

Welcome, Announcements, and Land Acknowledgement

As we come to worship in Jesus' name we acknowledge with gratitude and respect the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – on whose traditional and unceded territory we gather. We commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.

➤ *Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary (repeat)*

Lenten Liturgy

During Lent, we remember God's justice is being established and the oppressed are set free.

Let us submit our lives to Christ and be liberated from the patterns and sins that keep us captive.

God's grace brings justice and is at work within us, encouraging our relationships and challenging the flawed systems we are part of. Sometimes, change is gradual and sometimes change happens quickly.

All things are possible with God.

Let us pray... **Liberating God, you call us to seek that justice in the world which reflects the divine righteousness revealed in the Bible. When it is difficult to see your grace and justice at work, let us feel a strong sense of your presence and you at work in the world. Keep us focused on the one who is the way, the truth and the life, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

➤ *Bless the Lord (taize chant)*

PWS&D Sharing **New Technique, New Hope**

To Memory Nthakomwa, a young farmer from Malawi, it seemed like the upcoming farming season would be as difficult as the rest.

She had witnessed what climate change had done to previous crops — with inconsistent weather and floods, crop production had drastically decreased, yielding very little.

Then, Memory was introduced to a new farming method known as conservation agriculture. She learned the importance of rotating crops and how to intercrop seeds so that even when the effects of climate change did occur, she would be better prepared.

Memory was very hesitant to try the new technique. But after learning more at a workshop hosted by PWS&D's local partner, she grew more optimistic.

Today, she has not only increased the amount of land she farms using conservation agriculture, but Memory is equipped with the tools and techniques she needs to combat the effects of climate change and recurring hunger.

Thank you for faithfully responding to Christ's call to serve the poor. Through support of PWS&D, we can help vulnerable families better address the impacts of the climate crisis.

† Prayer for Understanding

God of wisdom, your Word brings light to show us the way you would have us follow. As the Scriptures are read and proclaimed this day, send us your Holy Spirit to aid our understanding and guide us in the ways we live out your truth. Amen

Scripture

Psalm 27 responsive/displayed

The LORD is my light and my salvation;

whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;

of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh – my adversaries and foes – they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in the Lord's temple.

For you, Lord, will hide me in your shelter in the day of trouble; you will conceal me under the cover of your tent; you will set me high on a rock.

Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer sacrifices in the Lord's tent with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

"Come," my heart says, "seek the Lord's face!"

Your face, LORD, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help.

Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up.

Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

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

Message

I love this Psalm – it fills me with a sense of calm and trust in God – with confidence, which seems particularly necessary and helpful to me these days with so much uncertainty and turmoil in our world. However, when you read through the whole poem – instead of skimming through the middle as we are sometimes inclined to do – you see and hear that it is a bit of a roller coaster! It is not a psalm for the faint hearted (are any of them?) but one that takes us through the ups and downs of our experience, offering spiritual resilience in times of trouble. So, a great psalm for our time when it can be so difficult to know who to trust – how to even discern truth, when fake news and genuinely dangerous lies are all around us.

Although we don't usually use war images these days, you could say that Psalm 27 emerges from the battlefield of life. *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"* This is such a strong declaration of a very personal relationship. It is the confession that God is **for me** — the stronghold of **my life**. Fear and threat are real. Evil doers abound. They are nipping at our heels. Yet, God lives and will have the final word. Enemies will be overthrown — fear will be vanquished. Indeed, if God is for me, who shall be against me? We can trust God because God will outlast every enemy. In the valley of the shadow, God is our companion.

Psalm 27 includes this opening song of trust, prayers for deliverance, and a lament. The rapid-fire movement among these responses to God makes clear the challenge of faith. The circumstances of our lives can cause us to question God's goodness. The empty echo meeting our prayers casts doubt upon God's attentiveness. We feel forsaken, and we can so easily fall into unbelief. Yet, the psalm begins and ends with proclamations of trust. They serve to reassure us as to who God is for us — they give us hope.

