

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on the 19th of February.

Announcements

I begin today with the sad news that Deb Cosford's father died this week. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Deb and her family as they mourn. You are encouraged to share your support with Deb as she and her family deal with their loss. A private gathering will take place later this week.

HYMN Praise God #306

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

One: God rules over the earth in majesty and mystery

All: We praise God's awesome name

One: God loves justice and calls us together

All: We seek to honour God with love and loyalty.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON¹

God of grace and wonder, you reveal your presence in richly diverse ways. Your glory glistens on snowy mountain tops and sparkling streams. Your mercy moves within us in conversations and bedside prayers. The comfort of your lingering Spirit frees us from fear and transforms our doubt. We come before you in worship to dwell in your goodness and seek your truth, as we offer all praise and honour to you, with Christ and the Holy Spirit, One God, mighty and merciful, now and always. God of mystery and mercy, we confess we sometimes mistake our desires for your will. We are reluctant to hear messages that challenge our assumptions. We seek assurances that we are right as we resist insights from the experience of others. Forgive us, O God. Shape our will to yours, so we can dwell more closely with you and with one another. We pray in the name of Christ, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

God's forgiveness shines into the world and the darkness scatters. Jesus knows our every strength and our every weakness, and loves us still. We are called to the promise of God's amazing grace. Thanks be to God. Amen. 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

Hymn Glory be to God the Father #298

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination and Scripture²

Your Word, O God, comes to us in the translation of ancient scripture. Send your Holy Spirit to open our minds with understanding and our hearts with wisdom in the name of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture³

Tanakh*	Exodus 24:12-18	[B#70/W#78]
Tanakh	Psalms 2	[B#489/W#539]
Epistle	2 Peter 1:16-21	[B#236/W#255]
Gospel	Matthew 17:1-9	[B#16/W#19]

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 scriptures tell of journeys through the wilderness and the darkness. A wilderness without maps or landmarks. A time without the comfort of familiar surroundings, familiar structures, and the comfort of regular routines. A time of transition that alters the structure of individual lives and communities in that time and for centuries to follow. The readings speak of transfiguration as we approach the season of Lent. Lent, a time set aside to seek inner transformation. A time to face our fears and overcome temptation. It is a time to seek an understanding of our living God, our faith, and our place within creation.

Our lives are transformed by the love of God. The scriptures help us to recognize the ways in which faith has affected others and allows us to understand the ways in which our faith impacts our lives. Seven long weeks after they left Egypt the Israelites arrived at Sinai. They were at the beginning of a difficult transition and in the wilderness. Where is the actual Mount Sinai located. If you could find a white edged bible and look to the back

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

³ Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

pages to find the map marked #1. This map takes a slightly different perspective. You will see the Great Sea at the far left with Egypt at the bottom, then the regions of Sinai in the middle, Midian at the top right, Edom, and Moab sits at the top left. Look towards the right edge of the page. You will find Mount Sinai between the red S and T. You will also see the question mark beside the name.

Mount Sinai is the location where Moses received the 10 commandments. The other biblical mention of Mount Sinai is in the book of Kings¹ when several hundred years later, Elijah the prophet fled from queen Jezebel. He hid in a cave on the mountain of Horeb, which is also known as Mount Sinai. It was there that the word of God came to him. You may recall that Elijah was told that God was not in the great noises and rumbling earthquakes. God is found in our quiet, humble day-to-day actions. Elijah was told to go back to the people and to do his work.

We know of these two significant events on Mount Sinai, yet they have not clearly marked the holy place. The Talmud, the historical debates and writings of the Rabbis, explain that it is not the place that provides honour but the person who honors the place. When God was on the mountain, the place was holy. What was done there was holy but the place is not inherently holy.

You may recall some of the story about Moses from when he was a child in the reeds by the river Nile. Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's court in Egypt, where he was privileged and set apart from his people. Moses recognized the injustice and was angered by the oppression of the Hebrew people. When he witnessed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, Moses killed the Egyptian and fled. He went to Midian where he became a shepherd. It was there that God spoke from a burning bush and called him to a higher purpose. He went back to Egypt with the purpose of freeing slaves from bondage. Yet, Moses hesitated. I am pretty sure that we can all understand his hesitation. Moses was hesitant to go back and take on a leadership role. God reassured him that others would help and that his brother Aaron could speak for him. Scripture tells of the many ways in which God helped. The plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the gifts of manna & quail, and water from a rock in the desert ... all signs that God was leading the people. Signs that Moses and the people were not alone. In his story, we discover a courageous and a flawed man. We discover a person who struggled with the frustrations

of working with a fearful and reactionary people. In their fear they turned away from God and the leadership provided. God was faithful. God led them, fed them, and stayed with them even when they lost hope. God called them to walk in the way and provided leaders to guide them. Which is where we enter into the story today. God told Moses he would receive the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandments. When the Torah – the stone tablets- was received on Mount Sinai, they continued their journey to the Land of Israel.

