

Worship on November 21st, 2021 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)

(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 570 – I have decided to follow Jesus
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Philippians 3:4b-14
- Sermon: Stepping Forward in Faith (The Rev. Lara Scholey)
- The Prayer for the People of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 292 – Father I adore you

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us. This is Sunday, November 21st, 2021. We are going to have an opportunity to think about our Legacy leaving. We will set aside this Sunday as Legacy Sunday to think about planning to build a legacy through our lives. Also, on this Legacy Sunday, we are remembering the gifts to our congregation.

. The Presbyterian Church in Canada provided the video sermon for Legacy Sunday. The preacher is the Rev. Lara Scholey.

. Next week is the First Sunday of Advent. Let us prepare our hearts and minds as we wait of the Lord's coming. We will have the Lord's Table next week.

. Thank you for your support with your gifts. As we give our offering to the Lord, let us offer up our whole lives and our hearts.

As we come into the presence of our God, let us calm down our hearts and minds, and focus on our Lord.

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Let us praise the One who has filled the world with blessings!

All: Let us sing to the Creator who has filled our lives with joy.

One: Troubles come upon us, unexpected opportunities cross our paths,

All: But we step forward in faith, sharing our gifts.

Praise song – BOP 570 – I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus (X 3) No turning back (X 2)	The world behind me, The cross before me; (X 3) No turning back (X 2)
Though none go with me, Still I will follow (X 3) No turning back (X 2)	Will you decide now To follow Jesus (X 3) No turning back (X 2)

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Blessed are you, O God, You are eternal and your truth is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow; and yet you are new each day and you breathe life into what is tired and stale. You have created us and this world we inhabit, and out of your generosity, all things live and move and have their being. You are the one we turn to in good times and in bad for Your wisdom, truth, grace and reconciling love; and so we praise you as Creator, Christ and Spirit.

You touch our lives in many ways. We try to understand your love as we discover your amazing blessings and your grace in the world and in our lives. We thank you for your goodness in our lives.

God of mercy, in recalling all that you are and all you have done, we remember who we are and what we have done. We admit that at times we pull away from being generous. We are hesitant to share our gifts. We are unsure about the path ahead. Guide us and give us courage and wisdom.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers in Christ at St. Andrew's, Hear the good news! Through Christ, we are forgiven. Dare to believe in this gift of a new beginning. Continue the journey and be at peace.

Prayer for Illumination:

O God, your thoughts are not our thoughts, your ways are not our ways. So, guide us by your Word and Spirit, and open our minds and hearts to your truth, speaking through the scriptures. By that truth, may our thoughts and our ways become a greater reflection of yours. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Philippians 3:4b-14

4b If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of

Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: Stepping Forward in Faith

Opening Reflection

Are you a runner? Have you ever been a runner?

If so, you may run races or you may simply run for exercise. You may love the feeling of the wind in your hair, your feet hitting the ground, or the satisfaction of crossing the finish line. (If you are a runner, adapt to describe what you love about it.)

Perhaps you have never been a runner, though you are impressed by people who are. Maybe you were the kid way at the back of the group in gym class, dreading sprints and endurance races. You may find it hard to imagine the desire of friends who get up at 6 a.m., even in the cold, snow or rain, to practice for a half marathon. A wise person once said of people who love to run, “I admire you, but I don’t understand you.”

Whether a runner or not, all of us understand running a race in a metaphorical way. You may remember the excitement and intensity of beginning university, college or your first job. You were filled with dreams for the future, and the next assignment or test or social event was always upon you. You may recall a season when you felt restless. You knew you were doing good work but you felt like you should be on the move, on the road to something else.

Living through a pandemic has made us feel like we are on an endurance run!

Our lives are a journey. Along our journey we may be developing a career, parenting, nurturing a relationship, being part of a community, and experiencing spiritual ups and downs. At times, the path is slow, as we wait for change to happen. At times, the path is intense, as we keep moving, trying to keep up. Sometimes we might feel like the old Family Circus cartoon by Bill Keane, where young Billy, the little boy in the family, is asked to go somewhere or retrieve something. On the way, Billy is distracted and takes an extremely indirect route, wandering all over the neighbourhood and exploring the things he sees. You understand this if you’ve ever tried to get a preschooler to go somewhere in a hurry! In the comic, we see Billy’s crazy route as he goes in circles, ventures under tables, up a tree and down again, through a doghouse, here, there and everywhere before finally reaching his destination—often not too far from where he began.

