

Knox Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Emma Duncan  
May 25, 2025

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION



Greetings

Call to Worship

**Leader: We worship Jesus Christ, the Bread of Heaven**

People: We worship Jesus Christ, the Light of the World

**Leader: We worship Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd**

People: We worship Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life

**All: Let every knee bend and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Amen.**

Music: We praise you, O God (#425, all verses)

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of promise and purpose, we greet you this day with thankful hearts. As flowers bloom and buds open, the beauty of spring lifts our spirits in praise. Each man, woman, and child here today were created in your image. Your world is full of such variety and detail. Your Word inspires us, your Son redeems us, and your Spirit strengthens us. In God we praise, in the Lord, we trust.

God of birth and rebirth, although we are your beloved children, we also form a circle of sinners. We cling to darkness and despair, hiding in tombs of our own making, ignoring your call to come out. We fail to unbind each other from oppression, poverty, and abuse. We fail to offer comfort to others. You lay a feast before us, but we fail to share this nourishment with our neighbour and then we wonder why our churches are empty.

O Compassionate Redeemer, save us from our sin. Save us from ourselves. Forgive us and lead us out of the darkness into your most glorious light.

All this we pray in the name of our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 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

In today's Psalm, we hear King David say these words - *for you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.* (Psalm 56:13)

Brothers and sisters in Christ, receive the Good News of the Gospel – through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we too have been delivered from death. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

## Announcements

1. Welcome!
2. TODAY - Sacrament of Holy Communion.
3. TODAY – Circle of Harmony Concert @ 1 p.m.
4. Join us for a time of fellowship and conversation after worship in our Fellowship Hall downstairs. **Sandwiches**
5. Thank you to Jean Lowe for doing the readings today.

A poster for the Knox Presbyterian Church 180th Anniversary Celebrations. The background is a faded image of the church building. The text is centered and uses various colors (blue, purple, black) for emphasis.

**Knox Presbyterian Church**  
**180th Anniversary Celebrations**

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

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

**Anniversary Luncheon**  
Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.knoxburlington.ca)

Music: Jesus loves me, this I know (#373, all verses)  
Children's Time: Take it to the Lord

Prayer of Illumination:

Let us pray. Eternal God, through the life, death and resurrection of your Son your kingdom has broken into our troubled world. Through your Spirit, help us to hear your Word. Give us grace to respond in faithful obedience so that our lives might be signposts of your kingdom. In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

**Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms and we will be reading responsively Psalm 56.**

Leader: Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;  
all day long foes oppress me;

**People: my enemies trample on me all day long, for many fight against me.**

Leader: O Most High, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

**People: In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid;  
what can flesh do to me?**

Leader: All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

**People: They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps.**

Leader: As they hoped to have my life, so repay them for their crime;  
in wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

**People: You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not in your record?**

Leader: Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call.

**People: This I know, that God is for me.**

Leader: In God, whose word I praise,

**People: in the Lord, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid.  
What can a mere mortal do to me?**

Leader: My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.

**People: For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling,  
so that I may walk before God in the light of life. Amen.**

**Rev. Emma:**

**Our Gospel reading is taken from the Gospel of John and Jean and I will be reading select verses from chapter 11. Hear the Word of the Lord.**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

**Jean:**

But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

**Rev. Emma:**

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"

**Jean:**

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him."

**Rev. Emma:**

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.

**Jean:**

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

**Rev. Emma:**

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

**Jean:**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**Rev. Emma:**

She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

**Jean:**

Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

**Rev. Emma:**

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

**Jean:**

Jesus wept.

**Rev. Emma:**

So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

**Jean:**

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Rev. Emma:

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."

Jean:

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

Rev. Emma:

So they took away the stone.

Jean:

And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Rev. Emma:

The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth.

Jean:

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

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

Announce offering

## 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)



## Reflection: When God says I AM – The Resurrection and the Life

Imagine for a moment that you are driving up Guelph Line to attend a friend's graveside committal service at Burlington Memorial Gardens. Your friend passed away unexpectedly after a brief illness and unfortunately, you weren't able to see them before they died. The traffic is busy, especially on the Highway 403 overpass because there is currently road work being done. You slowly make your way up the escarpment to the cemetery where you join your friend's family and other friends at the graveside. Being at a cemetery is a very emotional experience because you cannot deny the finality of it all. You will never see your friend again. And you are not the only one who is struggling. The emotions of the gathered crowd are raw and palpable. You feel the sadness. You see the tears. You hear the weeping.

Now that everyone has arrived, the Funeral Director gathers everyone close to the grave so that you can hear what is being said. The Minister, who you've never met before, begins to speak...

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to lay your friend to rest. Hear these words of comfort and hope from our Lord, Jesus Christ:

**"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."** (John 11:25-26)

The Minister goes on talking, says a prayer, and reads another passage from the Bible. At the end, they mark a cross on the coffin with some sand and say – earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Amen. Everyone gets a flower to lay on the coffin and the Funeral Director announces that the service is over and everyone is welcome to attend the reception back at the funeral home. The cemetery staff will come when everyone is gone and lower the coffin into the ground.

And that's it. It's a 5-minute service. The Minister gets paid, shakes a few hands, and then leaves to do whatever Ministers do with the rest of their time.

You speak briefly to the people who you know and then make your way back down Guelph Line to the funeral home for the promise of a hot cup of coffee and an egg salad sandwich.

### **Sound familiar?**

I think that many of us have had this kind of experience at one cemetery or another. Indeed, many of you have family and friends who are buried at Burlington Memorial Gardens. In this church family, I have officiated at many services at that cemetery – Liz Bordian, Lorraine Clark, Madge Cooper, Eunice and Len Erwin, Louise and Jim Griffiths, Patty Kirby, Doris Lamb, Anna Lovell, Gery Puley, Kitty and Don Smith, Joyce and Ralph Weston. Knox's previous minister, the Rev. Mark Hoogsteen, is buried there...shall I go on? I cannot drive past that cemetery without thinking about the great cloud of witnesses who are no longer with us. And my heart hurts.