Gregory of Nyssa, in the 4th century, recognized the revelation of God on the mountain as transfiguration, a moment in which life is changed and transformed.

The story is set in series of contrasts. As we read through the history of Exodus, we discover the power of God in contrast with the issues of the people; the light and the dark, the awesome with the ordinary, the breathtaking along side the tedious.

Perhaps this is how God catches our attention. Each of us know the impact of seeing a familiar face, feeling the touch of a hand on our shoulder, when we are in the depth of despair. In difficult times our faith offers the deep reassurance of God's love and faithfulness. When the struggle is great and the darkness seems overwhelming it is good to lean into the faith and assurance offered by others.

A few years ago, on a Sunday morning when I was preaching here in Bayfield, I received news that my mother was in the hospital. Following the service I headed back to Kitchener to join with my family. While I was visiting I went in search of a coffee. A man started talking with me as I walked down a hallway. He had noticed my clerical collar and needed to talk. He was struggling with the impact of a family member's illness. In that moment he found comfort and support with me sharing my faith.

The readings take us into a time when people were struggling in their faith journeys. In both Exodus and Matthew the people are becoming acquainted with God in new ways. Moses met with God in the darkness of a cloud on Mount Sinai as 600,000 former slaves waited below. In the gospel of Matthew, the disciples bore witness to the transfiguration as they made their way toward the confusing and terrifying crucifixion. Moses and Jesus experienced transfiguration on their challenging journeys.

Moses was changed in many ways. Even his physical appearance changed – when he left the mountain and returned to the people, his face was shining. Aaron and the others

realized that Moses has been in the presence of the divine God. They experienced holy fear of God. The “fear” was an exalted, reverential sense of awe. To fear God is to stand in awe of God’s majesty, power, wisdom, justice, and mercy. We humble ourselves and adore God. It may be easier to comprehend when we think in terms of being in awe of God.

The author C. S. Lewis, in the Chronicles of Narnia, retells the story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ with fictional characters. In doing so, Lewis allows the reader to suspend disbelief as they become immersed in the story. In the book, Aslan shared a message, "Here on the mountain I have spoken to you clearly. I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear and your mind is clear; as you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken. Take great care that it does not confuse your mind. And the signs which you have learned here will not look at all as you expect them to look, when you meet them there. That is why it is so important to know them by heart and pay no attention to appearance. Remember the signs and believe the signs. Nothing else matters."

In the gospel reading the disciples were growing aware of the signs and becoming more familiar with fear. Jesus had just predicted his coming death and they were grappling with this new reality. In this passage, Jesus went up the mountain with Peter, James, and John.

The transfiguration is a paradox. There was nothing the disciples could do to prevent the suffering that would unfold for Jesus or for themselves. In a similar way, there was really nothing that they could do to shield themselves from the light of God. The intensity of that light initially frightened them and that fear sifted to awe and reverences as God’s hope lingered with them in their darkest moments. The transformational experience on that mountain prepared them for the continuation of their sacred journey. Not everyone is blessed with moments of clarity provided by a transcendent experience. Yet, many of you have experienced challenges that prepared you for major transitions within your life. Such experiences shape how we see the world and how we live with one another. Such encounters allow us to remember the signs.

In her sermon at the Festival of Homiletics, Barbara Brown Taylor shared, “But here’s the thing about that cloud of unknowing, which even the saints take on trust: it’s not there to

get through, like a test or a fever. It is God's home. It is the place where God dwells. To be invited in is a great honor, and to stay a while? Better yet. Those who come out can be hard to look at, at first—where did all that brightness come from, inside that dark cloud?—and they may not have a lot of words to describe where they have been, but even the limping ones will tell you this: they would never have chosen it, not in a million years. But now that it has happened? They would never give it back. “

Through the centuries, the message of the transfiguration has continued to point us toward God. The one God who is present with us as we experience sorrow and darkness. The light of God continues to shine on our journey that takes us through the darkness and the wilderness. God finds us in our homes, in our work, in our communities. God finds us when our hearts are broken and when we experience joy. God finds us when we run away and when we are in the midst of the deepest darkness. The glimmer of Christ's light will show the way. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn The love of God comes close #474

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

Quote Wealth isn't always measured in dollar signs. We have time, talent & creativity, all of which can be powerful forces for positive change. Share your blessings in whatever form they come and to whatever level you have been blessed.

