

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.

➤ *Don't be afraid (repeat)*

Call to Worship

We have heard that Easter is over, so who is this that stands at the shoreline of our life?

Who is this that calls us to cast our nets on the other side?

Who is this that invites us to breakfast on the beach?

Who is this that says again, "Follow me!"?

Ah! It is the risen Christ. Easter has just begun!

Let us worship God. Please be seated as we pray...

Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

Holy God, the first and the last, beginning and end of all things, you are worthy of praise from all your creation. Sun, moon, and stars praise you. Earth, sea, and sky praise you. Every living thing praises you in its own way. And so we praise you in our human diversity, joining our varied voices with all your creatures in heaven and on earth. You fill our lives with the wonder of your love in Christ Jesus. Your Spirit moves throughout the world to reveal your purposes for every living thing. Receive our prayers and praise this day, for you are the Source of our life and our hope.

Loving God, Jesus commanded us to love one another so the world would know we follow him. Yet we confess we do not always love one another – not the way Jesus loves us.

The world has seen our squabbling – our history of hypocrisy – our lack of compassion for those who don't measure up.

Loving God, forgive us. Lord Jesus, continue to love us. Holy Spirit, fill us with love, so that the world will witness your love in our words and actions. **Amen**

Jesus taught us that no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. Christ has laid down his life for us and invites us to love one another as he has loved us. Let us rejoice in his forgiving love and share it with each other day by day.

➤ *This is my commandment*

694 (a round)

A Responsive Paraphrase of The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Our Mother

Who art in heaven

Who are in all the earth

Hallowed be thy name

Holy is your truth

Thy kingdom come

May your wisdom come

Thy will be done, on earth

***Your circle be one uniting
as it is in heaven and earth***

Give us this day our daily bread

Give us today a nurturing spirit

And forgive us our trespasses

***Heal through us those who trespass against us
as when we forgive, we ourselves are healed***

Lead us not into temptation

Lead us into fullness of life

But deliver us from evil

And liberate all that is good

For thine is the kingdom,

For the wisdom, the power and the glory,

Presence and the goodness are yours

Now and forever. AMEN

➤ ***Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet***

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† Prayer for Understanding

**We listen for the Word which you have spoken O God. Speak to our souls' understanding.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen**

Scripture **John 13: 31b-35** **[NT 108]**

...Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 21: 1-19 **[NT 115]**

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way.

Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, "We will go with you."

They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?"

They answered him, "No."

He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught."

So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."

Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

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

Message

A servant-girl, seeing Peter in the firelight, stared at him and said, *"This man also was with Jesus."*

But Peter denied it, saying, *"Woman, I do not know him."*

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, *"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"*

He said to him, *"Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."*

Jesus said to him, *"Feed my lambs."*

A little later someone else, on seeing Peter, said, *"You also are one of them."*

But Peter said, *"Man, I am not!"*

A second time Jesus said to him, *"Simon son of John, do you love me?"*

Peter said to him, *"Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."*

Jesus said to him, *"Tend my sheep."*

About an hour later still another kept insisting, *"Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean."*

But Peter said, *"Man, I do not know what you are talking about!"*

At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus said to him the third time, *"Simon son of John, do you love me?"*

Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, *“Do you love me?”* And he said to him, *“Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”*

Jesus said to him, *“Feed my sheep – Follow me.”*

The disciples have seen the risen Christ – in the morning at the tomb – in the evening behind the closed doors of their bed and breakfast – a week later in a special appearance to reassure Thomas. Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! So how has their time of discipleship influenced these followers of Jesus? What changes are they making in their lives because of his teaching, healing, preaching and his glorious resurrection? They go fishing. Fishing! Right back to what they used to do – right back to who they used to be. Nothing seems to have changed – it is as if Jesus had never been there. They get into the boat and go fishing.

They believe in Jesus – they have seen him resurrected and it is part of their faith, but they can't seem to sustain the Easter momentum. They have not translated their experience of Christ into their life and into their mission. Jesus is raised from the dead and the disciples are out to lunch – *“gone fishin’...”*

Until Jesus acts, they catch nothing – accomplish nothing. Until Jesus acts, they are blind and despairing. Jesus fills their nets and feeds them breakfast. Jesus opens their eyes and renews their spirit. And finally, Jesus heals the broken betrayer, Simon Peter.

