



Kensington Presbyterian Church

Judging the point

March 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)



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

Jesus & Java: Thursday, 3:30 at Beetz, 5914 Sherbrooke @ Clifton
Join us as we share the joys and questions of faith.

Friday Night at the Movies: Please join us for a simple meal & a family movie. Fridays at 6:30.

March 31: Prince of Egypt

~~April 7:~~ off for Good Friday

Please let Rev. Peter know if you want to come.

Seder (Passover) meal: Thursday April 6th 6 - 8:30

Please join us for this modern version of the last supper that Jesus shared with his disciples. It includes a pot-luck meal. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Peter.

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

Community Easter Egg Hunt: The Montreal Children's Theatre is hosting an egg hunt here on Saturday, April 8th at 11:30.

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 worship²

○ sing to the LORD a new song;

sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD in holy splendor;

tremble before the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the LORD, bless God's name;

Proclaim God's salvation from day to day

♪ Hymn: God is love.....pg 10 (314)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFwnnIAjnAE



Christ washing feet
Butler



Prayer of Approach

Dear God,

We are gathered here because you first loved us,
reaching out to your people,
to all people,
to help us to live in beautiful community
all people.

Sometimes we experience the joy of the community,
and can dream of what is possible.
You are a God of hope.

You also know, better than anyone else,
that the world is not perfect.

Everywhere, there are people who need:
nourishment, healing, companionship & love.

You know what we are capable of,
and where we have turned away,
perhaps afraid of failing,
of losing something,
of being touched (contaminated) by suffering,
or of being judged for our actions.

Please forgive us. . .

and may your Holy Spirit help us to change our ways,
and to live in the hope of your future.

In Jesus name

Amen.


Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news:

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
this shows God's love towards us.

In the name of Jesus the Christ,
you are forgiven!

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

Going through Lent we try to become closer to God. The first week I suggested thanking God every time you see, hear or taste something good. Then I suggested you think back of your day, ask God to forgive you... and then forgive yourself. Last week I suggested you say (silently or out-loud) "*Peace of God be with you*" to people that you meet.

³ Worship Sourcebook 2.4.40

Something that was an important part of Jesus' life was prayer. Living like Jesus includes praying. This week increase your prayers.

One way to help people is to pray for them. When you see a person or situation needing God's help, offer an 'on-the-run' prayer. If you live with others, collect the prayers together into one at the end of the day.

Dear Jesus,

help us to pray to you whenever there's a joy or a need.

Amen.

♪ Hymn: When the poor ones.....pg 13 (762)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKSF8M2TvSA



Northern Nativity - W Kurelek

Prayer for Illumination⁴


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

- since last week...
 - Jesus is asked about paying taxes to Ceasar
 - Marriage & resurrection
 - leading to the question about the greatest commandment, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul & mind.... And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself.*”
 - Everybody was impressed with Jesus’ answers
 - Then the tone starts to shift as Jesus warns against hypocrisy, doing good things for show, and not helping people in need... specifically targeting the religious leaders.
- And with that Jesus leaves the temple and gives a private lesson to his disciples about the end of the age. It’s pretty apocalyptic.
 - This is the last thing Jesus does before Matthew takes into the sequence leading to the crucifixion... and resurrection.
 - vague on when (not even he knows) and tells some parables about always being prepared
 - and then the two parables Elizabeth will read.
- While the Gospel readings have a tone leading into the crucifixion, our Psalm reminds us of what God is like.

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁵ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Matthew 25](#): 14-46 (or all of chapter 24 and 25)

[Psalm 96](#)



Sermon: Judging the point

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



Last Friday we started our movie series with *Brave*. It’s a Pixar movie that has a nice Lenten theme. The main character puts her own desires ahead of everyone else, and the world falls apart... until she can confess and repent. We had a family join us who saw the poster. From the point of view of a grade 7 boy, it was an okay movie - but predictable. While he wondered how it was going to come together, he wasn’t surprised that it ended happily ever after.

