

Knox-Calvin Presbyterian Church, Harriston, Ontario

Service for Sunday April 11, 2021

Guest minister by Rev. Dirk Kramer

Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: We light this light

**All: in the name of the God who creates life In the name of Saviour who loves life
In the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.**

Opening Hymn: *Hail the day that sees Christ rise (#265)*

Hail the day that sees Christ rise, Hallelujah! to the throne in paradise; Hallelujah!
Christ the Lamb for sinners given, Hallelujah! enters now the highest heaven. Hallelujah!

Christ, for you high triumph waits, Hallelujah!
lift your heads, eternal gates; Hallelujah! you
have conquered death and sin: Hallelujah!
enter, Sovereign, enter in. Hallelujah!

See the nail marked hands above, Hallelujah!
signs of God's redeeming love; Hallelujah! hark,
Christ's words our hearts assure, Hallelujah!
"I will send a Comforter!" Hallelujah!

Christ, for us still intercede; Hallelujah!
by your suffering for us plead; Hallelujah!
near yourself prepare a place, Hallelujah!
as the first fruits of God's grace.
Hallelujah!

Now, though parted from our sight,
Hallelujah! in the depths of starry night,
Hallelujah! may God raise us up again,
Hallelujah! heirs of your eternal reign.
Hallelujah!

Responsive Call to Worship

One: We gather with joy, for Easter continues.

All: Locked doors have been opened and fear has turned to peace.

One: We celebrate the presence of the Risen Christ among us.

All: Doubts have been erased and uncertainty has turned to faith.

One: Let us rejoice and be glad!

All: Let us offer our prayers and our praise with humble, hopeful hearts.

Prayer of Adoration Community Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Hymn: *Come to us, beloved Stranger (#262)*

Come to us, beloved Stranger, as you came that Easter day. Walk with us to our Emmaus, for we need you still today. Come to us when we are broken, when our dearest hopes are lost, speak to us the prophet's message you fulfilled upon the cross.

Stay with us and give us blessing, that our hopes again may rise. Offer us your broken body; open our unseeing eyes. Come to us, God's love embodied; touch our hearts with burning flame. Risen Christ, once dead, now living, come to us through joy, through pain.

We would never fail to see you
as you walk with us each day. As
a friend and not a stranger you
would join us on our way.
Help us trust that through your mercy
we can doubt and fear transcend, and
to others be a blessing.
Keep us faithful till life's end!

Prayer for Understanding Scripture Readings: Isaiah 53:1-5

1Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? **2** He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. **3** He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. **4** Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. **5** But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

John 20:24-31

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." **26** A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." **28** Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." **30** Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31** But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon: "His Scars"

Here's a poem for you:

My scars tell a million stories
The stories of struggle
The stories of persistence

The stories of survival
The stories that made me who I am The
stories of my life...

My scars voice a millions things
They tell me dark days will pass
They ask me to hold on strong
For even the deepest wounds eventually heal
& someday I will be looking at another scar
pondering over the story it yearns to tell.
My scars whisper a million things to me And
I know, yours do the same.
“What are your stories behind those scars??
Scars that are etched onto your skin...
& Scars that hide in your heart...”

—Kaka

The scars of Jesus, the Risen Lord Jesus—arguably the most noteworthy and best known scars (at least among believers)...What story do they tell?

An astute observer pointed out—and I’m inclined to agree—that the scars of Jesus are the only manmade thing that’ll exist in heaven for all eternity.

Which opens for us the question: what about the scars we carry with us? On our bodies and our souls, inflicted by others or self-inflicted? What about them?

Some say only the scars of the martyrs, along with those of Jesus, will be visible in heaven. As a badge of honor. Which makes me think of another poem, one by Amy Carmichael, which asks: “Hast thou no scar?”

“No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me.

But thine are whole; can he have followed far Who
hast no wound or scar?”

Some argue biblically that we’ll have no scars or imperfections in heaven because of what it says in Revelation 21, where it says of life there that “[he’ll] wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”

That still leaves us with the scars of Jesus. What are we to make of them?

Thomas saw them eight days after the Resurrection when he was asked to look for himself. To inspect them even. The Risen Lord invited Thomas to go so far as to touch them even with his finger! Although I doubt he felt the need to take Jesus up on his offer. The proof was overwhelming. Enough to silence any question or doubt Thomas may have had.

But what about us? What are we to make of the scars of Jesus?—we who're counted among the blessed ones Jesus was referring to when he said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

The scars of Jesus show us first of all that his suffering on the cross was real. His wounds are a badge of his identity.

Remember, John was the only one of the disciples who was at the cross. None of the other disciples actually saw Jesus suffer and die.

