

Knox Presbyterian Church
Rev. Emma Duncan
May 11, 2025



Greetings

Call to Worship

Leader: Good morning! May God's blessings be with you this day!

People: Thank you and may God's blessings be with you also!

Leader: May the light of Christ's love shine on you

People: May the peace of Christ dwell within us

Leader: Open your hearts to celebrate the reign of our Saviour Jesus Christ

All: With joy, we open our hearts and spirits to the Lord. Amen.

Music: Morning has broken (#814, all verses)

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

In the beauty of the spring, Creating God, we come before you with thanksgiving. You have created all things – you formed light out of darkness. You put the stars and planets in their place. We behold the beauty of spring - the blooming flowers, the chirping birds, and the bounty of the earth. You shaped each one of us in our Mothers' wombs. In the fullness of time, you sent part of yourself to be born in Mary's womb. Jesus Christ – our light and salvation – was born into the messiness of humanity. He is the Word made flesh and the Light of the World which shines through the darkness. With all that we are and all that we have, we will sing praises to the Lord all the days of our lives.

Compassionate Saviour, we come to you knowing that we cannot hide anything from you. Day and night have no meaning for you. What is done in the darkness will always be seen by you. We are full of shame and regret for the things that we have done, for the cruel words we have said, and for the judgments that we have made to make ourselves feel better. We crave your pardon for the times when we have hurt the people who we are supposed to love the most. We seek your forgiveness for the times when we have caused harm to our planet.

Heavenly Father, in your tender mercy, forgive us. Lord Jesus, through your perfect grace, redeem us. Holy Spirit, by your power, guide us to turn away from sin. Thank you for your redemption and for the opportunity to live as forgiven people. Transform us into new creations in Christ Jesus.

O Triune God, thank you for the shelter that you provide. Thank you for shining your light upon us. May our lives and the fellowship of the Church reflect Christ's light out into the darkness of our world.

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

The Light has come into the world and the darkness shall not overcome it! God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Rejoice! Beloved children of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!

Announcements

1. Welcome!
2. Happy Mothers' Day! Thank you to the Nixon family for the pansies. We also thank the Davidson and Jaconelli families for arranging this beautiful floral display.
3. Thank you to Mike Logan for doing the readings today.
4. Thank you to Elizabeth Copeland and Maria Duncan for sharing their musical talents with us today. Elizabeth is my niece and Maria is my sister-in-law.



Knox Presbyterian Church
180th Anniversary Celebrations

Spring Concert
Sunday May 25th at 1:00 p.m.
Featuring: Circle of Harmony Women's Chorus
Tickets \$20 per person

Anniversary Worship Service
Sunday June 1st at 10:30 a.m.
Guest Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Richard Fee
Former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Anniversary Luncheon
Sunday June 1st at 12:00 p.m.
Royal Canadian Legion
828 Legion Road, Burlington
Tickets \$20 per person

To reserve your tickets, call 905-333-3013.

Knox Presbyterian Church (Burlington)
461 Elizabeth Street
www.knoxburlington.ca

Menu:

Salad
Chicken breast
Parisian potatoes
Baby carrots & green beans

Buns & butter
Tea & Coffee
Cakes

Music: Jesus bids us shine (#773, all verses)

Children's Time: A Mother's Purse

Prayer of Illumination:

Let us pray. O Lord, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love, and strength to follow on the path you set before us. In the name of our blessed Redeemer we pray. Amen.

Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms and we will be reading Responsively Psalm 27, verses 1-9, 14.

Leader: The Lord is my light and my salvation;

People: whom shall I fear?

Leader: The Lord is the stronghold of my life;

People: of whom shall I be afraid?

Leader: When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.

**People: Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.**

Leader: One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:

**People: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.**

Leader: For you Lord, will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

**People: Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.**

Leader: Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

People: "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"

Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Leader: Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help.

People: Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

**All: Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!
Amen.**

Our 1st New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of John and we will be reading chapter 1, verses 1-5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Our 2nd New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of John and we will be reading chapter 8, verses 12-20.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid."

Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid, for it is not I alone who judge but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf."

Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Reflection: When God says I AM – The Light of the World

Did you know that there is a light bulb called the “Centennial Light Bulb”?



It is in the Guinness Book of Records for being the world’s longest burning light bulb and it even has its own web site.¹ You can even watch it live on the “Bulb Cam.”² The Centennial Light was first turned on in 1901 and currently lives in the main Fire Station in Livermore, California. It has had a few homes since 1901 and has been off for short periods of time because of a power failure or faulty wiring. The longest that it has been turned off for was a week because of renovations at the Fire Hall.

Now, most of us probably have extra light bulbs in our homes, but they burn out after a few years if we are lucky. So, how is this possible for a light bulb to burn for over 100 years? According to their web site, this light bulb was made with superior materials and excellent craftsmanship. Also, because it hasn’t been turned on and off all the time like a normal light bulb, its internal parts haven’t worn out from daily use.

And there is another reason – a more sinister reason...did you know that there was a secret society of light bulb manufacturers in the 1920s called the Phoebus Cartel?³ The Presidents of the world’s largest light bulb manufacturers met in secret in Geneva in

¹ <https://www.centennialbulb.org/>

² <http://bulbcam.cityofpleasantonca.gov/view/view.shtml?id=352736&imagepath=%2Fmjpg%2Fvideo.mjpg&size=1>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoebus_cartel

December 1924 and agreed that they should make their products WORSE in order to increase sales and make more money. So, they signed an agreement to reverse engineer their light bulbs so that they would only work for a maximum of 1,000 hours. **They conspired to break their own products.** They even had penalties if one company's light bulbs were better than everyone else's!! The Cartel collapsed during the Second World War when these companies found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict, but they accomplished what they set out to do.

Hard to believe, but it's true.

And we now know that this isn't the only time when this kind of conspiracy has taken place in the service of the 'god' of capitalism. The technical term for this is 'planned obsolescence.' As consumers, we have all been frustrated by planned obsolescence - when something breaks and it is more expensive to replace it than repair it. If they can send human beings into space, why has my family replaced our dishwasher twice in the 11 years that we have lived in Burlington?

But we are more than just consumers. We are people of faith.

And as people of faith, we believe that there is a light that shines brighter than the Centennial Bulb. We believe that this light will outlast any man-made light bulb.

And that is the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

The imagery of light and darkness is contained throughout the Old and New Testaments and there were lots of options for me to select that go with our main reading from

John chapter 8. I could have selected Genesis 1 where it says – In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep...then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.



(Genesis 1:1-3) What about Psalm 119, the longest book in the Bible, where we read – **your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.** (Psalm 119:105) Or the prophet Isaiah - **the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.** (Isaiah 9:2) And what about the New Testament? In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians we hear these words – **[Christ] has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** (Colossians 1:13-14) And at the end of the Book of Revelation, the new Jerusalem is described as a city with no need for sun or moon for the Glory of God is its eternal light. (Revelation 21:23)

From Genesis to Revelation, we are invited to be people of the light. And in the Gospel of John, that invitation is present from the very beginning where Jesus is compared to the light. A light so strong, so powerful, so brilliant that it will overcome the darkness of this world, including the darkness of bad decisions and poor choices. The darkness of brokenness. The darkness of evil. Jesus then goes on to use this imagery to describe himself – **I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.** (John 8:12) This is the testimony that he was giving to the Pharisees, this was the evidence that he was giving to those who doubted that he was the divine Son of God. As we saw last week when we talked about Christ's first "I AM" statement – I am the Bread of Life – Jesus again wasn't offering them something that would break or burn out. His light is not going to be damaged by malfunctioning components. It's not going to eventually wear out because of corrupt business practices. Instead, Jesus reveals himself as an eternal light that provides direction, wisdom, warmth, and hope. Think of a time when you have walked in darkness and then seen the light. Remember the feeling of relief that you felt? I am not alone! I am safe! I was blind but

now I see! This is what it's like to bask in the glow of Christ's light. And even better still, this light is freely available to the whole world.