Do you have that feeling after today’s readings? Are you confident of a happy ending? Do these stories bring you confidence and joy, or do they ‘put the fear of God’ into you?

Heading into the crucifixion story, Matthew picks up a theme we’ve heard through him before. There will be judgment. Some

⁵ 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

people will be tossed out in the dark, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. While Matthew tends to end sections with this frightening future, not everyone receives this judgment. Some (most) people get to enjoy the banquet.

Still, the ending of a story (or anything really) is what leaves the taste in your mouth. It's hard not to feel the looming shadow of eternal punishment. I'm sure this is on purpose, but I don't think it's the main point Matthew hopes to make.

Thinking over the stories we heard today, and in other places that mention judgment, the punishment is only briefly described. The bulk of the text focuses on what people are doing before the judgment - their day-to-day activities.

Take our first story from today. The master trusts people with parts of his estate or 'kingdom'. They don't get the same amount. Presumably they are given what they can handle - so they aren't overburdened or overwhelmed. It turns out one of them can't handle it, but the other two can. While they can't see the master around, they trust that the future will be good. They take what they've been given to make more. They grow the master's kingdom because they have faith in a future with the master in charge.

This is something that came up at Jesus & Java this week. That there is a lot that is depressing about the state of the world at the moment, and that the future can look grim. Then another view was put forward. Although the news is full of horrible things, there are medical advances every day. We live in a time of record low infant mortality. We can live thinking the world is going to hell, or live as if Jesus is coming back and things will be made well. This isn't denying horrors and tragedies, but it also acknowledges that nothing is too much for God. Jesus encourages us to live in hope.



As most parables in Matthew remind us, this way of living isn't passive. Last week's parable of the wedding banquet reminded us of the need to be always ready. In the first parable today the people take what they are given and do more. The second parable takes this to the next level. Here we have a list of activities: feeding the hungry, quenching the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, helping the sick, visiting the prisoner. They are actions encouraged in the Older Testament... and in many (most?) religions. This, and not the punishment or reward, is what Matthew takes time to describe. Living this way is the focus.

It could be taken as a list of rules that an impartial judge can use like a checklist... but I don't think that's right. We are told that the judge will be the Son of Man - Jesus. This is an important context.

One part of this context is that Jesus is not a stranger. He came to live with us. He shows us what God, our judge, is like. He feeds the hungry - their bodies and spirits. He welcomes people

into his family - even those who aren't good at God stuff, or those not accepted by good people. He heals the sick. While we don't have any stories of him visiting prisoners, we do know would soon be imprisoned... and he did visit those imprisoned by their lives/choices/society/sickness/gender/situation. The list of actions isn't a checklist; it's a description of ways that Jesus lived.

Living this out can be demanding, depending on who you consider 'qualified' to receive help. Is it just people in the church? or is it everyone? For most of the past 2000 years it's been just the people in your version of Christianity. I think a greater awareness of the world, and perhaps how wide-spread these values are, has helped bring about a different interpretation that started taking over in the 19th century - one that is Biblical founded.

Considering what Jesus teaches us. Back in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about loving your friends and enemies. While he focuses his attention on the Jews, he also helps non-Jews - even members of the occupying army. He travels outside the borders to bring God's love and healing there too. There are no limits on who is included. Jesus offers God's love, hope and healing to everyone. This is demanding... though if we remember the previous parable, we aren't asked to deal with everything. While it may not feel like it, God only asks us to take what we can carry.

But it's best not to think of it like that. It's not about picking up a load, or carrying a burden. It's about living like Jesus. In the gospels, this is the difference between good and evil, light and dark. Does your life reflect the light of Jesus?

I heard a new story this week about a stellar example of this. IF she was in the first parable of the master giving out coins - she'd have been entrusted with 50. After Mother Teresa's death a reporter was asking one of her helpers what made her so special. The person replied that she lived out Matthew 25. She saw Jesus in the poor of Kolkata. The reporter tried again. "But what made

her so special? Was she a great leader? a great manager?" The disciples tried again to explain that she saw Christ in everyone. The reporter tried again. The disciple realized the reporter didn't have "ears to listen" and let it rest. The reporter was left in the dark and probably experienced gnashing of teeth.

