

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

Announcements

Mission Moment For over 75 years, Presbyterian World Service & Development has faithfully responded to serve those in need around the world. Together with our partners, we are making a positive difference. We are working together to care for the poor, sick and vulnerable, helping restore human dignity, ease the pain of want and promote community cooperation that benefits all. As people of faith, we respond to Christ's call to walk with the distressed and marginalized, and work towards equality, human dignity, peace and care for God's creation. United, we are working towards a world that is sustainable, compassionate, and just.

There has been an increased intensity of email and phone scams. This issue is problematic due to their nasty ability to touch on things that are familiar. A congregant recently received a message with 'Rev...' as part of the sender's email address. Thankfully she reached out to ask if it was me. I've received an increased number of messages. Some claim that I owe money and others that I'm eligible for money from a government agency. I block each phone number and delete the messages without hesitation. Be assured that you will never receive requests for money through text, email, or phone messages.

On a lighter note, all are welcome to join in a time of fellowship and a bite to eat after the worship service. There is plenty to share for all who are here.

Next week Marten Dykstra will be leading the worship service. I will be moderating the annual meeting as Interim Moderator at Knox Cranbrook.

The people of Knox Bayfield acknowledge with gratitude the territory upon which we live, work, play and worship. We live on the traditional lands of the Chippewa and Haudenosaunee, 'People of the Longhouse,' Anishinabewaki, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and Mississauga peoples within Treaty 29, of 1827. We are all treaty people. We recognize the harm incurred through colonization and we acknowledge that The Presbyterian Church in Canada was a part of the residential school system. We affirm the 94 Calls to Action, refute the Doctrine of Discovery, and accept the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There is much for us to learn. We commit to growing in healthy

relationship, one based in truth, respect, and reconciliation, with the First Nations of this land.

HYMN Praise God #306

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

One: What does the Lord require of you?

All: To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of wisdom, on this cold morning we come into the warmth of your presence. Here we find shelter in the strength of your promises. Grateful for the protection you provide, thankful for the comfort of your community, we offer our praise to you. For you give blessing when the world condemns; you bring freedom when the culture confines. Embrace us with your love we pray.

God of the ages, we hear your call on our lives and find calls to do justice are demanding, for the world has taught us to look to our own interests first. Forgive us, we pray. Renew us with your mercy, so that we may walk more humbly with you and each other day by day. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Trust in God who breaks the bonds of our oppression and covers us in mercy. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn Praise the Lord with the sound #466

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination and Scripture

Holy God, your people turn to your Word for truth and guidance in every age. Send your Holy Spirit to inspire our understanding of your Scripture, read and interpreted today. Help us hear the truth for our lives and our times through Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture²

Tanakh* Micah 6:1-8 **[B#866/W#966]**

Tanakh Psalm 15 **[B#495/W#546]**

¹ PCC Worship Planner Advent December 2021 Year C

² Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

Epistle 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

[B#166/W#173]

Gospel Matthew 5:1-12

[B#4/W#4]

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

Message

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 scripture readings this morning encourage us to be mindful of our responsibilities within God's creation. Micah reminds us that God calls us to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. Jesus shared the beatitudes in Matthews gospel. Paul wrote that the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Micah was a prophet in the southern kingdom of Judah. He lived in the late 8th century BC when the Assyrians were conquering the northern kingdom. He was a contemporary of Isaiah. He foretold the fall of Jerusalem because of unjust social practices, false teachers, and corrupt leaders. Like Isaiah, Micah foretold of a time when people would beat their swords into plowshares. In the new era of peace, people would be able to sit under their own vines and fig trees without fear. God did not desire burnt offerings for sins. God's desire was for people to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. In Micah's time the people had fallen out of "right" relationship with God and with one another. They lacked mindfulness, they were not centered in their relationship with God. And, God calls on the people to "remember" once again.

The prophecies of Micah and Isaiah continue to speak to us today. The Connections newspaper and the prayer partnership raises our awareness of social justice issues. The February "Social Action Spotlight" speaks to the *Dream of a World Without Nuclear Weapons*. Setsuko Thurlow was 13 years old when an atomic bomb dropped on her hometown of Hiroshima, Japan. Now a Canadian, she received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*. Many people believe nuclear weapons are incompatible with the dream of a peaceful world. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has exacerbated the global anxiety of the possibility of nuclear war. The 2018 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada advocated that Canada sign and

ratify the Nuclear Ban Treaty.³ There are steps we can take as a congregation and as individuals. We are able to learn more from Project Ploughshares, a PCC partner working in support of peacemaking efforts: www.ploughshares.ca Contact your MP advocating that Canada sign and ratify the Nuclear Ban Treaty and use its position within the NATO alliance to advocate support of the Ban Treaty. The sample letters available online www.presbyterian.ca/resources/advocacy simplify this action for us.

