

“The church rekindled – 1st and 2nd Timothy”
Knox-Moore’s 141st Anniversary Service (1881 – 2022)
October 23, 2022



God calls us to worship:

Responsive reading: Psalm 46:1-7

Hymn: #321 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

We respond in praise, confession, and supplication:

Prayers of Praise and supplication (*Please remain standing*):

Creating God,
the mountains you raised
reflect your strength and majesty.
Sunrise and sunset frame the day with your light and joy.
Fields bursting with grain and trees coloured with autumn glory
sing of your steadfast love.
Pictures from the depth of space give a glimpse of your infinity,
yet in Christ you have walked the humble earth.
You alone are worthy of our praise.
You alone give us hope.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we praise you,
and join our voices to those of every precious thing
to wonder at your mystery and majesty.

Prayers of Confession (*Please be seated; said in unison*):

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you
with our whole heart, mind, and strength;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be,
so that we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.**

Assurance of grace: 1 Timothy 1:15; 2:5
(The response to: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good” is: “**His love endures forever.**”)

God speaks to us:
Prayer for illumination

Reading of Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1-19
(The response to “This is the word of the Lord” is “**Thanks be to God.**”)

Strong in the grace of Christ

“On Tuesday, June 15, 1875, the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland”¹ united to form the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Three years before this union, in 1872, the Canada Presbyterian Church sent the Reverend James McCutcheon to serve the Presbyterian congregations in Corunna and Mooretown.

At that time there was no house of worship on the then-named 8th concession (now Rokeby Line.) However, the lack of a church building in no way diminished the passionate faith of those early settlers. The faithful would meet regularly in private homes for prayer. There is record of the congregationalist minister in Mooretown (Rev. Geikie) occasionally walking out from the river through the bush to hold worship services in the home of Mr. Joseph Anderson. And, so the story is told, some devoted souls would walk to the Bear Creek church for Sunday morning worship and the Burns church on the Hosie settlement for afternoon worship!

When Rev. McCutcheon arrived in 1872, in addition to his ministry in Mooretown and Corunna, he would visit the families on Rokeby Line to fan the flames of their passionate faith and stir up support for a new church. He would even travel to Toronto “to enlist the support of the Missions Committee of the Church.”²

Nine years after Rev. McCutcheon’s arrival, in 1881, a meeting was held to organize the building of this new church on the 8th line. And, on May 14, 1882, the Rev. McCutcheon led the worship gathering that opened the new church for worship.

¹ “Basis of Union (1875)” para. 1, *Book of Forms*, 444

² *Knox Moore Presbyterian Church 1881-1981*, Rev. John Cruickshank.

For more than 170 years, the faithful “8th liners” have been gathering for prayer. And, for nearly 141 years – through two world wars, economic depressions and recessions, a cold war, multiple pandemics, social uprisings, protests, and revolutions; through feasts and famines, they have gathered here, at the Knox-Moore Presbyterian Church for Sunday morning worship, Sunday School, suppers, and community events.

Now, I want point something out.

According to the research compiled by the Rev. John Cruickshank in 1981 for our 100th anniversary, the first communion roll of the Knox-Moore congregation contained the names of 35 souls.

With 35 souls, they decided it was worthwhile to build and maintain a house of worship and organize a Christian congregation on Rokeby Line.

One-hundred and forty-one years later, we have 46 names on the communion roll.

Often, in conversations about the place and health of the church today, the conversation revolves around the perceived need to close our congregations, or amalgamate, or dream up some new kind of ministry. It is generally assumed that 46 people are not enough to sustain a church.

It is true that there are many factors involved in the decision to close a congregation, or to amalgamate. There are cultural matters to consider, there are age and population demographics to consider, there is the fact that not all 46 members are active members, and many other factors.

Nevertheless, my point is this: 141 years ago, with 35 souls on board, the community was on fire for the gospel of Jesus Christ. In their optimism they thought it worthwhile to travel to Toronto, to knock on doors, and to do the work necessary to build a church building and organize a Christian congregation. Now, with 46 members, we often complain that there is no Sunday School, that (except today) there is no choir, and that perhaps we should disband our fellowship.

