



Kensington Presbyterian Church

# Boxing Day Gifts

December 26, 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

Clicking on or tapping blue text will take you to a web-site

**Visits:** If you would like to talk or have a prayer please contact Rev. Peter anytime. We can have a visit in a manner that you are comfortable with.

**Re-opening:** With concerns about the rapid spreading of the Omicron variant of COVID, we will be closing the building for a while after Christmas. We will monitor the situation and hope to invite you back to the building soon. In the mean time, please join us over Zoom, YouTube and through this full text version.

**Children's activities:** if you know of anyone who might be interested, please contact Antoinette.

**Jean Laird:** passed away. While she asked that there not be any visitation, you may leave notes online at [www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/pointe-claire-qc/jean-laird-10493665](http://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/pointe-claire-qc/jean-laird-10493665)

**The Chosen:** Thursdays Jan 13 to Feb 24 7pm video, 8pm study  
You are invited to join us over Zoom as we watch and discuss the series *The Chosen* along-side the Biblical stories of Jesus. This video series is a fascinating drama based on what we know of Jesus' followers and the times they lived in. We will consider what is artistic licence and what is revelatory. The discussion will be lead by Rev. Peter.

## Contacts

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## Approaching God



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



### Call to worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,  
**who was and is and is to come!**

Jesus was born into dark times;  
**showing God's light to the world**  
and so we come and worship, come and worship,  
**Christ the newborn King.**

♪ Hymn: Angels from the realms of glory.....pg 9 (146)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUL8CDz2G1k>



### Prayer of Approach

Dear Lord, You really are pretty amazing.  
You could so easily just have your way;  
you don't trample over us to get your way.  
You always listen to us,  
and allow us to make decisions - even bad ones.  
You are patient with us,  
waiting for us to notice,  
waiting for us to listen,  
waiting for us to take your hand and join you,  
and allow you to join us.  
and you forgive us.

Jesus, please forgive us for our sins.  
For the when we trample over others to get what we want.

For the times we don't listen others & honour them.  
For the times we are not patient with others,  
or ourselves.  
Please forgive us. . .

Thank you that you respect us.  
and please help us to accept your love,  
and to love the world better.

In Jesus name  
**Amen.**



### Assurance of Pardon (Matthew 1: 21)

Read the good news  
She will give birth to a son,  
and you are to give him the name Jesus,  
because he will save his people from their sins.

**Amen.**



Mother's Love - Roxana Gonzales

 Lord's prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)  
As we approach God, let us be guided by the prayer that Jesus teaches us.

**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 Amen.**



*Listening to God*

 Hymn: Infant Holy, infant lowly.....pg 10 (143)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=laqoeCl\\_jR0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laqoeCl_jR0)

 Prayer for Illumination  
Immanuel, as we wait for your return,  
may your Spirit help us see your glory  
feel your love  
and receive your peace  
through the reading and preaching of your Word.  
Amen.<sup>2</sup>

 Intro to the readings

- The gospel passage gives us the only glimpse of Jesus as a boy, perhaps as a 'tween', starting to find his own identity.
- The psalm reminds us of the scope of Jesus' work

<sup>2</sup> adapted from Worship Sourcebook D.3.1.7

- The passage from Paul's letter to the Colossians reminds us of the depth to this gift.

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,<sup>3</sup> or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Colossians 3](#): 12-17

[Luke 2](#): 41-52

[Psalm 148](#)

 Sermon: Boxing Day Gifts

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

Christmas Day.

This is church, so we know that the big thing about Christmas is the gift of Jesus, but for a lot of people the other presents are more exciting.

and then we have Boxing Day - today.



For many, this is a day about shopping, but what's the origins? One is that Boxing Day is when the servants received their gift boxes. Another is that this is the day the Alms Boxes are opened

<sup>3</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

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

up. Both of these explanations have boxes in common - which suggests the name Boxing Day.

There's something else they have in common. Both involve giving things to people who have less - especially the alms giving. Alms are donations collected for people in need. This is usually money, clothing or food. Traditionally, the role of figuring this out would belong to the deacons. They were responsible for the pastoral and practical care of the congregation (even in our branch of Christianity). The first official deacon is considered to be Stephen.