What's the point? That Mother Theresa wasn't living out a checklist. She wasn't trying to impress a judge. She had internalized what it meant to live like Christ - in a pretty extreme context.

There are several ways to get to this point. One is to spend a lot of time with Jesus. How? prayer, reading the Bible, engaging with other Christians through books, podcasts, discussions, songs, art, looking for Jesus in the people all around you - and practising. It's not something you can do without doing it. This is like the disciples following Jesus around.

Another way is like today's parables. It's a way we're trying with my boys. We managed to get them into swimming lessons... and they usually aren't too keen on going. This isn't unusual. Learning how to swim is hard. It takes faith and courage. We've explained why it's good for them, used strong encouragements, etc. Now we've just made it clear that there are consequences to not going. They can decide whether to go swimming, or lose screen time. We are hoping that they will choose to work through this, and learn lessons like determination - as well as being more comfortable and competent in the water.

We should not doubt the stories of judgment, but we also need to remember the context. The judge is Jesus. This is not some impartial person. Jesus is our brother. He loves us. He came to live with us. The judge is not a stranger, but family. For some

of you that may be disturbing, but in this case it's not. Jesus is a better brother than you can imagine. Jesus will go through anything to help - as well remember in the next couple of weeks.



So, yes, there are consequences to how you live. Jesus tells stories of judgment that show wonderful, and dark, options. But we're not alone. Matthew makes the point that Jesus is Immanuel - which means God with us. Jesus shows us God bringing love, hope and healing into people's lives - even when it would kill him.

This is who we can put our hope in and follow.

*To God be all the Glory
Amen.*



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: God, whose giving knows no endingpg 11 (663)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUKNNdpMdHs

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

Memories: Mother Theresa is a pretty extreme example. Can you identify more normal examples of people who live out Jesus actions - at least some of the time?

Wonder: Is fear a good motivator to live a good and joy-filled life?

Wonder: Consider why Jesus hasn't come back yet. When thinking these judgment scenes, is there a difference when you think of it as lead by a modern (or TV) judge or a loving parent?

Values: How do we balance leaving the judging to Jesus, and helping people we feel may be risking a bad judgment?

Actions: Share a way you'd like to improve this week, and hold each other accountable.

Prayer: ...that we might be more like Jesus

✦ Spirit Sightings

Someone came in to ask New Hope about their programming and saw our movie night poster - and they came. Why? Because it was inviting, and they were looking for community. I think this was the Holy Spirit moving and making connections.

They have some other commitments, but we hope to see them again. We ask that you pray for this family, and that we will connect with more people.

✦ 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

Divine parent of all,
we pray today for those who are sitting around us:
our sisters and brothers in this part of your body
called Kensington.

Some have come with gladness and warmth,
others with sadness or troubles.

Together, help us to support one another,

as we practice what it means to “love our neighbour”.

Hear our prayer for our neighbour, we pray.

Divine parent of all,
we pray for those immediately beyond our walls today:
our brothers and sisters in this local community,
our neighbours across the fence,
our colleagues at work,
local acquaintances and strangers alike.

We know of some concerns in this area
and we pray for them now.

We do not know the details
of many other worries and concerns,
still, we pray for your Spirit to help them,
and perhaps to help us help them.
as we practice what it means to “love our neighbour”.

Hear our prayer for our neighbour, we pray.

Divine parent of all,
we pray for those who are far from us:
our brothers and sisters off the Island,
our brothers and sisters in humanity around Turtle Island,
like us, different from us,
Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist,
Hindu, Sikh, Atheist and more.

We hear of some troubles and terror,
horror and heartache,
but we cannot possibly be aware of each and every need.
So we pray for all those who need your blessing today,
as we practice what it means to “love our neighbour”.

Hear our prayer for our neighbour, we pray.

