

Kensington Presbyterian Church

Ups and Downs

February 26, 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)



Lost Sheep - NC Wyeth

¹ 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

- Communion:** Will be next week, with our anniversary and annual general meeting.
- Annual Meeting:** will be in person & Zoom, March 12 after church. We will email out the reports as soon as they are ready. If you would like a copy dropped off, please let us know.
- Friday Night at the Movies:** We are fine tuning our plans for a weekly family dinner & movie night. Please let Rev. Peter know if you have an opinion on time or film. Starting March 24th.
- 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.
- 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).

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.

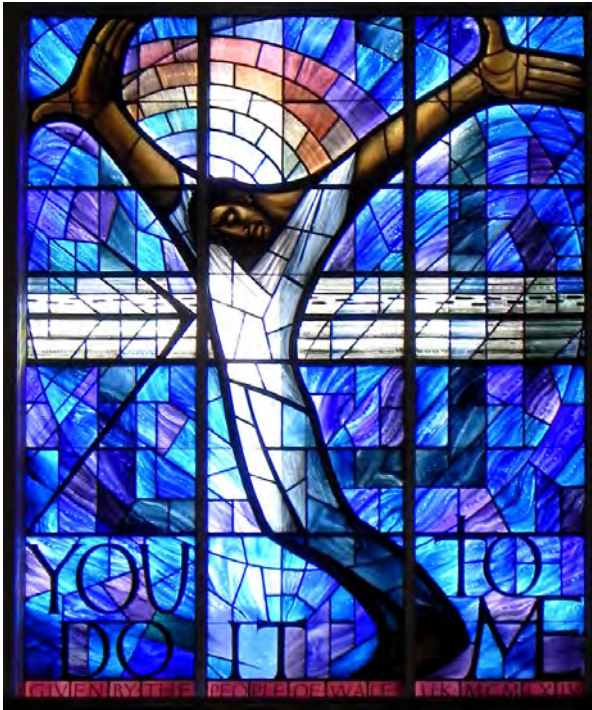


Call to worship

Come to the Lord, who is rich in grace,
approach our God, who is full of mercy.

**We will praise God with all our heart
and glorify the name of the Most High forever.**

♪ Hymn: Crown Him With Many Crowns.....pg 11 (274)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM (at the proms)



Christ Crucified - J Petts



Prayer of Approach

Dear God,
We are so grateful that came as Jesus.
That you walked with us,
and had to put up with us.
You know what it's like to be annoyed
and tempted to respond.
Yet, you managed to respond in a Christian way,
showing us what it is like to live in God's kingdom.
You know that we fail at this.

You assure us that our sins will be wiped out when we ask,
so that healing may come.
Our sins will not be a barrier
But it can be hard for us to leave them
to move past them
to not be defined or shaped by them

Help us to admit when we mess up.
Help us to accept your forgiveness.
Help us to grow into relationships of love, hope and healing.

In Jesus name


Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news,
It doesn't matter how big or small your sin is;
by grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

 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 story

Last week for an addition to Lent to help you focus more on God I suggested saying "thank you God" every time you saw, heard or tasted something good.

This week I'm going to suggest you recall all the ways you messed up through the day. Then pray to God for forgiveness and help - and then say, "*God forgives me, so I can forgive myself.*"

Dear Jesus,

*Please forgive us when we hurt our relationships with you, each other,
and creation - and please help us to forgive ourselves and do better.
Amen.*

 Hymn: Rock of Ages.....pg 12 (240)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gM7gt_cSxjw

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKRdhBK_fts (band)



Prayer for Illumination²

God of call, God of transformation,
God of the Lenten journey.

Help us to discern your still, small voice;
open us to change and growth,
that we may walk with Christ.

In Jesus name,
Amen.




Intro to the readings

- Between last week and this week...
 - coming down from his mountaintop experience with Moses, Elijah, and God Jesus found that his disciples still lack faith to do the work.
 - After a little complaint and then helping out Jesus again tells them that he will be betrayed, killed, and rise again.
 - There's a cute scene where Peter wonders if and how they should pay the Temple tax. Jesus suggests that while they shouldn't have to, sometimes it's easiest just to go along with it. As for how... Jesus suggests to Peter that he might be able to find a fish - being a fisherman and all.
 - Then today's teaching chunk starts. The disciples ask who will be greatest in the Kingdom. Jesus tells them to be like a child - powerless, curious, full of faith. And he warns them that if something becomes a stumbling-block they should cut it off.

