

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

*We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation. We also acknowledge that the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – have lived on this land since before settlers of European descent claimed ownership and displaced those for whom it was home. As we pursue our goals to dismantle racism and attend to growing diversity, we lament this injustice in our history and commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.*

***May we live with respect on this land and live in peace and friendship with its people.***

➤ *Dance with the Spirit*

*MV 156 (repeat)*

Call to Worship

Let us praise God the Creator,

**filled with glory and power – holiness and splendor**

Let us worship God the Saviour,

**filled with love and compassion – justice and peace**

Let us experience God the Spirit,

**who fills us with faith and joy – love and eternal life**

Let us celebrate God in this time together! Let us pray...

† Prayer

Holy One, you truly are the rock upon which we build our lives. We sing our praise to you with joy and thanksgiving and enter this time of worship ready to open our hearts to your Holy presence. Help us to set aside the debris of our daily lives and immerse our whole being in your life-giving Spirit.

Lord, you come to us, but we do not recognize you – you call, but we do not follow – you command, but we do not obey – you bless us, but we do not thank you. Forgive and help us we pray.

Lord, you do forgive us, but we do not forgive those who wrong us. You love us, but we do not love our neighbours. Forgive and help us we pray. **Amen**

Words of Hope

All who are led by the Spirit of God are truly children of God. Give thanks and be at peace – you are forgiven.

➤ *Your hand, O God, has guided*

*477*

## † Prayer for Understanding

**Lord God, Loving God, our souls wait for you, more than those who watch for the morning. Send your Spirit upon us as your Word is read and interpreted, so that we will hear your voice and know the way of truth and love through Christ, the Living Word. Amen**

## Scripture

### **Psalm 138**

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

**I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.**

On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

**All the rulers of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth. They shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.**

For though the LORD is high, God regards the lowly; but perceives the haughty from far away.

**Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;**

you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

**O LORD, fulfill your purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.**

### **Mark 3: 20-35**

...and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat.

When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind."

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons."

And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" – for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you."

And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### Message

Matthew, Mark and Luke each present variations of Jesus' mother and brothers arriving while he's teaching and although Mark's account is the starkest, they share a singular reaction. Upon hearing his family is nearby, Jesus asks the harsh question, "*Who are my mother and my brothers?*" And his jarring response is that it is not his kin – not those who bore him or grew up with him – but instead those who have become his followers – that is his family now. His own flesh and blood family is seemingly rejected as he claims that a new kind of

community is on the horizon. This new spiritual family includes the nuisances and the nobodies – tax collectors and sinners – not just the wise and righteous.

In the verses prior to the passage read this morning we learn that Jesus' fame has begun to spread throughout the region – even to Jerusalem. So much so, that the religious authorities have started to show up to challenge Jesus and have become sufficiently worried that they have begun to plot how to destroy him.

At the time of Jesus, the first line of attack would be for the authorities to publicly discredit and shame Jesus, because without the backing of the crowds Jesus is no threat whatsoever – he could just be sent back to

obscurity in that no-name hamlet in the backwoods of Galilee where he belongs.

And so, this passage begins by setting the scene in the presence of a crowd – the place where public reputations are made – or broken. There are two sources harassing Jesus here – the authorities and his own family.

Family is as foundational a concept in the Bible as anything else. The Bible begins in Genesis, not with talk of nations and tribes, but families – big families – real families – families with moments of dysfunction so great it makes your head spin. It gives one pause at the phrase “biblical family values” that some people throw around a bit carelessly.

There are other great metaphors to describe the relationship between God and humankind: monarch and subjects – master and slaves – but it always comes back around to family. Sometimes God’s faithful people are likened to the bride of the bridegroom – and our infidelities are then compared to adultery. But most of the time we are God’s children – God’s daughters and sons who bring great joy as well as great consternation.

And so, coming to God is really like going home – to family – to family values, whatever those are. But what is our vision of family? And what vision of family is Jesus calling us to in this text?