The apostle Paul also took many circuitous routes as he journeyed over land and across the Mediterranean Sea, from Damascus across Turkey to Macedonia and Greece and back to Jerusalem, planting churches and raising funds for the church in Judea.

What I love about Paul’s writing is that all along the journey he is thinking about the future and always moving forward. This movement is rooted in his relationship with God through Christ,

who is always calling him forward. In Philippians 3:12 Paul writes, “I am well on my way reaching out for Christ who has so wondrously reached out to me.”

Even from prison, Paul helps early church communities move forward, because he has his eye on the goal, far beyond any present circumstance. The goal is drawing near to God known to us in Christ. The path is wherever or whatever God is calling us to do—to serve, to learn, to be in relationship.

Paul doesn’t claim to be an expert. He says, “I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made, but I have my eye on the goal where God is beckoning us onward. We are off and running and we’re not turning back” (Philippians 3:12b–14 Message).

Supporting Future Ministry

Legacy gifts, or planned gifts, are a way for people to keep moving forward in faith. They are more intentional than your weekly offering and generally come from savings or accumulated resources. They often have special tax benefits and require planning to give. And they generally support ministry that is forward-thinking.

The most common type of legacy gift comes to the church when a person dies: money left in a will, a gift of life insurance or a charitable gift annuity. However, a planned gift can also be given when a person is alive. Personal investments like stocks, bonds or mutual funds, or a valuable piece of property can all be used to support ministry into the future.

Planned gifts can have a big impact on communities. These gifts might allow a church to go ahead with a ministry or special project that they wouldn’t otherwise have been able to do. The legacy of that investment in ministry may be felt for generations to come.

Stories of Giving

(If your congregation has a story of a bequest that has impacted the church or community, use it here.)

Like Paul, Mary Hobley thought about the future ministry of the church. Mary was passionate about music. She was still singing in her church choir and taking weekly voice lessons into her 90s. She wanted to pass the gift of music on to future generations, so she left a gift in her will through a foundation for St. Columba by-the-Lake Presbyterian Church in Pointe-Claire, Que. Interest from this gift allows St. Columba to support music ministry in Mary’s name. Half of the money provides two music scholarships annually for high school students in the community who have graduated and are going on to study music. The second half provides funds annually to support St Columba’s ministry, which the session can designate as it sees fit. Some years it has been used to enhance the music ministry, like organ maintenance, but it has also been used to help fund equipment for the kitchen, sanctuary renovations and a new Food Ministry Coordinator at St. Columba. Mary’s gift continues to bless both St. Columba and the community of Pointe-Claire. Through her planned gift, Mary’s love of God, neighbour and music lives far into the future.

Many years ago, Bethel Presbyterian Church in Scotsburn, N.S., had a dream to hire a part-time Christian Education Worker. The congregation was blessed with a growing number of babies and children. They became accustomed to the delightful sounds of young voices during worship—children singing, asking questions, standing on pews so they could see during the service. This medium-sized, rural congregation realized they needed more resources, but some people said a new staff person was unrealistic. The Session created a fund for Christian education and invited people to give, while applying for a grant so the Christian educator could start right away. They renovated the nursery and restarted an afterschool program that they’d been wanting to renew for

a long time. Children and youth in the church and community were served and spiritually nourished as they grew.

A planned gift doesn't have to be big—when given in faith, and joined with the gifts of others, small gifts can make a big difference. Bethel's fund, which began in 2004 with a donation of a few thousand dollars, grew to over \$100,000 in two years. Over the years, contributions have ranged from \$40 to a gift of securities worth over \$25,000! Many have supported the fund by giving the gift of time to help with the fundraising efforts. The Sunday School and afterschool fundraisers, along with initial donations, really helped start the momentum and the children of the church made cards to say thank you. The fund grew enough to invest in the PCC's consolidated fund and continued to support the Christian educator part-time once the special grant was done.

As the years go by, people continue to support the fund through gifts of stock and legacy gifts in their wills because they value outreach and ministry to children and youth and want it to continue. A Christian educator faithfully serves Bethel to this day, sharing God's love and reaching out to the community. Children who were toddlers when the new ministry began are heading to university this year!

Risk and Investment

Jesus' teachings and stories remind us that everyone is blessed, valued and entrusted with resources—money, talents, time, life, families. We are given these resources by God and it is up to us how we use them. The ministry we do, and the impact of legacy gifts, looks a little different in each congregation.

