



Kensington Presbyterian Church

## *Into deeper waters*

*February 28, 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).

### *Announcements*

Rev. Peter will be away today and next week. As a result...

Clara Maranzano will be leading worship again.

**Communion:** will be delayed a week to March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Prayer Group:** as a group, we'll take a break until March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Pastoral Care:** If you need pastoral care, please contact your elder or the church office.

**Live Worship:** After Montréal is no longer a Red Zone, Session will reconsider when we feel it is safe to open. If you would like the Zoom information, please contact Peter.

### *Contacts*

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



## *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 (which is from the PWS&D (Presbyterian World Service and Development) and is being used by congregations across Canada)

**L:** We are not the first to make the journey to Jerusalem; many have gone before us and many will come after us. From near and far, God's people gathered to celebrate God's goodness on the holy mountain.

**P: We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are travelers on the road.**

**L:** Jesus often went to Jerusalem as a child to celebrate Passover. Now he has set his face toward Jerusalem again, knowing this time will be different.

**P: We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are travelers on the road.**

**L:** Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem is somber. He has no illusions about what is to come. Still, he goes ahead, doing God's will.

**P: We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are travelers on the road.**

**L:** Let us pray:

**All: God of light, we want to follow in Jesus' footsteps, but**

**we have our fears and doubts. We would rather avoid the pain and darkness on our journey. Give us courage and perseverance when the journey is difficult and the grace to help others on the road. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.**

♪ Hymn: Come, let us to the Lord our God.....pg 7

 Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, you walk with us and before us on the road that leads to abundant life, and although we say that we trust you, we often find ourselves looking for shortcuts. We try to have things in control and we become self-centered, leaving behind those who are most vulnerable and in need. Forgive us, we pray. Grant us your grace to open ourselves to You and to one another, so that in joy and in suffering, in light and in darkness, we may fully trust in your unconditional love and eternal life in and through Christ.

Amen.

 Assurance of Pardon

God is slow to anger and full of compassion.

He forgives all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

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

Jesus left us a prayer to guide us into a healthier relations with God and each other. 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.

Hymn: Take up your cross.....pg 8



*Listening to God*

 Prayer<sup>2</sup>

Holy God,

you revealed to the disciples  
the everlasting glory of Jesus Christ.

Grant us, who have not seen and yet believe,  
the gift of your Holy Spirit,

that we may boldly live the gospel  
and shine with your transforming glory

as people changed and changing  
through the redeeming presence of our Savior.

Amen.

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

Psalm 22: 23-31

Mark 8: 31-38

Sermon: Into deeper water

Dear Lord, please bless these words and the meditations of our hearts.<sup>3</sup> Amen.

One of the first books that I had to read for my theology courses in the university had this Latin citation by St. Augustine on its first page: “Si comprehendis non est Deus” which means “If you understand it, then it is not God.” I found it to be a helpful sentence, coming from one of the greatest theologians of the church, because it emphasizes the mystery that God is ultimately for all of us. And when you start to study theology, it is indeed very good to keep in view that reality: even if we could study for years and years all the words that human beings have written about God, we just won’t be able to grasp His profound mystery.

Today’s lectionary reading reminds us of that in a way, I think. We are on the road with Jesus and his followers, and so far his disciples have heard him preach and teach with authority; they have seen him expel unclean spirits, perform the most extraordinary kinds of healings, even restore a dead girl to life; they have seen him still a storm at sea and walk on the water; they have seen him feed thousands of people with only five loaves of bread and two fish. So far, so good, I would say. So good indeed that when answering Jesus’ question “Who do you say that I am?” Peter has said bluntly “You are the Messiah” the Christ, the one sent by God to restore the people of Israel.

Perhaps you have also lived similar circumstances. I mean, there are those periods in our lives when we feel the wind in our sails, we go smoothly over the waves and we may experience that sort of awareness: God is here, He is at work in these precious moments, and we can recognize and praise Him with grateful hearts. I remember the story of a very popular Italian singer who had a moment of profound conversion when after seeing his career soar, meeting the love of his life, and having his first child he realized that he needed to give thanks to God, not as a mere figure of speech, but in concrete actions of worship, prayer, and work in the community.

But in our reading today, we are past that moment of awareness when Peter confesses for the first time that Jesus is the Christ. In fact, a moment after such a declaration, Jesus enters into deeper, more turbulent waters, as it were, and starts teaching his disciples that he “must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” And, of course, Peter would have none of that. That is a perspective that simply does not make sense for him. I mean, they are all so happy witnessing the wondrous works of Jesus, works of healing and new life, that they just cannot accept this new information. They must have even been in such a shock at words like “great suffering,” “rejected,” “killed,” that they may have skipped the last part altogether: “rise again.”

