

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 Confession **[responsive]**

God of new life, we come to you, rejoicing in the mystery of the Risen Christ. We marvel at your constant love and your resurrecting hope which embraces us in every circumstance. Trusting in your gifts, we seek to live as Easter people in every time and place. Fill us with the gift of your Holy Spirit in this time of worship, and grant us your peace through Christ, our Risen Saviour.

Merciful God, we confess our trust in you falters when we become anxious about many things. We talk about loving our neighbour, yet we fear those who differ from us. We pray you will forgive us.

Through the power of your Holy Spirit, rekindle our passion for you, so we can witness to your love in all we do. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the words of the risen Christ: Peace be with you. ... Receive the peace and forgiveness of Christ, and share that peace with one another every day. 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 **Christ the Lord is risen today #247**

To Hear The Word Of God

Prayer For Illumination and Scripture

Breathe your Spirit upon us, O Lord, as we listen to the Scriptures. Open our minds and hearts to receive your Living Word, and fill us with renewed hope. Amen.

Scripture

Historical	Acts 4:32-35	[B#122/W#126]
Psalms	Psalms 133 [responsive]	[B#575/W#636]
Epistle	1 John 1:1-2:2	[B#239/W#258]
Gospel	John 20:19-31	[B#115 /W#119]

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.

This is the Second Sunday of Easter - a joyful continuation of the Easter celebration with scripture guiding us through collective stories of faith. Our journey through scripture helps us to connect our fear and confusion, our joy and faith with the divine promises fulfilled and yet to come. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, his greeting was, Shalom, peace be unto you. Shalom expresses the fullness of well-being and harmony. It is a blessing and a prayer. In his teachings Jesus reinforced the depth of the blessing and the sense of community with the sharing of this prayer.

Last Sunday we read that Mary, when she discovered the empty tomb, she ran and told the disciples. She reached out to her community. The other disciples went to the tomb and left when they found it empty. Mary stayed and was able to ask the angels about Jesus. Then, Jesus spoke with Mary. Again, she went out to her community to proclaim that she had seen the risen Christ.

In today's reading, Jesus appeared to several disciples in a locked room. When they told Thomas they had seen the Lord he wanted to see him too. In response to his need, Jesus appeared to Thomas. It is a pastoral moment. In that moment, Jesus showed up for each of them in their need. Jesus found them where they were with his abundant grace. Seeing is believing. Believing creates rejoicing.

It is amazing when we stop to consider the ways in which Jesus shows up in our lives. Yesterday, I was at a workshop at Camp Kintail. The workshop was organized in response to the confusion many are facing about the challenges of accessibility issues. Challenges on all of the issues. Challenges faced by those who have difficulty with access and challenges for those responsible for creating access. Julie Sawchuk led the workshop and presented her research and personal lived experiences. She shared her courageous story. She was able-bodied until she was hit by a car while training for a triathlon in 2015. Paralyzed from the mid-back down - her life changed. It was helpful to learn that only some challenges are visible such as her need for a wheelchair and others that are invisible

such as the pain she experiences. Julie encouraged the workshop participants to develop their awareness of these issues in order to shift their focus to the many challenges encountered in our society.

We are very aware of the challenges facing this congregation. The physical challenges in getting to church, navigating within the sanctuary, and accessing the lower level. There are also challenges with vision and hearing that affect many of us. An important consideration is the difficulty of speaking to our personal issues. In particular, as we age, our bodies do not function as well as they used to. I am grateful for the courage people have demonstrated by speaking to their needs so the issues can be tackled. We continue to investigate and search for solutions. These issues need to be addressed with open and transparent discussions to better understand the diverse needs within this congregation. We often make presumptions about the needs of others. It is vital that we listen and hear the concerns, the challenges, and the possible solutions.

I'd like to share a story about Albert Einstein, the brilliant, absent-minded scientist. This sense of forgetfulness would happen while he was focused on an issue. Yet, in his very disorganized office, he was able to remember where everything was. He had many gifts and challenges. So ... Einstein was traveling from Princeton on a train, and when the conductor came down the aisle to punch the passengers' tickets, Einstein couldn't find his ticket. He looked in his vest pocket, he looked in his pants pocket, he looked in his briefcase, but there was no ticket. The conductor was gracious; "Not to worry, Dr. Einstein, I know who you are, we all know who you are, and I'm sure you bought a ticket." The conductor moved down the aisle, then looked back to see Einstein on his hands and knees, searching under the seat for his ticket. He walked back, saying "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. You don't need a ticket, I'm sure you bought one." Einstein stood and said "Young man, I too know who I am; what I don't know is where I am going." We often make presumptions about the needs of others. It is vital that we listen and hear the concerns, the challenges, and the possible solutions.

