelmed with criticism within us and from others. We are impatient for things to improve yet we hesitate to change our ways. Forgive us we pray. Renew in us joy and gratitude for your gifts to us, in Christ Jesus.

Assurance of Pardon

Receive the Good News with joy. God forgives what we confess with the offer of new life in Christ. Rejoice in a new beginning and share the joy in mercy and forgiveness with others.

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination

God of justice and joy, we turn to your Word to hear your wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Friend and Saviour. 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

SCRIPTURE

Tanakh*	Isaiah 35:1–10	[B#663/W#735]
Tanakh	Psalms 146:5–10	[B#581/W#644]
Epistle	James 5:7–10	[B#231/W#249]
Gospel	Matthew 11:2–11	[B#11/W#11]

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

Expectations

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 readings this morning help us to see different perspectives of Advent, the waiting and the anticipating. Isaiah encourages the reader to visualize a desert that breaks out in massive flower blooms with all of creation rejoicing. James encourages the reader to plant their feet, to take a stance. It is not creating a barrier. We plant our feet to ensure a firm foundation and a sense of balance. In this way it is possible to work through challenges that arise. Matthew draws us into the questions and the confusion that arise when seeking to understand scriptures. The readings consider the ongoing struggle with expectations that do not fit in reality and the struggle to hold hope. James encourages us to do this with patience endurance; Isaiah encourages exuberance; and, Matthew encourages the reader to nurture curiosity in their faith.

The prophet Isaiah points to the divine presence with poetry, illustrating how life will be when people no longer turn away from God. He speaks of wholeness: the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap, the mute will sing. But we should pause here. Are we to understand this message from Isaiah as actual physical change or as metaphor? He sings of liberation, homecomings, and the end of all sorrow. He tells of leaping, singing, and everlasting joy. Many of the captives in exile in Babylon had returned to Zion. They returned to a land that was scarred from battle and military occupation. Isaiah speaks with hope of a new future contained in the promises of the ancient scripture. In this message we find the essence of Advent.

Sorrow and sighing will fall away. Imagine... even sighing will be a thing of the past. Our most basic response to stress and distress is to sigh. We sigh with weariness and regret. We sigh for understanding beyond our grasp. We sigh in our yearning for relationship and love, and ... for all that we do not know how to name.

It can be difficult to imagine the time of salvation described by visionaries who see how we are and how we can be. They imagine different ways of being and are brave enough to speak of the new way. Many of us struggle to see how life could be different. We like the comfort of the familiar even when the familiar is not good. Yet, it can be a relief when someone speaks out. When that question that has troubled us ... is asked by someone else. In Matthew's gospel two strong voices, John the Baptist and Jesus, speak about challenging issues.

John was unable to speak with Jesus because he was in prison. John had been arrested as a political enemy of King Herod. Matthew puts it this way: "When John heard ... what the Messiah was doing, he sent word ... and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" Something that Jesus was doing did not seem to fit within the scope of the anticipated Messiah. Certainly, Jesus did not meet some of the expectations of his followers. The messiah could take away the sin of the world, yet King Herod and many others were continuing their harmful ways. So, John and others wondered whether Jesus was really the one promised by the prophets. The Messiah did not behave in the way that the anticipated Messiah would act. In his response, Jesus assures us that questions are good. It is a deep comfort for me to know that questions are encouraged.

In response to John the Baptist, Jesus essentially said, "I cannot answer for you. You have to decide on your own whether I am for real. Look. What do you see?" What do you see? Do you struggle to stay with the question? Many have turned away from the brilliance of the divine spirit. Saul of Tarsus – he would become the apostle Paul, St Augustine of Hippo, Jean Calvin of Geneva, Mother Theresa, and others experienced doubt. They experienced deep doubt and they had deep faith.

The Gospels share the confusion that surrounded Jesus. When we pay attention, we can recognize the discrepancy between Jesus and the expectations that we have of him. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?". Jesus asked then - and we

continue now - to reflect on how we experience him. This often leads to the same question about self - Who am I really? This passage from Matthew helps us to understand such questions of identity. John wonders who Jesus is. Jesus recognizes that the crowd wonders about John the Baptist.

