

May the grace of Jesus Christ be with you ... **and also with you.** Welcome to worship at Knox Presbyterian Bayfield on May 12th. It is Mother's day and Christian Family Sunday - a celebration of the parents, grandparents, siblings and children.

Announcements

Mission Moment

Somalia faces an acute hunger crisis, worsened by the most severe drought in four decades. With failed crops, widespread water shortages and reduced livestock productivity, Nafiso Hussein's family and thousands more had to abandon their homes in search of relief. Hunger and extreme conditions affected Nafiso's son Hadi, whose health had deteriorated critically. In the displaced persons camp where they had sought refuge, Hadi was quickly referred to the stabilization centre for treatment, and under this initiative, his health significantly improved. Nafiso is grateful for her son's recovery, "He is well now, and I am happy to see him play and laugh like before." PWS&D, with partners at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, provides funding to train community nutrition workers who identify and screen severely malnourished children.

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 make this acknowledgement, knowing it is incomplete and inadequate. May we listen, learn, and repent.

HYMN Praise God #306

CALL TO WORSHIP [responsive]

One: For God is awesome, reigning over all the earth!

All: We sing praises to God every day.

One: Let us worship God with all we have to offer.

All: We offer God our love – heart, body, mind, and soul!

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

God of promise and purpose, we praise you with thankful hearts as we marvel at the wonders and beauty of the emerging spring. The beauty of your world lifts our hearts in praise. We pray for the promise and purpose in our own lives to unfurl in this time

empowered by your Holy Spirit, embraced by the love of Christ our Lord. God, we join our voices together ...

Lord Jesus Christ, you call your followers to carry the Good News of God's love and forgiveness to the ends of the earth. We confess it can be difficult to share our faith with others. We face challenges in expressing why we do what we do for you. Holy God, help us to find the courage to speak openly of our faith and our commitment to you. 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

#267

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 readings this morning speak of challenging moments. In our lives there are times when we become aware that the decisions we make may have lasting impact. It is important at such times to be aware of how we understand the context ... the many factors that influence how we see and experience our concerns. In John's gospel we will hear of the concerns Jesus holds as he turns to God in prayer. Jesus wants them to find a sense of security in their unity with each other, with him, and with God. He demonstrates the importance of sharing our concerns and celebrations. Diana Butler Bass wrote that prayer, "isn't about changing others; it isn't about changing particular circumstances. It is about changing ourselves by rooting us more assuredly in relationship with others, reminding us of our oneness with God, and experiencing the love which has held us" since the beginning of time. Theologian Karl Barth wrote, 'To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.' In the passage from the gospel of John, Jesus prayed with his disciples just before he was arrested. They have finished the seder meal of Passover. He prayed for them knowing they would soon live in the world without his physical presence.

This passage is both a high-priestly prayer and a farewell prayer. Jesus prayed for God's presence and guidance as the disciples were sent out to witness to God's love and unity with the assurance of God's presence and protection. The prayer emphasizes abundant, eternal life that are gifts from God. The disciples were called, set apart, and sent into the world in the midst of conflict and confusion.

In her sermon Gifts you can't return Mary Austin wrote, "Jesus was building a wall of care around his disciples as he prepared to leave their presence. They would have to live in the world in a different way, without his daily guidance, without his wise and fiery presence, without the compassion of his touch. ... If Jesus saw these first disciples as a gift, it gives me hope that he sees us a gift. Even though we, too, are at times, clueless, vengeful, self-serving, and silly, mixed in with our love for Jesus."

Listen to the prayer Jesus shared. **John 17 [B#111 /W#115]**

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My

prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” Amen. May God bless our understanding of this, God’s holy word. **The word of the Lord.**

Jesus prayed for people to become one with the triune God. We are encouraged to become aware of God’s presence within our lives so that we are able to live in unity and love. In his book, *Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines That Shape the Church for Mission*, professor David Fitch wrote about recognizing God’s presence in everyday life. He writes about his intentional efforts at a local McDonald’s. Fitch wrote, “I was challenged to see this place as a vibrant arena where God was truly present. ... As time went on I started to meet an array of people in surprising conversations. I got to know people struggling to hold onto a job, abused by a spouse, or mistreated by police. I got to know some police ... I shared tables regularly with people who lived in cars and vans. I became enmeshed in a network where God was working in people’s lives, and I was swept up into it. I had never been invited into the lives of so many people as I was at this McDonald’s - not even in a church ... I found myself joined with people in prayer, reconciliation, healing, and proclaiming the hope of the gospel. I became a participant in God’s work.”