Sure enough, two thousand years later, those in the church are familiar with Jesus’ words. They are part of the mystery that we remember each time that we share communion. But for Jesus’ first followers, this was precisely that, “a first” and more importantly, this idea of their teacher being rejected, tortured, and killed is not at all what they had in mind for a Messiah. So Peter rebukes Jesus. Mark doesn’t say, but we can imagine Peter’s

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3 Psalm 19:14

reaction along the lines of what another evangelist, Matthew, reports: “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” In other words: “No!” No, Jesus, this cannot be. This should not be. No, no, no.

Now, Jesus’ sharp reply leaves no room to doubts about what will happen, for not only does Jesus call Peter “Satan”, like the great tempter he had to face in the desert before starting his ministry; not only does Jesus reproach him that he is too centered on his human perspective instead of trying to see what God is doing and will be doing, but he makes clear to all around him that those who want to follow him must be ready to endure suffering and even death for the sake of his words: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

Well, it is clear that those words will not help anyone to win a contest on popularity. After all, human beings spend a big portion of our lives trying to avoid suffering. There are even whole philosophies built around the notion of going past the suffering that sooner or later we all have to face in our lives. And here is a man, a teacher, a prophet, a healer, who is disclosing for us the profound mystery: God is with us not only in the moments of light, of joy, when everything seems to be all right, but he is with us in our time of suffering. He is with us when we feel surrounded by enemies and trapped in darkness. He is with us even when we feel that He has abandoned us.

I think that all of us can identify with Peter in this story, because all of us at one point or another in our lives are confronted with suffering and, at the same time, with a God who challenges our understanding of how things should be. All of us even have a certain idea of how God should act, and if we hold

on to that idea strongly we end up forgetting that God is God, and we can only trust Him, trust His Word, trust Christ.

The question that Jesus asked his disciples moments before is “Who do you say that I am?” not “Whom do you want me to be?” God is God and there will surely come a moment in life when we will not understand what He is doing. But again, Jesus does not ask his followers to simply understand him. This is not a purely intellectual endeavor. Jesus is asking them, and us, to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow him. And this would surely be overwhelming if we did not pay attention to what follows: For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

As Christ’s disciples we are called to embrace the whole of life, the lights and the shadows, the moments of joy and the moments of suffering, trusting that God is there, with us, in all those moments. Trusting. In fact, the original word that many times is translated as “faith” means also “trust.”

Today, two thousand years after Peter and the crowds heard those words for the first time we may have become familiar with them, but if you take a deep breath and make some silence in your mind you may receive them as the challenge that they really are: don’t try to by pass suffering in life, take up your cross; don’t be self-centered and don’t think you can tame God and be in control of everything, deny yourselves; for when you try to live avoiding suffering and those who suffer, focusing only in your own needs, when you try to make God at your image instead of accepting that God is God, and you cannot grasp Him, figure Him out – you cannot contain Him in a set of precepts, doctrines, traditions or culture however lovely and securing these may feel; when you do that, you are not living the life abundant that the God of love intends you to have. You are not living the life that Christ is inviting you to live.

During these long months of pandemic, lockdown, and never-ending news about Covid-19 and its victims, some of us in church have been trying to see where God is active and at work in the midst of all this suffering. Some may be even able to pinpoint those moments and places where hope rises and light comes in through the hands of kind caregivers, in the smiles of children who continue to play and be noisy and naughty around us, in the words of comfort that friends pronounce out loud for us online, on Zoom as we remain physically distanced... But sometimes, we may feel unable to see God moving among us. Sometimes the load of isolation, illness, anxiety, depression, you name it, may be too heavy; we may feel our cross is too heavy. Well, know this, God is at work even when we cannot perceive Him, because God does not need us to be watching Him at work, God just asks us to trust Him. We need to do our part and trust Him with the results. Take up our cross and deny ourselves.

I know, this is deeply counter-intuitive, right? Counter-cultural even. We are so shaped by the culture to seek for the reassurance of feeling in control, and succeeding in our endeavors, whatever they may be, that it is easy to worship the God of glory and reduce to a minimum the God of the cross. Perhaps that is why we have the season of Lent in the church. A time to ponder the life, and the suffering of Christ (this is the first meaning of the word “passion” you know, “suffering”). Lent is meant to be a time of introspection, of deepening our relationship with God in Christ, and with one another in the community. A time to go into deeper waters, acknowledging our shadows and our light. Keeping in front of us Jesus’ cross, as we walk with him to Jerusalem, trusting him. Trusting that death on that cross will not have the last word in this story. Trusting that, as mysterious as it may sound, death has not the last word in any story.

