



Kensington Presbyterian Church

# Rising from the dark

January 17, 2021

WELCOME, during these times of physical isolation 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, or even in small groups outside.

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



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

## Announcements

**Prayer Group:** will be meeting through Zoom on Wed. at 11:30 a.m.

If you would like to pray at a different time, please contact Peter.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78266904325?pwd=dkhMck1ZRXBKTmdvK2VsaHRlOFF1UT09>

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 782 6690 4325

Passcode: 7864826

**Movie:** Join Antoinette (over Zoom) to watch *The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe* - based on C.S. Lewis' Narnia book. Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm.

**Book Club:** Is reading *The Magicians Nephew* by C.S. Lewis. This is the first book (chronologically) in the Narnia series. If you are interested in joining the discussion on Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, please contact Antoinette for details.

**Visiting:** The government considers ministers to be essential workers. If you need a visit, please contact Rev. Peter.

**Live Worship:** Currently we are not allowed to have anybody join us for worship. We pray that it will become safe to do so sooner rather than later. As we are an essential service, we are continuing to broadcast live on Zoom from our Sanctuary.

Please continue to check out the website

<https://kensingtonchurch.ca/>

or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KensingtonChurchNDG/>

## Contacts

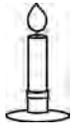
Church Office: 514-486-4559.....info@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor).....Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Antoinette (families).....Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca



## Approaching God



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

### ✦ Call to worship<sup>2</sup>

All who thirst, come to the water  
and drink deeply of these living streams.  
Come, all who are weary;  
come, all who yearn for forgiveness.  
Our gracious God beckons and blesses us.  
Let us give praise for new life in Christ.

♪ Hymn: Thou whose almighty word.....pg 7  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGuUQjDkQA4>

### 👤 Prayer of Approach

Heaven Father,  
We gather around you like children knowing that you will make  
us safe and welcome.  
We remember stories of dark times,  
such as Noah and the flood,  
and how the dove brought signs of solid ground  
and a fruitful life.  
Today we will remember how your Spirit came like a dove to  
Jesus, showing that he is our solid ground and source of a  
fruitful life.  
Thank you for the signs of your Spirit,  
and the light that you bring in Jesus.

2 Worship Sourcebook G. 1.2.5

In John, and then Jesus, you challenged people to confess  
and seek forgiveness.

We now confess to you ways that we have hurt others, ourselves,  
and creation, through:

the words we say to others  
the memories we relive in ourselves  
the products we chose to buy  
and other actions done, or not done. . .

We are sorry  
and ask for your Holy Spirit to help us change  
so that we may help the world become your Kingdom.

In Jesus name  
Amen

### ✦ Assurance of Pardon

To all who turn from sin in sorrow,  
to all who turn to God in hope,  
this is God's Word of grace:  
We are accepted, we are forgiven, we are loved.  
This gift we have from God.  
Amen.



from the Jesus Mafa project

 Lord's prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)  
Jesus left us a prayer to lead us into better living. Let us join with Christians around the world, saying...

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.



### *Listening to God*

 Hymn: What was your vow and vision.....pg 8  
<https://youtu.be/A6iV6ggY9ic?t=596>

 Prayer  
Our Lord and our God,  
as we hear your Word,  
may your Spirit descend on us.  
Softening our hearts so that we may see your ways.  
Fill us with your light.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
Amen.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Worship Sourcebook F.3.1.6

### Intro to the readings

- Except for the psalm, these are very familiar readings. Try and listen for things that stand out. What can help in the Gospel passage is that Mark tells the story a little differently than the other Gospels. Is there anything that is a little different for you?
- A side note: a teacher could ask a student to do anything... except untie the teacher's shoelaces.
- The psalm is about comparing the power of God to the most powerful things in nature. It doesn't really come into the sermon, but there's a good FaithTalk question about it



 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible, or click on the name to be taken to an online version (NRSV).

[Genesis 1: 1-5](#)

[Psalm 29](#)

[Mark 1: 1-11](#)

## Sermon: Rising from the dark

Dear Lord, please bless these words  
and the meditations of our hearts.<sup>4</sup> Amen.

