



Kensington Presbyterian Church

It's a blessing

January 22, 2023

WELCOME, to worship. We are offering a variety of ways for people to gather. We are welcoming people to worship in person (with singing), as well as through Zoom, YouTube, and this printable PDF.¹ If this is how you are worshipping, know that you are not alone... and if you like, you can invite those who live with you to join you, or connect with others through the phone or 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

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

Choir: would like you to join them. We practice Sunday at 9:30.

Jesus & Java: Thursday, 3:30 at Beetz, 5914 Sherbrooke @ Clifton

Join us as we share the joys and questions of faith.

note: the evening session is joining *The Chosen* until into March.

The Chosen: Fridays at 7 at church and on zoom

is a Bible study in which we watch an episode of the TV show about the disciples and Jesus, and then discuss it in relation to our lives and the Bible. Discussion will be led by Rev Peter

Drop Box: We are now accepting food donations to help the St. Monica's Food Pantry, AND items to help the young parents program at Head & Hands (ex. clothing, diapers, toys).

¹ note: that the footnotes are not as thorough as an academic paper.



Sermon on the mount - Laura James

Contacts

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Approaching God



Lighting of the Christ Candle

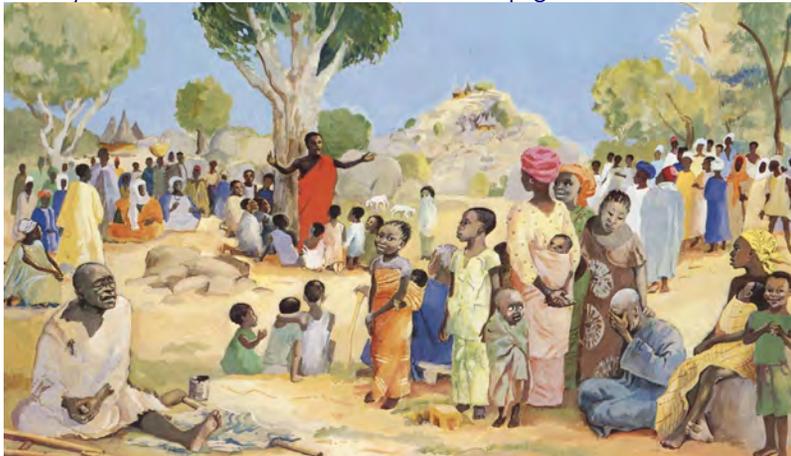
Jésus Christ est la lumière du monde.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



Call to worship

Come, worship the Christ **who tends to the poor.**
Come, worship the Christ **who wipes away our tears.**
Come, worship the Christ **who gives inheritance to the meek.**
Come, worship the Christ **who nourishes the hungry.**
Come, worship the Christ **who gives mercy to the merciful.**
Come, worship the Christ **who gives vision.**
Come, worship the Christ **who blesses the peacemakers.**
Come, worship the Christ **who remembers the persecuted.**
Come, worship the Christ **who finds the lost.**
Come, worship the Christ **who is with us now and always.**

🎵 **Hymn:** Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.....pg 10 (371)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eb6xfRzjhg



Sermon on the mount - Jesus MAFA



Prayer of Approach

Dear Lord,
You are the light that brought us to this time with you;
a time that will help us get to know you and ourselves.
You are the salt that brings out the unique flavour in each of us;
flavours that come together and help the community to be wonderful.
You are our teacher, who shows us what it means to live together
in the Kingdom of God.
You are the one who blesses us, and invites us to share the
blessings.

We confess that we sometimes miss out;
That we focus on walking our way,
so much that we don't follow you up the mount.
That we are so focused on our own lives
we don't notice that you are with us;
That we don't take the time to see the blessings around us
in our lives - and in the lives around us.
We confess that while we want to be a light to those around us
we find it hard to be put on the lamp stand and be seen.
We confess that we doubt;
we feel as small as a pinch of salt,
and that we can make a difference.

May your Spirit bless us
help us to accept your forgiveness and help
and to follow you

As we do, let us sing together the prayer you teach your disciples...

 The Lord's Prayer (please use a version you are comfortable with)

**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

 Children's story²

This is a retelling of the start of an important teaching that Jesus gave. 'Happy' is really a strong enough word. This would be so happy on the inside that it bursts out.

We can be happy
when we don't worry about what others have
and are pleased with what we do have.

We can be happy
when we can allow ourselves to be sad sometimes
and know that God understands how we feel.

