

**SERMON**  
**By: Gail Fricker**

***“What’s Happening Here?”***

**October 21, 2018**

Happy Anniversary Knox! Wow, what a long way you have come. This congregation has 184 years of heritage -that’s older than anyone here! It began with Stanley Street Church in 1834, Knox Presbyterian Church in 1843, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church 1864. They joined together in this fine building in 1888, and you became Knox United Church of Canada in 1925.

So, let’s look at some fun facts about our past, all of which we can find on our website today:

- Where will you find the inscription: "Erected in memory of the officers of the church by the Ladies Aid Society 1909." (Bell installed in 1909)
- When did the first woman preach from the pulpit? (Rev. Ida MacKenzie preached on March 12, 1950 -) ... and our first woman on session was 1976!
- When did we start preaching from the floor lectern? (1990. Donated in memory of Mrs. Agnes Brown)
- Two important symbols of our faith are our Communion Table and our Baptismal Font. Any ideas when these were dedicated to Knox? (1953, commissioned from a bequest by Mrs. George Easton.)

I encourage you to take some time after church to look at all the historical artifacts that have been placed out here in the sanctuary. There is no doubt that it is a beautiful building with lots of history. Some of our congregants are seventh generation "Knoxites;". If these walls could talk, there would be stories to tell.

Today, we want to celebrate those stories of who we are as a people of God.

As part of that celebration, I have invited some people to share their memories of “where we came from – stories of the past”. So, I invite Susan, Shirley, John and Kate to come forward to share their stories:

Susan Humphrey  
Shirley Mitchell  
John Gillespie  
Kate Cressman

Thank you for your stories.

Our scripture today talks about the “body of Christ being built up”(v12).

Paul is encouraging the early Ephesian Church to “grow as the body of Christ”(v 15).

Now you might think, looking around you, that our numbers are dwindling, our ages are getting older, and we don't seem to be in a period of growth.

But growth in Christ is not measured in numbers.

Paul reminds the Ephesians that the church “grows and builds in love, as each part does its work”(v 16).

And I think that we need to celebrate that we are doing that work here at Knox. There is something here at Knox, that keeps us coming back. Something that makes us stay when we come for the first time. Something that builds us up in love.

And I don't think that ‘something’ is our beautiful steeple, our stain glass, or even our deep history.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit – stirring and moving through this place, here, now, in the present.

I have asked some people to share their stories of how they have been moved, and “where we are now - stories of today at Knox”. So, I invite Betty, Nancy and Tammie to come to forward.

Betty Butcher  
Nancy Anderson  
Tammie

Thank you for your stories.

God's Spirit is alive here. God's Spirit is alive in the United Church of Canada.

And our General Council, our Conferences and our Presbyteries are listening to God's Spirit. That is why things are changing with the restructuring of our government structure. We as a denomination are responding to the Spirit of God.

How do we at Knox, Ayr, as a people of faith, respond to God's Spirit?

Do we long for the old days?

Do we moan and complain and resist change?

Or do we embrace the future with hope and faith?

What is our vision and our story for “who we want to be?”

I'd like to invite Glenyce to come forward and share one last story with us.

Glenyce

Thank you Glenyce.

Our Mission statement here at Knox has three parts. It says that we will

- provide opportunity for spiritual development and growth
- offer a variety of ways to worship and belong
- build support, friendship and fellowship in our community and beyond.

I encourage each of you on this Anniversary Sunday to think about this Mission Statement. Ask yourself what you can individually do live out this Mission.

Perhaps God's Spirit is prompting you to lead or participate in a bible study or devotional group?

Perhaps there are ways that you can support the various ways of worship such as helping and participating in Sunday worship, or Jazz Vespers or Messy Church?

Perhaps you are being called to work in ways to build fellowship in the community through outreach projects like Lunch N' Learn, Kindred Spirits, PD days, Knox Café nights, and our accessibility project.

It is good to look back over the past on an Anniversary Sunday. But we can not live in the past. We are called to be a body of Christ:

*"joined and held together by every supporting ligament, growing and building up in love, as each part does its work."*

We are called to change and grow in Christ. We are called to live into our Knox vision "To connect people to Christ as we discover, rejoice and serve ...**Together**"

Amen.