- and then tells the story of the shepherd who leaves everything to find the one sheep that is lost.
- The gospel reading will be ending with a parable. The original listeners would know some things we don't.
 - A slave owes the king 10 000 talents. This is both the largest number in Greek, and the largest coin. There's no way of owning more.
 - Just because someone is a slave does not mean they do menial labour. They could be a teacher, or have financial responsibilities.
 - Throwing someone in prison to pay their debt could happen (though discouraged in some parts). The idea was to encourage the family to pay off the debt and restore their honour.
- The larger context is that Chapter 18 is Jesus teaching his disciples about living as a community. Listen with that in mind.
- The Romans passage and Psalm add some helpful perspectives and community and forgiveness.



Shepherd - A Vollotton

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,³ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.
[Matthew 18](#): 12-35
[Romans 14](#): 5-10
[Psalm 32](#)

 Sermon: Judgment and Forgiveness

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

So... now that you've heard part of Jesus' teaching about community - is it all clear and easy? Personally, I found the passage erratic. It started with a system for judging someone, and then said we should forgive. The king forgives a huge debt... and definitely remembers it in a later judgment. The passage suggests kicking someone out of the community... right after the story of the good shepherd leaving the 99 to find the one that has lost their way.

Are we to judge or forgive?

Kick out the sinner, or go bring them in?

We've all had issues with others - from annoyance, to anger, to being hurt. This happens in every community. Since the dawn of time there's been the question of how to deal with it. Sometimes the impulse is to just hit the person, sometimes there's manipulative plots, and sometimes we just want to hide. Jesus suggests something different.

Our section started with the suggestion to judge others. It's a good system. If someone is living in a way that is harming their relationships with God, community, creation, or even themselves

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

(ie. sinning), then talk with them about it privately. If they don't listen, then try bringing in some more people. Most organizations, including the Presbyterian Church in Canada, have conflict resolution policies that follow this advice. If the person continues to cause harm, then separate them from the community. You can see this pattern in judicial systems. When somebody does a crime that hurts society, they are locked up to prevent the damage from continuing.

This sounds good, but what about other passages in Matthew? Back in the Sermon on the Mount (7:1-2) Jesus says, "Do not judge." That's pretty clear. Elsewhere in Matthew we're told that the judging will happen "at the end of the age."

Are we to judge or not judge?

And how's it related to the passage about forgiving?



Comfort - Charlotte Smith

Peter asks Jesus if he needs to forgive someone 7 times, and Jesus says, 'No - 77 times'. We all get that we should forgive more than we can keep track of... but it's more than that. The number 7 represents perfection. Peter could be asking if he needs to

forgive someone perfectly. I assume that would mean more than a grudging forgiveness, but one down to the heart - and Jesus says it should be even more.

Something to be clear about - it's not possible for us. Let's acknowledge that, and still hold it as a goal. Trying to forgive completely will help make the world better - more like the Kingdom of God.

But it still leaves the question of how do we live out these two stories that are beside each other? Are we to forgive someone and threaten to kick somebody out of the community?

One perspective that can help is to think of it less like judging and more like holding someone accountable. Jesus is talking to the disciples, and the book is written to the Church. The people this message is for have agreed to a Christian way of living. Sometimes they, like ourselves, don't see how we might be 'losing our way' - like an errant sheep - so it's helpful for someone to quietly speak to us. Is this judging... yes, but it's not about condemning. It's about trying to be helpful. Can it still cause hurt and conflict? Yes (especially if not done sensitively), but it can also bring healing. There might be conflict, but there will be less damage then if the issue is ignored.

I mentioned Bonhoeffer last week, and he has wisdom this week as well. He points out that a community can't forgive what is not identified. We teach this to children in school. When saying sorry, include what you are sorry about. The community, because everyone is always affected, can't move on until there's acknowledging and forgiving.

Sometimes the situation escalates. Then it may be necessary to treat them "as a gentile and a tax collector." On the surface this

sounds like kicking them out. It's certainly been used to support shunning and excommunication. However, let's remember how Jesus treats gentiles and tax collectors. He goes to them, has dinner with them, and heals them - like the shepherd and the lost sheep in the story just before today's passage. What's this mean about holding someone accountable, or judging them? It sounds like it leads into Jesus' answer to Peter - that we keep trying to heal this relationship.