We can be happy

when we take our time doing things
and don't get angry if things don't always work out.

We can be happy
when we try to do what Jesus would do
and accept that God will be with us always.

We can be happy
when we show love and kindness to others
because God is kind and loving always.

We can be happy
when our heart is strong for God
because we are able to understand him more.

We can be happy
when we try to keep the peace with others
for God is upset by all the fighting in our world.

We can be happy
when we don't always do things just for ourselves
but try our best to include others.

We can be happy
because God is on our side
and will always be on our side when we do good things.

We can be happy
if what we do makes others happy
and that lets people get a taste of God's goodness.

We can be happy
by lighting up the dark parts of this world
and become a shining light for God wherever we are.

² from Spill the Beans issue 14

Dear Jesus,
Help us to be happy from the inside out,
and to live so that others may know your blessing too.
Amen.

🎵 **Hymn:** Blest are they.....pg 10 (624)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV8nrwJG1-w

🙏 **Prayer for Illumination**

Guide us, O God,
by your Word and Spirit,
that we may discover your love, hope & healing.
Amen.

✦ **Intro to the readings**

- We have a passage from Micah that ponders a question people have been asking since forever - and still do.
- Our psalm talks about those that are blessed by God, and those that aren't. They are called wicked - which is defined by not following God's way, but their own.
- While not planned by me, the episode of 'The Chosen' that we watched this week was about our next passage from Matthew: the Sermon on the Mount. One of the points that was made in it is that Jesus included something for everyone, and the characters were challenged to acknowledge what was for them. (which I suspect will keep going throughout the season) As you listen, what's in it for you? What stands out this time?
- A quick comment on salt - this is before heart doctors.
- Just before Marie-Hélène reads us the passages, I want to include a few verses leading into the Gospel reading (4:23-25)

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their

synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

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

[Matthew 5: 1-20](#)

[Micah 6: 1-23](#)

[Psalm 1](#)



Rembrandt - Peter's mother in law

³ 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: Blessings

*Dear Lord, please bless these words
and the meditations of our hearts. Amen.*

The Sermon on the Mount is big - and what we heard is just the start.

It is the first teaching chunk in the New Testament - and it goes on for three chapters. Did Jesus say it all at once just like this? We can't know. Mark & Luke also have teachings found here, but they present them in different ways. It is likely that Jesus repeated his teachings for different crowds - or just so that it would sink in. It is good and important teaching.

But what's the point?

That can be hard as there's so much going on. What stood out for you was probably different than the person beside you - and that's part of the wonder. I'd be interested in hearing what stood out for you - or you can share it with a friend. In my reading this week I found that Bible scholars in the Global South⁴ really relate to the line about peacemakers - and the implied need for them in their context. There are many many books & podcasts that try to cover what's in this Sermon. I'm not going to go into verse by verse detail today, but if you want to, please ask me for a Bible study.

I think the point is to describe the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Hhmm,' you may be thinking. 'Is this different than the Kingdom of God?' No. Luke tends to say God while Matthew, like a good Jew, avoids writing the name of the Lord. We can find both used in a variety of sources. An important point to remember - Heaven in this context is not some other plane of

existence. It's not something after death. It's coming here.

What is the Kingdom of Heaven like?

Starting here, it sounds like some crazy reversal of the kingdom, or world, we live in - and especially for the people hearing this in the first century. God is blessing the poor in spirit? Shouldn't God be blessing those who are strong in Spirit? God is blessing those who mourn? Isn't that supposed to be a sign of God *not* blessing them? These are notions that are still around - partially because we don't feel blessed when we are spiritually down, or grieving. It's crazy for those hearing it... but perhaps not for the crowds following Jesus. After all, they had seen it.

We're told that a crowd had been building as Jesus travelled around "*proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.*" These glimpses of the Kingdom of Heaven are an important part of the context for the Sermon.

Yes, the Sermon is a key part of scripture. I've heard people say that if you're only going to read three chapters in the Bible, pick Matthew 5, 6, & 7 (The whole Sermon on the Mount). But this teaching is part of a larger picture. Those crowds gathered had seen this reversal. They had seen those grieving be comforted; those struggling in spirit be included in the Kingdom. This would have affected their hearing of the words - and should shape ours as well.