The power of prayer led the disciples through the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Which lead us to the accounts proclaimed in the book of Acts. In our reading

today, we find the disciples seeking to fill the space left by Judas. This passage explores the ways in which the disciples discern God's presence in their decision making.

Acts 1:15-17; 19-26 [B#118/W#122]

In those days Peter stood up among the believers - together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons- and said, "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.... So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. May God bless our understanding of this, God's holy word. **The word of the Lord.**

In Hebrew the word for "lot" ... "goral" means a "share". More recently, casting lots has acquired the general meaning of "fate". The ancient Israelites used the process of casting lots for many reasons. The land west of the Jordan was divided among the tribes by lot. Jewish tradition holds that the land was divided under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with the casting of the lot as the visible confirmation. The "goral," were likely small stones or sticks that were thrown or shaken so the one that fell out pointed to the chosen one. Moses chose the seventy elders by selecting six men from each of the twelve tribes, and then placing seventy-two pieces of paper into an urn. One was drawn by each man. Jacob's sons drew lots to decide who would take Joseph's coat to their father. There are diverse ways in which we hear and respond to God's call to serve.

The leaders of this congregation respond to God's call in many ways. For example, the Session and the Finance Committee spend significant effort to care for the congregation. They meet intermittently throughout the year. The Finance committee is led by Pieter and Teresa as co-conveners along with Jim, Jan, and Jim. The session includes me, as your minister plus the ruling elders. Currently there are 3 dedicated elders – Brenda, has been serving as an elder for over 20 years and she serves as the Clerk of Session; Deb,

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2024 05 12

currently serves as and elder and as the Presbytery Rep; and Jim, serves as an assessor elder and liaison to the Finance and Maintenance committee. We meet as a Session about 9 or 10 times a year to discuss the governance of the church. Our next meeting will be tomorrow morning where we will discuss many issues including moving forward with the elder election.

The decision to call an election arises from the need to have a reasonable number of elders to share the spiritual oversight of the church. This Session would be well served by 5 or 6 elders. There are many matters that come before Session including: responsibility for establishing good order, providing for the pastoral care of the congregation, maintaining oversight of groups, determining the frequency and dates of Holy Communion, and the policies and procedures within the church. For example, you may recall the significant discussions on inclusive policies within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The decision to be an inclusive faith community here at Knox Bayfield was prayerfully considered and discussed.

The spiritual office of eldership consists of people who are committed to serving God. You are asked to consider the ways in which you may be called to this role. Do you sense your purpose within the congregation is shifting? Perhaps you are curious about the ways in which you might serve. You may be called to be part of the Session and you may feel you could help by encouraging others to serve. I encourage each of you to be attentive to God's calling in this place and time.

There are many ways to serve and, when we are attentive, we witness evidence of God's call. Many years ago, as I became more attentive, my call to serve began with a nudging as I listened to scripture being read from the pulpit on Sunday morning. I had a sense that I could read for the congregation and I wasn't sure about how to proceed. So I asked. Little did I know where God was leading me that day.