The early church leaders interpreted Micah in a variety of ways. Cyril emphasized God's compassion. Tertullian stated that God expects people to act with the mercy and compassion that God has given them. Augustine noted that the love of God, the love of neighbor, and the offering of self in loving service to one another are superior to any other sacrifice or offering.

Micah warns of the danger of 'talking the talk but not walking the walk'. He asked... what sacrifice was needed to be in right relationship with God? Was it the need for burnt offerings, calves a year old, thousands of rams, thousands of rivers of oil, or the firstborn? The practice of making burnt offerings and other sacrifices were routine. Israelites were surrounded by hundreds of gods and goddesses that belonged to their neighbors and sometimes they bought some of their idols - just to be safe. Seven hundred years before Christ, the privileged people of Israel had become arrogant, entitled, and uncaring. The people believed it was sufficient to make their offerings and follow religious practices without regard for their community. The aggressive land practices and exploitation of the vulnerable continued. They continued to 'talk the talk' and they failed to walk in faith. Micah speaks of God's deep disappointment in the people who failed to seek liberation for those held in political and economic bondage. The prophet spoke of God holding Israel to account. He spoke of God calling to the mountains, the hills, and the foundations of the earth to witness to their selfish behaviours and the ways in which they had forgotten that God loved Israel, brought them out of slavery, and gave them a home.

In his letter, Paul wrote that the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Paul proclaimed that you cannot know what you don't know until you know it. You cannot know ... what you don't know ... until you know it. It would have been a great relief to understand this concept when we were

³ (A&P 2018, pp. 286–288, 22).

younger. Before the insecurity, or the 'you should have known better' or 'are you stupid?' phrases come barreling toward us. It is also a wonderful phrase to remind those who do know ... that others may not be aware. It helps us remember that wisdom or insight cannot be taught. Wisdom is the ability to think and act utilizing knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. Insight is a clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation. Foolishness, however, is nonsense or stupidity; it's acting in a way that is silly or irrational.

The **beatitudes** may seem like foolishness ... within the context of our culture. Most of us have heard the Beatitudes throughout our lives. During the reading you may have zoned out a little because the reading is just so familiar. You may have wondered where you would fit within the descriptions. This passage reminds me of headstands. Do you recall the sensation of standing on your head or doing a handstand? Everything looks so different. Nothing has changed except your perspective. The beatitudes impact us in this way. Everything in life looks different when we discover that others truly care. Jesus was turning the world upside down when he spoke on the mountainside. Those fighting for survival at the bottom of their culture were being told that they were closest to heaven. In the Beatitudes Jesus described those who are blessed, not those who are wealthy or powerful. Barbara Brown Taylor points out that Jesus described the blessed as those who were known as victims, dreamers, push-overs, and fools. These are the chosen ones, he said, the blessed who will experience the divine. They will see God. They will be lucky ones, they will be satisfied.

A shift in perspective can be helpful at every age. When we consider this teaching as a whole, rather than individual statements, something shifts. Charles James Cook wrote, "There are three principles for living into the spirit of the Beatitudes: simplicity, hopefulness, and compassion. These three principles allow us to be in the world, while not being totally shaped by it." The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote of hearing the Gospel in a "primitive way," "stripped of all refinements. Hear the Beatitudes simply and hear the words spoken directly to you.... You are blessed in this life whenever you demonstrate humility, bring a peaceful presence, open your heart to others, and show mercy on those who cry for it."

The Beatitudes shift our perspective away from cynicism. Cynicism offers little hope that things will get better. The mantra is "Do not worry about it. That is just the way things are. You will get used to it." In contrast to cynicism, Christ offers hope and compassion. Henri Nouwen's insightful writing noted ... compassion "grows with the inner recognition that your neighbor shares your humanity with you. This partnership cuts through all walls which might have kept you separate. Across all barriers of land and language, wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, we are one, created from the same dust, subject to the same laws, destined for the same end."

Humanity shares the common gift of being created in God's image. Compassion means attempting to walk in our neighbour's shoes. Perhaps the ways in which we support the local foodbank illustrates this. Everyone has experienced hunger, if only for a short time. We have a basic understanding of this need. However, those of us who have known the deep hunger of empty cupboards and empty wallets are aware in a different way of the need for food security.