Jesus draws a wide circle for this new spiritual family that includes people of all races and sexual orientations –

cisgender and trans and gender fluid – those holding various interpretations of scripture and differing images of the divine. Draw the circle wide in your own understanding of family to think about who you might include rather than exclude – maybe it's those experiencing homelessness – or those struggling with addictions – maybe it is someone making life choices you don't understand – maybe it is someone professing to be spiritual but not religious. What vision of family do you hold in your heart and mind? Does it connect with Jesus' call to love God and love others – to include all others?

We have been reminded this week that our understanding of family has not always been so inclusive. As a country and as a church – as Christians – we did not always value the families of Indigenous

people on this land. In fact, we actively disrupted and dismissed as irrelevant those families and their relationships as we implemented colonial practices designed to assimilate and eliminate Indigenous presence. We may have been well-intentioned at the time, but that hardly excuses our hurtful, unloving and ultimately tragic actions.

We know that the bodies of 215 children buried at the Kamloops residential school site will not be the only ones found – testimony from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission affirms that there will be more such disturbing and shameful discoveries. When these things happened – not so very long ago – in my lifetime and yours – in this country – just across the tracks or the river – where were we? Were we sitting at



the table with our family? Coming to the Lord's Table with our church family? Did our vision of family mirror the spiritual family of Jesus? Can we grow our understanding so that we live more fully the family dynamic Jesus envisions?

*Who is family?* Jesus' question is well worth asking.

Jesus' family is either frustrated with him, or simply worried about him. They hear that Jesus is drawing crowds again, and they go to restrain him – because people are talking. Some people think he's loony and his family is either embarrassed or concerned about what might become of him. It doesn't always end well for such people.

The mother of Jesus rarely appears in Mark's Gospel. His brothers and sisters appear even less often. When they do show up, as in today's reading, it tends not to be a happy situation. They think Jesus is out of his mind – they are there to apprehend him – to drag him off to safety – a intervention of sorts.

For Jesus – and for those men and women who left everything to follow him – loyalty to God was the first, unassailable priority. Not the cultural customs of his community, not the assumed wisdom of the religious leaders, not the law of Moses, not even loyalty to family – parents, siblings, life partner, children. *Who is my family?*

His family are acting to ensure that Jesus' behaviour does not bring the family into disrepute and does not

get him killed. If Jesus is indeed “*out of his mind*” the family is honour-bound to restrain him and keep his craziness secret within the family.

Jesus asks, *who are my mother and my brothers* – and it cuts to the heart of a society where family is everything. *You are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my sibling and my parent. Those who seek divine connection through Christ are family.*

It is one of the most radical statements in the Gospel because it announces a whole new way of being family and the abandonment of blood-relations as the primary bond that defines and orders one’s life. Jesus opens the tent and allows everyone who wants to enter, the chance to enter – includes everyone. *Who is his family?*

Those who turn to God are the family of God. When you seek the divine and serve by the grace of Jesus you are brother – sister – mother – and more!

Jesus' family thinks he is out of his mind. Others wonder if he is perhaps possessed by an evil spirit. The gospel message is that there is a third option – he is filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not out of his mind – Jesus is not filled with demonic spirits. Jesus has the mind of God – is filled with the Holy Spirit – and Jesus invites all of us to be of the same mind and same Spirit in a new understanding of family.

Come in. Join the family. Jesus' family is an open family. The door to the homestead is thrown wide. While each of us may bring historic burdens and a certain

dysfunction in with us, we are welcome all the same. And as we have been welcomed, so we are called to be truly welcoming. I'll end my message today with the **welcome statement** that Knox Session affirmed at its May meeting...

### You are welcome.

At Knox Presbyterian Church, our Christian community of faith aims to create a welcoming space for all by upholding the values of diversity and inclusion. We recognize that some people experience historic and current systemic barriers based on their country of origin, gender identity and expression, Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability, and faith experience. We seek to serve in our community and the world in ways that contribute to dismantling these barriers.

We are committed to celebrating diversity, identity and expression, implementing anti-racism and anti-bias

practices. We continue to seek opportunities to develop our cultural competence and humility awareness.