How's that work out in real life? It's hard. Gentiles and Tax-collectors have different values. Building a relationship with somebody who is different is hard. It's so easy for misunderstandings and hurt to happen. I'm sure you've experienced that. Are we meant to keep at it, even if it means getting hurt? God doesn't promise our lives will be perfect, but does promise to protect us from the worst. Jesus also tells us that forgiving isn't the same as wiping the slate clean.



The next part of the lesson on community swings back to judging. A slave owes the king a ridiculously large sum of money. There is no way he'll be able to pay it back.

Have you ever been in that position? Maybe with money, but there's another level in this parable - especially with the previous discussions about sins and forgiveness. Have you ever been involved in somebody getting so hurt, probably betrayed, that it's impossible to imagine any way to make things right? Maybe you did it? Maybe you didn't stop it? It happens, and being pushed out by pain is deserved.

In this case, the king does what we expect - but not what was expected back then. He forgives the slave. They are all right again. Personally, I think it would be a time for a celebration - though I'm not sure our forgiven person has the capital to host a feast. Perhaps that's what he's thinking as we enter the next scene.

Our character catches up with a colleague, and has him thrown in jail over 100 denarii. This was acceptable behaviour at the time. It would encourage the family to pay up and recover their honour. It might have seemed a little odd as a poor farmer could pay this back in a year - especially as these two likely had much more than that. However, everyone who hears the story is seeing the world by a different light. In light of the king's mercy, this ordinary behaviour was intolerable. What is 'fair' and 'just' has been redefined.

This is part of what it means to be a Disciple of Christ. We start to see the world in a new way - a way with different values that challenge us to reach out for those who have wandered away, disrupted the community, or have different values. And we try to live that way because it is better.

and for those who don't... well, it seems the king didn't forget. Harm was not allowed to continue in the community. The king judged, and sentenced.

Does this mean that if you have a relapse, or make a mistake after being forgiven, that God will punish you? I'm not God, but I believe that if you're worrying about then that's a good sign. The Bible is full of people who keep making mistakes. They admit it and try to do better - and God keeps welcoming them back. While forgiveness can be hard for us - it's not for God.

I could wrap this up nicely with a line about how we should watch out for each other while living out God's mercy... but life's not that simple. Unlike what the passage says, it's not a case of when two people agree God will do it. Perhaps it was for the disciples, but not us.

Take the debate over same-sex marriage. People have been praying for it and against it. There are Christians in our denomination who believe it is a sin, and with the best of intentions, try to hold people accountable to their interpretation of God's will. They are worried about the judgment at the end of the age. However, there are also good Biblical reasons to bless committed same-sex relationships. The decision on what to hold people accountable for isn't easy.

Paul's advice to the church in Rome is helpful. *"Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike."* What does Paul suggest they do about this difference... don't pass judgment. Focus on God - who is full of love and healing.

So, how do we hold people accountable? Jesus started by saying to be like children. We do it humbly. We do it when we see that people aren't experiencing God's love. We acknowledge problems, and try for forgiveness. We do not judge, but try to help. We balance protecting people from harm, while offering healing to all those in need. We do it with the mercy of the king.

Can we do it? Not always, but we continually try to bring God's love, hope and healing to everyone.

And while we as a church can't force God to do what we want, we can have faith in verse 20, *"where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*



*To God be all the Glory
Amen.*



Responding to God

- ♪ Hymn: Amazing Grace.....pg 12 (670)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n145-J8ejg just voices
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw with guitar
www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p2CbHG9O0s with everything

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

Etching: Are you “bottling” something up?

Memories: Share about a time when direct and private conversation helped resolve an issue.

Values: How do you balance holding somebody accountable to living a Christian life, seeking the lost sheep, and forgiving perfectly (77 times).

Values: How do we forgive and protect victims?

Actions: This week, at the end of the day, reflect on where you ‘messed up’. Ask God for forgiveness and help. ...and know that God does forgive you, and you should forgive yourself.

Prayer: ...may God help us to bring love, hope and healing to the relationships we are brought into.

✦ Spirit Sightings

Again, two sightings this week. One is the hymn we just sung. This year is the 250th anniversary of Amazing Grace. While I’m sure we don’t all agree, many find this a powerful and positive hymn. The story behind it is powerful too, though not quite the one I knew.

John Newton did work on a slave ship and was in a violent storm - after which he became a Christian. That said, he kept working on slave ships until he had a stroke. After that he ended up becoming a priest, and eventually wrote Amazing Grace. About 15 years after that he took a stand against slavery.⁴

This is a good reminder that change isn’t instant, but God’s Spirit doesn’t give up on anyone.

