

Worship
September 24, 2023
9:30 a.m. St. Andrew's, Mooretown
11:00 a.m., Knox-Moore



**Indicates to please stand as you are able.*

God calls us to worship:

Call to worship:

We respond in praise and confession:

*Hymn: #483 “Glorious things of thee are spoken”

Prayer of praise and supplication:

Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
To you all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
And you chose to come amongst us in Jesus Christ,
sharing our joy and sorrow,
manifesting your greatness in the child of the manger,
revealing your Lordship in the master
washing his disciples' feet,
showing forth your glory in the shame of the cross.
And so we rejoice in your steadfast love
which has filled creation from the beginning
and which calls all life into being.
Bless us, gracious God,
with the renewed awareness of your nearness
so that our worship and our lives
may be a true celebration of your love in Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray.
Amen.

Prayer of confession (*unison*):

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed.
We have not loved you
with our whole heart and 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.**

God speaks to us:

We hear the gospel of God's grace: Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21
(The response to: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good" is, "**His love endures forever**")

*Hymn: #18 "Through all the changing scenes of life"

Scripture and sermon:

The Lord is faithful

Psalm 105 can be divided in two sections.

The first, verses 1-6, is a call to worship. By these verses the reader is invited to seek and rely on the Lord, to tell others about what He has done, to give thanks to Him, and to sing His praises.

The second, verses 7-45, is the content of the praises.

This rather long section can be further subdivided in two:

- Verses 7-11 tell of God's sovereignty, holy justice, and faithfulness.
- Verses 12-45 tell of God's wonderful works in Israel's history: Abraham in Canaan, Joseph in Egypt, Israel in Egypt – first as prosperous refugees then as slaves, the Exodus and Israel in the Wilderness, and then finally Israel back in Canaan, the Promised Land.

This is a song of God's faithfulness and His deeds of protection, deliverance, and provision.

READ PSALM 105:1-45.

When the people gather in worship and retell God's wondrous acts throughout their personal and communal history, they:

1. Praise God for His past faithfulness, and thus
 2. Rekindle their own faith and obedience in response.
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1. When *we* sing God's praises, we have our own history to remember.

Since 1844, 23 pastors have served St. Andrew's, Mooretown. Over the course of 179 years this congregation has weathered 23 different styles of ministry. They've weathered vacancies at times lasting 3, 5, 7, or even 12 years! And, they've weathered different configurations of the charge. What began as a loosely structured open-air assembly in Sutherland's orchard became a three-point charge together with Corunna and Bear Creek. This became two 2-point charges (Mooretown-Corunna and Bear Creek-Hosie Settlement.) Later, under the leadership of Rev. McCutcheon, it returned to a 3-point configuration with Corunna and the 8th line church, to be called Knox-Moore. And then, much later, our current 2-point configuration with Knox-Moore.

Prior to the arrival of the Rev. McCutcheon, the faithful of the 8th Line would gather in one another's homes throughout the week to seek the Lord and his strength, to sing praises to him, to study the Bible, and to encourage one another in their spiritual growth, and Christian walk. Sometimes some would walk to Corunna or Bear Creek or the Burns church at the Hosie Settlement for Sunday worship.

When Rev. McCutcheon arrived, he worked with the fellowship to establish a formal congregation and build a church building in which to meet (1881). To be named, Knox Presbyterian Church (of the then Moore township, hence, Knox-Moore). Throughout the next 142 years, the Lord provided many ministers to serve this congregation in the various charge configurations which have changed over the years to best meet the needs of the era.

In addition to the changes of ministers and various ministry styles, and in addition to the changes in the configuration of the charge, our two congregations have also weathered denominational upheaval with:

- the union of 4 Presbyteries/Synods to create the Canada Presbyterian Church in 1875,
- the organ controversy of the late 1800s. (Our own Rev. McCutcheon is quoted as saying that the Lord “does not want to listen to a box of whistles!” Knox-Moore bought their first organ in 1889, the same year in which Rev. McCutcheon died!)
- the creation of the United Church in Canada in 1925 which threatened the existence of the Presbyterian denomination when a large proportion of our congregations, ministers, colleges, missionaries, and mission fields broke away to join with the Methodists and Congregationalists in the UCC.
- the ordination of women in 1966
- even changes in worship styles from sitting to sing the psalms (without instruments) and standing for prayer to standing for the singing and sitting for the praying!

There have been wars, floods, and droughts. The rise and fall of dictatorships and democracies. Pandemics, economic depressions, and the birth of this country which we call Canada.

Regardless of what was going on in the world or the denomination or even the charge, God continued to call the faithful together in worship.

Throughout these years, people have been born, baptized, married, given birth, gotten sick, and died. They've moved away, gone to war, and come home. Some.

Through it all, God continued to call the faithful together in worship. Through it all, the Lord provided a worshipping community of care in Christ's name.

*O give thanks to the Lord,
call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.*

...
*Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgements he has uttered,
O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.*

Seven years ago, the Lord brought Hannah and me to join the Moore-Mooretown community.