Stephen was a Greek speaking Jew and Christian. As the church was just getting started he was asked to help distribute food and other services to those in need. God also used him to do wonders and spread the good news... which led to him to becoming the first follower to die because of his belief in Jesus.

His feast day is Boxing Day... or rather, Boxing Day is on his feast day - perhaps this is why the Alms boxes were distributed on Dec 26<sup>th</sup>.

Why did the early church, and Stephen, help people in need? Because it was the kind thing to do. This kindness is something that was modelled by Jesus. You could even say it was a gift of Christ.

Now, being kind wasn't a new thing. However, the Christians took it to a new level. There are reports from governors back to Rome about the kindness of this group called Christians - that they actively try to be helpful to everyone in need. The governors admit it sounds crazy, but also seems harmless.

It's one of the behaviours/activities mentioned in Paul's letter to the Colossians. Along with this basic characteristic of Christians he includes:

- compassion: or feeling deeply with someone

- humility: where you respectfully listen, engage with and honour others
- meekness: which isn't about letting yourself get trampled on, but about not trampling over others
- patience:
- and forgiveness. Why does this last one need mentioning if we have compassion, kindness, humility, meekness & patience? Because we're never ideal people. To make things right, we need to ask for forgiveness and offer the gift of forgiveness - just as our Judge forgives us. In the words of the Lord's prayer, "*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*"

And Jesus helps us to carry these gifts with us. The passage uses the word 'bind'. This isn't being used like being 'bound' by handcuffs so you can't move. Instead it's like wrapping a ribbon around a package so that it stays together. We can 'keep it all together' when we bind ourselves with love - Christ's love.

How do you get more of Christ's love?

By asking for it. By trusting it and leaning into it. By living out aspects of it - such as kindness, humility, meekness, patience & forgiveness. Which may sound a bit circular: if it's love that helps you live those qualities AND those qualities help you know love... which comes first? Well, God comes first, as revealed through Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

How do you live out these gifts? (this gift?)

You practice within your community: church, family, friends, neighbours, etc.

You also practice with yourself. Remember the way the passage starts? You are chosen, holy (set apart from the ordinary), and beloved by God. Yes, these words are all used in the gospels to describe Jesus. While you're not Jesus, they are also used to describe you. You are chosen, holy and beloved. So, practice being kind to yourself, and meek with yourself, patient, forgiving - in short, love yourself as Christ loves you.

...and love others.

How else do we accept these gifts of life?

Paul writes that we should be thankful - full of thanks. Being thankful is transformative. If you can be thankful for the people and situations in your life, then it will be easier to be kind, to feel with others, to respect and value them - to love them. If you find it difficult to be thankful (for example, having another COVID Christmas), then ask Jesus for help.

I also find it helpful to start with small things. Such as the leftover Christmas bread this morning, and the hands that made it (my father's hands), and family to share it with, ...and it snowballs from there.

Another small thing you might start with is being able to hear and sing the hymns this morning. Except this isn't a small thing. It's big enough that Paul names it as a way to connect with God. *"with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."* The words can be reminders and guides. The tunes can bury themselves in our soul. Long after everything else is forgotten they can bloom - connecting you and



others with God's love.

So far, that's three ways that Paul mentions: practice, living thankfully, and singing. There's another one I want to mention that Paul doesn't here... but Paul is doing it anyway. That is talking about these gifts. Discuss them. Remind each other of them. This is what Paul is doing in his letter. You can talk about the sermon, or the Bible passages, or where you struggle to be kind, humble, meek, patient, forgiving. Where you struggle to love. Also share times when you've seen success, and thank God.

You might even try your hand at writing a letter like Paul, or a hymn like Jason Neale (who wrote our closing hymn), or something like this editorial that Anne Blott passed onto me. It's be circulating for a while. It comes from the 1959 Christmas edition of McCall's Magazine.<sup>5</sup> Despite the difference in years it is still a good reminder for us - a gift

CHRISTMAS is celebration; and celebration is instinct in the heart. With gift and feast, with scarlet ribbon and fresh green bough, with merriment and the sound of music, we commend the day—oasis in the long, long landscape of the commonplace. Through how many centuries, through how many threatening circumstances, has Christmas been celebrated, since that cry came ringing down the ages, *"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* (Luke 2:10-11 KJV)

Christmas is celebration, but the traditions that cluster sweetly around the day have significance only if they translate the heart's intention—the yearning of the human spirit to compass and express faith and hope and love. Without this

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sdanet.org/atissue/Christmas/thoughts-mcalls.htm>

intention, the gift is bare, and the celebration a touch of tinsel, and the time without meaning. As these attributes, exemplifying the divine spark in mankind, informed the first Christmas and have survived the onslaughts of relentless time, so do they shine untarnished in this present year of our Lord.