The psalmist moves from confidence to a more pragmatic tone – seeking safety and security in God's house, far from the dangers all around. He promises to behold the beauty of the Lord, joyfully offer sacrifices and filling God's house with song. There is devotion here and some distance from the troubles of the world, but it doesn't last because you can hear the anxiety breaking through: *Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! – I am seeking your face the way my heart urges me to, so don't turn your servant away – don't turn me away in anger – don't forsake me.*

And even as he pleads, the psalmist offers a challenge to God. *Remember who you are, you who have been my help, you who are my salvation.* God is not only my light and my salvation — God is the parent who remains faithful.

And then we hear the confidence – the hope and trust — returning in the final verse: *Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!* That verse is beautiful, and it is true, but it is not quite the same as the song at the beginning. Now we are waiting without the bluster and bravado of the opening verses. And does anyone enjoy waiting? Not me.

Waiting in line, waiting in a traffic jam, waiting for your turn to use the bathroom, waiting for your table to be called to the buffet. “Are we there yet?” “No, we have a long way to go, you’ve just got to be patient!”

But then there is that other kind of waiting. What will the lab results be when the pathology report of your biopsy comes back? How is that surgery on your loved one going? Is there anything more agonizing than waiting for the dawn on those nights when your anxiety keeps you from sleeping? You turn over in bed to see the glowing numbers on the alarm clock’s display and you sigh deeply to see that it’s been only five lousy minutes since the last time you checked.

And all during COVID, we’ve come to know again what it is to wait. Waiting through a time of quarantine. Waiting for the virus to subside. Waiting for a test result. Waiting for life to get back to “normal” even though we have no idea exactly what we are waiting for, or exactly how long it might take.

“*Wait for the Lord*” the psalmist says. *Wait*. And be confident in your waiting – be strong of heart while waiting. Faith involves hope and trust precisely because we cannot see our God the way we can see lots of other things in life. And so, while we await the consummation of our salvation, we hope, and we trust. We wait because we don’t have all the answers just yet. We wait because we don’t yet know whether any given prayer will be answered the way we hope.

Our lives have their share of ups and downs. The results are not always clear. There are no guarantees that we will be successful, or that our side will triumph in the challenges of everyday life. Tempted to give up hope, trust in God places our efforts in the context of a larger story, God’s vision of Shalom. Trusting God, we know that deep in our hearts we do believe – that somehow, we will get through it all. In that spirit, we can proclaim, “we are not afraid,” despite the words of fear mongers, the obliviousness or mismanagement of government and corporation leaders, and our own personal predicaments.

Facing the desperate and apparently unsolvable crises of our time, let us not give up heart. Let us not be afraid. But let us respond with hope and courage to the struggles of day-to-day life, global uncertainty, war in Ukraine, changing demographics and their impact on the church, climate change and the rise of racism, and our own personal dramas.

To trust in God actually and objectively transforms the situation: we behave differently and reason differently from those who are sure they are abandoned. Even in defeat, we are not annihilated. *The Lord is our light and our salvation. Always. Of whom, then, shall we be afraid?*

➤ *Come, know my joy, the Maker says*

788

† Offering

Our lives overflow with good gifts which come from God. Out of the goodness we enjoy, let us present our offering to God with thankfulness and generosity.

Living God, we offer our gifts today in hopeful gratitude. Bless and use them to increase the goodness enjoyed by those in need. Bless our lives that others will be touched by the hope we know in Christ Jesus and find their lives blessed by his love and mercy. Amen

Welcoming New Members **all who are to be received come forward**

Christian friends, **Jim Jeatt, Wendy Jeatt, Jan Elliott, and Keith Elliott** have been baptized and are members of the body of Christ. They have been nurtured within the Christian community and instructed in the belief and practice of the church. They have been received by Knox Session into the membership of this congregation and desire to make a public profession of their faith – claiming the rights and responsibilities associated with membership in the congregation of Knox Church.

