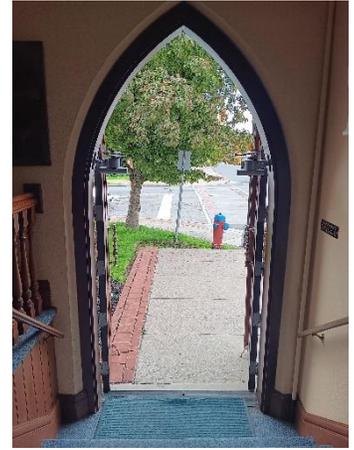


Knox Presbyterian Church
Rev. Emma Duncan
July 27, 2025

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
AND WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS



Greetings

Call to Worship

Leader: On this summer's day, we gather to offer our praise to the Lord

People: But it has been a busy week and we are tired

Leader: In this time and place, we come together to be renewed

People: Nurturing God, refresh us in your presence

All: May the peace of Christ be with us all. Amen.

Music: Be thou my vision (#461, verses 1, 2, 3, 5)

Prayer of Adoration and Confession (including Lord's Prayer)

Creating God, in the fellowship of the Church, we come before you to worship and adore you. From the tiniest microorganism to the vastness of the cosmos, you created all things and hold them together in perfect balance. You knit each one of us in our mothers' wombs and have given us minds that think, hearts that love, hands that serve, and feet that preach the gospel of peace. And if all of this wasn't enough, you have given us the wisdom of Scripture, the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and the perfect salvation of your Son, Jesus Christ. With all that we have and all that we are, we praise you as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

O Compassionate Saviour, our ability to worship you is restricted by our sin. In the silence of our hearts, we know that we have sinned this week. We have forgotten to love our neighbour as ourselves. We have gossiped and been mean spirited. We have given into temptation. We have been greedy, selfish, and cruel. We have treated this planet without the reverence that it deserves.

O Lord, in your great mercy, save us from our sin! Save us from temptation! Save us from ourselves! We humble ourselves before you and pray that you will not be angry with us. Clothe us with your mercy, forgiveness, and grace.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for all that you have done for us. We do not deserve these gifts and yet, you freely give.

By your Spirit, take us, mold us, use us to be ambassadors of Christ who share the gospel in hope and joy. Strengthen the Church and all believers to proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

To you be all honour and glory and praise. We pray in the blessed name of 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 this time of worship, we experience God's Word, God's way, God's love, God's forgiveness. What more do we need to sustain us as we continue along the Way? On every road, in every moment, we receive the promise that we do not travel alone. In the name of Jesus Christ, receive the Good News of the Gospel – that in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

Announcements

1. Welcome!
2. Welcome to our friends from Brant Hills Presbyterian Church.
3. Welcome to the families that are here for the Sacrament of Baptism.
4. Join us for a time of fellowship and conversation after worship in our Fellowship Hall. **Sundae after Sunday**. Thanks to Horace from Brant Hills for donating coconut ice cream for the festivities!
5. Thank you to Mike Logan for doing the readings today.

6. Midweek Social Drop-in

Every Wednesday from 9:30-11:00 a.m.

7. Rev. Emma's vacation and Intermission

The Rev. Emma Duncan has been approved for an Inter-Mission starting on Monday, August 18, 2025 until Monday, October 27, 2025. With her vacation time, Rev. Emma will be away from Knox as of August 1st. She will return to the office on October 28th and be back in the pulpit on November 2nd. For the duration of her Inter-Mission, she will be away from all aspects of the life and ministry of the Congregation, including worship and pastoral care.

✚ During this time, the Rev. Susan Kerr, Minister at Burlington East Presbyterian Church, will serve as our Acting Moderator. Rev. Kerr will moderate Session meetings, oversee pulpit supply, and provide crisis pastoral care. Rev. Kerr will also be available to officiate at funerals.

✚ The church office will be open throughout the Inter-Mission (Monday – Thursday 9-2 and Friday 9-12)

✚ Our Elders are available should you require assistance or support

Children's Time: Wearing a uniform

Music: Jesus, friend so kind and gentle (#519, all verses)

Sacrament of Baptism and Welcome of New Members

Emma:

Baptism is not of our doing or deserving. It is a gift from God. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Church recognizes God's covenant of grace. We receive God's gift with reverent joy and respond in faith and obedience.