Faith and hope and love, which cannot be bought or sold or bartered, but only given away are the wellsprings, firm and deep of Christmas celebration. These are the gifts without price, the ornaments incapable of imitation, discovered only within oneself and therefore unique. They are not always easy to come by, but they are in unlimited supply ever in the province of all.

THIS CHRISTMAS, mend a quarrel.

Seek out a forgotten friend.

Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust.

Write a love letter.

Share some treasure.

Give a soft answer.

Encourage youth.

Manifest your loyalty in word and deed.

Keep a promise.

Find the time.

Forgo a grudge.

Forgive an enemy.

Listen.

Apologize if you were wrong.

Try to understand.

Flout envy.

Examine your demands on others.

Think first of someone else.

Appreciate.

Be kind; be gentle.

Laugh a little.

Laugh a little more.

Deserve confidence.

Take up arms against malice.

Decry complacency.

Express your gratitude.

Go to church.

Welcome a stranger.

Gladden the heart of a child.

Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.

Speak your love.

Speak it again.

Speak it still once again.

These are but inklings of a vast category; a mere scratching of the surface. They are simple things; you have heard them all before; but their influence has never been measured.

Christmas is celebration, and there is no celebration that compares with the realization of its true meaning – with the sudden stirring of the heart that has extended itself toward the core of life. Then, only then, is it possible to grasp the significance of the first Christmas – to savor in the inward ear the wild, sweet music of the angel choir; to envision the star-struck sky, and glimpse, behind the eyelids the ray of light that fell athwart a darkened path and changed the world.

*Thanks be to God*

*Amen.*



Trust in the Lord - Ivan Guaderrama

## Responding to God

♪ Hymn: What child is this.....pg 10 (161)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfORpRy7N\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfORpRy7N_M)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTPQrrWcj4Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTPQrrWcj4Y)

🗨️ FaithTalk: These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies. This week they are a little more personal than usual. Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

Memories: What Christmas gift(s) do remember receiving as a child?

Values: What gift have you really appreciated?

Actions: Pick something to practice: kindness, humility, meekness, patience & forgiveness... or something from the McCall's article Together, come up with a way you can practice this better. Set a timeline to try. Pray for help.

Actions: Share some things that you are thankful about.

Actions: What hymn or psalm do you like? What is it about? Why is it meaningful to you?

### ✦ Spirit Sighting

About a month ago we dug out the Christmas DVDs. They include several VeggieTales stories. For those who don't know, this is a series of stories in which Bob tells a story, with the help of Larry, that is a silly adaption of familiar tales into a moral lesson. They can be quite good. Incidentally, Bob is a tomato and Larry a cucumber.

After watching the story inspired by *The Little Drummer Boy* (several times) Markus suggested that I should show this to you on the Sunday after Christmas - and it's something he

remembered and reminded me of the other day. I wasn't sure what you'd think if we had a VeggieTales service. I am sure it would violate copyright rules.

That said, it is still a good example. This is one way the spirit works. You experience something and need to share it with others. It's not because you're going to get something out of it, but simply because you want them to experience it too.

I invite you to notice to what brings you hope or joy. What makes you laugh? What fills you up? and share this.

(You also may want to check out VeggieTales: The Little Drummer Boy.)



