



Kensington Presbyterian Church

## *Sabbath Keeping*

*March 29, 2020*

Welcome & announcements

For now we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home.<sup>1</sup> This doesn't mean you have to do them alone. You can invite those who live with you, or connect with others through the phone or computer.

If you have any prayer requests, ideas, or just want to talk, please reach out to your elder or Rev. Peter. [Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca](mailto:Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca)

### *Announcements*

Each of these events will happen through Zoom. This website enables video conferencing and phoning in. You don't need to download their app, just look for the web-browser option. At the set time, go to this web site: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4095620745> or call this Toronto number: 1-647-558-0588 and the put in this meeting number: 409 562 0745

- Today (Sunday, March 29)  
you can join Rev. Peter between 11:30 and noon for a chat.
- Prayer Time: Wednesday morning prayer at 9 a.m.
- Zoom Café: Thursday at 3 p.m.  
Join Rev. Peter for coffee (not included):
- Sunday Worship: Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

If you are interested, but these times don't work, please contact Rev. Peter: [Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca](mailto:Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca)

Please continue to check out the website <https://kensingtonchurch.ca/> or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KensingtonChurchNDG/> for news of these ideas.

<sup>1</sup> note: the footnotes are not be as thorough as an academic paper.

## *Approaching God*



lighting the candle

Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.  
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

Prelude: Gloria spiritus et alme (with saxophone improvisation)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOH5hFAZEBO>

Call to worship<sup>2</sup>

God provides for every need  
**guidance in right paths,  
presence in darkest valleys,  
nourishment beyond measure.**

God shines light on the world in Jesus  
**opening eyes that are blind,  
exposing prejudice and fear,  
offering new understanding of life's good purpose.**

But we persist in our own ways  
**judging by appearance,  
denying others' experience,  
hoarding what we can for ourselves.**

Lord, have mercy  
**Christ, have mercy**  
Lord, have mercy

Assurance of Forgiveness  
Hear these comforting words:  
If you honestly try to change your ways  
and believe in God's redeeming mercy,  
your sins are forgiven.  
Trust in God's promises

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Iona MacLean for the Presbyterian World Service and Development Lent Responses series 2020

and begin anew your life  
with God and all people  
in the name of Jesus Christ.

Unison Prayer<sup>3</sup>

**Creator God,  
you are the Source of light and love,  
rest and nurture, hope and peace.  
Open our eyes to your goodness.  
Empower us to live as children of light,  
bringing a rich harvest of all that is good and right and true.  
Enlighten us to see the world  
with your eyes of love.  
So may all people know  
your goodness and mercy forever;  
through Jesus Christ the light of the world.  
Amen.**

♪ hymn: Take time to be holy.....see last page  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFApbg-wcmE>

### *Listening to God*

Readings - As you read through you can click on the link to read the passage, or look it up in your own Bible.<sup>4</sup>

#### [Isaiah 58](#)

As usual for a prophet, Isaiah is warning people to start living God's way. What's his point this time?

#### [Psalm 19](#)

What strikes you in this psalm?

#### [Matthew 12: 1-8](#)

Is Jesus getting rid of the Sabbath? or is he making a power grab?  
What's going on?

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Iona MacLean for the Presbyterian World Service and Development Lent Responses series 2020

<sup>4</sup> If you'd like a new Bible with helpful notes, I recommend the 'Life with God Bible' NRSV from Renovaré. ISBN 0061834963 or for the more academically inclined, The New Oxford Study Bible NRSV

### Sermon

Dear Lord, please bless the words typed here  
and the meditations of our hearts. Amen.

“These are crazy times” is something preachers have been saying... well, since forever.

A month ago I might have said it in reference to how much ‘time’ has become a commodity. How some professions charge \$40 for every 7½ minutes of their time. Time is broken up into what can be billed. How that defines our worth. How it gets the adrenaline rushing. How that overshadows our other times (dinner time, family time, etc.). ...and it's so hard to stop.

and then Novel Coronavirus sweeps over the world, forcing everybody to practice physical (not social) distancing - crazy times.

It has disrupted everybody's normal rhythms in their lives. Somebody was telling me this week that it was too crowded on the sidewalks to go for a weekday walk after lunch, so they went in the morning - and it's empty. Nobody going to school. Few people going to work.

Patterns have changed. I think everybody is struggling with what to do.

If you're retired, what do you do without going out?

If you're a student, what do you do without school?

and if you still have school, can you get into it?

If you're employed, how do you do your work?

...especially if you have children at home with you.

If you're unemployed... now what do you do?

[Isaiah 58](#) is also asking this question - what do you do. Although I don't think that's its main concern. After all, the people are apparently fasting - but *why* are they doing it? It seems to be

something they've put in their lives to try and get a favour from God - which isn't making God happy.

