

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

Announcements

**HYMN Praise God #306**

**CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]**

**PRAYER OF ADORATION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God of all time and space, you have called people to meet you over the centuries, in many different places, in many different ways. You hear our prayers and claim us as your own. In this time of worship, may your Spirit revive our faith and guide our footsteps in the ways of Jesus Christ. God of all life, you know each of us, our concerns and our hopes. We confess we are often anxious to see results. We lose patience when we cannot see progress. We blame others rather than seek solutions. Forgive us. Help us claim your peace when our hearts are anxious. Amen

**Assurance of Pardon**

God's amazing love allows each of us to receive his grace and be at peace with God, with yourselves and with each other. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

**Hymn Rejoice the Lord is king (v 1, 4) #267**

**To Hear The Word Of God**

**Prayer For Illumination and Scripture<sup>1</sup>**

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.

**Scripture<sup>2</sup>**

**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.

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<sup>1</sup> Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

<sup>2</sup> Page #'s for pew bibles with Blue or White edged pages

People are faced with many challenges in this world. Economic upheaval, illness, violence, and the realities of oppression and war. The scriptures offer the persistent message of hope through the ages of humanity. The hope of a loving and faithful God. It is necessary to engage with the teachings beyond a surface interpretation.

The previous chapter of Isaiah ended with a complex imagery of terror. The people had broken covenant with God and there would be punishment. During this time of hardship, Isaiah spoke of praising God. Isaiah wrote of the table set for friend and foreigner, strong and weak, wealthy and needy. They share in a common meal and share the promise of God's salvation. Within the memory of death, ruin ... Isaiah proclaimed that God is a God of life—a God who ends war, slavery, and exile.

Isaiah speaks of a community that remembers the past, accepts the message of the meal, and responds with thanksgiving and praise. God's faithfulness transforms the present and the future. Mealtime is more than food. It is nourishment that replenishes the body. We mark time within the day by our regular meals. Special occasions and events are often centred around the meal. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, weddings, and funerals include sharing in a meal together. D J Harrington wrote that "Jesus' meals with tax collectors and sinners and especially his Last Supper with his disciples symbolized what life in God's kingdom will be like."

Matthew's parable of the wedding banquet tells of a king's invitation to a wedding banquet that is rejected by the guests with violence against the messengers. The banquet was then opened to anyone and everyone who would attend. In the end, there was a guest who was violently removed when the king deemed his clothing to be inappropriate. This parable has been interpreted as an allegory with the invited guests as those who refuse God's invitation to the divine banquet.

The gospel parable compares the kingdom of heaven with a king who hosted a wedding banquet for his son. This is the second parable with the teaching of God's judgment for those who decline God's persistent invitation. Declining the invitation continues with the parable of a royal wedding. Guests eventually attend, however, one is sent out into the darkness.

Mickey Anders addressed clothing metaphors in scripture when he wrote *When Showing Up Isn't Enough*. Anders wrote, "Clothing is a common New Testament metaphor for

spiritual change. Paul wrote in Romans, "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Rom 13:14). And in First Corinthians, "The perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:53). In Colossians, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Colossians 3:12). Finally, in First Peter we are admonished, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5)." Anders continued with, "Being clothed anew is a consistent New Testament expression for holiness and righteousness. The old clothes have to come off and new ones put on. This text confronts us with the paradox of God's free invitation to the banquet with no strings attached and God's requirement of "putting on" something appropriate to that calling. The theological point is that we are warned of the dire consequences of accepting the invitation and doing nothing except showing up."

In his commentary, Raj Nadella wrote, "The parable has primarily been interpreted as an allegory. In many of these allegorical readings, the originally invited guests are analogous to Jewish religious leaders who refused to participate in God's eschatological banquet and treated God's messengers harshly. God punished them by using Rome to destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple."