Peter affirms his love for Jesus and is commissioned to feed and tend the Lord's sheep – this is how he must follow. Seeing the risen Lord is not enough – saying he loves the Lord is not enough – dependence on the Lord is required and that dependence leads to true discipleship. This is the faith that Peter is called to reaffirm that morning on the beach. It isn't something he hasn't done before – he has, more than once during the ministry of Jesus. Simon Peter has believed in Jesus for some time – has been his closest follower. And yet in that experience by the sea, he is converted all over again. The moment of decision approaches again.

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

“Okay, feed my sheep.”

In this moment we witness what happens to Peter as God encounters him yet again – works change in him yet again – demands radical commitment yet again.

“Follow me!”

So I wonder about that – the recurring moment of decision that happens as God encounters us and asks again for our radical commitment – a willingness to be transformed – reformed yet

again. Does that happen for you? Sometimes I think I am open to encounters with God and other times I am sure that I actively resist. From time-to-time God encounters me – or I encounter God. It happens in different ways – often through interactions with people I meet. And then I recognize a shift – change at work in me – renewed radical commitment being stirred. In those moments I feel challenged and encouraged to push past a barrier – to hear the question, “Do you love me?” in a fresh way and to live out my response.

I remember when a colleague asked if we “*passed the peace*” regularly during worship. We do on occasion but not every week. And I know that many congregations stopped or limited the practice during the height of the pandemic. Some people get distressed if they are asked to participate in *passing the peace* and others are distressed if worship does not include such a moment. My colleague went so far to assert that he would not worship anywhere that did not engage in this age-old ritual every time they met.

I used to sit firmly in the “why are we bothering to do this” camp. I wasn’t excited about it because so often *passing the peace of Christ* seems to be a glad-handing, social time that disrupts worship – a variation on manly back-slapping and polite “How are you?” that we see so many other places. It can seem like another, somewhat artificial, time of greeting each other. If we have talked with each other before worship and we will have another chance following the service, why do we need to set aside this moment to do more of the same?

Do we really know each other? Does *passing the peace* suggest greater or less familiarity than we actually experience? Are we a room full of strangers who need to introduce ourselves to each other?

Like the question Jesus poses to Peter three times after their beach barbeque, offering and receiving *the peace of Christ* is something more than the words we speak. In their interaction Jesus acknowledges Peter’s betrayal – his brokenness – his failure – and his despair. Jesus also forgives – he invites Peter to love him – accepts that love – and so the relationship is restored.

Passing the peace isn’t merely a chummy greeting. We don’t just say, “Hey, how you doing. What do you have planned for this afternoon?” Instead we *pass the peace of Christ* to each other. It’s more than polite conversation.

We are offering to each other the peace and forgiveness that Christ offers. It is giving the other person a blessing – like the exchange of loving compassion between Peter and Jesus that binds them again in divine purpose.

It is a prayer on the other person’s behalf. One of the great things about this greeting is that it gets us out of the “me and Jesus” kind of thinking – where my faith is all about me and my relationship with Jesus. *Passing the peace* asks us to bless others – asks us also to open ourselves as we receive a blessing. In this age old practice we are moved into solidarity with one another.

In this moment we can be reunited with each other. If there is any animosity, anger, or ill-will, this is a step toward new beginnings. If you are angry with someone or disappointed in them – if you feel they have betrayed you – this is an opportunity to make things right between you. And perhaps it is not a relationship within these walls that needs mending but one somewhere else in your life and in the larger community but as we offer and receive *the peace of Christ* we are invited to restore all relationships – to reform and transform.

Passing the peace goes back to the earliest worship in the Christian church. Again and again Paul says to his churches, “Greet one another with a holy kiss,” and Peter writes, “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.”