⁴ <https://wordandway.org/2017/09/12/the-myth-of-amazing-grace/>

Another way the Spirit is working is seen in these recent Sunday photos.



✦ 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 people

Today Sybil will be leading the Prayers of the People, however you who are reading this won't hear her without going to YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@kensingtonchurchmontreal2543/streams

You are invited to use the prayer below.

God, we tie ourselves and others in knots.
Sometimes we are just trying so hard to get it right
that we make it more difficult than it needs to be.
May we grasp the simplicity of your good news –
that we are forgiven and are called to forgive others.
Simple, but not easy.

God, we thank you for stories that witness to freedom,
for lives that testify to the capacity to forgive
even in the most dire circumstances.

We pray for victims of crime
who find freedom in forgiving the perpetrators.
We pray for those who have lost everything
yet keep on hoping for better
because they are assured that your will
for all your people is good.

God help us to be people who “pay it forward”,
taking each small act of kindness
and visiting it on someone else.

Taking your huge gift of forgiveness
and extending that to all whom we feel have wronged us.
As we look on our world today,
may we see signs of your love and forgiveness
being played out in the live of others,
especially those who lead and direct.

May our government find the courage
to release people from poverty and fear
by letting go of power and oppression.
May we become a nation that lives in freedom—
not the freedom that comes by exploitation of others
or by holding onto what is not ours—
but the freedom that comes from waking up
to all that we have and resolving to share that with others,
freedom that comes from the knowledge
that there is enough food and clean water,
enough warmth and shelter for all to be fed, clothed
and homed if we let go of our grasp
on all that we do not need,
on all that we tie up for fear of letting go.

God, release us from our fear
and give us the will to go and free others
in the name of Christ who brings us freedom.
Amen.⁵

⁵ from *Spill the beans* issue 15, pg 15

♪ Hymn: Help us accept each other.....pg 13 (632)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=N71oXSJe80U (higher)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=49zFSbxS37Y (lower)

✦ Benediction

Next week we'll hear a parable from Matthew 20. You may want to read the parts we're skipping (in order to get to Easter on time).

*The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.
Amen.*⁶



6 Numbers 6: 24-26

In Pakistan, Gauri learned how to cut and sew at an early age. As an adult, this knowledge allowed Gauri to contribute to her family's income by working as a seamstress. After her husband was killed in an accident, Gauri's income was not enough to provide for her family on her own. **Gauri was selected for a Presbyterian World Service & Development project that provides emergency food assistance to families in need, as well as longer-term support through small business training and development.** The food aid the family received made it possible for Gauri to save a portion of her monthly income that would have otherwise been spent on food. With the money she saved, Gauri was able to further her child's education and stock her tailoring shop with more materials.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, March 5 (Second Sunday in Lent) Dear God, help us to order our lives in faithful obedience to you so that we may come to know our weaknesses and appreciate your grace at work in our lives.

Monday, March 6 We pray for people around the world who are striving to rise above poverty with educational opportunities and livelihood support through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Tuesday, March 7 We pray for the members and work of the Women's Missionary Society.

Wednesday, March 8 On **International Women's Day**, we give thanks for women. We pray for true gender equality and for an end to the violence that has marked the lives of too many women.

Thursday, March 9 We give thanks for Presbyterian World Service & Development projects that are breaking barriers to gender equality by empowering women to achieve economic independence and improve their well-being.

Friday, March 10 We pray for women living in Palestine who are suffering sorrow and heartache as they struggle to hold their families together in times of violence and oppression.

Saturday, March 11 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Montreal in Quebec.

Crown him with many crowns

DIADEMATA 6686 D SMD

Descant

5. Crown him the Lord of years, the end of time,

D Bm G D/F# G A7/E D A

1. Crown him with ma - ny crowns, the Lamb up - on the throne: hark,
 2. Crown him the Son of God, be - fore the worlds be - gan; let
 3. Crown him the Lord of life, who tri - umphed o'er the grave, and
 4. Crown him the Lord of peace whose king - dom is at hand; from
 5. Crown him the Lord of years, the Source, the End of time, Cre -

Cre - a - tor of the spheres in maj - es - ty sub - lime.