It was in their DNA to doubt. What if Jesus had come to them without any evidence of ever having been crucified? Would they have believed he even died? And if he hadn't died in the first place, how could it be that he had been resurrected?

The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be a suffering servant...That "he was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

For Jesus to have come back from the dead without his scars would have been a denial of the reason he came to us in the first place: to take upon himself the iniquity of us all.

Furthermore, the scars of Jesus show us there is nothing Jesus cannot overcome—even death itself.

That's what accounts for the peace and joy the disciples felt at his appearing. The Apostle Luke captures it in his succinct description of this scene.

He records the first words Jesus spoke to his disciples at Easter: "Peace be with you," he said to them. And then came joy. Luke tells them how "he showed them his hands and feet." And their reaction? "Amazement and joy," Luke says.

Leonard Vander Zee, writing in *Reformed Worship*, offers a wonderful insight here.

"It's as though the wounds somehow opened them up to joy," he writes.

"Why would the disciples be glad to see the wounds? When Jesus showed them his wounds, it meant that they could remember the pain they had all experienced on those last few days—the fear, the tears of remorse, the terrible hours watching him die. Their emptiness, their loneliness, their hopelessness: it was all there in those wounds. In his wounds they were free to probe their own. Now they could remember. Now they could rejoice. It's the same reason we need to ask people who are grieving how it's going, or say something about the one they're grieving for—it gives them the freedom to remember, perhaps to weep—the kind of weeping that releases and cleanses."

Vander Zee then goes on to tell the story of the late Richard Selzer, a surgeon who had the extraordinary gift for putting his everyday work into words. Here how he describes a memorable encounter he once had:

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus from now on.

The surgeon followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had cut the little nerve.

Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. . . . The young woman speaks.

“Will my mouth always be like this?” she asks.

“Yes,” I say, “it will. It is because the nerve was cut.”

She nods, and is silent. But the young man smiles.

“I like it,” he says. “It is kind of cute.”

All at once I know who he is. I understand, and I lower my gaze. One is not bold in an encounter with a god. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that her kiss still works.

—Richard Selzer, *Mortal Lessons* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1996), p. 45.

Vander Zee concludes:

“When Jesus appeared behind those locked doors to greet his fearful, wounded, ashamed disciples, he showed them his scars. It was like a kiss that conformed to their wounds. It was as if the Lord were saying, ‘I know your wounds, and I love you still.’”

Now that’s grace!

One thing more. I can’t end without mentioning the last image the New Testament gives us of the nailscarred Jesus. It’s found at the end, in Revelation 5, in a final vision John gives us of Jesus: “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’”

May that glorious sight be ours to see someday as well! Amen

Prayer of Confession Assurance of Pardon

**Invitation to the Offering Prayer of Dedication
Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

The Lord’s Prayer

Going Forth Hymn: *Go my children, with my blessing*

Go, my children, with my blessing,
Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you;
You are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river, I
have made you mine forever.

Go, my children, with my
blessing , You are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you,
What I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story;
Here you touched Him, saw his
glory, Go my children, sins
forgiven, At peace and pure.

Benediction

One: In work and worship,
All: God is with us. One:
Gathered and scattered, **All:**
God is with us.
All: God is with us.

Closing Song: *Awake, arise, oh sing a new song* (#819)

Awake, arise, oh sing a new song of
joy and celebration.
A new day has come; bring praise to the Son of
God, of God.

Announcements

Session meets April 13 7:30. Zoom link will be sent out earlier in the day.

Annual Congregational Meeting is set for Sunday April 25 after worship ~ 11:30.

Lectionary Readings for April 18:
Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

Please be in touch if there are others you would like added to the prayer list. 519-321-1942.

Moment for Mission

Annakala Finds Answers at Shining Hospital

In Nepal, Annakala Nepali was living in significant discomfort. Severe problems with her fingers, along with loss of sensation in her legs and tingling in her body were followed by vision problems. In Annakala's community, Many people prefer traditional healers to Address their medical problems— Annakala decided to do the same. However, she still suffered after the visit. Her daughter-in-law, on seeing her in pain and suspecting that it might be due to leprosy, encouraged Annakala to visit the Presbyterian World Service & Developmentssupported Shining Hospital. Once she was admitted to the hospital, she was officially diagnosed with leprosy and started treatment, which has improved her symptoms and pain. Annakala is very grateful for the Shining Hospital's care, love and support.

One: Now and always,

Go, my children, fed and nourished,
Closer to Me;
Grow in love and love by serving,
Joyful and free. Here my Spirit's power filled you;
Here his tender comfort stilled you. Go, my
children, fed and nourished, Joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you
And give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you And
give you peace:
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and
Brother.
Go, my children, I will keep you
And give you peace.