Bob's VeggieTales

### ✦ 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

Incarnate God,  
with the angels we sing and glorify your name,  
thankful for all that you have given us:

for your presence in the world,  
 that you are present even in the dark corners,  
 but Lord, we ask for your light to shine  
 bringing your love, and all your other gifts . . .  
 for our nation with it's diversity and supports . . .  
 and please be with those people who are oppressed  
 or have been wronged . . .  
 for our community and its leaders  
 including our political leaders & business leaders  
 May they receive and share your gifts of humility, kindness,  
 meekness & patience . . .  
 and may they seek forgiveness when they should . . .  
 for the witness of your church celebrating around the world . . .  
 and pray for your congregation here at Kensington,  
 and the leaders you have raised up . . .  
 But today we are especially grateful for the gift of your Son, who  
 gave up his heavenly home for a manger and a cross so that we  
 might experience redemption, a gift that neither spoils nor  
 fades.

We pray this in the name of the one who became flesh and dwelt  
 among us,  
 Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
 Amen.<sup>6</sup>

♪ Hymn:

It's interesting to know that this hymn, *Good King Wenceslas*, is  
 actually about a real person. He was King over a little territory in  
 the 9<sup>th</sup> century in what is now Germany. He became famous for  
 being a Christian, and for helping people who needed it - as  
 exemplified by the hymn. Let us be reminded and inspired by  
 him, and reminded of God's love which nourishes these gifts.

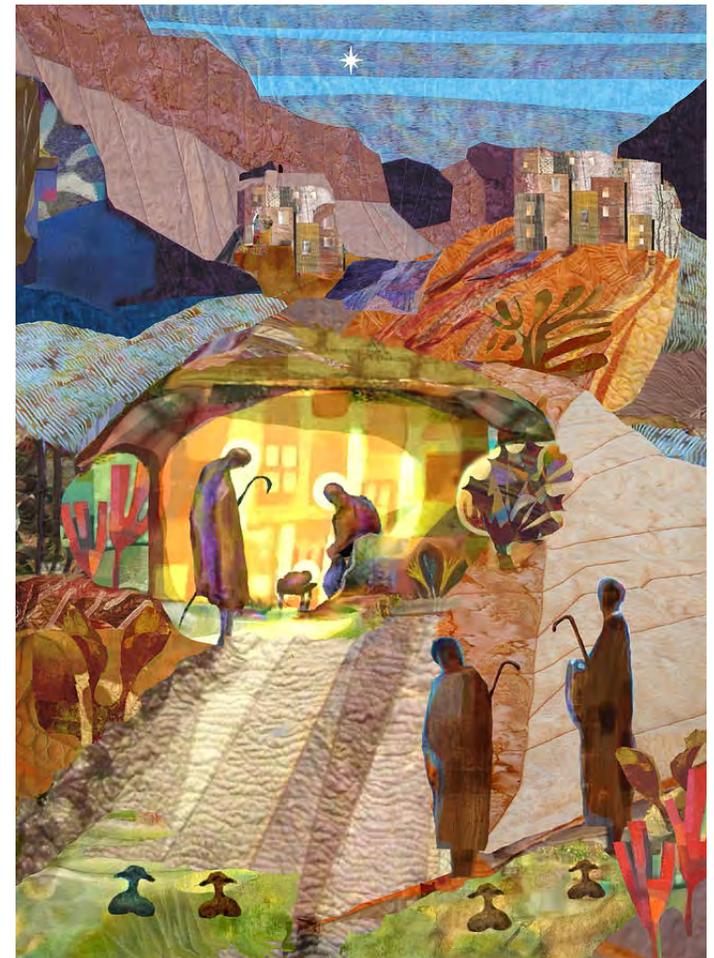
<sup>6</sup> adapted from *Worship Sourcebook* E.4.4.1

Good King Wenceslas.....pg 11  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQVUMG6LZGM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQVUMG6LZGM) (choir)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5E8CXQwtrg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5E8CXQwtrg) (Irish Rovers)

✦ Benediction (Romans 15:13)

*May the God of hope  
 fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
 so that you may abound in hope  
 by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Amen.



Shepherds at  
 Bethlehem  
 Michael Torevell

## Giving Gifts through Service

For Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church, the practice of gift giving is a year-round commitment. Every day, the congregation provides “gifts” through programs and services to families living on the Mistawasis Plains Cree Reserve in Northern Saskatchewan. The ministry’s elders also share gifts in less tangible but equally important ways. The congregation is blessed with wise, strong leaders who act as role models for Mistawasis’ youth, helping to provide them with a solid foundation in spirituality and education. Youth programming offers teachings from the medicine wheel as well as instruction in music and Bible study—gifts that will serve the youth well as they grow into the leaders of tomorrow. Mistawasis Memorial PC is supported by gifts to Presbyterians Sharing.