D A/C# Bm /D E /D A/C# E7/B A D Esus4-3 A /G

how the heav - en - ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own! A -
 all who tread where he has trod, crown him the Son of Man, who
 rose vic - to - rious in the strife for those he came to save. His
 pole to pole let war - fare cease and Christ rule eve - ry land! A
 a - tor of the roll - ing spheres in maj - es - ty sub - lime. All

Words: Matthew Bridges (1800–1893), Godfrey Thring (1823–1903), alt Music: George Job Elvey (1816–1893); descant, Richard Proulx (1937–)

Words: public domain Music: descant, copyright © Richard Proulx

All hail, Re - deem - er, hail, for you have died for

D/F# D A7/E D/F# G B7/F# E D/F# E/G# A /G

wake, my soul, and sing of him who died to be your
 eve - ry grief has known that wrings the hu - man breast, and
 glo - ries now we sing who died and rose on high, who
 ci - ty stands on high; Christ's glo - ry it dis - plays, and
 hail, Re - deem - er, hail, for you have died for me; your

me; praise shall not fail through all e - ter - ni - ty.

D/F# G D/F# Em7 A D /F# G D Asus4-3 D

Sav - iour and your match - less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 takes and bears them for his own, that all in him may rest.
 died e - ter - nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
 there the na - tions "Ho - ly" cry in joy - ful hymns of praise.
 praise shall nev - er, nev - er fail through all e - ter - ni - ty!

Rock of ages, cleft for me

TOPLADY 777777

Bb (Eb/Bb) Bb /D (Eb) Bb (/D) F Bb (Eb6) Bb/F F7

1. Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in
 2. Not the la - bours of my hands can ful - fil thy law's de -
 3. Noth - ing in my hand I bring, sim - ply to thy cross I
 4. While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when my eye - lids close in

Bb F 7 Bb F

thee; let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy
 mands; could my zeal no res - pite know, could my
 cling: na - ked, come to thee for dress; help - less,
 death, when I soar through tracts un - known, see thee

7 Bb (Eb/Bb) Bb

riv - en side which flowed, be of sin the
 tears for - ev - er flow, all for sin could
 look to thee for grace; foul, I to the
 on thy judge - ment throne, rock of a - ges,

/D (Eb) Bb Gm F7 Bb (Eb6) Bb/F F7 Bb

dou - ble cure: cleanse me from its guilt and power.
 not a - tone; thou must save, and thou a - lone.
 foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - iour, or I die.
 cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

Alternate tune: Redhead 76 (Petra)

Words: Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778) Music: Thomas Hastings (1784-1872)

Words: public domain Music: public domain
 Kensington Presbyterian Church

Amazing Grace!

1. A - maz - ing grace!—how sweet the sound—that saved a wretch like me!
 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears re - lieved;
 3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I have al - read - y come;
 4. The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his Word my hope se - cures;

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
 how pre - cious did that grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 he will my shield and por - tion be, as long as life en - dures.

5. And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
 and mortal life shall cease,
 I shall possess within the veil
 a life of joy and peace.

6. When we've been there ten thousand years,
 bright shining as the sun,
 we've no less days to sing God's praise
 than when we've first begun.

St. 1-5, John Newton, 1779
 St. 6, *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790



AMAZING GRACE C.M.
 Traditional American melody
 and harm. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

Help us accept each other

BARONITA 7 6 7 6 D

G Em 7 Cmaj7 Em Am7 G/B Em/B B7 C /B

1. Help us ac - cept each oth - er as Christ ac - cept - ed us;
 2. Teach us, O Lord, your les - sons, as in our dai - ly life
 3. Let your ac - cep - tance change us, so that we may be moved
 4. Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters with all who are in need,

Am 7 G/D (Am/D) G/B A9 Em A9/C# Dsus4-3

teach us as sis - ter, broth - er, each per - son to em - brace.
 we strug - gle to be hu - man and search for hope and faith.
 in liv - ing sit - u - a - tions to do the truth in love;
 who hun - ger for ac - cep - tance, for right - eous - ness and bread,

G 6 C/E Em/D C6 G/B Bsus2-3 Em /D

Be pres - ent, Lord, a - mong us and bring us to be - lieve
 Teach us to care for peo - ple, for all — not just for some,
 to prac - tice your ac - cep - tance un - til we know by heart
 we need new eyes for see - ing, new hands for hold - ing on:

C /B Am G/B Em /G Amsus4 D9 (D) G

we are our - selves ac - cept - ed and meant to love and live.
 to love them as we find them or as they may be - come.
 the ta - ble of for - give - ness and laugh - ter's heal - ing art.
 re - new us with your Spir - it; Lord, free us, make us one!



1 Corinthians 13 - Ivan Guaderrama