The history of humanity is filled with ordinary people who have been attentive to the Spirit's movement within their lives. When Jewish psychiatrist Victor Frankl was arrested by the Nazis in World War II, he was stripped of everything - property, family, possessions. Before the war, he had spent years researching and writing a book on the importance of finding meaning in life. The concepts he developed would later be known as 'logotherapy'. However, when he was sent to the death camp in Auschwitz, his

manuscript was taken from him. His life's work had been carefully preserved and hidden

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6

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inside the lining of his coat. His work was ripped away from him. Frankl wrote, "I had to undergo and overcome the loss of my spiritual child. Now it seemed as if nothing and no one would survive me; neither a physical nor a spiritual child of my own! I found myself confronted with the question of whether under such circumstances my life was ultimately void of any meaning." A few days later, while he was wrestling with this devastating issue, the Nazis forced the prisoners to give up their clothes. "I had to surrender my clothes and in turn inherited the worn-out rags of an inmate who had been sent to the gas chamber. Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in the pocket of the newly acquired coat a single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, which contained the main Jewish prayer, Shema Yisrael (Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one God. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.) How should I have interpreted such a 'coincidence' other than as a challenge to live my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?" Later, Frankl wrote in his book *Man's search for Meaning*, "There is nothing in the world that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life ...' He who has a why to live for ... can bear almost any how.'

At the end of his earthly life, Jesus prayed for people to become one with God, to find their purpose, their love, their connection with the divine. The disciples took this message to share with the world. It is through the everyday actions and interactions of people through the centuries that we have continued to reach out in faith and experience the love of God. Praise be to God for visions and the movement of the Spirit among us.

Hymn Spirit of the living God #400

THE OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND LABOUR TO THE LORD

Quote Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service. Mother Teresa – nun, missionary

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.

The season of Easter concludes at the end of this week. We continue to receive the blessings God pours out for us in Christ and in creation. Our gifts to God are a token of our gratitude and our commitment to share them with the whole world.

Blessing of Gifts

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2024 05 12

Eternal and ever-present God, bless the gifts we offer with the power of your Holy Spirit. Use them and us to witness to the love of Jesus Christ and bring healing and hope to the world in your name. Amen.

Prayers of the People

O God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life, you began the work of creating a new world, a world where justice is known, where freedom and healing are available to all people. We are grateful for the seeds you have sown.

We pray for the places in the world that are caught up in violence, where people are held captive or struggle under oppressive powers, and where sickness prevails and medical resources are scarce. Grant each one courage and perseverance through your Spirit. May people everywhere find the fullness of life you intend for us all.

God of human connection, you began the work of creating a new community, one where love is shared and all find a sense of belonging. We are grateful that we belong to you. We pray for groups who are made to feel like they don't belong, for families caught up in tension or strife, and for those who feel isolated believing that no one cares. Grant each one courage and comfort through your Spirit. May people everywhere find the fullness of life you intend for us all.

God of the earth and its wonders, you began the work of a new creation where all that has been broken is being restored, where all that has been distorted is made right, and what has been damaged is renewed. We are grateful for your power of renewal. We pray for the earth, the places where its natural balances are threatened and species put at risk by human exploitation. Send your healing Spirit to renew the earth and strengthen good stewardship. May creatures everywhere know the fullness of life you intend for us all.

God of this life and new life, as you work towards making all things new, we pray for renewal in our churches and ministries, for leaders who have become tired out by their responsibilities, and for church members who struggle to discern their contribution.

Holy One, on this Christian Family Sunday we pray for families. Thank you for parents, grandparents and caregivers, for the generations who started our families and all they have given to us. Today we thank you for our mothers and pray for all the mothers around the world. May they have hope for their children. Comfort and support each member of our families.

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8

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KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BAYFIELD

2024 05 12

We pray your energizing Spirit will gather the church in familiar and new ways. May your servants in every church know the fullness of life you intend and be empowered to bear witness to Jesus in refreshing ways.

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 your Spirit to linger with Jim, Jane and family as they mourn Valerie; with Brenda, Faye and family as they mourn John; and with friends and family as they mourn the loss of Marjorie. May their shared memories be a blessing. God of hope, we ask you to linger with all who are dealing with challenges: Renee & Jim; Judith & Gerry; Rob, Jim & Jane; Carl; Betty Lou; Ruth; Audrey & Grace; Courtney, Gayle & family. 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 Love divine love excelling #371

To Go Forth In God's Name Commissioning and Benediction

Go in with the assurance that Christ walks with you. Embrace his love in truth and action. May God's resurrecting love open the future for you, empowered by the Spirit, and embraced by the presence of Jesus Christ, our Risen and Ascended Lord.

Postlude

Amen