Have you been experiencing COVID brain? There are various symptoms. It can include foggy thinking, difficulty concentrating, and forgetfulness. Last week I had the toughest time remembering what day of the week it was.

This isn't the first time things have seemed formless and dark. Take the start of the Bible, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep...."

I suppose the opposite of formless would be order. Give things a place and have them stay there. It's one of the recommended ways of reducing your stress, to create some order in your life. Have a predictable pattern to your day and week. Set some boundaries as to when it's okay to snack or wear pyjamas; set some times to go for walks or watch TV.

This isn't a new concept. One of the themes of the entire first chapter of the Bible is God creating order. It's also one way to look at the cleanliness rules in the Bible - rules for life to happen 'decently and in good order.'<sup>5</sup> It included guidelines or rules about what is proper to eat (ex. sheep is okay, but goat is not), rules about how to behave with each other (respect your parents, do not steal), and where things should be (blood should be in the body and not come out). If anything was not in the decent order than they believed it threatened a healthy relationship with God, because how could God associate with chaos - but all was not lost. There were various ways to make things right again. One technique, especially when it involved your body, was to have a

ritual washing. This could be just your hands, or your whole body... such as a baptism.

Baptisms weren't a new thing with John. They'd been happening for a thousand or more years. Somebody recognizes that something has happened to separate them from God, and they need to come to God for a blessing to be made right again with God.

John, however, was disturbing the usual pattern.

This shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone. If somebody was walking around with a deerstalker hat and pipe you'd think Sherlock Homes. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey... so everybody thought of Elijah. Elijah was a prophet from back when Israel had their own kings. Like most prophets, he intruded unexpectedly into people's lives - breaking boundaries if you like. Although if you listened to his words, he was railing against boundaries of behaviour that had already been broken.



Elijah was known for challenging those in power and doing amazing things (like getting God to light a water soaked alter without a match). Now there's John, dressing like Elijah and challenging people to "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." This is challenging to those in power, and everyone else. John's talking about sins, not if you had been touched by blood. He's calling for people to change their way of living. He connects this with the 'forgiveness of sins'... something that only God can do. This talk attracted a lot of attention. Will God show up at the baptism? Some came to see amazing things like Elijah had done, and some came because they listened to his words and accepted the challenge to change. They acknowledged the darkness their lives were submerged in, and they were lifted into the light.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 19:14

<sup>5</sup> a popular phrase with Presbyterians

This is one of the things that makes these passages relevant for today. There is darkness in our world. Some of it is external and some inside us. Some of it we can't do anything about, others we can.

These stories acknowledge the darkness, but don't end with it. They are about rising into the light.

Jesus joins the people "from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem" in going to John. He descends under the water, into the dark, and rises from the dark.

This is a bigger moment than anything Elijah did... although it's unclear in this passage if anybody except Jesus experienced it. Still, it was a defining moment. The Heavens are torn open. The Spirit comes down. The voice of God speaks, giving identity and encouragement.

This acknowledges who Jesus is and what his ministry is going to be like - a good beginning to a book. Although it's not really the beginning of the story. That goes back to John, and Elijah, and way back to creation when God created light and made a place for dark and a place for light.

This story of Jesus' baptism reminds us about God being in the darkness and adding light.

But here, it isn't as tidy as the understanding in Genesis 1. The Heavens are "torn apart." Did those words jump out for you? In Matthew and Luke, both written later, they tone it down and say, 'the heavens were opened.' But here in Mark they are "torn apart". This isn't God opening the window and calling down. This is God breaking the barriers between the heavens and Earth in a way that can't be undone.

Is this God creating chaos? undoing the order of creation?

No.

While it might feel that way at times, the world is not going back to being formless and a void. What is happening, like in Genesis, is that the Spirit of God is sweeping through the darkness and bringing a new order. This is good foreshadowing how Jesus will go into all sorts of dark places and bringing light into the lives of people there. It may seem formless or dark, but day will come - and God said it was good.

*To God be all the glory*

*Amen.*



## *Responding to God*



**FaithTalk** These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies. Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

**Memories:** What's something you appreciate about baptisms?

**Etching:** What does baptism mean to you?

**Values:** How do you create order/stability in your life? Do you give space for the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit? (and how do you make sure it's God talking?)