In our reading today John describes his corporeality [cor-pour-e-al-ity] when Jesus walked through walls. Jesus spoke to the disciples, telling them, "Peace be with you". His physical presence is described when Thomas was invited to touch his wounds. Hearing, seeing, and touching are crucial in our understanding of our faith. Jesus breathed on them and the Holy Spirit was given in the breath, the pneuma, of the crucified and risen Jesus. We are

mindful of the account in Genesis when God breathed into a creature of dust and humanity came to life. Christ breathed into the world and the disciples became more fully aware of God's presence.

The disciples struggled to understand many of the teachings from Jesus. They thought they understood and then struggled with fear and confusion. The reading described their room as locked and shut up. In their fear of persecution, the disciples gathered behind locked doors. Christ went to be among them. Jesus appeared in the locked room that was filled with fear and spoke the word of peace. He allowed them to see his wounds. He gave his disciples the Holy Spirit and made them apostles. He told them, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' They were empowered to speak words of forgiveness and of judgment, words that would declare the work of God here among us.

Our minds tend to search for order. We want to make sense of life, to understand the world, to organize all that comes to our awareness. This tendency may appear differently within each of us. Our cultural and societal beliefs form structures that often need to be adjusted and re-organized. When this need rises up it can be a messy and emotional process. We struggle to understand what to keep and what is no longer necessary or helpful. We look to history for examples of major shifts, such as the recognition of human rights for all peoples. The pandemic caused our world to restructure movement on the global level and on the personal level when we remained isolated in our homes. During the pandemic many of us became more aware of the historical impact of disease and the devastating impact of polio, leprosy, sexually transmitted diseases, and even the flu.

Yet, even with the medical advances, humanity seems to cling to old and odd behaviours. Although we are well aware of the immense benefits of moderate exercise and good nutrition, we live in a nation where the rate of obesity has doubled since 1970.

Sometimes our need for order conflicts with established rules that don't work very well. It is messy to reconsider in-effective rules or a limiting perspective through which we see life. It is good to look anew at the teachings of Christ, to seek renewal of our perspectives.

During this time of the Easter season we celebrate the biggest mystery of faith. We look to the scriptures. Jesus was crucified, died, and resurrected. The disciples were living through the events without the knowledge of how it would be resolved. Thomas and the others provide us with reassurance that faith can include questions and that Jesus meets

us in our need. Isn't this the way that many of us have come to our faith? We were not there two thousand years ago to see the events as they unfolded. We did not see or touch. We heard, read, and experienced that which allowed our faith to blossom. We heard the stories of Jesus in a way that invited us to explore our faith. Something spoke to us, calling our name. There was a sermon, a passage, a prayer, a kindness. Jesus said, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine #687

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

Quote God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

In this season of Easter, we celebrate God's precious gift to us in Christ's dying and rising. As we present our gifts to God, may our generosity reflect God's goodness to us and the hope we have found 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

Generous God, thank you for the hope we can claim in your resurrecting power. Bless the gifts we bring so they may spread that hope in the world you love. In the name of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen

Prayers of the People

Thank you, loving God, for your renewing presence in our lives and for the many ways you make yourself known to us. We are thankful for creation that awakens wonder within us. We are thankful for words spoken in peace, in actions that embody love, and in worship that inspires faith and understanding. We pray that all people will come to know the life-giving joy we find in Christ.

We pray for those who face violence and unrest each day throughout the world and in our own community. We pray for our national, provincial, and municipal leaders as they seek solutions to the challenges in our common life. We pray for our congregation, for churches in our community, and for people of faith within this world.

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We pray for those who are feeling fearful, worried, or overwhelmed, in these days of economic pressure and uncertainty. We pray for our neighbours, especially those struggling with rising costs and scarce housing, and those who know rejection and discrimination.

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. Draw near to those who must confront illness, loss, and 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 and you're your Spirit to linger with Brenda, Faye and family as they mourn John. May their shared memories be a blessing. God of hope, we ask you to linger with all who are dealing with challenges: Marjorie & family; Renee & Jim; Judith & Gerry; Rob, Valerie, Jim & Jane; Carl; Betty Lou; Ruth; Audrey & Grace; Courtney, Gayle & family; and, Phyllis and 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 Great is thy faithfulness #324

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

Go in faith, with the peace of Christ within you, to witness to his compassion in the world. May God's resurrecting love open the future for you, empowered by the Spirit, and embraced by the presence of the risen Christ.

Postlude Amen