Loss and grief are part of the human condition. If you love someone, you will grieve their loss. And many of us live with grief each and every day, especially those in our midst who have lost children.

While we – as human beings – are all familiar with grief, we are not familiar with our friends being resurrected after they pass away. None of us have been to a graveside service where the dead person wakes up and comes out of the tomb as Lazarus did.

And so, the passage from John 11 that Jean and I just read for you is perhaps the most challenging “I AM” statement that Jesus made according to the Gospel of John. Christ's words, on their own – I am the resurrection and the life – are relatively easy to understand. With this statement, Jesus is revealing himself to be our hope for the future. When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, then death is not the end for us.

When we pass from this life to the next, we will dwell with the Good Shepherd forevermore. This beautiful promise is not only hopeful – it gives us comfort when we grieve. It gives us the strength to live each day in the knowledge of God’s love and his desire for us to have an abundant life.<sup>1</sup>

But what do we do with the details surrounding this “I AM” statement? That Jesus intentionally delayed his arrival? That he left his dear friends, Mary and Martha, alone to deal with the devastating loss of their brother? That he prayed out loud to his Heavenly Father so that there would be witnesses who would share this miracle far and wide? That with 3 words – Lazarus, come out – Jesus raised him from the dead?

Well, I could do a whole sermon series on this passage alone because there is lots to discuss...the dynamic between Jesus and the disciples, the Jewish customs for funerals, the relationship between Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and the fact that Jesus is predicting his own death and resurrection with this miracle.

Without diving into all of this rich soul food, there are 2 things that I want to highlight and they both have to do with the intersection between Christ’s humanity and divinity. In this story, we see that as a man, Jesus felt grief as we do. In verse 35, John records this simple yet profound fact – Jesus wept. Jesus understood what it feels like to stand at the grave of a friend and be overcome with sadness and grief. Jesus was a human being just like you and me. But unlike us, he was more than a mere mortal. He was also fully divine. And in his divinity, he offers us a hope that is out of this world. Through his own death and resurrection, Christ defeated the bonds of sin and death and has promised us life *beyond* death. He has promised us a future of reunification with our loved ones where – as John wrote in the Book of Revelation - **he will wipe every tear from**

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<sup>1</sup> Connection to last week’s message on I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10)

[our] eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

This joyful hope is what we celebrate in the sharing of Christ's body and blood – that in Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, we can participate in the reality of the resurrection.

Amen.

Song of Approach - All who hunger, gather gladly (#534, all verses)

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

### Invitation

In the Gospel of John, our Lord, Jesus Christ, is revealed to us as...

The Bread of Life

The Light of the World

The Gate and Good Shepherd

The Resurrection and the Life

Through these revelations, we receive forgiveness, salvation, and the promise of eternal life. We receive nourishment for our weary souls. We receive comfort in our grief.

Beloved in the Lord, you are invited to share in this feast of grace just as you are. Young and old. Men and women. Rich and poor. All are welcome to experience the sacrifice that Christ made on our behalf.

### Apostles' Creed

Let us join together and confess our common faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. Please stand if you are able.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day, he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated on the right hand of the Father,  
And he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

## Prayer

Triune God, source of all being, your Spirit hovered over creation and brought order out of nothing. You spoke and the doors of chaos were flung open as creation rushed in, full of beauty and diversity. You are everywhere – eternal and sovereign – and you are also present in this very moment – loving and forgiving.

### **Blessed are you, creating Father.**

Triune God, redeemer of the world, in love you took on our limitations. You poured yourself into a human body that needed air to breathe and food and water for sustenance. You needed sleep and rest, you craved love and community, you wept when your friend passed away. You love us so much that you experienced the agony of the cross, defeated death, and revealed yourself as the resurrection and the life.

### **Blessed are you, risen Lord.**

Triune God, divine Advocate, you guide and encourage us. When things seem hopeless, you breathe new life into our weary bones. When faith seems like a waste of time and energy, you renew the Church in hope and confidence. O Holy Spirit, breathe new life into all believers. Nourish our souls with the body and blood of Christ. Equip the global Church to worship, serve, pray, and love in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **Blessed are you, Holy Spirit.**

O God, who always listens to us, who breathes new life into us, call us forward to be people who live into the hope of the resurrection. May we be reborn in you. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, all honour and glory are yours, our creator, redeemer, and friend. Amen.

## Institution of the Sacrament

Beloved in the Lord, attend to the words of the institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered to us by the apostle Paul:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed  
took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks,  
he broke it and said,  
"This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."  
In the same way he took the cup after supper, saying,  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

It used to be that we had no hope. But no more. Our hope is in Christ Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. He willingly and obediently sacrificed his life so that we will not perish but have everlasting life. As we celebrate this wonderful hope, we pray for the Holy Spirit to come and blow over these elements. Whether these elements are present in this sanctuary or at home, we recognize that the Holy Spirit is not confined to any building, but blows wherever it chooses. O Spirit of the Living God - take these natural elements of bread and wine and transform them into this holy mystery.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I invite you to come - all who hunger and thirst for God's grace and mercy – come and experience the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation!

## Sharing of the Body and Blood

The body of Christ broken for you. // The blood of Christ shed for you.

## Prayer

We thank you, eternal God, that you have fed us in this sacrament, uniting us with Christ and with all believers. Renewed for our daily living, inspire us to share Christ's resurrection hope with the world that you so love. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: What a friend we have in Jesus (#746, verses 1, 3)

Blessing & Sung Amen