Sometimes we hear the Beatitude and the Sermon on the Mount as a description of things to come. For those first listening crowds it described what they had been seeing. Jesus was giving them words for their experiences. The Kingdom was coming

⁴ at least in the Philipppians, Nairobi & Argentina - as read in *Return to Babel*

among them through Jesus - Jesus, who back in chapter one, we are told is Immanuel (God with us).

But that's not all; because it's also a description of things to come. The 'Kingdom come' is a process; one we can have faith in. Really? you may wonder when looking at the world. Yes - really. Something that comes up repeatedly in Matthew is that Jesus is the fulfillment of various promises recorded in the First (Old) Testament. God does fulfill promises - and will follow through on these as well. The meek, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and others listed are, and will be, blessed.

Why are they blessed? I suspect that it's partially because their lives create space for God to bless them - but mostly it's because God is pleased to do so.

Does that mean that we should try and live this way?

This has been a common understanding of the Sermon on the Mount, and the way it teaches us about the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a guide to living - or a series of rules. If you want to "see God", become "pure in heart." The answer is yes, living as peacemakers, meek, etc is good - but it's not quite that simple. It's not an exchange. The way you live doesn't earn your way into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus came before the world was ready - the massacre of the innocents makes that horribly clear. If you read about the healings Jesus does, those glimpses of the Kingdom, he never waits for the person to become perfect first. God's love is offered before anything we can do. This is the Grace of God - and it's a part of the way the Kingdom of Heaven works.

That said, grace doesn't mean we are to be passive. When the crowds caught wind of what was going on, they followed Jesus. People left home and became his disciples to try and live like him

- not for glory, but to live in the Kingdom. They are told, as we were today, that they are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world".

Salt and light are interesting images to use. Both were very valuable in Jesus' day. They were necessary. Neither salt nor light do anyone any good just sitting off by themselves. But salt mixed with food will keep it healthy (ie. not bad). Light allows people to see after dark - and would help inside buildings that would have small pre-glass windows. Both helped people way beyond what their size would suggest. My dad tried making bread without salt, and it collapsed. Add just a little and it changes the whole thing. Jesus tells them they are precious and needed. That they will have an impact on their community.

You've experienced this. Everyone impacts the people around them. A person can make a workplace toxic, or a joy. One neighbour offering caring conversations can make a bunch of houses into a neighbourhood. One person can light the way to a better way - to the Kingdom of Heaven.



Who is qualified to be that person?

Jesus says it to the crowd - a crowd that probably included those healed (who had been socially unacceptable), working people like fishermen, curious theological types, and probably some Roman soldiers keeping an eye on things. We know Jesus had some patrons - perhaps they were there too. The whole crowd is told they are the Salt of the Earth.

Who is qualified?

Basically, anyone who hears... like you.

And who is it for?

Jesus is addressing the crowd. (Yes, it says disciples, but we know a crowd is following and by the end in chapter 7 we know the whole crowd is listening.) As I mentioned, this would include quite the variety of people. Jesus starts the sermon by listing people who are commonly excluded or ignored or ridiculed: the weak, meek, naive, & patrons of lost causes. These people are seen and included in God's Kingdom. He then talks about them being "the salt of the earth" & "the light of the world"... basically, everyone in the world is invited to join the Kingdom - and to help the Kingdom grow.

And will this really work?

Yes. It'll take redefining needs and dreams in our society- leaving them behind to embrace the world reversing ideas of Jesus. It'll take placing God first. Thankfully, God came first to us. Jesus started with healings, showing the Kingdom, and gathering a community before describing it. You, and everyone else, can help bring about the Kingdom - but God is with us. There is hope!

To God be all the glory. Amen.



Responding to God

♪ **Hymn:** Be thou my vision.....pg 12 (461)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0VpaiwjqhY (church)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxvXGgSIRCs (big church)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihJAJA4ibEs (solo with cello)

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

Values: What stood out for you in this part of the Sermon on the Mount?

Wonder: How would Jesus have worded things today? What examples or illustrations would work? Bounce some ideas back and forth.

Wonder: How does it change the Beatitudes (and the rest of the sermon) to think about them as a description of what has happened as opposed to what will happen after death?

Wonder: How does it change your understanding to think about this as Jesus speaking to a group rather than an individual?

Wonder: The Law that Jesus was talking about was seen as a blessing by the Jews. It helped them to live in a good relationship with God and others. How can the Sermon on the Mount help us?

Actions: each day write down three positive deeds or thoughts you had, and that you are not so impressed with. Which was easier to come up with? Take a few minutes to talk them over with God.