As a church—and especially as Presbyterians—we are known to be a thinking people. We think carefully before we do things. We assess and reassess; we pray and we ponder. We look at the big picture, the long-range goals. We create budgets and prepare reports.

But even with all that planning, there are things we don't know about how ministry and our lives will unfold. This past year-and-a-half has taught us that sometimes we have to rethink everything! And yet, we keep moving forward in faith. We pledge from our resources, make use of our gifts and strengths and invest in what will enable us to serve God and make our community better.

Stepping forward in faith always involves a risk and an investment. Paul risked everything to share God's love, creating and supporting communities that would live out the way of Jesus. He ended up in jail because of this work. Jesus invested in the lives of fisherman and tax collectors, trusting that they would pass on the good news. By his presence on earth, in his life, death and new life, God took the risk that we would accept this amazing new life and share it with others. Giving a planned gift can be risky, as none of us can predict the future. People of faith have always taken risks, in the generous use of their lives and financial resources. Many people have made risky investments over the years in us, in this church community, and in those we love—and they continue to inspire us.

And we are asked to take risks every day—to love, to hope, to be generous, and to try something new. We may invest in education, a community project or a new ministry. We may risk a new relationship, help others, share our faith or our life story.

Once in a while, a new initiative may not go well, or it may go very well but follow an unexpected path. The good news is that even when our running route is like a Family Circus cartoon, full of twists and turns, ups and downs, wavy lines and circles, we are still in the race.

Like Paul, we are not always experts, but when we continue to run the race, and when we continue to be generous, our lives are enriched.

As we step forward in faith together, we move towards the God who created us and who loves us. The road is not always safe, the path not always smooth, but God goes with us. As we

step forward taking risks and sharing our resources, there is always lifegiving community to be found.

Thanks be to God!
Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Gracious and loving Father God, we thank you for calling us your children. Your love is so amazing that you cleansed us and gave us your life. Thank you. As we are standing before your presence at this time, pour out your Holy Spirit, so our eyes are open and our hearts are awakened.

Heavenly Father, your great love enabled us to love others. Help us overcome our selfishness with your love and live our lives with your love in our hearts. With your love, you want us to love our church. Thank you for the connectedness we have within our church. As we pray for each other, help us enjoy our relationships and our love deepens and stretches to the people whom are forgotten and neglected. In our community, there are people in need. Help us be generous and give us warm hearts to embrace them and help them. Thank you that we have the Welcoming Arms and Martha's Table. They are becoming your loving arms and feet. May your kindness and love be experienced and enlighten their hearts. By serving as your hands and feet, may they come close to your hearts every day and experience your abundant blessings in their lives.

We pray, Lord, for the people who are having difficult and challenging times. Many are fighting with their physical pains, relational struggles, mental weaknesses, and emotional frustrations, and more. Your love is strong. Your power is above all. And you are with us. With your loving power, go to each person and fill their hearts with your Holy Spirit. So, they may gain strength to hang on. They may turn their eyes to you from their difficulties. Fill their hearts with you.

Also, we pray for British Columbia. It is a beautiful place, but these days, people are struggling with wild fire and flood. We are truly facing climate crisis. Lord, have mercy on the people who are experiencing damages from this natural disaster. And Lord, you called us the stewards of your creation. Please help us lay down our selfish desires, and start protect and take good care of your creation. We truly need your guidance and help on this. Fill our hearts with your wisdom and strengthen us with your courage.

As time passes, as we grow older, and as we become more mature spiritually, we want to trust you more with our lives, with our actions, with our faith. Guide our steps and lead our steps, so we can make forward steps with you. Thank you for your promise that you are going to be with us. We rely upon your promise. Help us and be with us, always. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. On this Legacy Sunday, let us remember how our previous generations handed down their faith to us. God is generous and provided enough for us, always. As we offer our gifts to the Lord, may our hearts be filled with gratefulness and thankfulness for what we have given through our Lord Jesus. Christ. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

In response to all of our blessings, we return to you a portion of all you have given us—the offering of our money, our talents, our time and our very selves.

Use them to demonstrate your love for the world, and for the work of your kingdom. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP#292 Father, I adore you

Father, I adore you, lay my life before you. How I love you

Jesus, I adore you, lay my life before you. How I love you

Spirit, I adore you, lay my life before you. How I love you

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Let us step forward in faith to love and serve the Lord with the blessings and peace of God our creator, Jesus our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit our sustainer.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.