And friends, we need this light so desperately in our world today. So much is broken. So much is evil. And no one can deny that the darkness can be so overwhelming that fear and anxiety and despair are always close at hand. I have experienced this in my own faith journey and I know that I am not the only one. As a faith leader, I have been asked many times – especially since the pandemic and even as recently as last week – Rev. Emma, why is there so much darkness? Why do so many people suffer? Where is Christ? Has his light faded away or burned out altogether?

While there are no easy answers to these questions – the greatest thinkers of all the world's religions have wrestled with the question of suffering since time began - what I will say is this...the prince of darkness, the evil one, Satan, the devil, or whatever you want to call him, is alive and well in this world. As King David said in Psalm 27, there are enemies all around us. But, as people of faith, we believe that there is a light that is far more powerful than the prince of darkness. We believe that this light comes from our Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and that THIS LIGHT will never fade or burn out. Following that light – trusting that it is present even when you can't see it – is the only way to overcome the darkness. We need to stay focused on Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Word made flesh, the Bread of Life, the Light of the World. We need to focus on God's Word which is a lamp unto our feet and light for our path. Jesus Christ can – and will - rescue us from the power of darkness and transfer us into his glorious kingdom. As the great hero of our faith, the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu once wrote,

Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death;
Victory is ours through Him who loves us.⁴

People of God – there is no need to be afraid of the dark when we focus on Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Amen.

⁴ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/history-of-hymns-goodness-is-stronger-than-evil>

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)

Special Music: You formed us in your image, Lord by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette
Duet by Elizabeth Copeland and Rev. Emma Duncan, accompanied by Maria Duncan

Prayers of the People

O Creator God, throughout the changing seasons, you are everlasting and eternal. Throughout the passage of time, you are infinite and unchanging. Throughout the ages and stages of our lives, you provide direction, wisdom, warmth, and hope. As people of the light, we offer you our worship and praise today.

Loving Saviour, we give thanks today for mothers! Thank you for mothers who gave birth to us, and for the women who have cared for us as their own children. We honour their love and wise counsel. Father, many also need your comfort today because they are missing their mothers and some are missing their children. May your spirit of warmth and comfort be with those who find Mother's Day difficult.

Loving Spirit, we pray today for mothers around the world. We lament for mothers who cannot feed their children; for mothers who are homeless or without a homeland; for mothers who must teach their children about the dangers of bombs and bullets; for mothers who have to deal with domestic violence and abuse. Lord in your mercy, help us to us create a world where families of all shapes and sizes can raise their children in peace and plenty.

Loving Parent, as we lift up our prayers for your world, we have to confess that there are times when the darkness overwhelms us. Many people suffer in darkness and gloom. The causes of darkness are varied: bereavement, illness, money troubles, worries about family, addiction, loneliness, and despair. Many more suffer because of the forces of evil – the darkness of war, poverty, climate change, and unfair economic systems. Today we remember the people of Palestine and Israel, Ukraine and Russia, Pakistan and India. May enemies seek peace, O God. May reconciliation prevail over hatred.

So much suffering. So much darkness.

O Triune God, send your light into the darkness. Help all people to see that your light hasn't faded or burned out, but is eternal and life giving. Send your Holy Spirit into the global Church and the lives of all believers so that we may be beacons of Christ's light in our world. Give us strength for this challenging work. Give us determination, resilience, and perseverance to show the world that through you, goodness is stronger than evil and love is stronger than hate.

Today we pray for your beloved children who need your tender loving care...

Catholic Church//new pope, Pope Leo 14th

We thank you, O Lord, that you are constantly at work in our world. You are our light and our salvation and because of you, we have no need to be afraid of the dark. May the Light of Christ shine brightly around us and through us. Come, Lord Jesus, come and make all things new. In your most holy name we pray. Amen.

Music: Shine Jesus Shine (#376, all verses)

Blessing (Ephesians 5:8-10)

Sung Amen