As a bit of an aside, there's a lot of "if... then" statements here. Don't think that that means 'if you do \_\_\_\_\_, then God will like you more'. It's more like something that happened last night at my dinner table. "If you don't eat your dinner, then you will be hungry." The food is there, but the recipient decides to turn away. God is always there, but sometimes what we do turns us away from the blessings that are offered.

Which is probably the point. Those ancient Israelites aren't getting into the spirit of fasting or the Sabbath. God sends Isaiah to warn them to consider what, and why, they do what they do.

What are you doing?  
Why are you doing it?

It's like they've forgotten [Psalm 19](#) - that following the Law is sweeter than honey and better than gold. They're trying to make their own gold and honey. However, living God's way revives the soul more than anything we can do for ourselves.

So, how to do that?

Well, there's the 10 Commandments which give us some rules, and then there's Jesus who suggests they're more like guidelines than actual rules. That the spirit behind what you do is very important.

Take the whole time thing. It's a commodity. I suspect that's not really new; we're just better at it than societies in the past. We forget time is a gift from God. While we need to function in our society's economic systems as best we can, we also need to be reminded of how relationships should (and will) be. This will nourish our souls better than gold and good food.

Keeping the Sabbath helps.

In the 10 Commandments, the Sabbath rule comes between the section on our relationship with God and the section on our relationship with each other. It's important for both.

The version in [Deuteronomy 5: 6-21](#) emphasizes *whose* we are. We are no longer Pharaoh's slaves, we are God's children. Slaves have no rights and must work whenever the master says so. (Sound familiar?) Slaves are not people, but commodities.

Children are very different. They have rights and responsibilities - including making sure everybody, even outsiders and their donkey, get a Sabbath. They participate in the Sabbath, and make sure that this time is kept Holy (meaning: set apart for the service of God).

But set apart to do what?

What are we supposed to accomplish?

The other version in [Exodus 20: 1-17](#) stresses remembering *who*. *We* are created in the image of God. God rested on the seventh day, and so should we (not that we're God).

Have you ever wondered why the seventh day? Isn't it annoying to have seven days in a week? Hopefully this isn't too much info, but I tend to wash my hair every couple of days... and every Sunday. This pattern just doesn't work. It's like the Sabbath day is globbed onto the week, throwing everything off, ...intruding on my life.

Perhaps that's the point. That every week we bump into God's day and make time for it. As a part of creation, our creator rested. God rested. God wasn't afraid the world would fall apart or need to be tweaked, although we've all experienced things we think should be fixed.

What's the Sabbath supposed to accomplish? Quite a number of things - and nothing at all.

It's about the gift of time...

Time when we don't make a list of problems to solve. Time when we turn it all over to God. Time when we actually trust God to look after things.

Time to appreciate creation. Time to experience joy. This could be joy from nature, or family, or laying down and letting our fears and anxieties go.

Sabbath is a time to 'let go and let God'.

Which is easy for me to say, but much harder for us to do.

This week I read about several peoples experiences living a Sabbath time. There are many differences as to what they do and don't do. Some take a full 24 hours, some less - or more spread out. (Personally, I find it takes me time to get into it.) Some people respect the environment by not driving. Some spend extra time with family and friends, others take time to be by themselves. Some give time to community service. It seems that it's less about what specifically is done, and more about the intention behind it... like what Isaiah was getting at.

I quite like an idea from Rev. Kara Root. Her family practices Sabbath every two weeks. When they start their day they each answer the two questions. *What am I giving up?* and *What will I embrace?*<sup>5</sup> These can be activities or attitudes, joys or worries.

There are a few things they all say.

It's important for time to be loose. Don't try to pack anything in. Let things flow. Allow time for reflections to bubble up inside you.

Give time to your relationship with God, and your community.

That said, it helps to have a clear start and end to your Sabbath time. Several of them borrow the Jewish practice of lighting two candles for the two listings of the 10 Commandments. The Rev. Root's congregation also thinks of them as the 'who' and 'whose' candles. After lighting the candles, they say, "Blessed art Thou, O LORD our God, King of the Universe, that you have commanded us to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

All of them say it is hard. I know some of you appreciate this more than two weeks ago. It is hard for us to stop doing all the things we do - even when we remember that's not what makes us valuable. Hopefully you've also discovered that having a support group makes it much, much easier. If not, give me a call.

Something else they all say.

While it may seem crazy, living God's way revives the soul more than anything they could do for themselves.

That over time they notice God working in wonder-full ways.

I pray that you are able, now, to experience the 'crazy times' of Sabbath.

*To God be all the glory.*

*Amen.*

moment for meditation

Bobby McFerrin: Common Threads

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZwH0otKKnU>

---

5 Kara Root. *Sabbath: The Gift of Rest*. Word & World Volume 36 Number 9, Summer 2016.

## *Responding to God*

### FaithTalk

These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies.