As Jesus did, and as he taught, we strive to respect and affirm the dignity and worth of all whom we meet, especially those who seek spiritual, emotional and physical support through our community of faith.

➤ *Draw the circle wide*

*MV 145*

#### † Offering and Prayer

Today, the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada opens in a new way, drawing commissioners from across Canada together online. Our offering supports the ministries and mission we undertake together, in this country and around the world. Consider how your gift to God is multiplied in the witness of our denomination, combined with so many others!

**God of grace and goodness, we offer our gifts in gratitude for all we receive from you, in Christ and in creation. We trust you can multiply them in ways we cannot even imagine. Bless the ministries of our congregation and of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in these challenging times. Surprise us by what you accomplish through us as we sow seeds of generosity in the gifts we bring to you. Amen**

#### The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

➤ *Deep in our hearts*

*MV 154*

## Gathering at the Lord's Table

This is the Lord's Table – a table of companionship with Jesus – all who love him and all who want to love him more.

**It is the table of sharing with the poor and broken – the table of relationship in which Christ becomes flesh. We come seeking strength and healing. We come seeking unity with Christ.**

Come to this table you who have much faith and you who would like to have more – come you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time – come you who have tried to follow Jesus and you who have failed. Come.

It is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

**We remember with thanksgiving the gracious acts of God throughout history and in all creation. We praise our God that we have been invited – to serve one another without pride, to forgive one another as we have been forgiven, to feast together as members of one family.**

Around this table our voices fall silent as we pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Fill them and fill us with the abundance of Jesus.

~ Silence ~

### **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26**

I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, ***“This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me.”*** He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, ***“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me.”*** Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

➤ ***You satisfy the hungry heart (verses 1, 2, 4)***

**538**

## Sharing Bread and Wine

The one who breathed on the first disciples is present for us in this bread.

The one whose Spirit stirred the Church at Pentecost revives us in this cup.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

*Everyone consumes the elements in their own space...*

## † Prayer (adapted from PCC Resources)

We thank you for the mystery of being joined with Christ in this meal as a community of faith. Grant us the humility and enthusiasm to return again and again to feast together at your table so that we may be continually nourished for the journey.

We pray for the life of our denomination as it meets in General Assembly. Send your Spirit to work in and through the commissioners, even while they gather at a distance and engage through virtual technology. Speak through your Spirit to open minds and hearts to your leading. May your grace sustain us in communion and community, even when we differ over decisions and directions.

God of compassion and concern, we thank you for the ministries and mission Presbyterians undertake together in Canada and throughout the world. Thank you for lessons learned and hope inspired by partners we have worked with in many different cultures, over this difficult year and throughout many years. We pray for all who serve in the name of our church and for those who join in ministries supported by Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service & Development. Open our hearts to support these ministries with generous giving and ongoing prayer, so lives will be healed, transformed and strengthened according to your compassionate concern.

God of our hearts and our hopes, we pray for those you have given us to love. Hear us as we place their needs and hopes before you...

We pray for those who serve our nation as leaders in business, politics, health care and education. Grant them wisdom in this challenging time, so that their choices consider the needs of the most vulnerable...

We pray for those who face uncertainty, unrest, and threat from violence day by day. We remember people in our own community who know upheaval because of the pandemic, and those in places around the world where injustice is unrelenting...

God of the earth and all its fullness, in this season of planting and growing, of nesting and nurturing, we pray for the environment and all the creatures it supports. Protect species and habitats at risk and awaken us to better stewardship in the garden you have entrusted to us.

Hear our prayers for everything and everyone you have created in love, O God, as we join in singing as Jesus taught...

➤ ***Our Father in heaven (The Lord's Prayer – no repeats) 469***

## Blessing

Let us go into this week looking for our next encounter with the living God. May we experience God breaking into our lives and making us new – giving us hope – filling us with peace – pouring love into our hearts this week and always. And may the grace of the Risen Christ, the love of God and the nurturing community of the Holy Spirit embrace us all.

➤ ***Go now in peace, never be afraid***