

Gathering Song: VU 626 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Announcements

Welcome

One: Welcome to this time of worship, dear ones! Whatever brings you to this time of prayer and community, may you know that when your light grows dim, the light of Christ can rekindle your heart so that you might step into the world with hope renewed. And so, we light our Christ candle in gratitude (*Elder lights Christ candle*).

And may you know that when you feel disconnected from that which is sacred, the light of Christ still shines to illuminate your way along the path of peace. And so, we light the Peace candle as we pause to acknowledge and give thanks for the lands, waters, the plants and animals and all of the people of Mi'kmak'i, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. Through the course of our days, may we learn to live in peace and friendship with all beings, and with God. (*Elder lights Peace Candle*)

One: And may you know that from your very beginning, you have been a part of God's sacred creation! And so, we light the Affirmation candle to celebrate all the wonderful diversity in which God has created us, and calls us good! (*Elder lights Affirmation candle*)

In this community of faith, we celebrate that all are welcome in this place.

All: All are welcome by God's grace.

Call to Worship

One: If you were searching for your way and someone pointed out a direction, what would you do?

All: Would I follow their lead?

One: Jesus called to the disciples, to Andrew and Peter, to James and John, and they left their nets and followed him.

All: Would I follow his lead?

One: And to his disciples following his resurrection, Jesus said: "stay here and wait for the presence of the Spirit to light upon you."

All: Would I follow his lead?

One: With love as our guide, with the Spirit pointing a way, with a community of faith to join us in our search, we wonder...

All: Am I willing to go?

Am I willing to stay?

Am I willing to be a disciple of Christ?

One: Let us ponder our answers to these questions as we worship today.

Opening Prayer

**All: God of all grace, Spirit of all love, Christ alive in *our* lives—
open us to the possibilities of today, we pray.**

**Give us minds that wonder;
Hearts that seek,
And lives that offer healing—
So that wherever we go,
We might live the invitation to be your disciples and follow in your Way.
All of this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Hymn: MV 113 Jesus Saw Them Fishing

Prayer of Confession:

One: It isn't just praise that we bring to God—we bring with us all of our lives, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears. So, let us bring our prayers of confession to God, trusting that God hears our prayers and holds us always in love. Let us pray together:

All: Holy One, in earth, sea and sky, you are there; in everything we touch; in everyone we meet; your presence is 'round us, and we give you thanks. And yet, we know there are times when we are careless—we do not always meet you as we could. We have missed opportunities to love and care, to be in wonder and awe, to give and receive, and we are sorry. Forgive us for this, and help us to change so that we might gladly meet you all around us. Amen. (*a time of silent prayer*)

Assurance of Grace:

One: No matter where we are, God is there.

No matter what we have done, God forgives.

No matter our reluctance to accept God, God has accepted us.

With that assurance, receive God's forgiveness, and live your life in the spirit of Jesus with fullness and hope. For this forgiveness, this hope, and this way of life, let all the people say:

All: Thanks be to God! Amen!

Hymn: VU 567 Will You Come and Follow Me (vv. 1, 4, 5)

Time for All Ages

Hymn: When You Walk from Here

Prayer of Illumination

Reader: Loving God, as we proclaim these words today, open our hearts and minds. May these ancient words and stories come to life and provide illumination for us in our time and place. All this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 4:12-22 - offered by _____

Words of God that are still speaking.

Thanks be to God!

Reflection

Ministry of Music: Lead Kindly Light

Offering Hymn: VU 563 Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore
Offertory Response: VU 541 Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Offering Dedication

All: Loving God, we open our hearts wide to share the Good News in action and commitment. May these gifts be transformed into caring visits to those who are celebrating, hurting, or in need, learning times with young and old, and faith-filled worship for all seekers. May outreach be possible and love be imaginable. Let these offerings be for feeding body and soul. All praise and glory be yours. Amen.

Marking the End of the Pastoral Relationship

Penny: Members, adherents and friends
of Knox United Church,

I thank you for your love, kindness, and support
during this past year.

I am grateful for the laughter, the tears, the struggles
and the opportunities we have shared in this time.

I ask your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made.

As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

**Congregation: We receive your thankfulness
and offer our forgiveness.**

We ask you to forgive us for our mistakes.

We are grateful for your guidance and your gifts.

All: As we part, may we know God's grace and peace.

Chairperson of Council or SOC: Will you, the members and friends of the Knox
United, release Penny from the duties of ministry in this place?

All: We will, with God's help.

Chairperson of Council or SOC: Will you respect the new relationship that now
begins between Penny and her new congregation, and offer your encouragement
and prayers for Penny's continued ministry elsewhere?

All: We will, with God's help.

Chairperson of Council or SOC: Penny, will you release Knox United Church and
the wider community of Sackville from our dependence upon you as a minister of
Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care?

Penny: I will, with God's help.

Chairperson of Council or SOC: Will you respect the new relationship that now
begins between us, and between this congregation and the next ministers to come?

And will you offer your encouragement and prayers for the continued ministry here?

Penny: I will, with God's help.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: MV 150 Spirit God, Be Our Breath

Blessing:

One: May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
may the rains fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of God's hand.

Parting Song: Go Now in Peace

+Welcome written by Rev. Penny Nelson while at Knox United, 2022. Used with permission; Call to Worship adapted from Richard Bott, Vancouver, BC. From *The Gathering: A/C/E 2016-17*, pg. 41. Used with permission; Opening Prayer adapted from Richard Bott, Vancouver, BC. From *The Gathering: A/C/E 2022-23*, pg. 46. Used with permission; Prayer of Illumination used from *The Gathering: A/C/E 2019-20*, used with permission; Blessing adapted from *The Gathering: A/C/E 2010-2011*. Used with permission.