Hear the words of the risen Christ - "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you; and remember, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Obedying the command of Jesus Christ and believing in his promises, the Church baptizes those whom the Lord our God calls. God acts for us in baptism as God has acted for our salvation from the beginning of time.

By the waters of baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit God claims us and calls each one by name. God unites us to Christ in his death and resurrection and grafts us into the body of Christ as members of the church.

Remember what the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians – for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Who comes to receive the gift of Baptism?

Sharon White:

On behalf of the Session, I present

1. Cole Lawrence Lejniaks, son of Rachel Ziliotto and Brandon Lejniaks
2. Wesley Connor Johnston, son of Sarah and Sam Johnston
3. Dina Ajori
4. Seyed Dariush Moussavian

Emma:

Both Sarah and Rachel have connections to Knox. In 2023, we baptized Sarah's nephew, Austin, as well as Rachel and Brandon's daughter, Harper. We are delighted to have you and your families with us again!

Dina and Dariush are newcomers from Iran. Dina grew up in the Muslim faith tradition and converted to Christianity as an adult. She and her son, Dariush, have been coming to Knox for a few months and have felt God's love and hospitality within this community of faith. It is their desire to become part of our church family.

As we are baptizing 2 infants and 2 adults today, for the following questions, Rachel and Brandon, Sarah and Sam will answer on behalf of their sons, and Dina and Dariush will answer for themselves.

Do you desire to participate in the Sacrament of Baptism today?

Rachel and Brandon, Sarah and Sam, Dina and Dariush (Participants)

We do.

Emma:

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God who has been faithful to us in all generations, do you turn away from sin, renounce all evil powers in the world which oppose God's rule of justice and love?

Participants:

I do.

Emma:

Do you renounce the ways of sin which separate you from the love of God?

Participants:

I do.

Emma:

Do you turn to Jesus Christ, accepting him as Lord and Saviour, trusting in his grace and love?

Participants:

I do.

Emma:

Do you desire, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to mature as a Christian in the Church, to seek the guidance of Christ as you listen for his Word, to celebrate his death and life at the table he provides, and to engage in his mission in the world?

Participants:

I do.

To parents only - Rachel and Brandon, Sarah and Sam:

Do you promise to raise your sons in the love and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ within the home and the fellowship of the Church?

Parents:

We do.

Godparents:

As Godparents of Cole and Wesley, do you promise to nurture these children in word and deed?

Godparents:

We do.

Emma:

I would now ask the congregation to stand if you are able.

Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Cole, Wesley, Dina, and Dariush by word and deed, with love and in prayer, encouraging them to follow the way of Christ as you are able?

The congregation:

We do.

Emma:

Let us proclaim our common faith with the Apostle's Creed, which is on the screen.

All:

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.

You may be seated.

Emma:

Let us pray. Loving God, we give you thanks that you nourish and sustain all things by the gift of water. Since the beginning creation, water has given us life. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus Christ, who was baptized and anointed by your Holy Spirit. In that moment, you showed us just who Jesus is – your Beloved.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to share in Christ's baptism. He did not need to be baptized because he is without sin and yet he took on the sins of the world. Send your Spirit to move over this water, that it may be a fountain of deliverance and rebirth. Wash away the sin of all who are cleansed by it. Raise them to new life and graft them to the body of Christ. Bless Rachel and Brandon, Sarah and Sam as they raise their sons, Harper, and be with Dina and Dariush as they begin their new life here in Canada. Bless them all with your love, peace, hope, and joy.

Pour out your Spirit on all those gathered here today so that we will always know that we are your beloved children. Heavenly Father - to you be all praise, honor, and glory. Now and forever. Amen.

The Act of Baptism

Cole Lawrence Lejnieks - I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley Connor Johnston - I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Dina Ajori - I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Seyed Dariush Moussavian - I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Cole, Wesley, Dina, and Dariush have now been received by Christ's appointment into the holy, catholic church. Through baptism, God has welcomed them into the family of God.

[Invite congregation to sing the Aaronic Blessing.]

Aaronic Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you,

And be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you

And give you peace. Amen.

[Rachel, Brandon, Sarah and Same may be seated.]