I suggest that what fuelled the optimism of those first 35 souls and what inspired the passion of the Rev. McCutcheon is that they knew what it is to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. They were pioneers, they were immigrants. They understood self-strength can only get you so far; they were not strong in themselves, they were strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

*You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*³

Timothy was a pastor of a new Christian congregation in one of the most affluent and powerful cities of his day. Ephesus had a population of 250, 000 people. It was the hub of business, politics, culture, and thought. It was the centre of worship of Artemis and of the emperor. Timothy was trying to teach the Word of God and encourage the faithful to walk in ways consistent with the glorious gospel of the blessed God in a culture that saw the Christian church as irrelevant on one hand and a threat on the other.

Paul, writing this letter from prison on account of his own ministry, knew that the Christian witness would only endure in such a context by the grace of Christ Jesus.

So, he urged Timothy, to continue his work despite disappointments and the seeming lack of tangible results, but to do so not in his own strength, but in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul then gave three analogies to explain what he meant:

A soldier.

An athlete.

A farmer.

A soldier may not know the complete battle plans. They don't need to. But a good soldier does need to be convinced of the cause. And, they need to trust their officers.

An athlete, in order to win honourably, plays by the rules. Whether they like the rules or not, if they want to win with honour, they recognize the authority of the governing body, and they play by the rules.

And a farmer labours with dedication. They plant the seed and devote their time to weeding and watering; to feeding and doctoring their livestock; to building and maintaining their buildings and machinery. With no immediately obvious reward, they dedicate themselves to their work.

So, we have *conviction* of the cause, *trust* in the officers, *obedience* to the rules, and *dedication* to the work.

Conviction, trust, obedience, and dedication.

³ 2 Timothy 2:1

These are four qualities of strength in the grace that is in Christ Jesus which Paul encouraged Timothy to embody.

As the church; as members of the household of God; as the body of Christ in the world, our *cause* is to make known the one living and triune God and his kingdom.

The city in which Timothy worked, Ephesus, was the centre of the worship of Artemis. The temple to Artemis was in the city. And the priests who worked therein were charged with maintaining the purity of Artemis worship throughout the world. Ephesus was to the cult of Artemis what Vatican City is to the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, Ephesus became the centre of the worship of the Roman Emperor. If you did not acknowledge the emperor as the god of gods and pay appropriate tribute to Artemis the divine protector, you would likely be killed.

In the midst of this city, Paul urged Timothy to remind the faithful that these gods are nothing more than creations of human imagination. That, as he wrote in 1st Timothy:

*There is **one** God and there is **one** mediator between God and humankind: Jesus who is **the** Messiah, the descendant of David who gave his life a ransom for all, and who was raised from the dead foreshadowing what awaits all God's creation.*

It took conviction to stand before the temple of Artemis, the altar to the emperor, the centres of advanced thinking and proclaim: No. None of this is God. There is one Living God who creates, protects, and sustains and there is one mediator between God and humankind: Jesus.

The equivalent today would be to insist when having conversations with friends or family, or when navigating the school curriculum, or when you cast your vote, to insist that there is a God, and that there is *one* God, and that there is *one* way to fellowship with this God and that is Jesus of Nazareth.

It is not hard to imagine how that would be received in our Canadian culture today!

Yet, I can't help but suppose it was the conviction of that truth and of the cause to make it known that inspired the 8th liners to solicit support for a new church plant.

So, we have a *cause*.

And, we have a *rule book*. We call it the covenants. The terms of which are preserved for us in the Old and New Testaments of the Word of God.

We have an *officer*. Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, the descendant of David who was crucified for sin and raised from the dead.

In his faithfulness we can place our trust.

God once made a promise to be faithful to His creation. He said: “I will be your God.” That promise He extends to us through Christ: “The Lord knows who are his.”

Whether 135 souls gather on Sunday morning, or 35, or 5 the Lord knows who are his. And He will remain faithful – for he cannot deny himself.

Our *cause* is to make known the one living and triune God and his kingdom.

Our *rule book* is the Word of God.