So let me finish today with a personal story.

When I was ten years old my parents decided that the time had come for me to learn to swim. We did not have access to a public pool but then, during our summer holidays, we went to spend some time with my grandparents who lived in another city. My grandparents had very kind neighbours who happened to have a beautiful garden with a pool. Quite big, at least for me at the time, and my father saw there the perfect opportunity. So whereas my mom was busy taking care of my two young siblings, my father and I started the “lessons.” His method was that I should learn first how to stay flat and float on top of the water on my back, so he would put his two hands on my back, lift me up to the surface of the water, and keep me afloat there. I had to stretch my legs and open my arms, and trust. First, trust him, trust that he would not let hold of me as long as I was not ready. Then, trust the water. Trust that as heavy as I was, the water would support me. Well, for the record, two things: first, I did not have the best of relationships with my dad. He is a man with a strong personality and I was quite intimidated by him when I was young. Second: although I knew in my head that human beings can swim, the physical experience of deep water was telling me that I was going to go right to the bottom of that pool.

Then my father said, “Clara, you may not float right away and you may go down, but I will catch you and put you over the water again. I am here, right beside you.”

So yes, a couple of times I went down. And yes, a couple of times my father grabbed me and put me back on his hands and above the water. But by the end of that afternoon, I was floating on the water, on my back, arms open wide, legs stretched, on an invisible cross, and the water was supporting me. How did this happen? I don’t know. It is a mystery. And I am not talking about the physical explanation of the phenomenon, you know. I am talking about that moment when you stop wanting to have the

control and accept that those deep waters can do what you cannot do. They can save your life by keeping you afloat if you surrender your own control.

Maybe, just maybe, this Lent season, with God's grace we may be able to listen to Jesus' words a little like this: I am going first into the deep waters of rejection, suffering, and sacrifice, but God will keep me afloat and give me new life. If you want to follow me, you also need to go into deep waters yourselves and trust that you will be kept afloat, and even given new life.

May God grant us the grace to trust Him.  
Amen.



### *Responding to God*

♪ Anthem:

✦ 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<sup>4</sup>

God of our salvation,  
we praise you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ,  
to suffer for our sins so we may be redeemed.  
We are thankful for the reminders of that redemption visible in

creation . . .  
the nations of the world when they . . .  
our nation and those who govern as they . . .  
our own community as it . . .  
the church universal as it seeks to . . .  
our local church as it . . .  
the lives of those near to us . . .  
our own life as we experience your saving grace . . .

We also ask that  
as the source of the world's hope and redemption  
you hear our prayers on behalf of  
all creation . . .  
the nations of the world . . .  
our nation and those in authority . . .  
the community and those who govern . . .  
the church universal, its mission, and those who minister . . .  
our church and its ministry . . .  
those with particular needs . . .  
We pray this in the name of the triune God, our Redeemer  
and Savior, to whom  
belong all glory and honour.  
Amen.

♪ Hymn: Lord of all power.....pg 8 (626)

✦ 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,  
rest upon you always.*  
Amen.



4 Worship Sourcebook J.4.4.1

**(2nd Sunday in Lent)** God of Lent, we pray your grace moves us beyond our desires so that we may offer ourselves to you and put our faith into action.

### Hygiene Kits Protect Families in Nicaragua



“As a family, we try to take all the necessary measures, like covering our nose when sneezing, avoiding shaking hands or going places where there might be large crowds. For many of the families in our community, it’s not possible to acquire protection materials like face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer or cleaning materials due to rising prices in the market. We are so thankful for all of you and the help you bring to our community.” Like many in Nicaragua, María struggles to access proper protection materials and cleaning products due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Presbyterian World Service & Development, through local partners, is helping people like María and her whole community, receive hygiene and sanitation items, ensuring they are prepared to safely face the pandemic.

#### DAILY PRAYERS

### MARCH

**Monday, March 1** We pray for presbyteries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, that they have a spirit of cooperation and collegiality as they oversee the work of ministers and congregations.

**Tuesday, March 2** We pray for stewardship and mission committees as they work to inspire their congregations and generate enthusiasm for the ministry God is doing through them.

**Wednesday, March 3** We pray for food banks as they find ways to meet the increased demand for their services.

**Thursday, March 4** We pray for Atlantic Mission Society groups and members as they find new ways to meet together for worship, fellowship and to support the mission work of the church.