Divine parent of all,
 we pray for ourselves.
 May your Spirit help us live more like Jesus,
 to accept what we can do,
 to forgive ourselves when we fail,
 and to keep trying.
 Help us to be a part of your community,
 as we practice what it means to “love our neighbour”.

Hear our prayer for our neighbour, we pray.

We pray this in Jesus name
Amen.⁶

♪ Hymn: What gifts can we bring.....pg 12 (798)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTgslNKjdXA (original tune)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLtLyl-uMYO (tune at back)

✦ **Benediction**

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
 be with all of you.
 Amen.*⁷



6 adapted from *Spill the Beans* #15
 7 2 Corinthians 13: 13

In Haiti, Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) is supporting farmers and their families. As a farmer, 62-year-old Emmanuel Joseph has experienced changes to his land for decades. When Emmanuel joined a farmer’s collective supported by PWS&D in 2013, he began learning conservation agriculture practices like composting and crop rotation. Now, Emmanuel’s garden produces more and better food year-round, and his wife is able to bring produce to the market to sell. Projects focusing on food security benefit farmers and their loved ones by providing education and resources to help achieve better food security and address the impacts of climate change—both now and in the future.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, March 26 (Fifth Sunday in Lent) We pray for marginalized people, and for the wisdom to learn and grow in God’s love of all people, so that we may not exclude anyone from our circle of care.

Monday, March 27 We give thanks for Presbyterian World Service & Development projects that are helping farmers in Haiti combat the impacts of climate change and achieve better food security for their families.

Tuesday, March 28 We pray for Women’s Missionary Society synodicals as they prepare for their annual meetings in April, and for WMS presbyterials and groups as they continue to engage in mission.

Wednesday, March 29 We thank God for calling people to helping professions. May God guide and empower them as they prepare for this important work.

Thursday, March 30 We pray for the members and work of the Life and Mission Agency Committee.

Friday, March 31 On **Transgender Day of Visibility**, we pray for the safety, dignity and well-being of all transgender people.

God is love: come heaven, adoring

ABBOTS LEIGH 8 7 8 7 8 7

D /F# F#m/A Bm /A G /B C/D D Bm (/D) Bm Em 6

1. God is love: come heaven, a - dor - ing; God is love: come
 2. God is love, whose arms en - fold - ing all the world in
 3. God is love, and though with blind-ness sin af - flicts all

D/F# Em/G:Gmaj7 Asus+3 G D/F# F#m/A Bm /A G /B C/D D Bm (/D)

earth, re - joice. Come cre - a - tion, voi - ces soar - ing, sing ex -
 one em - brace. with un - fail - ing grasp are hold - ing eve - ry
 hu - man life, God's e - ter - nal lov - ing - kind - ness guides us

Em 6 D/F# Em/G:Gmaj7 A C /B D7/A Em (/G) C6 (Am7) D7

ult - ing with one voice. God who laid the earth's foun -
 child of eve - ry race, and when hu - man hearts are
 through: all earth - ly strife. Sin and death and hell shall

Gsus 4-3 A (/G D6/F#) A7/E(D6 A9/C#) Bm/D F#7 Bm D/F# F#m/A Bm /D

da - tion, God who spread the heavens a - bove, God who breathes through
 break - ing un - der sor - row's i - ron rod, all the sor - row,
 nev - er o'er us fin - al tri - umph gain; God is love: so

C/E D/F# Bm/A Em/G B7/D# Em A7/E D/F# G D/A A7 D

all cre - a - tion— God is love, e - ter - nal love.
 all the ach - ing wrings with pain the heart of God.
 love for - ev - er o'er the u - ni - verse must reign.

