

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2024 03 31

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**]

PWS&D Insert

Prayer of Adoration and Confession [**Responsive**]

God of Resurrecting power, you lift our hearts with joy with the empty tomb. God of Resurrecting hope, you fill us with excitement with accounts of the risen Christ.

God of Resurrecting love, you encourage us to trust in the power of new life promised in the Risen Christ. We offer you all glory, honour and praise with hearts overflowing in Jesus' name. We lift our voices together

God of resurrecting joy, we confess it is challenging to sustain Easter hope. Discouragement, fear and frustration to settle in plus anger and anxiety turn our hearts away from you. Resentment and disappointment cling to us as we forget your great mercy and love. Forgive us, we pray. May your promised joy and hope be restored within us. We pray in the name of Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free for new life by God's resurrecting grace. God's amazing love allows each of us to receive his grace and be at peace. May the peace of Jesus the Christ, which surpasses all understanding, be with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn God is love: come heaven, adoring #314

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination and Scripture

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.

Did you hear?

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.

Early on the first day of the week, the disciples went to the tomb where he had been buried. They found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Friends, we gather here as Christ's disciples, on the first day of the week, to celebrate the good news of the gospel: Jesus Christ has risen from the dead!

Swiss theological giant Karl Barth said that what brings people to worship—not just on Easter, but any day—is an unspoken question clinging to their hearts and minds, and that question ... "Is it true?" Is it true that God lives and gives us life? Is it true that God established the laws of nature, and God raised Jesus from the dead? Is it true that the extra-ordinary happened on that morning and that we can only rebuild our lives on its foundation? There is something in the Easter story that reaches the deepest part of our hearts and minds, where both doubt and faith are found. In the resurrection God gave a miracle of love and forgiveness ... it is worthy of faith and our doubt lingers.

The psalm is filled with a sense of joy grounded in gratitude. Today this psalm helps as we look to the many challenges facing our communities of faith. God provides the transformative power of divine grace to live in us and in this world. God's mysterious power embraces us and sets us on a path in life. The term 'metanoia' describes a shift in perspective, a new way of understanding that we are accountable for living in a transformed way. It is a shift in focus, a shift away from that which serves the individual personal gain. We are turned outward - to serve others, to serve God. In doing so, we discover that we share our hope with others.

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 [B#565/W#625]

In our reading from the book of Acts, the apostle Peter realized an essential truth that creates a struggle for many people ... God offers restoration and salvation to all people. The news of God's impartial love extends out to each of us, for we are called to love as God loves. This divinely inspired love is the focus of the "good news of peace through Jesus Christ" evident throughout the books and letters of the New Testament. **Acts**

10:34-43 [B#129/W#134]

This message of love reaches out to us from the gospel of John 20:1-18 [B#114/W#119]

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

Mary ran to share the news of the empty tomb with a sense of urgency. When the disciples heard the news, they raced to the tomb. We know people like this ... those who see possibility where others see barriers and the exhaustion of more work. The individuals

who seem to have an unwavering trust that God will provide goodness, even out of a crucifixion. Peter had just spent the last few days running away from Jesus. Here he ran toward the possibility.

Many of us live with Peter in these complex, conflicting emotions. We commit to following the path set before by God, but our faith falters when significant obstacles arise. Yet, our memory holds the remarkable and life-giving moments that nourish our faith and we run to see if it might be true. We are eager for new life even with conflicting thoughts and emotions.

In "Surviving Crucifixion" Barbara Brown Taylor wrote, "The truth of the matter, for me, is that resurrection is nothing any of us has ever seen or experienced for ourselves. Near-death experiences, yes; ghostly visitations, yes; but none of us knows firsthand what it is like to be resurrected from the dead." She continues with, "According to the Bible, God set it up that way. Hundreds of people witnessed Jesus' crucifixion, but not one living soul was there when he was raised from the dead. The women saw him afterward, when he was back on his feet, and his disciples saw him after that, although not for long, but no one was allowed the privilege of seeing him come back to life. So none of us should feel too badly about finding it hard to believe. Resurrection is not something we can test, like gravity or true north."

I wonder how we might also be like Mary. John wrote that, when she returned to the tomb, two angels spoke to Mary. Then she turned to find the gardener beside her. Mary looked at him, listened to him, and did not recognize him. Perhaps it was overwhelming. The crucifixion, the empty tomb, and then the angels. Then, he spoke her name. When Jesus said, "Mary," his words touched her. She was seen and she was able to see. Each of us yearns to be seen for who we are in our lives, our bodies, our histories, our dreams, and our losses. God comes to each of us in deeply personal ways. Jesus comes to us as a presence that reaches beyond our intellectual knowing. He touches our lives in ways we cannot see.

We nurture this connection when we join with others in faith. It is in the familiar hymn that stirs us, in the taste of the communion elements, in the feel of the Bible and the hymnal in our hands, in our communal prayers, and with the mutual support given and received.