**Friday, March 5 (World Day of Prayer)** We pray for wisdom and guidance to be better neighbours, to better care for the homeless, the elderly and those who are different from us, and to live in harmony with all of your creation.

**Saturday, March 6** We pray for members of the Benevolence Committee and those who receive support thanks to generous gifts that people have made over the years.

KILMARNOCK 8 6 8 6 CM

E♭ /G A♭ E♭ /B♭ B♭ 7 E♭ A♭

1. Come, let us to the Lord our God with  
2. God's voice com - mands the tem - pest forth and  
3. The night of sor - row long has reigned, but  
4. Then let us know, let us press on to

E♭/G E♭ Cm6 E♭/B♭ B♭ E♭/G A♭ E♭/G E♭ G7/D

con - trite hearts re - turn; our God is gra - cious,  
stills the storm - y wave; God's arm is strong and  
dawn shall bring us light; God shall ap - pear, and  
know our God the Lord, whose com - ing is as

Cm B♭ E♭ A♭ E♭/G A♭ E♭/B♭ B♭ 7 E♭

nor will leave the de - so - late to mourn.  
swift to strike, but al - so strong to save.  
we shall rise with glad - ness in God's sight.  
sure as dawn, whose name shall be a - dored.

5. As dew upon the tender grass  
diffusing fragrance round,  
as rain that ushers in the spring  
and cheers the thirsty ground,
6. so shall God's presence bless our souls  
and shed a joyful light,  
that hallowed morn shall chase away  
the sorrows of the night.

Words: John Morison (1750–1798), Scottish Paraphrases 1781, alt Music: Neil Dougall (1776–1862)

Words: public domain Music: public domain

# Take up your cross

HESPERUS 8888LM

E /G# C#m A6 B E /G#

1. Take up your cross, the Sav - iour said, if my dis -  
 2. Take up your cross; let not its weight fill fright-ened  
 3. Take up your cross, nor heed the shame, nor let your  
 4. Take up your cross, then, in Christ's strength, and eve - ry  
 5. Take up your cross and fol - low Christ, nor think till

F#m7 B E F#m/A B F# B/F#

ci - ple you would be; de - ny your - self, the  
 spir - it with a - larm; his strength shall bear your  
 fool - ish pride re - bel: for you the Sav - iour  
 dan - ger calm - ly brave; 'twill guide you to a  
 death to lay it down, for on - ly those who

F#7 B E 7 Amaj7 Bsus4 -3 E

world for - sake, and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me.  
 spir - it up, and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.  
 bore the cross, to save your soul from death and hell.  
 heaven - ly home, and lead to vic - tory o'er the grave.  
 bear the cross may hope to wear the glo - rious crown.

Words: Charles William Everest (1814-1877), alt Music: Henry Baker (1835-1910)

Words: public domain Music: public domain

Clara Maranzano  
for Kensington Presbyterian Church

# Lord of all power

SLANE 10 11 11 11

Eb /G Ab Bb /Ab Eb/G Ab/C Fm6 Eb

1. Lord of all power, I give you my will,  
 2. Lord of all wis - dom, I give you my mind,  
 3. Lord of all boun - ty, I give you my heart;  
 4. Lord of all be - ing, I give you my all.

Eb/G Bb Fm /Eb Bb/D Eb /G Ab Eb/G Eb6 Bb

in - joy - ful o - be - dience your tasks to ful - fil.  
 rich truth that sur - pass - es our know - ledge to find.  
 I praise and a - dore you for all you im - part:  
 If e'er I dis - own you, I stum - ble and fall,

Eb/G Ab Ab/Eb Eb Bb/D Cm Gm 7 Ab

Your bond - age is free - dom, your serv - ice is song,  
 What eye has not seen and what ear has not heard  
 your love to in - spire me, your coun - sel to guide,  
 but, sworn in glad serv - ice your word to o - bey,

Bb/Ab Eb/G Eb /D Cm Eb/G Ab6 /C Eb

and, held in your keep - ing, my weak - ness is strong.  
 is taught by your Spir - it and shines from your word.  
 your pres - ence to cheer me, what - ev - er be - tide.  
 I walk in your free - dom to the end of the way.

8/8 Words: Jack C. Winslow (1882-1974) Music: Irish traditional; harmony, Erik Routley (1917-1982)

Words: copyright © Mrs. J. Tyrrell Music: harmony, copyright © 1975 Hope Publishing Co.