

Knox Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Emma Duncan  
November 30, 2025



Advent One (Hope)  
Sacrament of Holy Communion

Carol singing before the service (10:15 a.m.)

**Welcome**

**Call to worship** (PWS&D Advent Liturgy)

Marchinko Family

Leader: The prophet Isaiah announced that people of all nations will come to the mountain of the Lord and learn God's ways.

People: When we look at this suffering world, we know we need to follow God's ways.

Leader: God will settle disputes among the nations. Weapons will be transformed into tools for planting and growth. Nations will live in peace— no more will they prepare for war.

People: We cling to that promise and light this candle of hope, inspired by a vision of a world where children grow into adulthood, and parents live to old age.

**The candle of hope is lit.**

Let us pray together: Living God, make us more aware of your presence. We trust your promises and wait with hopeful hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

**Music:** Come thou long expected Jesus (#110, all verses)

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession (including The Lord's Prayer)**

Almighty and everlasting Creator, in the beginning, you created the expanse of the universe out of nothing. You created the galaxies and planets, the earth and the seas. You brought light out of darkness. And you saw that it was good. You formed all of humanity in your image. And you saw that it was good. In the fullness of time, you sent part of your divine self into the form of a helpless infant. In this Advent season, we anticipate the moment when your Son, Jesus, breathed his first human breath, when he cried out for food, and when his eyes opened to see your beautiful world. As we watch and wait for the coming of the Messiah, we give thanks to the name of the Lord.

Heeding Christ's call to keep awake, let us be humble in confessing the truth of the brokenness in our hearts, our actions, and our systems. God of hope, we confess that we too often seek salvation from that which will not save us. We cling to our own comfort, rather than being generous with our gifts and privilege. We are complicit in systems that benefit us, rather than challenging the exploitation of other people, animals, and the environment. We act from fear rather than faith.

O Lord in your mercy, forgive us and renew us. Make us restless for justice. Teach us again to be people of courage and hope.

Thank you, O Emmanuel, for your grace upon grace. Be our refuge as we put our trust in you.

God who is, who was, and who is to come, we enter this season of Advent keenly aware of the brokenness in and around us. Comfort our longing spirits and teach us how to be people of vigilant hope. Walk with us in our pilgrimage toward the renewed world that you have promised.

We pray in the holy name of our 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

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the Church year. And on this "New Years Day" it is worth repeating that the Assurance of Pardon is one of the most important aspects of our worship services because it reminds us of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Mark, heaven and earth may pass away but God's word will never pass away. People of God – rejoice and be glad for we are forgiven. Claim your inheritance as a beloved child of God, through the saving love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Announcements

1. Welcome!
2. Thank yous...
  - a. Carolyn Haacke for playing the carols
  - b. Rick Craig for doing our readings today
  - c. Gord Sherritt and his helpers for a wonderful congregational breakfast
  - d. Cathie Davidson and her helpers for decorating the sanctuary this week.
3. TODAY Sacrament of Holy Communion  
Gluten free wafers ??

Watching online – get your elements ready! 😊

### 4. Santa Clause Parade – Volunteers needed

Sunday December 7th in the afternoon (approx. 1:30-4:00 p.m.) Volunteers need to set-up and serve hot chocolate to the community during the parade. If you are available, please contact the church office.

### 5. White Gifts (Season of Advent)

It is part of our Christmas tradition to help those in need during the holidays. These are the organizations we support:

- \*Burlington Food Bank
- \*Carpenter Hospice
- \*Reach Out for Kids Centre
- \*Wellington Square U.C. community meal program

#### *How can I support this ministry?*

Between November 24th and December 15th, you may give a monetary gift (no gift cards please!) by designating “white gift” on your regular envelope or by E-Transfer. Please contact Kathy in the office to make special arrangements. All of the funds received will be equally split between these organizations to support their excellent work in our community!

## Christmas @ Knox

The Magic of Christmas is not in the presents,  
but in the presence of the Christ Child.

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord!

### Worship Services

- November 30<sup>th</sup> – Candle of Hope & Sacrament of Holy Communion
- December 7<sup>th</sup> – Candle of Peace
- December 14<sup>th</sup> – Candle of Joy
- December 21<sup>st</sup> – Candle of Love & Children's Play
- December 24<sup>th</sup> @ 4:00 p.m. – Carols and Communion Service

### Special Events

- November 29<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. – Congregational Breakfast
- November 30<sup>th</sup> @ 10:15 a.m. – Carol singing
- December 7<sup>th</sup> @ 10:15 a.m. – Carol singing
- December 14<sup>th</sup> @ 10:15 a.m. – Carol singing

**All services will be held in-person  
and broadcast on our [YouTube channel](#).**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6

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November 28, 2025

To the people of Knox,

It is with mixed emotions that I announce that I have submitted my letter of resignation to the Presbytery of Hamilton and the Session of Knox. I will be leaving Knox as of December 31, 2025. My last Sunday in the pulpit will be December 28, 2025.