By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Jim, Wendy, Jan, and Keith you stand before God and this community of faith to acknowledge your growth in grace and to assume responsibility as a disciple of Jesus Christ in this congregation and in the world.

- Do you profess your faith in God our creator – in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord – in the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide? ***I do***
- Will you faithfully participate in worship, study and prayer – entering into the life and work of the church, supporting it with your gifts and sharing in its mission in the world? ***I will***
- Will you seek to turn away from sin and evil which separates you from the love of God – pursuing always Christ's way of love and hope? ***I will***

[To the congregation] Will you guide and nurture **Jim, Wendy, Jan, and Keith** by word and deed, with love and in prayer – encouraging them to follow the way of Christ and to be faithful members of Christ's church? ***We will***

The Blessing **Individually for each person with my hand resting on their head.**

Jim, Wendy, Jan, and Keith may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

You have been received into the membership of this congregation. You join us as siblings in the Lord to share in the worship and work of this faith community. Let us pray...

Holy God, we praise you for calling us to be a servant people, and for gathering us into the body of Christ. We thank you for choosing to add to our number siblings in faith. Together may we live in your Spirit, and so love one another, that we may have the mind of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom we give honour and glory forever. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

God of strength and comfort, in the quiet calm of your presence, we pause in the whirlwind of concerns around us, and set aside our own interests and distractions to pray for the world you love. Today we remember before you...

- the people of Ukraine who are living the nightmare of war and invasion
- those in Russia caught up in this horrible conflict
- all people in their daily life and work wherever they live
- our own families, friends, and neighbours
- those we work or study or play with
- and those whose faces we recognize regularly but do not know

Be with all who find these times stressful or exhausting...

We remember before you this congregation, our presbytery, and congregations of other traditions near us, as well as those who serve in church leadership and all who nurture faith in others. Help us support each other and look to the future with hope.

We pray for this community, our country, and governments throughout the world, as well as all those who work for justice, freedom, and peace. Send your Spirit to speak for the voiceless and challenge injustice.

We pray for victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression, for all who struggle to rebuild their communities after natural disaster and the effects of the pandemic, and for all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble. Bring them comfort and courage, and the support of their neighbours.

And we pray for those people and situations on our hearts and minds this day...

Hear us as we pray as Jesus encouraged us to do ...***Our Father, who art in heaven – hallowed 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen***

➤ *O Jesus, I have promised*

569

Blessing

As we move from our time of worship to our congregational meeting may we welcome the gifts of all among us and dedicate our own gifts to the glory of God without regard to the amount or

measure by which others serve. May we see in each face the reflection of God's glory and hear from each voice the good news of God's love.

Our generous God gathers us together as a church. May we be the church at its finest – with fond and caring friendships, creative conversations, and decisions that bear witness to God's presence in our midst – to God's promise for our future.

And now may the grace of Christ Jesus, the love of God and the nurturing community of the Holy Spirit embrace us all. Amen

➤ *Go now in peace (round)*

622

Please remember to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting – in person or via Zoom – at 10:45 am this Sunday (13 March 2022). The Annual Report, Financial Statements, Declaration of Trust (Trust Deed), and a cover letter outline protocols for joining via Zoom have all been emailed to you. There are some copies of these documents available at Knox but please bring your own print copy if you can. The Zoom invitation is below. Please contact Laura with any questions or concerns.

Laura (she/her) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: 2022 Annual Congregational Meeting

Time: Mar 13, 2022 10:45 AM Pacific Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89117533288?pwd=Ym5QTXBhUDRnQnVkdW4yU2lqR2xTd09>

Meeting ID: 891 1753 3288

Passcode: 724753

Dial by your location

+1 778 907 2071

Meeting ID: 891 1753 3288

Participant: #

Passcode: 724753

Thank You!



Presbyterians
Sharing

Together We Are Sharing God's Love is a short video to say thank you for your/our generous gifts in 2021 – click on the link or insert it into your browser

<https://presbyterian.ca/2022/01/18/presbyterians-sharing-video-together-we-are-sharing-gods-love>