

Knox Presbyterian Church
Rev. Emma Duncan
April 27, 2025

MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY



Greetings

Call to Worship

Leader: We are here today because the weeping Mary Magdalene once said:

People: I have seen the Lord!

Leader: We are here like doubting Thomas, who finally cried:

People: My Lord and my God!

Leader: We are here like Peter, who first denied then shouted:

People: It is the Lord!

All: We are here today because many faithful disciples experienced the resurrection of Christ. Come and worship our risen Saviour! Amen.

Music: The day of resurrection (#249, all verses)

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Sing praises to the Lord, O you, his faithful ones, and give thanks to God's holy name. We rejoice in the things made known by Easter's light. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ we see beyond all doubt that you have a design for all creation and that nothing exists beyond your saving power. You take our sin and shame and cast them into the depths of the sea. You take ordinary men and women and transform them into your disciples. You overcome all things, even death, so that the world will experience your amazing grace.

Even as we offer you our praises, O Lord, we must confess that we often choose darkness over light. We forget the new beginning offered to us in Christ and we cling to our familiar routines and limited vision. Forgive us for failing to recognize your resurrected presence in our everyday lives. Forgive us for ignoring the signs you send and the ways in which you call. Forgive us for not caring for your people as Christ commands us to.

O Good Shepherd, forgive our sins for they are many.

In this season of Easter, the miracle of Christ's death and resurrection is fresh in our minds. As individuals – and as the Church – may we live into Christ's resurrection reality with faith and hope. Take us. Mold us. Transform us. Inspire us. Strengthen us. O Holy Spirit, move among us and make all things new.

We pray all these things in the name of our risen Lord and Saviour, who taught us to pray, saying...

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

God the Father hears our prayers of confession and changes them into songs of amazing grace.

God the Son takes our biggest failings and transforms us into his disciples.

God the Spirit turns our mourning into dancing and clothes us with joy.

People of God - rejoice and be glad for in the name of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Announcements

1. Welcome!

2. Mission Awareness Sunday

Welcome to our guests who are here today.

We will be hearing about The Rev. Mark Hoogsteen Memorial Trust Fund today. Thank you to Janet MacIntyre, who is the Convener for this Fund, for all of her work in this ministry.

3. Join us for a time of fellowship and conversation after worship in our Fellowship Hall downstairs.

4. Thank you to Hella Hanson for doing the readings today.

5. Annual General Meeting

6. Spring Concert

Sunday May 25, 1 p.m.

Circle of Harmony women's *A Capella* choir

Tickets are now available for \$20 per person

7. 180th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday June 1, 10:30 a.m.

Guest preacher: The Rev. Dr. Richard Fee,

former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Special Music: Dr. Peter Hanson and Carolyn Haacke, organ and piano duet

Jada Dawson, soloist

Luncheon at the Legion to follow worship service

Music: He's got the whole world in his hands (339, traditional verses, 1, 2, 5, 6)

Presentation from The Rev. Mark Hoogsteen Memorial Trust Fund

Janet MacIntyre

2025 Recipients:

Margie Warren and Sherry Ramirez on behalf of Nicole Brochu

Children's Time: Let's go fishing

Prayer of Illumination

Let us pray. O Lord of sea and sky, we bless your holy name. Touch our hearts through the Word proclaimed here today so that we may serve you with strength and joy. We pray in the name of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms and we will be reading Responsively Psalm 30.

Leader: I will extol you, O Lord, for you have lifted me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

**People: O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.**

Leader: Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to God's holy name.

**People: For the Lord's anger is but for a moment; the Lord's favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**

Leader: As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."

**People: By your favor, O Lord, you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face; I was dismayed.**

Leader: To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication:

**People: "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?"**

Leader: Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!

People: O Lord, be my helper!"

Leader: You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

People: O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever. Amen.

Our New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of John and we will be reading chapter 21, verses 1-19.

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 his outer garment, for he had taken it off, 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."

19 (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. Amen.

Reflection: Plan B

Oh Peter. Poor Peter.