The past 12 years at Knox have been a real blessing in my life, but I have been wrestling with the fact that God is calling me into a new season of ministry. I have accepted an appointment as the General Presbyter in the Presbytery of Brampton. This two-year contract takes my ministry in a completely different direction and God willing, will give me an opportunity to serve the broader denomination at a critical time in our history.

I wish to express my gratitude to each one of you for your support and encouragement over the years. We have shared both laughter and tears and I trust that our Triune God will continue to guide you into the future.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. *Rev. Emma*



The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
The Presbytery of Hamilton

## Citation

The Session of Knox Presbyterian Church

Citation regarding the resignation of the Rev. Emma Duncan

Emma Duncan minister of this congregation, having laid her resignation before The Presbytery of Hamilton. The Presbytery hereby cites, the session and congregation to appear at the meeting of the presbytery be held avia Zoom on the day of Ninth (9) December in the year 2025, at 7 o'clock pm, that they may give reasons, if they have any, why Emma Duncan's resignation should not be proceeded with, with certification that if no appearance be made, they shall be held as consenting to her resignation.

In order to facilitate this citation, the session is asked to appoint two-three representatives to attend and, when called upon, to speak to the presbytery.

November 29<sup>th</sup> 2025  
Binbrook, Ontario

Rev. Lois Whitwell  
Clerk, Presbytery of Hamilton

Citation Read:

Signature

November 30, 2025

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December 7, 2025

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Clerk: Rev. Lois Whitwell  
Ph: 905 579 8255

187 Kirk Rd Binbrook ON L0R 1C0  
[email: hampresby@gmail.com](mailto:hampresby@gmail.com)

Music: People in darkness (#124, all verses)

Children's Time: Walking in the dark

### **Prayer of Illumination**

Let us pray. God of whispers and shouts, you proclaim the good news of hope from all corners of creation. As we turn to our scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where hope thrives among us. Amen.

**Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Psalms and we will be reading Responsively Psalm 122.**

Leader: I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”

**People: Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

Leader: Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.  
To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,  
as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

**People: For there the thrones for judgment were set up,  
the thrones of the house of David.**

Leader: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

**People: “May they prosper who love you.  
Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.”**

Leader: For the sake of my relatives and friends  
I will say, “Peace be within you.”

**People: For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your good. Amen.**

**Our Old Testament reading is taken from the Book of Isaiah and we will be reading chapter 2, verses 1-5.**

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house

shall be established as the highest of the mountains,

and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

to the house of the God of Jacob;

that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

**Our New Testament reading is taken from the Gospel of Mark and we will be reading chapter 13, verses 24-37.**

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.

And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

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

## **Dedication of our Tithes and Offerings**

**Song of Thanks:** Hope is a star (#119, verse 1)

Hope is a star that shines in the night

Leading us on till the morning is bright

When God is a child, there's joy in our song

The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong

And none shall be afraid

**Prayer of Dedication** (Not written in advance)

## Reflection: The Will to Dream - Vigilant Hope

There once was a man who had a dream. A vision of something both horrible and hopeful. In that vision, he saw horrible judgment for people and nations who rebelled against the Lord. He saw destruction and pain. He saw a city built on a hill being invaded and conquered. He saw people being forced from their homes and land because of war and violence.

This was not a happy dream by any stretch of the imagination. Indeed, it was a nightmare.

But the nightmare was only one side of the story.

The other part of the dream was hopeful – defiantly hopeful. Yes, these horrible things were going to happen, but in the midst of these challenges, there was a vision that God is near. This defiant hope emerged from the shadows of oppression and injustice and the cruelty of war. This defiant hope said – God is in the midst of the city. God will bring peace to his people and all nations. God will show us the way to turn swords and spears into tools for farming and harvesting. **God's way is life not death.**

This man – who I hope you've realized by now is the prophet Isaiah – shared a two-fold message with God's people. There will be judgment if we turn away from the Lord. But when we follow the Lord – when we go to the house of the Lord – there will be peace. There will be hope.

Unfortunately, Isaiah did not live to see this vision of peace and hope come to fruition. As a prophet of the Lord, he was pointing God's people towards the future, a hopeful future when the Messiah would appear and all nations would gather together in the house of the Lord.

Fast forward to our reading from the Gospel of Mark and Jesus was also sharing a vision that was both horrible and hopeful. Imagine for a second that you are hearing Jesus speak about the darkening sun and moon, stars falling from the heavens, and heaven itself being shaken. That the Messiah will come in a cloud with great power and glory and gather his followers from the ends of the earth.

For those first century followers, they took Jesus' words literally – that heaven and earth were going to pass away in their generation. They believed that the end was VERY near. Like tomorrow near. And truth be told, they were frightened by Jesus' words. Who wouldn't be scared hearing this vision?

But Jesus quickly corrected them. Don't take my words literally. Don't pretend that you have the power to predict what tomorrow will be like. No one knows when the Messiah will come. The angels in heaven don't know. Neither do I. The Messiah will come again at any time of day. No one cannot predict exactly when and anyone who tells you otherwise is a liar and a fool.