Jon M. Huntsman – businessman, diplomat, politician

God reached out to the world in Christ Jesus, calling us to share God's transforming love. We offer our gifts as a sign of our readiness to follow him, praying they will become tangible tokens of that transforming love.

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

Sovereign God, you revealed your love and guidance for us on Mount Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration, giving us a vision of how to live with equity and peace. Trusting in your care for us, we bring to you our gratitude and concern in prayer.

We pray for your church, that it may be the light of love for all people. God of mercy and forgiveness, you call us to live together in peace and unity. Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment, show us how to work for reconciliation. Where violence

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and fear turn neighbour against neighbour, or nation against nation, call out leaders to work for justice that will bring peace. Help us build a world where children can grow up to enjoy their future in good health and happiness We pray for the nations of the world, that their leaders may be wise and compassionate.

We pray for those who suffer illness or oppression, that your healing and liberation may be embodied by faithful caregivers. We pray for your creation, that we may be your wise and obedient stewards. We pray for all those who are in search of you, that they may walk by the lamp of your Spirit and be at peace in your light now and forever.

God of love that transforms lives, we offer our gifts in gratitude for all we have received in Christ, your beloved Son. Take our gifts and transform them into acts of love that will bless the world in his name.

God of life, God of love, you created us and set us in relationship with each other. In families and neighbourhoods, in communities and countries, in cultures and nations. We are grateful for the faith shared by previous generations.

We are grateful for the meaning and encouragement from our complex heritage. Help us stand open to the wisdom in other cultures and insight from a new generation so we can all contribute to the well-being of others. God of all creation, hear our prayers.

God of our faith and our future, there are many pressures on families today. Draw near to those struggling in economic difficulty, and those burdened by challenges to their health and happiness. Work with families where members are in conflict with each other to create solutions that express mutual respect.

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 are thankful for healing and we are thankful for the end of suffering. God of compassion, we lift up Deb and her family as they travel the long journey of grief as they mourn Lyle's death. We lift up Jan and family as they mourn the loss of Danielle. May your Spirit linger with them in this time. God of hope, we ask you to linger with Ruth George as she heals; Stephani, Judith & Gerry; Rob; Betty Lou; 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. Joined together in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all majesty and honour are yours, Holy One, forever and ever.

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 Jesus loves me #373

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

Christ has been revealed to us. We are called to follow him and transform the world. Go in love. Work for peace. May the self-revealing God be a lamp on your way as the day dawns and the evening falls.

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.

298 Glory be to God the Father

Glory be to God the Father, Glory be to God the Son, Glory be to God the Spirit, God almighty, Three-in-One! Glory, glory, glory, glory, While eternal ages run.

Glory to the One who loved us, Washed us from each sin and strain; Glory to the One who bought us, Raised us up to serve and reign. Glory, glory, glory, glory, To the lamb that once was slain.

"Glory, blessing, praise eternal!" Angel choirs their hymns prolong; "Honour, riches, power, dominion!" Echoes all creation's song. Glory, glory, glory, glory, Praises to our God belong.

373 Jesus loves me

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! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! 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." **Refrain**

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

474 The love of God comes close

The love of God comes close Where stands an open door, To let the stranger in, To mingle rich and poor. The love of God is here to stay, Embracing those who walk the Way; The love of God is here to stay.

The peace of God comes close To those caught in the storm, Forgoing lives of ease To ease the lives forlorn. The peace of God is here to stay, Embracing those who walk the Way; The peace of God is here to stay.

The joy of God comes close Where faith encounters fears, Where heights and depths of life Are found through smiles and tears. The joy of God is here to stay, Embracing those who walk the Way; The joy of God is here to stay.

The grace of God comes close To those whose grace is spent, When hearts are tired or sore And hope is bruised and bent. The grace of God is here to stay, Embracing those who walk the Way; The grace of God is here to stay.

The Son of God comes close Where people praise his name, Where bread and wine are blest And shared as when he came. The Son of God is here to stay, Embracing those who walk the Way; The Son of God is here to stay.