"Who am I?" asked Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in a poem from prison only a few months before he was executed by the Nazis. Despite all his efforts to live faithfully, Bonhoeffer wondered whether he was a hypocrite.

"Who am I?" we ask. In this season of Advent, we set aside time and energy to reflect on who Jesus Christ is and who we are. Not easy issues to ponder. We give thought to the meaning of objects; we express our gratitude to God for the many gifts provided to us; and, we ask God how we can be more actively involved in caring for creation. We wait in anticipation of God's response.

We are encouraged by the prophetic words of Isaiah, Matthew, James, and Jesus. John the Baptist points us toward looking to Christ. Jesus points us toward God.

Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Will you come and follow me [1, 4, 5] #634

To Respond In Faith

The Offering of our Life and Labour to God

Quote Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:13
This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Joy. Our joy rests in the knowledge that our time, talent, and financial offerings are seeds planted in the world God so loves.

Prayers of the People, Blessing of Gifts

God of Joy, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude. We seek your blessing on these seeds that joy may blossom. May those who depleted by challenges and places overwhelmed by scarce resources find hope through Jesus Christ.

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God of all creation, every creature finds its way to rejoice in your presence. The desert blooms, a mountains glisten, water moves with the rhythm of life. We give you thanks for the joys of nature that lift our hearts. Thank you for the joy we share with each other, for familiar songs on our lips, for greetings from old friends, and for the excitement of children in this holy season.

God who makes all things new, renew our life together. God of the world, its wonders and its woes, we know there are many who cannot rejoice this year/

We remember those silenced by oppressive governments, by tragedy, by threats, or by illness. Help us to listen with care when words are not easy to find. Guide us to know when and how to speak when others cannot.

We remember those who have suffered with isolation, with challenging economic circumstances, through illness and hunger. Renew their strength and courage as we learn when and how to offer our support and encouragement.

We remember those whose days are filled with fear because of war, conflict, intimidation, and discrimination. O holy One, help us to work toward a safer world where all people experience protection and comfort. May we become more generous neighbours who offer relief. We remember those whose lives seem empty, for all who live with the reality of empty cupboards, and no shelter. Help us to share what we have in ways that are generous and dignified.

Loving God, by your Spirit, surround us with strength and love. Equip us to offer support for those who are near to us. God of hope, we ask you to linger with Lyle, Deb and family; Stephani, Judith & Gerry; Rob; Stephanie and family; and, 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 voices. Hear our prayers. Let there be joy in Jerusalem and peace among all nations. Let sounds of weeping and cries of distress turn to shouts of joy and laughter. Let infants grow and thrive; let the old dance like children. Let every person find a home and enjoy the fruit of their labor.

Renew in us all the joy that comes from the assurance of your love for us in Christ Jesus for we gather our prayers together in the words he 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**

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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

People in darkness [v 2, 3, 4]

#124

To Go Forth In God's Name

Commissioning and Benediction

Let your hearts be strong. Go with joy .. renewed and energized to share your joy with justice and generosity in the world God loves. May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of Jesus Christ. 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

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.

124

People in darkness

1. People in darkness are looking for light. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People with blindness are longing for sight. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of love.
2. People with sickness are praying for health. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People in poverty want to have wealth. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of hope.
3. People in trouble would like to be free. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. People with arguments want to agree. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of peace.

4. People in sadness are trying to sing. Come, come, come, Jesus Christ. Bells in the steeple are waiting to ring. Come, Lord Jesus Christ. These days of adventure when all people wait are days for the advent of joy.

119 Hope is a star v1

1. Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright.

Refrain When God is a child there's joy in our song. The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong, and none shall be afraid.

2. Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth, giving a promise of safety and worth. **Refrain**
3. Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn, telling the world that the Saviour is born.

Refrain

4. Love is a flame that burns in our heart. Jesus has come and will never depart. **Refrain**

Will you come and follow me [1, 4, 5] #634

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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.