One day, he was a lowly fisherman, working with his brother, Andrew, and their partners, James and John, just trying to catch enough fish to eek out a living. Then along



came Jesus and said follow me. And they did. All four of them. Along with the other disciples, they would go on quite the adventure together. They would watch Jesus turn water into wine, offer a Samaritan woman living water, protect a woman caught in adultery from being stoned, feed thousands of people, heal the sick, and even raise a man from the dead. In their time together, they would hear Jesus say such powerful things like – I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the Bread of Life.

In John chapter 6, when many of Jesus' followers were abandoning him, Jesus asked the disciples if they were leaving too. And Peter replied - [Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.](#) (John 6:68-69)

Peter was very committed to following Jesus, who he believed to be the Messiah.

And then...in the blink of an eye...everything collapsed. Jesus was arrested and executed. And in the midst of this very stressful time, what did Peter do? He did exactly what he said he *wouldn't* do – he abandoned his Lord and then denied him three times.

On Easter Sunday, we heard the story of Christ's resurrection as told to us in the Gospel of John. The risen Christ chose to reveal himself first to Mary Magdalene and then he revealed himself to the disciples. First, he appeared to all of the disciples except Thomas, then he appeared to them again with Thomas present, and then he appeared to them again on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius which is also known as the Sea of Galilee.

We will never be able to understand what Peter was thinking when he was out on the Sea of Galilee fishing. But because this was what he was doing when he first met Jesus, we can imagine that he was feeling...

Sadness

Regret

Guilt

Shame

I also imagine that he was feeling confused and doubtful. Peter saw the empty tomb, he heard the testimony of Mary Magdalene, and he saw the risen Christ twice already. But was this really happening? Could he trust his own eyes and ears?

And so, in their confusion and doubt, Peter and his friends went back to the only thing that was left to them...fishing. **This was their Plan B.** They went back to the familiar world of boats and nets and the Sea of Galilee. With the smell of the water in his nostrils and the blowing of the wind in his face, Peter went back to his old ways, his old life.

Then along came Jesus AGAIN and said follow me.

This beautiful story from John chapter 21 is a full circle moment for Peter. When Peter jumped into the water to go to Jesus, all of his sin was washed away. All of his past mistakes and failures and cowardice were gone. The denial and guilt and shame sank to the bottom of the Sea.

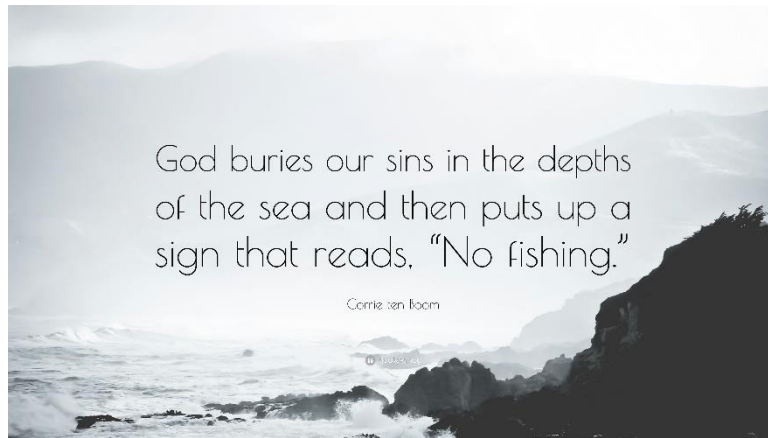
Peter made it to the shore and was reborn.

He experienced his own resurrection.

And just as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus gave Peter a three-fold mission for himself and for the coming Church - feed my lambs...tend my sheep...feed my sheep. Take what you have seen and learned from me and go out into the world in my name.

Friends, this is such a powerful story of redemption and hope.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we too can receive forgiveness of our sins. Whatever weight we are carrying of regret or guilt or shame or doubt, all of our past mistakes are washed away when we declare that Jesus is Lord. All of our inadequacies and cowardice are cleansed through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As that great hero of our faith, Corrie ten Boom, once said – **God buries our sins in the depths of the sea and then puts up a sign that reads, “No fishing.”**



Each one of us is welcome to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ so that our sins can be buried at the bottom of the sea. And we too may be reborn, we too may have our own resurrection.