Memories: Share how your family made the Sabbath different when you were a child.

Values: What do you allow to pull you away from your Sabbath practice?

Wonder: How do you relax? What do you enjoy doing? What gives you joy?

Etching: How could you allow the Sabbath to make an impression in you? How can you make space for God? How will you notice? How will you place your anxieties aside (including keeping the Sabbath)?

Actions: How can you receive the gift of the Sabbath in this time?

### Offering:

What could you offer others this week? ...

How could you share God's presence? ...

How could you support the work of God in the world? ...

Financially, you can contact the church to set up PAR (pre-authorized remittance). We are also looking into other ways you can financially support the ministries at Kensington during this time of physical distancing.

### Prayers of the people

Note: if you would like specific prayers included here (like we do with the prayer book), please send an email to: [prayer@Kensingtonchurch.ca](mailto:prayer@Kensingtonchurch.ca)

We come before you, LORD, in this holy time.

We come and thank you that we live in a country where the leaders are taking this virus seriously, and were we have such good health care teams. . .

We pray for places that lack leadership in this,  
places that lack skilled people,  
and places that lack resources. . .

We thank you Lord that we have food to eat and places to live,  
and we pray for those who struggle for food and a home. . .  
We also pray for those who have been laid off or lost their jobs or businesses. . .

Lord, we pray for people's mental and physical health as they deal with isolation or too much family, and all the normal issues that arise + Novel Coronavirus. . .

Help us to connect with and support each other.  
and help us to live a Sabbath and connect with you.

As a way to reform our relationship with you, and with each other, we now say the pray you teach us:

Lord's prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

sending & benediction:

Last sentence of Matthew:

**“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

May God the Father bless you,

God the Son heal you,

God the Holy Spirit give you strength.

May God the holy and undivided Trinity

guard your body and soul,

leading you to a life forever with our Lord.<sup>6</sup>

Postlude: Bobby McFerrin joyfully singing: Glory

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kSmTANF\\_Xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kSmTANF_Xk)

For other music, you may want to explore Palestrina, Thomas Tallis, or Jan Garbarek with the Hillard Ensemble



## *Prayer Partnership*

These are invitations compiled by the Presbyterian Church in Canada for our prayers. They were created months ago, and so serve as a reminder that there is more than COVID19 in our world. (That said, I did adapt a couple.) Should you add these prayers to your own, you will be joining with others throughout the church.

**Saturday, March 28 (Earth Hour)** When we turn off our lights during Earth Hour, we are reminded of the need to use the Earth's resources responsibly. We pray that we will carry this reminder throughout the year. [I wonder if this was noticed.]

**Sunday, March 29** We praise God that, over the last six years, more than 500 refugees have been welcomed into Canada with the support of Presbyterian World Service & Development and the PCC.

**Monday, March 30** We pray for the Rev. Stewart Folster who serves as Convenor of the Pastoral Care Committee for the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan.

**Tuesday, March 31** We pray for the Vancouver School of Theology as they anticipate their 50th anniversary in 2021.

**Wednesday, April 1** Pray for the Moderator, Rev. Amanda Currie, as her term is expectantly extended by a year due to the cancellation of the General Assembly (national meeting) of the church.

**Thursday, April 2** Pray for the national committees of the church as they consider how to do their work without the guidance of the General Assembly this year.

**Friday, April 3** Pray for the international students at the Presbyterian theological colleges who are far from family and friends. Pray that they sense God's presence in a special way.

**Saturday, April 4** We pray for elders on Sessions as they care for members while reaching out to the broader community with compassionate service.

**Sunday, April 5** We pray for PCC-partner, the United Mission in Nepal.

<sup>6</sup> adapted from Worship Sourcebook (2004) 9.2.17

# Take Time to Be Holy

1 Take time to be ho - ly, speak oft with your Lord;  
 2 Take time to be ho - ly, the world rush - es on;  
 3 Take time to be ho - ly, let him be your guide,

Chords: F, B $\flat$ /F, F, E/C, C7, F

a - bide in him al - ways, and feed on his Word.  
 spend much time in se - cret with Je - sus a - lone.  
 and run not be - fore him, what - ev - er be - tide.

Chords: F, B $\flat$ /F, F, C/G, G7, C

Make friends of God's chil - dren; help those who are weak;  
 By look - ing to Je - sus, like him you shall be;  
 In joy or in sor - row, still fol - low your Lord,

Chords: C7, F, C7, F

for - get - ting in noth - ing his bless - ing to seek.  
 your friends in your con - duct his like - ness will see.  
 and look - ing to Je - sus, still trust in his Word.

Chords: F, B $\flat$ , F, C7, F

WORDS: William D. Longstaff (1822-1894), a.k.  
 MUSIC: George C. Stebbins (1846-1945)

HOLINESS  
 6.5.6.5.D.