Emma:

Who desires to become a professing member of Knox Presbyterian Church?

Sharon White:

On behalf of the Session, I present Dina Ajori and Seyed Dariush Moussavian who wish to become members of Knox Presbyterian Church in Burlington.

Emma:

Dina and Dariush, through your baptism, you have declared that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour. Do you now desire to become members of Knox Presbyterian Church?

Dina and Dariush:

I do.

Emma:

Do you commit yourself to this congregation as part of the body of Christ, promising to uphold others in times of tears and times of laughter, working together to spread the Gospel as Christ commissioned us to do so?

Dina and Dariush:

I do.

Emma: (To the congregation - please stand if you are able)

Do you welcome Dina and Dariush into Christ's Church, vowing to nurture and cherish them as the Lord commands us to love one another?

Congregation:

We do.

Emma:

Do you commit yourselves anew to this congregation as it is the body of Christ, promising to uphold each other in times of tears and times of laughter, working together to spread the Gospel as Christ commissioned us to do so?

Congregation: We do.

Emma: On behalf of Knox Church, I welcome you into this congregation!

Prayer of Illumination

Let us pray. Calm us now, O Lord, into a quietness that heals and restores. Open our wounded hearts to the balm of your Word. Speak to us in clear tones so that we may put on the whole armor of God. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

***Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms
and we will be reading Responsively Psalm 2.***

Leader: Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take
counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, saying,

People: "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us."

Leader: The One who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision.

Then God will speak to them in wrath, and terrify them in fury, saying,

People: "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."

Leader: I will tell of the God's decree; the Lord said to me,

People: "You are my son; today I have begotten you.

**Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.**

**You shall break them with a rod of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."**

Leader: Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.

People: Serve the Lord with fear, and trembling,

Leader: humble yourselves before the Lord lest God be angry, and you perish in the way;
for God's wrath is quickly kindled.

All: Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord. Amen.

Our New Testament reading is taken from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians and we will be reading chapter 6, verse 10-20.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power; put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm.

Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace.

With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

Pray also for me, so that when I speak a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.

Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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

Reflection: Ephesians – God’s Armor

For those who are visiting with us for the Sacrament of baptism, this reflection is the final installment in a 5-week series on the Apostle Paul’s letter to Ephesians. This letter, which he wrote while in prison, was written to encourage and teach the Christian community in the ancient city of Ephesus. He lived among them for almost three years and his letter reminded them of who they are as children of God, loved and forgiven. To close out his letter, as an ‘ambassador in chains,’ he gives his readers a fascinating image of how to protect themselves against the dark forces of evil, temptation, and sin.

And his image? That of a soldier about to enter into battle.

And the people of Ephesus would have known exactly what he was talking about.

A Roman soldier.

You see, Ephesus was part of the Roman Empire during the time of Paul and they would have been used to seeing soldiers. This picture is a carving of Roman legionaries which was discovered in southern France.¹ In this picture, each soldier is wearing a belt, breastplate, and helmet. They had shields in front of them and sandals on their feet. And if you look at the soldiers’ hands in the front row, it appears that they were supposed to be holding something...like a sword, perhaps?



¹ <https://www.philipkosloski.com/the-roman-centurion-and-the-armor-of-god/>

Roman legionaries from carving found in Glanum, southern France (CC BY-SA Ursus, Wikimedia Commons)

Paul knew his audience and knew that they would understand what he was explaining to them. In our daily lives, we need to be prepared for battle – but not a battle of swords and shields, but a spiritual battle.

Now you and I live in a very different world from the one that Paul lived in. We do not have legions soldiers marching around our communities. So, does this imagery still work for us today?

I think it does.

And I believe this because there are still evil forces in our world. The devil – or Satan or the Evil One – or whatever you want to call him - is alive and well in 2025. You could even say that the forces of evil are thriving in 2025. Millions of people are suffering because of war and terror. Millions more have been forced from their homes and communities. Violence, injustice, and poverty are a way of life for so many. Evil exists in our world – amongst rulers and authorities and ordinary people who have let their hearts and minds be corrupted by the dark forces of greed, envy, and the quest for ultimate power and control. And for us as Christians, our faith is under attack. Secularism, consumerism, and capitalism all exert great pressure on our faith. And sadly, there are also challenges **within** the global Church. Earlier in Paul's letter, he urged Christians to be united in one faith, one baptism, and one hope. Oh, how the world would be a better place if Christians loved others as God loves us!