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Jesus appointed Mary to go out and tell others what she has experienced. She went out from the garden and told the others ... Jesus the Christ had risen. Mary went out to live in His way and to share what she knew to be true. We continue her work today in the many ways in which we follow in the ways of Christ. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Thine be the Glory #258

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

Quote We are temporary stewards with an obligation to manage the inheritance in such a way that it can be passed along even better and stronger than it was when we received it. Robert L. Payton

Easter Day celebrates God's most precious gift to us in Christ's dying and his rising. As we present our gifts this morning, may our generosity reflect God's goodness to us, and the hope we have in Christ Jesus

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.

Blessing of Gifts

God of Resurrecting Grace, we offer our gifts with grateful hearts. You have provided abundance within our lives. Empower these gifts to spread the hope and joy we feel today in the world you love, in the name of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

This is the Lord's table. You are welcome to share in the feast which God provides. We remember Jesus declared that people will come from east and west and north and south to share at the table in God's kingdom. We join with those who follow Jesus from around the world to celebrate the joyful feast of the Risen Christ this day. The gifts of the table are for all who love him and for all who want to love him more. All are welcome to share in God's gifts.

Hymn All who hunger gather gladly #534

Affirmation of Faith The Apostles' Creed [in unison] #539

The Story of the Table

When we gather at this table, we share in the story of how this meal began. We remember how Jesus shared bread and wine in community the night before he died. So, as we break this bread and share this cup may our eyes be opened to recognize the

presence of Jesus among us. And, as Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth, let us also thank God for what we are about receive.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving [responsive] #564

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts! **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

On this joyful Easter Day, with hearts lifted high, we offer gratitude and praise to you, O God, for we have seen your grace and power, rolling away the stone of sorrow and despair, bursting from the tomb in the gift of new life. And so we join our voices with creatures high and low, with all the saints before us and beside us, in heaven and on earth, to raise the song of your unending greatness. We join with the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Receive our praise and joy this day, O Christ. Your resurrection promises new possibilities for us and our weary world. Even when we falter in discouragement or doubt, even if we hesitate at the news that your great love has come back to embrace us, you do not abandon us. You open your arms wide and invite us back to your side. At this table, you offer not just bread and wine but your very self, so that we may be filled and forgiven, healed and blessed once more. Great and gracious God, such gifts touch our deepest needs, and so we proclaim our faith and our hope as we sing. In joyful anticipation of sharing these gifts, we proclaim our faith. And so, remembering Christ's life, love, death, and resurrection, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Spirit of Life, rising in us and around us, Bless us and this bread and wine. May they become for us Christ's body and life blood, offering new life and the power to make us whole. As this bread and wine become a part of us, make us a part of you, Lord Jesus. Dare us to live for justice and joy, trusting that all things will work together for good through the power of the love that raised you from the dead, and all the people say,

Amen

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We boldly lift our voices to pray: *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.*

Words of Institution and Invitation

Jesus, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you: do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood: as often as you drink of it, do this in remembrance of me.'

We break this bread, the communion in Christ's body once broken. We drink this cup, communion in Christ's blood once shed. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, we thank you for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself and we praise you for breaking into the world. Send us out in peace for we have seen, have heard, and been fed by your grace. Keep us faithful and alert for signs of Christ's coming and lead us to live lives marked by truth and light.

God of new beginnings, break into your Church with resurrecting power. Where congregations are challenged to rethink outreach in changing times, inspire new approaches and renew commitment for today's ministry. Where gathering resources and finding new leaders present challenges, renew our trust in your faithfulness.

God of new possibilities, break into our relationships with resurrecting power. Where they are vibrant and life-giving, nurture and sustain them. Where there are memories of hurt or current misunderstanding, refresh them with forgiveness and reconciliation. Where they are neglected or taken for granted, open our eyes to the great gift we offer each other.

God of new opportunity, break into the governance of your world with resurrecting power. Stir the minds and hearts of leaders to work for justice and the equitable sharing of resources. Where violence and conflict threaten the innocent and the earth itself, raise up advocates for peace and negotiators to call combatants to account. Bring wisdom, compassion, and cooperation to all in authority.

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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 new life, break into situations of illness, pain, grief, and loss with resurrecting power. Where there is sickness of body, mind, or spirit, bring healing and hope. Where people mourn the loss of loved ones bring comfort and courage to go on.

God of compassion, we lift up families who travel the long journey of grief. May their memories hold your blessing. We ask you to linger with all who mourn. We hold Brenda, Faye, and family in our hearts as they mourn the loss of John.

God of hope, we ask you to linger with all who are dealing with health challenges: Renee & Jim; Judith & Gerry; Rob, Valerie, Jim & Jane; Carl; Betty Lou; Ruth; Audrey & Grace; and, Courtney, Gayle & family. We lift up all 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 honor are yours, Holy One, forever and ever.

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. We pray in the name of Christ, Amen

Hymn Now Let Us From This Table Rise (v 1, 2) #556

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

Go in the strength of the Spirit, to greet all you meet with understanding and friendship. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Postlude

Amen