Nadella draws our attention to aspects of the parable that "especially call for further exploration: rejection of the king's invitation and his violent response to invited guests at different points in the story. ... The violence towards the end of the parable highlights the absurdity of the host's suggestion that an invited guest was not worthy of the banquet." As we hold the complexity of this parable, it is good to recognize that we are aware of the setting in which Jesus lived and taught. The Roman empire ruled with absolute and brutal authority. Objectors to the Roman rule were crucified and kept on public display to deter others. Perhaps in this parable the King is an impetuous ruler, similar to King Herod. The scriptures offer the persistent message of looking beyond the superficial and digging into the stories we live withing. There is divine hope through the ages of humanity. The hope of a loving and faithful God. The hope of Christ living among us in the midst of the challenges.

In closing, there is a story of a fisherman called Aaron. Aaron lived on the banks of a river. Walking home one evening after a hard day's work, he was dreaming of what he could do if he were rich. As he walked his foot struck against a leather pouch filled with what seemed to him to be small stones. Absentmindedly he picked up the pouch and began throwing the pebbles into the water. "When I am a rich man," he said to himself, "I'll have a large house". And he threw another pebble into the river. He threw another one and thought, "My wife and I will have servants and rich food, and many fine things". And this went on until just one stone was left. As Aaron held it in his hand, a ray of light caught it and made it sparkle. He was not throwing ordinary stones but valuable gems, throwing away the real riches in his hand, while he dreamed of riches in the future." The value of the Kingdom of God is before us if we will but realize.<sup>3</sup> Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

**Hymn                      This is my Father's world                      #328**

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

**Quote**

The Apostle Paul urges consideration of that which is honourable and just, commendable and true. God has given you a great banquet. May your thanksgiving overflow with joyous giving for the sake of others.

**Doxology**

**Blessing of Gifts**

O God, bless what we offer today as well as the time, talent, and concern we will offer you this week. We trust that, with your blessing, your Holy Spirit will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine in Christ's name. Amen.

**Profession of Faith: An Affirmation of Baptism**

**Prayers of the People**

Life-giving God, you equip your people with gifts to work for your good purpose bringing justice and peace to every land and community. We thank you that you will work through us, even when we don't feel equal to the task. Help us recognize your Spirit at work among us.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard F. Fairchild, ChristianGlobe Illustrations

Through your Spirit, O God, you give the gift of prophecy. With this gift, empower the church to speak words of justice and truth into situations where people are oppressed, exploited, and treated unfairly. Guide us to bring change for good in the world and bring hope to the hopeless. Encourage your servant Church to work with the vulnerable. Show us how to share the abundance with those who lack basic resources.

Through the love and compassion of Christ, O God, you give the gift of encouragement. As a congregation, show us where and how to reach out to encourage those who are struggling. Give us the words and actions to comfort those who mourn, to be companions to those coping with mental or physical illness, and support any who feel isolated or left behind.

Through the examples of prophets and apostles, O God, you give the gift of leadership. Call up leaders within the Church to build up our ministries and model respectful ways of living and loving together. Call up leaders in our nation and neighbourhoods who demonstrate respect and attend to the common good.

O God of the bruised and broken, we are grateful that, in Christ, you have taken up the cross and know by heart all that causes suffering and pain. We pray today for all those in need of healing and comfort, whatever the source of their pain.

Before we call, you answer, God. Before we speak, you know our voices. Hear our prayers. Loving God, by your Spirit, surround us with strength and love. Equip us to offer support for those who are near to us. O God of the lonely and sorrowing, in Christ you experienced the loss we know when loved ones die and the pain of betrayal by friends. We remember before you those who grieve the loss of their beloved and those who are lonely. 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 families who travel the long journey of grief. May their memories be a blessing. We ask you to linger with all who mourn Warren and Danielle. God of hope, we ask you to linger with all who are dealing with health challenges: Jim T; Judith & Gerry; Rob, Valerie, Jim & Jane; Carl; Betty Lou; Ruth; Audrey & Grace; Lori & family; and, Don, Phyllis, & Shawn. We lift up all who are on our hearts as they face immense challenges.

O God of hope and new possibility, in Christ you opened the way into the future for us through the power of your redeeming love. Give us the courage we need to face our future, assured of your presence and power to sustain us. We offer all that we are and all that we hope for through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray together as his people: 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                    O Lord my God            (v 1, 4)            #332**

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

May the Spirit guide us  
to that which is true and just  
that we may live with integrity.  
May we seek to do God's will and praise God forever.

**Postlude                    Amen**