Prayer: ...that we will feel God's blessing

✦ Spirit Sightings

Two short stories that were shared with me this week.

One conversation was with somebody who, a year ago, was living in his truck. Now he has a steady job and a place to live. He shared that after this experience, he is different than he used to be. He is no longer tempted by things when he's shopping. He is content with what he does have - and feels blessed with that. He knows he could be feeling very different, and sees this as the work of the Spirit in his soul.

The other story involves a marriage. Now, I always advise anyone who is planning to get married is to do some marriage prep (basically, counselling). Even those who have lived with others find there are difficulties to marriage. Someone shared with me that they had rough times in the earlier part their marriage. They were both strong personalities, and it took quite a while to adjust to sharing decisions with someone else. What did they do in their disagreements - and disagreeableness? They held hands and prayed. They went to God and asked for God to lead them... and it worked time after time.

God is among us, helping us to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven.

✦ 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.

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

🧎 Prayers of the people⁵

Gracious God,
we pray for the faithful all over the world,
that all who love you may be united in sharing your Kingdom.
We pray for the Presbyterian Church in Canada,
and your church here in Kensington
where we practice being salt to change the world. . .

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the peoples and leaders of the nations,
that they may help each another
in building justice and peace.

We pray for the world:
including Haiti, Turkey, Iran, & Ukraine. . .

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer from prejudice, greed, or violence,
that the heart of humanity may warm with your tenderness.
We pray especially for all prisoners of politics or religion
and for all refugees.

We pray for all who are oppressed . . .

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the land, the sea, the sky—
for your whole creation, which longs for healing.
We pray that we may live with respect for your creation
and use your gifts with reverence. . .

⁵ modified from *Wworship Sourcebook 4.4.18*

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer from: sickness, loneliness, fear, or loss,
that those whose names are in our hearts,
in the hearts of others,
or known to you alone,
may know your love, hope and healing. . .

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We say these prayers,
confident that you are protecting us from the worst,
that you will be faithful to your promise to answer us,
and are guiding us along the path to your kingdom.

*In Jesus name
Amen.*

🎵 **Hymn:** This little light of mine.....pg 12
www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2kDsqGeoLU

✦ **Benediction**

*May Christ, the Son of God,
become real in you,
so that your lives may be a light to the world;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.⁶*



6 modified from *Worship Sourcebook* F9.2.3

In Nepal, 51-year-old Lahia Tharu was suffering from a numb left foot. Lahia first sought help from a traditional healer—a practice common in rural Nepal. When the condition of her foot did not improve, she went to a nearby hospital. Tests confirmed that Lahia had leprosy and referred her to the Presbyterian World Service & Development-supported Shining Hospital. There, she received medication and treatment and was sent home to recover. **Reflecting upon her experience, Lahia said that she is “thankful and happy for the treatment that was provided at Shining Hospital.”**



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, January 22 We pray for the medical staff at the Shining Hospital in Nepal as they treat illnesses with support from the church through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Monday, January 23 Eternal God, wake us up to your glory in the world; stir in us delight and help us overcome despair through your assurance that it is not all up to us.

Tuesday, January 24 We pray for interim moderators and search committees as they work to assist congregations in calling a new minister.

Wednesday, January 25 We pray for the members and work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

Thursday, January 26 We give thanks for the many gifts that LGBTQI2+ people bring to the church’s mission and ministry.

Friday, January 27 We pray for congregations as they prepare and gather for their annual meetings.

Saturday, January 28 We pray for people in rural and remote congregations and communities across the country.

Love divine, all loves excelling

HYFRYDOL 8787 D

F C F Bb/D C7/E F C Dm C F/A C7/G F /A

1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, joy of heaven, to
 2. Breathe, oh breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to eve - ry
 3. Come, al - migh - ty to de - liv - er, let us all thy
 4. Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less

Bb6 Dm C F F /A C F Bb/D C7/E F C Dm C

earth come down; fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing,
 troub - led breast! Let us all in thee in - her - it,
 grace re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn and nev - er,
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion

F/A Gm 6 F /A Bb6 Dm C F Am Dm7 Dm

all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art
 let us find the prom - ised rest; take a - way our
 nev - er more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be
 per - fect - ly re - stored in thee, changed from glo - ry