Alternate tune: Hyfrydol

Words: Timothy Rees C.R. (1874-1939), alt Music: Cyril Vincent Taylor (1907-1991)

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663
(tune 722)

God, whose giving knows no ending

F Gm/F F /E Dmsus4-3 Bb C/Bb

1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from you rich and
 2 Skills and time are ours for pres - sing toward the goals of
 3 Trea - sure, too, You have en - trust - ed, gain through pow'rs Your

Bb 6 F Gm/F F F /E Dmsus4-3

end - less store: Na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom,
 Christ, Your Son: all at peace in health and free - dom,
 grace con - ferred; ours to use for home and kind - red,

/C Bb C/Bb Bb 6 F C/E (Dm7)C (sus2-1)

cost - ly cross, grave's shat - tered door, gift - ed by You, we turn
 rac - es joined, the Church made one. Now di - rect our dai - ly
 and to spread the gos - pel word. O - pen wide our hands in

Dm Am F/A Bb (maj7) C(sus2-1) Dm

to You, off' ring up our - selves in praise; thank - ful song shall
 la - bour, lest we strive for self a - lone; born with ta - lents,
 sha - ring, as we heed Christ's age - less call, heal - ing, teach - ing,

/C Bb6 (maj7) F/A Gm7 F/A Bb F

rise for - e - ver, gra - cious don - or of our days.
 make us ser - vants fit to ans - wer at Your throne.
 and re - claim - ing, serv - ing You by lov - ing all.

Robert L. Edwards (1961-) © The Hymn Society of America, admin. by Hope Publishing Co.
 Music: attributed to Benjamin Franklin White (1800-1879) from Sacred Harp 1844;
 harmony, Ronald A. Nelson (1927-) CCLI #4440603
 Music: harmony, copyright © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Reprinted by permission of Augsburg Fortress.

798
(tune 350)

What gift can we bring

G /B D 7 G /B D G

1 What gift can we bring, what pre - sent, what to - ken?
 2 Give thanks for the past, for those who had vi - sion,
 3 Give thanks for to - mor - row, full of sur - pri - ses,

C G (/B) A9 (/C#) D

What words can con - vey it, the joy of this day?
 who plant - ed and wa - tered so dreams could come true.
 for know - ing what - ev - er to - mor - row may bring,

7 G /B D 7 G /B D G

When grate - ful we come, re - mem - bering, re - joic - ing,
 Give thanks for the now, for stud - y, for wor - ship,
 the word is our prom - ise al - ways, for - ev - er,

7 Csus2 C6 G D G/D D7 G

what song can we of - fer in hon - our and praise?
 for mis - sion that bids us turn prayer in - to deed.
 we rest in his keep - ing and live in his love.

Refrain G G/B D7/A G D

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear God's voice!

D G/B D7/A G

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the peo - ple re - joice!

D7 G /B D 7 G /B D G

Oh come to the Fa - ther through Je - sus the Son,

G7 Csus2 C6 G/D D G/D D7 G

and give God the glo - ry, who great things has done.

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 Words: Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915), alt Music: William H. Doane (1832-1916)
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When the poor ones

EL CAMINO Irregular

Unison
Dm

A7 Bb

1. When the poor ones who have noth ing - share with strang-ers,
2. When at last all those who suf-fer find their com-fort,

D7 Gm C7 F

when the thirst-y wa-ter give un - to us all,
when they hope though e-ven hope seems hope-less-ness,

F E7 A7 Dm

when the crip-pled in their weak-ness strength-en oth - ers,
when we love though hate at times seems all a-round us,

Refrain Bb A7 Dm

then we know that God still goes that road with us,

D7 Gm A7 Dm Gm Dm

then we know that God still goes that road with us.



Dorothy Day and the Holy Family of the Streets
Kelly Latimore

3. When our joy fills up our cup to overflowing,
when our lips can speak no words other than true,
when we know that love for simple things is better,
Refrain:
4. When our homes are filled with goodness in abundance
when we learn how to make peace instead of war,
when each stranger that we meet is called a neighbour,
Refrain:

Words: Miguel Manzano, J.A. Olivar, English translation, George Lockwood (1946-) Music:
Miguel Manzano (20th cent.), J.A. Olivar (20th cent.); arrangement, Alvin Schutmaat (1921-1988)

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