Once we have this relationship of grace, transformation, and hope, Jesus also invites us to join in the work of feeding and caring for God's kingdom and God's people. And you don't have to stand up in the pulpit to do that. If God can use fishermen with no education or training, he can use you and me.

Each one of us is called to use the gifts that God has given us to tend to and care for people of God. I have gifts – and not just up here in this pulpit – that Christ commands me to use in the service of his kingdom.

And so do you.

That might be helping a neighbour with groceries or rides. It might be offering support and encouragement to a friend or loved one. It might be volunteering with an

organization in the community. It might be supporting the work of this congregation. It might be welcoming a stranger into the family of God.

Today on Mission Awareness Sunday, we are honouring the ministry of the late Rev. Mark Hoogsteen. The Memorial Trust Fund that was set up in his honour is just one way that you as a community of faith use your gifts to feed Christ's sheep. As we have already heard, the ministry at St. Patrick's feeds the hungry in Hamilton and the "Dying to Know" workshop series feeds people's souls in Kitchener and beyond. In past years, we have supported bicycles for migrant workers in the Niagara Region, the Burlington Food Bank, a refugee family from Syria, building homes in the Dominican Republic to name a few. What I love about this ministry is that it connects us with our brothers and sisters in Christ from other branches of the Global Church. As we sit here in this beautiful sanctuary or watch this service online from the comfort of our homes, we are reminded that the Church is far bigger than our little corner and when we work together to care for Christ's sheep, we can do so much more.

Indeed we are stronger together.

And we need that strength because the world's problems are greater than ever before. None of us can solve the issues of poverty, homelessness, and hunger on our own. None of us can comfort everyone we know who has lost a loved one. But we CAN – and DO – make a difference together in the great mission of the Church when we care for the people of God. And never forget that we are not alone in this work. As inadequate as we feel some days, the risen Christ, along with the Holy Spirit, guides ALL Christians from ALL branches of the Church to be like Peter and take what we have seen and learned and go out into the world to feed Christ's sheep. Amen.

Dedication of our Tithes and Offerings

Song of Thanks – Praise God from whom all blessings flow (#830)

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

Prayer of Dedication (not written in advance)

Prayers of the People

Creating and recreating God, we are so thankful that your everlasting dominion is a kingdom of grace and love. We are thankful that we can know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

God of all nations and people, wherever conflict, violence, and a hunger for power inflicts overwhelming grief and suffering, may your Spirit of truth bring peace into the pain. May the love of Christ shine comfort and hope into the darkness. May the selfish pursuits of greed and oppression be transformed by your Spirit of peace and unity. We pray for all those around the world who dare to work for justice, who dream of peace, and who feed your lambs.

God of victory over death, we pray for your Church in the world and the mission you have entrusted to it. We remember especially this congregation of your people and ask your blessing upon our ministries. We pray for the Presbyterian Church in Canada and all the people who worship and serve in our congregations. We lift up the work of our ecumenical partners and thank you especially for the ministries of St. Patrick's in Hamilton and "Dying to Know" in Kitchener. Bless their leaders, volunteers, and the people whom they feed in your name. We remember also our Catholic sisters and brothers as they grieve the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. Bless all who mourn the loss of this great Christian leader and servant. May your Spirit be upon the Cardinals as they discern the way forward in the coming Conclave.

God of rebirth and resurrection, we pray for those among us who are grieving, those who are ill or in need of any kind. There are many people who suffer in silence. Father, you know the cares and concerns of our hearts – give strength and courage to those who need it. Give comfort and hope to all who suffer.

We remember your children who we name before you...

Bless each one according to their needs with the great healing power of your love.

Great God of Heaven and Earth, you call us to leave behind our preoccupations and to follow you into the future. We find this a daunting task. As inadequate as we feel some days, strengthen us to use our gifts to make a difference in the great mission to care for the people of God. May your Spirit guide us in grace, hope, and the transforming power of God's love. To you – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – be all honour and glory and praise. Amen.

Music: And can it be that I should gain (#352, verses 1, 3, 5)

Blessing (1 Peter 4:7-11)

Sung Amen