Through you, the Lord provided us with a house that quickly became a home.

Through you, the Lord provided us with a community on which we could depend in the post-partum months as our family grew from two to three to four.

Through you, the Lord provided us with support and encouragement as I dipped my toe in the waters of congregational ministry, while we weathered the storms of global pandemic!

*O give thanks to the Lord,
call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.*

...
*Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgements he has uttered,
O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.*

2. Now, a new chapter begins – for the Moore Presbyterian Charge, for the Marnoch family, and for the Knox Presbyterian Church in Bobcaygeon.

And still:

*He is the Lord our God;
his judgements are in all the earth.
He is **mindful** of his covenant **forever**,
of the word that He commanded,
for a **thousand generations**,
the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an **everlasting** covenant,
saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance.”*

From Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, through Jesus, to the entire human race, He is the Lord our God and He is mindful of his covenant forever!

Just as the Lord has been faithful in the past, He will be faithful in the future.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is proof that not even death is strong enough to prevent God from making good on His promise to restore heaven and earth into the place of harmonious peace, grace, and mercy which He has always intended. And the Holy Spirit dwelling within each of us, guiding us in Christ’s way through the revelations of Scripture, uniting us to one another and to Christ, is the seal of that promise.

Ministers come and go.

Even individual congregations, although they hopefully outlast the tenure of any one pastor, are temporary. But what has been constant since the beginning of time, throughout the life of Israel, and throughout the life of the church is the presence and power, the grace and mercy of the Living and Triune God.

The Lord is faithful.

*He is mindful of his covenant forever,
of the word that He commanded,
for a thousand generations...*

Our assurance; our hope in Christ and his gospel doesn't depend on our faithfulness, but on God's.

That assurance inspired the apostle Paul to write, in his letter to the Philippians:

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Today marks the end of my ministry with you. And the beginning of your period of vacancy.

Whatever comes, Jesus is still Lord. And, *his* church will never close. It will need to change its expression in order to meet the needs of the current context, but Christ's purposes will come to fruition and His church will endure.

Next Sunday your Interim Moderator, the Rev. Dick Eric van Dorsten from Point Edward will lead worship and "preach the pulpit vacant." With him, you and your elders will work to discern what is God's will for the Moore charge in the months ahead. If you discern that the Lord has provided for you another full-time, or part-time minister, it might be 2, 3, or 5 years before the appropriate individual is called! Or, you might discern that the Lord has provided for you a different charge-configuration, or maybe a different setting in which to worship, pray, learn, and from which to bring Christ's gospel to the people – as has happened in the past.

As you wait, there will be moments of excitement and possibilities. But, because the waiting period may be long, you might also experience emotional opposition: discouragement, frustration, fear, anxiety, and worry.

But the Lord *will* provide what *He* needs for his church.

He is mindful of his covenant *forever*.

So, trust your elders.

Support your Interim Moderator.

Practice a lot of grace-filled patience.

And never cease to:

*Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
Glory in his holy name;*

*let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.*

For God's glory and our good.

Amen.

We respond in faith, offering, and prayer:

*Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed

*Offering:

(Offering plates are presented at the Communion Table while singing:)

**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

Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession, and the Lord's Prayer:

God of mystery and wonder,

We look around at the beauty of the world
and sense that you have given each precious thing its place
and a way of sustaining itself.

Thank you for your attention to the details of creation.

Yet we also see an aching world

and sense that many precious things are under threat.

Bless the work of faithful people everywhere to care for the climate and environment.

Show us how we can protect what is at risk

for the health of your whole creation.

God our Maker,

make us a sharing people.

God of energy and life,

We look around at the peoples of this world

and see your imagination and dignity in every variety of face and culture.

Thank you for the gifts you plant at the heart of humanity.

Yet we also see the aching of the hungry and hurting,

and hear the groans of parents whose children die in their arms

and the cries of children who fear tomorrow.

Bless the ministries of our church across our country and around the world

that bring healing and hope to lives at risk.

God our Maker,

make us a sharing people.

God of promise and possibility,

We look around at the places where people collide with each other

and hear the grumbling of nations locked into old rivalries and new grievances.

We watch the jousting of leaders impressed more by polls than effective policies.

We worry about the future of our communities and our children.

Thank you for the ministries of advocacy our Church undertakes

and the witness for justice and peace we make together in Jesus' name.

God our Maker,

make us a sharing people.

God of faithfulness and surprise,

We look at ourselves

and sometimes doubt we can make a difference or have an impact.

Challenge us to recognise the kinds of power we do have:
The love and compassion,
The courage and commitment,
The laughter and friendship,
The generosity and mercy.
In all of these gifts we know your power at work within us and among us.
Call us to keep serving together,
trusting you can do more than we can ask or imagine
through our denomination, our congregation, and our own lives,
blessed by the grace of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer

**God sends us to serve and witness
with God's blessing:**

*Hymn: #330 "O God, our help in ages past"

Benediction

Congregational Amen