**Actions:** Psalm 29 compares God's power to various examples in nature. Share ideas on how you would write it now. What comparisons would you make?

**Wonder:** People used to think the passage in Mark 1: 5 was exaggerating when it said *everyone* was listening to John, but we've seen how the world can be listening to everything one man tweets. Can you imagine a way the church could capture large scale attention in a good way? What would the message be?

✦ Sharing:  
Ines Rombeek shared her thoughts on baptism as an adult coming to Christ.

✦ Offering  
Financially, we have set up a donation option on **our website**. Just click the '[Donate Now](#)' button, and then the pretty button. It gives you various options that are easy to follow.

You can now donate through **interac e-transfer**. Our name is [Kensington Presbyterian Church](#) and the e-mail address is [info@kensingtonchurch.ca](mailto:info@kensingtonchurch.ca).

Mailing a cheque or signing up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (**PAR**) are also good options.

### 👤 Prayers of the people

God, today we are reminded of how you are not afraid of the dark, but willingly descend into darkness.

We pray now for situations that need to know your presence and healing.

- the world as we batter a something more powerful than thunder and floods - the little coronavirus
  - for the care teams that are battling it to save people's lives, and the staff trying to care the normal load...
  - for the research teams and manufacturers trying to meet the demand for vaccines...
  - for those who are sick with COVID...
  - those who's health or relationships are suffering because of all the other effects...
  - & those who livelihoods have been thrown into chaos..

We pray for your Spirit to bring strength, healing, and to lift people into the light.

We also pray for other places that need your help.

- for those who are worried about their next meal or rent...

- for those who are stuck in refugee camps waiting and waiting to make a home for themselves and their children. May your Spirit open doors for peace homes.
- for those who face greater challenges because of discrimination for their looks, or their special needs, or their age, or their gender... May your Spirit wash the discrimination away while preserving their distinctions.

God, today we are reminded that darkness is not all there is, but there is also light.

We thank you for the light we see

- in our neighbours, families, and our family here at Kensington.
- in the way the arts can speak to our souls
- in the health, and healthcare, that we are blessed with
- and in the sight of children playing in the snow.

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us,

rising from the darkness and into your light.

and help us to share this good news with others.

In the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit - holy and one.

Amen.

🎵 Hymn: Lead us, Heavenly Father, lead us.....pg 8  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpkEeXWtWg0>

### Benediction

*May the light of the glorious gospel of Christ  
Shine in our hearts, transform our lives,  
and brighten the world.*

*And the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
rest upon you always.<sup>6</sup> Amen.*



**Prayer** We give thanks for the Joint Christian Committee for Social Service in Lebanon, and pray that they receive the resources and support needed to provide life-changing vocational training to youth and refugees.



### Paving the Way for a Brighter Future

Anxious and unsure about his future, Abdul was 14 years old when he joined the electronics and computer program offered by the Joint Christian Committee for Social Service (JCC) in Lebanon. Now 19 years old and equipped with a diploma and five years of experience, he has a good job and an income to support his family. JCC's vocational training programs teach marketable skills and offer hope for many young Palestinian refugees who are out of school and living without a dream or ambition. Through gifts to Presbyterians Sharing, the PCC has been supporting this lifegiving program since 2018. Sylvia Haddad, JCC Director, shared that "equipping youth, and especially refugees who have nothing, with a skill or vocation is very important. The challenge is great, but we cannot give up and are grateful for your support."

#### DAILY PRAYERS

**Monday, January 18** We pray that God give those gathering in ecumenical services during the World Week of Prayer for Christian Unity a strong sense of God's presence and the unity of Christ.

**Tuesday, January 19** We pray for the congregation and community of Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church in Mistawasis Nehiyawak First Nation, Sask.

**Wednesday, January 20** We pray for the Rev. James Douglas who serves as the convener of the Ministry Committee for the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry in Ont.

**Thursday, January 21** We pray for all camp leaders and boards as they plan for 2021.

**Friday, January 22** We pray that people struggling with their experience of the church will be opened to God's love and grace so that any pain the church has caused will be healed.