There is evil in this world and we need to be prepared to fight it.

Paul's imagery of the armor of God has inspired and encouraged Christians throughout the millennia to stand strong in their faith. To persevere, keep alert, and not give up. We may not be wearing the battle vestments of a Roman centurion, but if we clothe ourselves in truth, righteousness, and faith, we can walk in the gospel of peace. If

we read the Word of God, pray to the Lord, and obey the movement of the Holy Spirit, we have protection from the devil and his evil schemes. From head to foot, Paul is urging us to never forget who we are as children of God. God can – and will – protect us if we put our trust in him.

It's also important for us to remember that we are not the only ones who wear God's armor. We do not do this in isolation, but in community. It took me a long time to find this image of a group of Roman soldiers. There is lots of archaeological evidence where 1 or 2 soldiers are depicted together, but I wanted to find a picture of a group soldiers, because we are stronger together. You are not alone and neither am I. God made us to live in community and fellowship – in families, with friends and companions, and within the Church. Believe me – one of my biggest worries about my Inter-Mission is the feeling of being isolated from the community of faith that I have been part of for over 12 years. Each one of us has been created to live and worship and serve **together**. And when the Church is at its best, it is a place of sanctuary, welcome, inclusion, and protection from evil.

The armor that God provides us with is crucial to be able to resist the temptation of sin and our lust for greed and power. It protects and strengthens us each and every day.

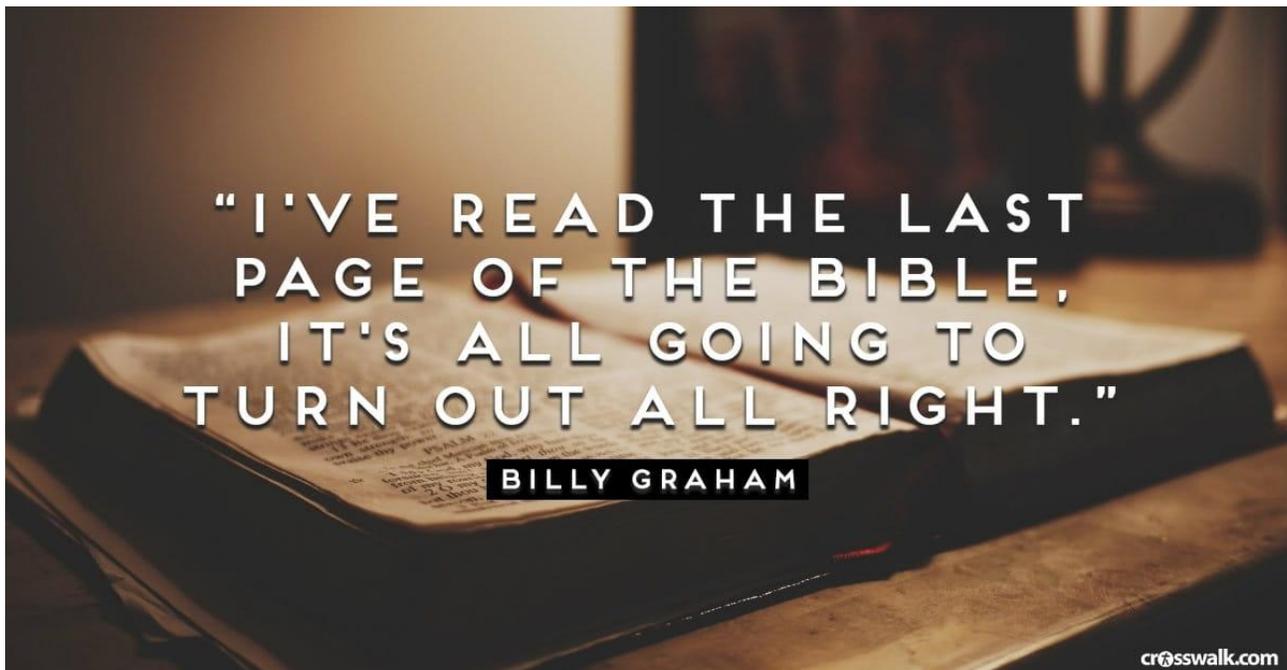
And finally, do you know what our final and greatest defense is against the evil forces of this world? Remember what we read in Psalm 2?