The Beatitudes are blessings. Jesus did not ask the crowd to become poor in spirit, or mourners, or persecuted for righteousness' sake. He offers consolation to the poor, to those who mourn, and the persecuted. Jesus proclaimed the good news. He takes our view of the world and turns it upside down with the Beatitudes. The poor are rich, the meek are strong, and the mournful are the truly consoled. The simplest thing to do with the beatitudes is to let them stand you on your head so that you cannot see the world in the same way again. The world looks different upside down. The perspective from which Jesus saw the world continues to change everything. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

HYMN God of the sparrow (v 1-3-5) #307

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

Quote Gratitude becomes a quality of our hearts that allows us to live joyfully and peacefully even though our struggles continue. Henri Nouwen – priest, professor, writer

The prophet Micah declared that God calls us to do justice, love kindness, and walk with humble hearts. So we offer our gifts humbly, trusting God will use them and us for kind and just purpose in this world God loves.

Doxology We give Thee but Thine own, What e'er the gift may be; All that we have is
Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee.

Prayers of the People, Blessing of Gifts

Blessed are you, most holy God, for you give release to the captives and food to the hungry. Bless us as we hunger and thirst for your justice and righteousness. May all who are needy find their hope in you.

Compassionate God, we thank you for your mercy. You give pardon for our sin and call us to forgive others. Embrace with your renewing grace those who are resentful or discouraged. Help us serve as instruments of reconciliation when discord or conflict arises.

Righteous God, we thank you for your justice. You watch over all who suffer and empower your people to act for good. Bless the work of our church and its partners to advocate for justice and dignity in our communities and in your world. Keep safe all who live under threat of violence or struggle for life's necessities.

God of new life, we give you thanks for your enlivening Spirit. You give courage to the persecuted and inspire the weary. Bless us as we strive to make a difference as a community in Christ's name. Unite your Church by the power of your Holy Spirit, and strengthen our common witness with the gifts you offer us through Jesus Christ.

God of Life, from you all loving kindness, justice and mercy flow. Bless these gifts so that acts of kindness, justice and mercy flow from them, too.

Caring God, we thank you for your comfort. You strengthen us when we are weak and pick us up when we fall. Bless us as we support and care for one another in this community. Surround all who mourn with the warmth of your love and the light of our hope in Christ Jesus.

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 light and love, draw near to those who must confront illness, loss or changing circumstances. We lift up Jan and family as they mourn the loss of Danielle. 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. Where new life is beginning and hope

dawns; where there is laughter and joy, healing and positive change, where there is good news to celebrate, send your Spirit with rejoicing and gratitude...

These things we pray in Jesus' name, gathering our prayers into one voice in the words he 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 Be thou my vision (v 1,3,5) #461

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

May the God of justice strengthen your will to serve. May the Christ of compassion inspire your heart to love. May the Holy Spirit walk with you in wisdom this day 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

306 Praise God

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures high and low;

Praise God in Jesus fully known; Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

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;

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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

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.

466 Praise the Lord with the sound

Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,
praise the Lord with the harp and lute,
praise the Lord with the gentle-sounding flute.

Praise the Lord in the field and forest,
praise the Lord in the city square,
praise the Lord anytime and anywhere.

Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine,

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praise the Lord in the dark of night,
praise the Lord in the rain or snow
or in the morning light.
Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,
praise the Lord on the highest hill,
praise the Lord; never let your voice be still.

Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal,
praise the Lord with the pipe and string,
praise the Lord with the joyful songs you sing.
Praise the Lord on a weekday morning,
praise the Lord on a Sunday noon,
praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.

Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow,
praise the Lord in the time of joy,
praise the Lord every moment;
nothing let your praise destroy.

Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet,
praise the Lord in your work or play,
praise the Lord everywhere in every way!

307 God of the sparrow, God of the whale

1. God of the sparrow
God of the whale
God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe

How does the creature say Praise

2. God of the earthquake

God of the storm

God of the trumpet blast

How does the creature cry Woe

How does the creature cry Save

3. God of the rainbow

God of the cross

God of the empty grave

How does the creature say Grace

How does the creature say Thanks

4. God of the hungry

God of the sick

God of the prodigal

How does the creature say Care

How does the creature say Life

5. God of the neighbour

God of the foe

God of the pruning hook

How does the creature say Love