When they tell others to greet each other with a holy kiss, they don’t mean to go plant a big, juicy smooch on each other, but offer a genuine greeting. We’ve seen the greeting that people in the Middle East and Europe still give each other – it is a kiss on each cheek. That is the same kiss that Paul and Peter talk about in worship – a holy greeting – a blessing. The equivalent for us today might be a handshake, eye contact with a nod, or an embrace – or in our current virus consciousness, a fist or elbow bump. If people are worshipping from home perhaps an email, text or phone call offering and receiving *the peace of Christ* is also an option. Give it a try!

We have the opportunity as we *pass the peace of Christ* to share ourselves with each other – to provide a prayer – a blessing – to recommit in loving ways. In *passing the peace* we not only greet and bless each other, we offer reconciliation and relationship.

Marva Dawn, American Christian theologian, tells of being in worship in her home church. When the time came for *passing the peace*, a man who had been having a serious conflict with another member walked clear across the sanctuary to offer *the peace* to the one he was angry with. He shook his hand and said, “*The peace of Christ be with you.*”

The other person answered, “*And also with you.*”

They looked at each other – truly saw one another – and embraced. Their difficulties weren’t instantly resolved, but from that time on they were able to talk with each other, eventually working out their problems. Watching the actions of those two people filled everyone in their midst with a profound sense of God’s presence.

I am filled with a sense of God’s presence in the experience of Peter and Jesus – in their time on the beach – in the words of love and forgiveness that pass between them – in the peace that sets the moment of their encounter apart. It is a moment suspended – Peter is restored and able to fulfil the tasks before him - forgiven, blessed, filled again with promise and hope.

The peace of Christ be with you...

† Offering

The season of Easter is unfolding while the gifts of spring also remind us of God's generosity in Christ and in creation. May the gifts we offer to support the ministry of Knox Church reflect our gratitude for God's goodness to us, and the hope for new life we have in Christ Jesus.

Generous God, we bless you for your gift of life renewed through Christ's love, and through springtime growth in fields and gardens. Bless the gifts we bring and make them signs of hope and renewal in the world we serve in the name of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers

Holy God, you have given us so many wonders in this world you created. We thank you for spring sunshine and refreshing rain – for colours exploding in blossoms opening – grass greening, and gardens sprouting. Thank you for the signs of new life all around us this Easter season. Make the earth fruitful in this growing season, so that food will be plentiful for the hungry.

God of new life, we pray that we might learn to care for our planet as your gift before it's too late. We pray for scientists and all those who work tirelessly to teach us how to look after the environment. Renew their energy for the responsibilities they carry. We pray for leaders in government, business and communities, that they will make care for the earth a priority for the sake of generations yet to come. Inspire each of us to do all we can, no matter how small or insignificant our efforts may seem, to walk more respectfully on the face of your creation.

God of the small and insignificant as well as powerful and influential, we thank you for our families and friends who offer us love and encouragement as we move through life. We pray for those families and communities whose lives have been disrupted by war and conflict – who worry about safety each day and what the future will hold for them.

Guide all those with decision-making power to consider the lives of the vulnerable as precious, and to make policies that protect the future for them.

God of the vulnerable, we pray for all those whose future is uncertain – those are facing illness or awaiting treatment – those mourning the loss of someone dear – those who feel lonely or discouraged...

We pray for those who are homeless or unemployed – for all who know hunger or despair – and for those facing danger or discrimination...

Empower us with your Spirit to reach out to those in need, in this community and in places distant from us, so that we can make your love tangible in their lives in Jesus' name.

Holy One, we thank you for this community that gathers in Jesus' name – for the warmth and welcome offered here – for friendship and faithfulness discovered – for learning and leadership shared with each other. Thank you for the hope that rises in us through the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. Make us expressions of that hope to each other and to the world you love in Jesus' name.

➤ *Oh for a world where everyone*

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Blessing

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we go forth into the world, to fulfill our calling as the people of God, the body of Christ.

Go in peace – love and care for one another in Christ's name; the blessing of Christ Jesus, the one who traded good for evil and love for hate, be upon you.

May Christ's mercy uphold us, his compassion guide us, and his strength sustain us now and always. Amen

➤ *Sing amen*

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