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and his anointed...
The One who sits in the heavens laughs...
I will tell of the God's decree; the Lord said to me,
"You are my son; today I have begotten you."

If you are feeling beaten down, worn out, or unable to keep your armor on, never forget that **GOD IS IN CONTROL**. When nations conspire and people plot, God laughs at them. God laughs. Throughout human history, empires rise and fall and still God reigns supreme. Kings and rulers plot and scheme against each other and still God is victorious. And what about that Satan and his legions of evil forces? The Bible teaches us that God will also be victorious over them in the end. Justice will come. Peace is possible. But only because of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son. Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the One who will save us and protect us. The armor of God that we wear is infused with Christ's love and grace. Everyone who takes refuge in the Lord will be saved.

And because of these promises, we have hope. Hope for ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, the world, and the Church. Hope that God will prevail.

To God be the glory. Now and always. Amen.



Dedication of our Tithes and Offerings

Song of Thanks – Salvation and Immortal Praise (#629, verse 1)

Salvation and immortal praise
unto our God we sing!
Let heaven and earth and rocks and seas
with glad hosannas ring.

Prayer of Dedication (not written in advance)

Prayers of the People

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty –we gather in this time to praise you for the blessings of this life. You created us to live in community with one another and so, we thank you for the people in our lives – family and friends, neighbours and co-workers, and the fellowship of the Church. We are grateful for this nation and the freedom that we have to worship you without fear of persecution. We praise you especially for your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who is our beginning and end. In Christ, you displayed such awesome power – to heal, to love, and to save us from the dark forces all around us. Lord, we come before you in awe and wonder and we lay our prayers at your feet.

Father, week after week, year after year, we pray for peace. So many suffer because of war and terror, violence and injustice. So many have no home, no bed to lay down their weary heads. We remember all those who suffer at the hand of evil. For victims of crime. For children and young people who are taken advantage of. For refugees, widows, child soldiers, and orphans. By the power of your mighty Spirit, help them to stand strong. Give them your strength and divine energy. Bless also the helpers – the peacemakers, the advocates, the soldiers of justice and reconciliation. Come, Lord Jesus, come and defeat the evil forces of our world as you have promised us in Scripture. Destroy the devil with the redeeming love of Jesus Christ.

We also learn in the Gospels that Jesus told us to pray for our enemies. But this is so hard to do! We pray for those who have let evil possess them to do such heinous acts. Soften their hearts so that they may cease their selfish and greedy ways. Let your justice and peace reign down on our world as we wait in eager anticipation for the day when you will destroy the forces of evil once and for all.

Holy God, we pray for your Church. May it be may be the light of love for all people. Where there is anxiety or fear in the global Church, send your peace and resilience. Where there is division and conflict, may there be reconciliation and wisdom. We pray for ministers, lay leaders, missionaries and all those who serve the Church around the world. Give them the courage to be who you call them to be. Given them the strength to put on the whole armor of God.

Blessed Saviour, we pray for all those who searching for you Lord. Many wander aimlessly throughout life with no hope or love. They have no sense of your divine presence in their midst. Guide them by the lamp of your Word and the movement of your Spirit. Show them that they do not face their battles alone, for you are always near.

Gracious and loving God, we remember those who suffer in our midst. We pray for those who are sick and suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Be with those who are lonely and anxious. Wrap your loving arms around all those who grieve. Transform these people through your grace, mercy, and healing power.

Today we remember those who we name before you...
Baby Eddie

Holy God, immortal and invisible, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, whose compassion illuminates the world. Thank you that we never fight alone, for you are constantly working on our behalf, shielding, protecting, strengthening, and covering us. You are our refuge and strength, ever present in times of trouble. Holy Spirit, transform our lives in Christ's image, write your law of love on our hearts, and make us faithful, true, strong. Remind us each and every day that we have hope in you. We pray in the name of our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music: We are marching in the light of God (#639, sing twice)

Blessing (Revelation 21:1-8)

Sung Amen