

Watchwords for the PCC at 150

Community Character for a Flourishing Future



In a book that Canadian Presbyterian theologian Blair Bertrand wrote with Andrew Root, *When Church Stops Working: A Future for Your Congregation beyond More Money, Programs, and Innovation* (2023), the authors suggest that churches find a new orientation for their missioning around “watchwords” that come from their past, energize their present, and form their work and witness in the future. Their take on the crisis in the church revolves around the dynamics of too much reliance on or pursuit of technology, too much focus on social media, and too much energy wasted in busyness. This crisis, they argue, “demands attentive waiting, that we try and see and hear what’s so easily blurred in our secular age” (87). They understand watchwords as follows:

A watchword forms you. It’s a shorthand story of beauty and encounter. It’s shorthand for your shared experience with the living God. ... You take it on, like a pair of glasses, moving in and through the world with a new lens. You use the watchword’s

narrative shape ... as a way of making sense of the world and your own life in it. (106)

In this 150th year of the denomination Brentwood is part of, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Brian, along with Jim Smith and Phil Murray, will explore their views on some of the key watchwords in our tradition and how they hold sanctifying significance for our future, especially as a congregation improvising with the tradition to flourish as blessings with our neighbours in Greater Vancouver and beyond.

We trust these conversations will bear the fruit of the Spirit in and through those who engage in them.

The top row are images of the burning bush used by Canadian Presbyterians over the years. The bottom row are from churches from which some of our members come.



October 5, 2025 – Celebrating Holy Communion at the Lord’s Table

World-Wide Communion Sunday

Lynn Dookie reading

Scriptures Psalm 100 – Refrain #1

*All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice*

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#63 – O sing a new song to the Lord

#543 – Here. O my Lord, I see thee – vvs.1-3

#543 – Here, O my Lord, I see thee – vvs.4-7

Sermon Title

Watchwords for the PCC at 150:

Our Community Character for a Flourishing Future

Words to Ponder Forgiving and Reconciling Love

October 12, 2025 – Thanksgiving Sunday – A Dialogue Sermon with Jim Smith

Kayla Green reading

Scriptures Psalm 121 – Refrain #1

***From God the Lord shall come my certain aid,
from God the Lord, who heav’n and earth has made.***

1 Peter 5:1-11

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#82 – I to the hills will lift my eyes

#301 – Many and great, O God, are your work

#802 – For the fruits of all creation

Sermon Title Thanksgiving for our Traditions

Word to Ponder Traditions

October 19, 2025 –

Ryan Clarke reading

Scriptures Psalm 98 – Refrain #1

***New songs of celebration render
to God who has great wonders done.***

Matthew 20:20-28

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#708 – When Israel was in Egypt’s land

#726 – May the God of hope go with us every day

#722 – Lord, whose love

Sermon Title An Anti-Tyrannical Form of Church Government

Word to Ponder Tyranny

October 26, 2025 - Phil Murray preaching

Sherwin Xie reading

Scriptures Psalm 133 – Refrain #1

*Joy abounds where love fills our dwelling,
tears and laughter bind us all as one.*

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#490 – God of grace and God of glory

#759 – In loving partnership

#692 – Where charity and love prevail

Sermon Title Equipped to Witness

Words to Ponder Body of Christ

November 2, 2025 – Celebrating Holy Communion at the Lord’s Table

Lynn Dookie reading

Scriptures Psalm 96 – Refrain #1

Joy to the world! The Lord is come.

John 14:25-31

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#63 – O sing a new song to the Lord

#543 – Here. O my Lord, I see thee – vvs.1-3

#543 – Here, O my Lord, I see thee – vvs.4-7

Sermon Title Reformulating Our Faith

Words to Ponder Reformed and Always Reforming

November 9, 2025 – Remembrance Sunday

Kayla Green reading

Scriptures Psalm #9 – Refrain #1

***For you are God
And shall by right the nations all possess***

Isaiah 11:1-9

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#727 – Let there be light

#736 – For the healing of the nations

#740 – Make me a channel of your peace

Sermon Title

Ambassadors of SHALOM

Word to Ponder SHALOM

November 16, 2025 – Jim Smith preaching

Ryan Clarke reading

Scriptures Isaiah 65:17-25

Luke 21:5-19

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#411 - Stand up and bless the Lord

#412 - Come, let us sing to the Lord our song

#324 - Great is thy faithfulness

Sermon Title Life Goes On

Word to Ponder Endurance

November 23, 2025 – The Reign of Christ Sunday

Sherwin Xie reading

Scriptures Psalm 100 – Refrain #1

*All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice*

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Hymns Opening Chorus #299 – vs.1 – Holy, holy, holy

#760 – Where cross the crowded ways of life

#763 - To show by touch and word

#775 – Sent forth by your blessing

Sermon Title Emissaries for the Gospel

Word to Ponder Ambassadors