**Saturday, January 23** We pray for Cariboo Presbyterian Church in Nazko, B.C., and their new leader, the Rev. Mark Carter. May their outreach ministries flourish as they connect with new families.

God the Holy Trinity

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## Thou whose almighty word

F Dm Gm/Bb C F Dm C F Bb/D F C

1. Thou whose al-might-y word cha-os and dark-ness heard  
2. Sav-iour who came to bring on thy re-deem-ing wing  
3. Spir-it of truth and love, life-giv-ing, ho-ly Dove,  
4. Bless-ed and ho-ly Three, glo-ri-ous Trin-i-ty.

C F /A Csus4-3 C F C7/E F C7 F Gm/Bb/D/A Gm

and took their flight, hear us, we hum-bly pray, and where the  
heal-ing and sight, health to the sick in mind, sight to the  
speed forth thy flight; move o'er the wa-ters' face, bear-ing the  
Wis-dom, Love, Might, bound-less as o-cean's tide roll-ing in

A A7/C#Dm Fmaj7/C Bb F/A Gm6 F Gm/Bb F/C C F

gos-pel day sheds not its glo-ri-ous ray  
in-ly blind, now to all hu-man-kind let there be light!  
lamp of grace, and in earth's dark-est place  
full-est pride, through the world, far and wide,

Words: John Marriott (1780–1825), alt Music: Felice de Giardini (1716–1796);  
descant, C.S. Lang (1891–1971)

# What was your vow and vision

GENEVAN 130 7 6 7 6 D

Dm Dm F A7/F Dm Am Bbsus2 1 F /A Bb Gm6 Dm Gm/Bb A

1. What was your vow and vi - sion, re - vealed and re - cog - nized,  
 2. Was this God's call, the crow - ning of all you had be - come:  
 3. We meet you at the wa - ter and pon - der why and how,

F C/E F Em Am Esus+3 Am Bb Am/C Dm C 6 Esus+3 Am

Christ, when you came to Jor - dan and asked to be bap - tized?  
 "Go, show and tell my com - ing, my own, my cho - sen one?"  
 in hope that we may fol - low where God is go - ing now,

Dm C/E F C Dm Amsus+3 Bb Gm F/A C Dm7/F G C

Was there a sud - den splen - dour of pro - phets, priests and kings,  
 Did scrip - ture join with scrip - ture, re - veal - ing in sur - prise  
 a - noin - ted with your Spir - it, re - born, and e - ner - gized,

F/A Bb C7/G F Bb C Dm /F Gm Dm Gm6 Asus+3 Dm

a wind that stirred the wa - ters, a blur of might - y wings?  
 the tri - umph of a ser - vant re - jec - ted and de - spised?  
 through deed and word pro - claim - ing: "In Christ we are bap - tized!"

Words: Brian A. Wren (1936-) Music: Genevan Psalter 1542

Words: copyright © 1975, 1994 by Hope Publishing Co. Music: public domain CCLI# 4440603

# Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

MANNHEIM 878787

Eb Bb/D Eb Ab Bb Ab/C(D) Eb Cm Ab Eb/G Cm Eb/G Bb7 Fb

1. Lead us, heav - en - ly Fath - er, lead us o'er the world's tem - pest - uous sea;  
 2. Sav - iour, breathe for - give - ness o'er us, all our weak - ness thou dost know;  
 3. Spir - it of our God de - scend - ing, fill our hearts with heav - en - ly joy,

Ab/Eb Eb Eb7/G Ab /Eb Eb Bb/D Bb Eb Cm Bb/D(Eb) F 7 Bb

guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us, for we have no help but thee,  
 thou didst tread this earth be - fore us, thou didst feel its keen - est woe;  
 love with eve - ry pas - sion blend - ing, pleas - ure that can nev - er cloy;

Eb/G Eb Bb/DEb Ab Bb Ab/C(D) Eb Cm Fm Bb/DEb /Bb Bb7 Fb

yet pos - sess - ing eve - ry bless - ing if our God our guide shall be.  
 lone and drea - ry, faint and wea - ry through the des - ert thou didst go.  
 thus pro - vid - ed, par - doned, guid - ed noth - ing can our peace de - stroy.

Words: James Edmeston (1791-1867) Music: Friedrich Filitz (1804-1876)

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