### DAILY PRAYERS

**Sunday, December 26 (Boxing Day)** For Christ, there was no room in the inn; we pray for those who seek shelter. Christ had to flee his birthplace; we pray for those who seek refuge. Christ read scripture as a child; we pray that God’s wisdom will enlighten our minds and direct our paths.

**Monday, December 27** We pray for the ministry and mission of Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church of the Mistawasis Nehiyawak First Nation in Northern Saskatchewan.

**Tuesday, December 28** We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia.

**Wednesday, December 29** We pray for theological students who graduate this spring and begin the process of seeking a call to a congregation.

**Thursday, December 30** We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of New Brunswick.

**Friday, December 31 (New Year’s Eve)** We end the year in praise for God’s loving kindness and care, and we pray for peace in the world.

## Angels from the realms of glory

REGENT SQUARE 8 7 8 7 8 7

Bb Bb/F Bb Bb/F F/Eb Bb/D Eb Bb/D Gm F/A F7 Bb

1. An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
 2. Shep - herds in the field a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
 3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vis - ions beam a - far;  
 4. Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,  
 5. Though an in - fant now we view him, he shall fill his Fa - ther's throne,

Bb /F /D Bb Cm Gm/D D Gm D Gm/Bb Gm F/C C7 F

ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth.  
 God with us is now re - sid - ing; yon - der shines the in - fant Light.  
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions; ye have seen his na - tal star.  
 sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear.  
 ga - ther all the na - tions to him; eve - ry knee shall then bow down.

Bb 7 Eb Cm Dm Eb6 Gm Fsus4-3 Bb

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship; wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

See also: Regent Square 298  
 Words: James Montgomery (1771–1854) Music: Henry T. Smart (1813–1879)  
 Words: public domain Music: public domain

## Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

1. In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2. Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il 'til the morn - ing new

ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.

Swift are wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, no - els ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:

Christ the babe is Lord of all. Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.

Polish carol  
Paraphrased by Edith M. G. Reed, ca. 1925

W ZLOBIE LEZY 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.  
Traditional Polish melody  
Arr. in *The Kingsway Carol Book*, 1946

## What Child Is This

1. What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him;

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris - tians, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:  
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by:

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y.

Traditional English carol  
Adapted by William C. Dix, ca. 1865

GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7.6.8.6.7.  
English melody, 16th cent.

# Good King Wenceslas

When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled...the blind, and you will be blessed. - Luke 14:13-14 NIV

1. Good King Wen - ces - las looked out on the feast of Ste - phen,  
 2. "Hith - er, page, and stand by me, if you know it, tell - ing.  
 3. "Bring me drink and bring me meat, bring me pine logs hith - er.  
 4. "Sire, the night is dark - er now, and the wind blows strong - er.  
 5. In his ma - ster's steps he trod, where the snow lay dent - ed;

when the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and e - ven;  
 you - der pea - sant, who is he? Where and what his dwell - ing?  
 you and I will see him eat, when we bear them thigh - er.  
 fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no long - er.  
 heat was in the ve - ry sod which the saint had print - ed.

bright - ly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cru - el,  
 "Sire, he lives a good league hence, un - der - neath the moun - tain,  
 Page and mon - arch, forth they went, forth they went to - geth - er,  
 "Mark my foot - steps, my good page, tread now in them bold - ly,  
 There - fore, Chris - tians all be sure, wealth or rank pos - sess - ing,

when a poor man came in sight, gath - ring win - ter fu - el,  
 right a - gainst the for - est fence, by Saint Ag - nes' foun - tain,  
 through the cold wind's wild la - ment and the bit - ter weath - er,  
 you shal find the win - ter's rage freeze thy - self less cold - ly,  
 you who now will bless the poor shall your - selves find bless - ing.

WORDS: John Mason Neale, 1853, alt.

MUSIC: *Tempus Adest Floridum*, from *Piae Cantiones*, 1582; arr. John Stainer, 1871

♩.6.7.6.11



Good King Wenceslas - GS Knowles