Gm C7 Dm C7/E F /E Dm Bb6 Am Gmsus+3 Bbma7 C7sus+3

all com - pas - sion, pure, un - bound - ed love thou art;
 love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;
 al - ways bless - ing, serve thee as thy hosts a - bove,
 in - to glo - ry till in heaven we take our place,

F Am Gm C7 F /A C Bb C

vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion;
 end of faith as its be - gin - ning,
 pray and praise thee, with - out ceas - ing,
 till we cast our crowns be - fore thee,

F/A Bb /D F/C C7 F

en - ter eve - ry trem - bling heart,
 set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 lost in won - der, love and praise.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Music: Rowland Hugh Pritchard (1812-1887);

Words: public domain Music: public domain

Blest are they

BLEST ARE THEY 7 7 7 5 with refrain (5 7 5 7)

Unison Ab Eb/G Db Ab/C Ebsus4Eb

1. Blest are they, the poor in spir-it; theirs is the king-dom of God.
 2. Blest are they, the low - ly ones; they shall in - her - it the earth.
 3. Blest are they who show mer-cy; mer - cy shall be theirs.
 4. Blest are they who seek peace; they are the chil-dren of God.
 5. Blest are you who suf - fer hate all be-cause of me. Re-

Ab Ab/G Db Eb7 Ab

Blest are they, full of sor-row, they shall be con-soled.
 Blest are they, who hun-ger and thirst; they shall have their fill.
 Blest are they, the pure of heart; they shall see God!
 Blest are they who suf-fer in faith, the glo-ry of God is theirs.
 joyce and be glad— yours is the king-dom—shine for all to see.

Words: Matthew 5:3-12; paraphrase, David R. Haas (1957-) Music: David R. Haas (1957-); arrangement, Norma de Waal Malefyt

Words: paraphrase, copyright © G.L.A. Publications Inc., 1985. All rights reserved. Music: copyright © G.L.A. Publications Inc., 1985, 1991. All rights reserved

Refrain Db Eb7 Ab Db

Re - joice and be glad! Bless - ed are

Ab/C Bbm Bb7 Eb Db Eb7 Ab

you; ho - ly are you! Re - joice and be glad!

Db Eb7 Absus4 Ab

Yours is the King - dom of God!

Be thou my vision

SLANE 10 10 10 10

Unison Eb /G Ab Bb /Ab Eb/G Ab Fm6 Eb

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be thou my wis - dom; be thou my true word,
 3. Be thou my breast-plate, my sword for the fight;
 4. Rich - es I heed not, nor vain earth - ly praise,
 5. High King of heav - en, when the bat - tle is done,

Ab Ab/Eb Eb Bb/D Cm Gm7 Ab (maj7) Bb/Ab

thou my best thought in the day and the night,
 thou my great Fath - er, thine own may I be,
 thou my soul's shel - ter and thou my high tower,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

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

naught be all else to me, save that thou art,
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 be thou my ar - mour and be thou my might;
 thou my in - her - it - ance, through all my days;
 grant heav - en's joy to me, O bright heaven's Sun;

Eb/G Eb (/D) Cm Eb/G Ab6 /C Eb

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 thou in me dwell - ing, and I one with thee.
 raise thou me heaven - ward, O Power of my power.
 high King of heav - en, my treas - ure thou art!
 still be my vi - sion, O rul - er of all.

Words: Irish anonymous, 8th century, translation, Mary Byrne (1880–1931), paraphrase, Eleanor Hull (1860–1935), alt Music: Irish traditional; harmony, Erik Routley (1917–1982); descant, John Wilson (1905–1992) CCLI No. 4440603

Words: translation, paraphrase, copyright © Chatto and Windus Ltd. Music: harmony copyright © 1975 and descant © 1983 by Hope Publishing Co.

This Little Light of Mine

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon - na let it shine;
 Eve - ry - where I go, I'm gon - na let it shine;
 Je - sus gave it to me; I'm gon - na let it shine;

5
 this lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon - na let it shine;
 eve - ry - where I go, I'm gon - na let it shine;
 Je - sus gave it to me; I'm gon - na let it shine;

9
 this lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon - na let it shine, let it shine,
 eve - ry - where I go, I'm gon - na let it shine, let it shine,
 Je - sus gave it to me; I'm gon - na let it shine, let it shine,

13
 let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bas-ket? No! I'm gonna let it shine...

Don't let anyone (blow) it out. I'm gonna let it shine...

Share my light with others! Yes! I'm gonna let it shine...