In other words, Jesus was reinforcing Isaiah's message. In the midst of doom and gloom, there is still hope.

Fast forward to 2025 and Christians all around the world are being reminded of this hope during the Advent season.

And that hope is supposed to be defiant. Because even in the shadows of oppression and injustice and the cruelty of war, that God is near. God is in the city, turning weapons of war into tools for peace; offering mercy and forgiveness, and transforming ordinary people into heroes of the faith.

We are called to be vigilant in our hope. We are to be wary of false prophets and fake Messiahs. We are to be alert and awake for the second coming of Christ. We are to work towards peace even if we won't see the end results. We are to share the message that God's way is indeed life.

Our future as the people of God is so much bigger than any of the challenges that we are currently facing. Empires fall. Dictators get removed from office. Economic crises come and go. Even ministers come and go. But NOT God. God will never abandon us. The Word of God is eternal and true and more accurate than tomorrow's newspaper. And the promises of Scripture – as told to us by the prophets of old – remind us to be faithful in hope. To walk in the light of the Lord.

And that's why the Church celebrates the Sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of Advent. The Sacrament reminds us of this hope. We are reminded that

because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, there is no need to be afraid of the dark. And when we share in the elements of bread and wine, we don't do it because we are physically hungry. We do it because we are spiritually hungry. A hunger to know that we are not alone. A hunger to know that God is in control. A hunger to know that Jesus is on his way.

Amen.

Introduce hymn - All the earth is waiting

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Music: All the earth is waiting (#109, verses 1, 3, 4)

### Invitation

Long ago, Jesus sat at a table with his friends, sharing a meal during turbulent times. Even though Jesus knew he would soon face pain and persecution, he paused for a moment of meaning with the people he loved, and he instructed us to do the same.

So, now we pause. We remember. We watch and wait and dream. We long to be welcomed at Christ's table, sinners and saints alike. We yearn to experience the peace of Christ in the midst of these turbulent times.

Beloved in the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, all are welcome to share in the feast that has been prepared for us.

### Apostles' Creed

I invite you to share in the common hope of our faith. 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 again 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.

Please be seated.

## Prayer

Creating God, as we begin this season of watching and waiting for the Christ child, we worship and praise you. Out of the chaos, you created order. You spoke and light dispelled the darkness. Through the prophets, you teach us your ways so that we may walk in your path. In communion with the global Church, we celebrate that prayer is an act of hope, and hope is an act of faith. And so, we come to you as faithful, hopeful people, giving thanks that you hear the prayers of our hearts.

Redeeming God, you sent your only begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth, to earth and in him we see the Word made flesh. While he walked this earth, he healed the sick, comforted the grieving, lifted up the outcast, and ate with sinners. He fulfilled the promises of Scripture when he said that heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Before he suffered a cruel and painful death, he shared his last meal with his closest friends. Through his death and resurrection, he delivered us from the power of sin and darkness. We wait in hopeful expectation that he will come again in a cloud of great power and glory.

Sustaining God, your Spirit liberates and nourishes us. It strengthens the Church to work towards an end to oppression and violence. It shows us how to turn weapons of war into life-giving tools of the harvest. Spirit of the living God, be present with us today. In the midst of such fear and uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring, come close to us. Descend upon the elements of bread and wine before us and transform them into representations of Christ's eternal sacrifice. Descend upon each one of us so that as we eat and drink, we may be one with Christ and the Church.

Holy and Gracious One, we pray for ourselves and each other — when this season tries to package hope as a product to be bought and sold— shiny, pretty, easy—center us in the sacred stories of our faith. Focus our attention on the stories of Scripture that invite us into a vision of a more just and joyful way, where peace may live within us all.

In the silence of our hearts, we pray for those who need your healing presence and hope...

O Triune God, we live in a broken world, full of darkness and hopelessness. We pray that Christ's light will come in these Advent days to dispel the darkness. May your hope break through the pain and suffering that so many are experiencing. Keep us alert as we watch and wait for the arrival of your Son. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, all honour and glory are yours, our creator, redeemer, and sustainer. World without end. Amen.

## Institution

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 again.

In this feast, God comes to us as we experience this glorious truth – that our Lord, Jesus Christ, willingly and obediently sacrificed his life on our behalf. As we celebrate this wonderful hope, we pray that the Holy Spirit will come among us and blow over these elements of bread and wine - here in this sanctuary and in our homes - so that they will be transformed into a holy mystery.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I invite you to taste and see that God is good.

## Sharing of the Body and Blood

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

## Prayer

Creator of all good things, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of blessing, small in their presentation, yet magnificent in our holy imagination. Give us the will to dream for a world bathed in the light of Jesus Christ. May the hope that we have experienced at this table sustains us each day. Amen.

**Music: Hail to the Lord's Anointed** (#115, verses 1, 3, 5)

**Blessing** (Revelation 21:1-6)

**Sung Amen**