Our *officer* is Jesus, the Messiah who is worthy of our trust.

God’s grace is expressed in covenants: a formalized relationship with humanity. God made his covenant with Adam and Eve and renewed it through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and finally Jesus. In the covenant God promises His faithfulness and we respond with ours. “I will be your God” he promised Abraham and his descendants, “and you will be my people.”

The covenant holds in Christ: “The Lord knows who are his” and “Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.”

The second part of the covenant concerns the human response to God’s grace.

Our *work* is to dedicate ourselves to the cause; to devote ourselves to making known the one living and triune God and his kingdom, to shape our lives according to His will and wisdom, to forsake all evil trusting that the mission is fulfilled through obedience to the Word of God, whether we can see the results in this age or not.

That covenant is inscribed on the foundation of Christ’s church in every age and it will sustain the church until Christ returns: “The Lord knows who are his” and “Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.”

It was the grace of Jesus Christ that inspired the faithful to meet in private homes for prayer when no church building was near at hand. It was the grace of Jesus Christ that inspired Rev. McCutcheon to travel into the country to stir up the passion for the gospel. It was the grace of Jesus Christ that inspired those 35 souls to

build this church. And, it will be the grace of Jesus Christ that will sustain our Christian witness until he comes again.

So, let us be strong – not in numbers or dollars or programs – but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Let us be convicted of the cause, trust our Lord and *His* ways, obey *His* word, and work; whether the times are encouraging or not: dedicate yourself to your work of revealing the living and triune God in the societies in which we live.

For the health of those societies, for the good of our souls, and for the glory of God.
Amen.

We respond by affirming our faith, offering our tithes, and prayer:
Ministry of Music

Apostles' Creed (*see bulletin insert for text*)

Hymn: #324 "Great is thy faithfulness"

Let us return to God the offerings of our lives.

Offering:

(*Offering plates are presented at the Communion Table while congregation sings:*)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost**

Prayer of dedication

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession:

Just and merciful God,
we lift our eyes to you in hope and gratitude.
When the world around us seems troubling,
we are grateful for your steadfast love.
Thank you for your Spirit at work in all times and places,
calling out the best in your people,
showing us when we must repent,
opening paths to reconciliation where we have offended.

We pray for justice for the earth:

Protect those creatures and habitats that our way of life is threatening.
Protect those communities and island nations at risk from climate change.
Open our eyes to see how we can live more responsibly
and change our hearts to know we must.

Hold a few seconds of silence.

We pray for justice among the nations:

Create more generous sharing of resources
between countries with good harvests and those depleted by famine.
Where resources are extracted for export,
protect brave advocates for fair wages and environmental protection.
And where there is aggression and intimidation between nations,
raise up the willingness to make peace and settle differences fairly.

Hold a few seconds of silence.

We pray for justice in our court systems:

Guide those who judge and defend to serve with integrity,
that those who are accused may receive fair trials,
and that those who have been wronged or harmed are restored to fullness of
life.

Grant those who are convicted humane treatment
so that your Spirit may lead them to rehabilitated potential.

Hold a few seconds of silence.

We pray for justice in the work place:
May those who work for others be treated with dignity and earn a fair wage.
May all who create that work earn a fair return.
Create equity and respect between those of different backgrounds and identities
and guide young people to opportunities to develop their gifts.

Hold a few seconds of silence.

God, we all need some kinds of healing in our lives:
We remember before you those struggling with illness of body, mind or spirit,
those waiting for diagnosis or treatment,
and all whose health challenges are invisible to others.

(Keep silence for 15 – 20 seconds)

We remember Chanie Wenjack, who died of hunger and exposure on this day
in 1966 after running away from Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School,
which The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated. We pray for Survivors and
all those who carry deep pain and trauma from Residential Schools.

Your Spirit prays within us, O God, even when we cannot find the right words.
So, hear us this day and answer us in ways that encourage our faith and change
the world for the good, for the sake of Jesus Christ who taught us this prayer:

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: #365 "This is the threefold truth"

God sends us with God's blessing:

Benediction

Congregation sings "Amen"