



Kensington Presbyterian Church
Growing in faith and sharing God's love
 since 1786

Living with a preposterous God
 June 18, 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

Zoom Prayer Group: Thursday at 6:30 a.m.

You may use the worship login details

[us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

[pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 773 730 107

Password: 7864826

Jesus & Java: Join us as we share the joys and questions of faith.

Thursday, 3:30 pm at Beetz, 5914 Sherbrooke @ Clifton

Pizza & Movie Nights: Fridays at 6:30

June 23: Patch Adams

June 30: Bride and Prejudice

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

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

Drop Box: Food donations are welcome for the local Food Pantry and diapers for young mothers through Head & Hands.

East Africa Hunger Crisis: until June 30 donations doubled by the Canadian government. Donations can be made through Presbyterian World Service & Development:

presbyterian.ca/pwsd/donate-east-africa-hunger

Contacts

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 514-773-4620

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Zoé Dupont-Foisy (music director).....zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com



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 (Revelation 15:3-4)

Great and marvellous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty!

**Just and true are your ways,
King of the ages.**

Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and bring glory to your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship you!

♪ Hymn: Open my Eyes, that I may see.....pg 8 (500)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=71jExPuxRBY



Prayer of Approach

Living and Everlasting God,
There is so much about you we don't understand
We thank you for bringing us to this time,
and pray that we may feel some of your wonder.
that we may be filled with your hope and love.
That our spirits may soar with yours
even if it means being surprised.

We are sorry when we resist your surprises,
when we turn away, or hide.
or even when we just don't see you in what's going on.
Please forgive us when we don't see you in the ordinary people
around us, and treat them as if they are you. . .

In looking for you
we say together the prayer
you teach your followers...



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.



Assurance of Pardon

Hear these comforting words God spoke through Jeremiah 33:8:

I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me,
and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin
and rebellion against me.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.²



Listening to God

♪ Hymn Favourites

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that today we may be filled with wonder.
Amen.³


Intro to the readings

- Our first reading jumps forward a little for Abraham and Sarah. God has promised to stay with them and that their dependence will be an example for all nations. They are still leading a nomadic life, but Lot settled down in a city.
- In his letter to the church in Rome (likely the last letter we have of his), Paul shares what he's learned from living with an affliction (we never find out what it is).
- Our psalm is considering our relationship with God. The part we're skipping refers to a potentially deadly situation.



3 adapted from Worship Sourcebook 3.1.10 & 23


ev. Peter Rombeek
Kensington Presbyterian Church

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁴ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Genesis 18](#): 1-15 & [21](#): 1-7

[Romans 5](#): 1-8

[Psalm 116](#): 1-2, 12-19

 Sermon: Living with a preposterous God

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

Wonder. It's something we've all experienced. Now, I'm not talking about when you wonder *about* something, but when you are fascinated/amazed with something that stuns you into staying in the moment. This wonder then sends your thoughts soaring in a new direction - until they come back down to earth.

All sorts of things can inspire wonder. What catches your attention? I never get tired of sunsets. Babies nurture wonder in (almost) everyone. It doesn't even matter what species. They could be puppies, or ducklings. Human babies can be mesmerizing.

This wonder from children helps us to have them - though this can be complicated. If you have them young, then you'll have the energy to get through the sleep deprivation to keep up with them - but they cost a lot. If you wait until you can afford a child, then you probably have a career under way. It's also not as easy to become pregnant. If you hope for a child, but can't have one, it is a bit like having a wonder taken away from you. It can be demoralizing. You're willing to try all sorts of things to embrace this wonder.

⁴ 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

We don't know why Sarah and Abraham didn't have kids when they were young. We don't meet them until they're in their seventies⁵ We know enough about their culture from the Bible, and looking at similar cultures elsewhere, to know that Sarah would have felt like she had let down her part of the marriage. She would have been ashamed.

I'll bet she wondered why she hadn't had children. She's not alone. People still wonder this. I have friends who would make excellent parents, but aren't able to have children.. They wondered why not. So have quite a number of other couples I've listened to. I'm sure you've heard similar questions, if not experienced this yourself.

This question leads to the more general question about God's timing. I'm sure you've wondered this. Why did someone lose their job as inflation is hitting? Why did someone get sick just as they were retiring? The timing question doesn't always come from something bad, but we can spin it. We know people who have been healed from a deadly illness... but ask why, if God will heal them, did they have to live so long in pain?

It's okay to ask these questions.

They show a desire to know God.

Like the situations, there isn't one easy answer - and none of them help in the moment of pain that gives birth to the questions.

One painful truth about the world is that evil still exists and works in it. There is evil at work in nature, such as cancer or Parkinson's or dementia. There is evil that happens because of people - such as not cleaning up our pollution, and war. The Bible reminds us that our actions have consequences. After

Abraham hosts the three strangers that are God, they go for a walk. Abraham hears how the city his nephew has settled in (Sodom) is living without respect for others - and so it will be destroyed. Abraham convinces God to give the good people a chance to clear out first. A more recent example could be the use of DDT and its negative effect on pregnancies and babies. Sometimes bad things happen, and sometimes people do things that break relationships - and this has consequences.

Sometimes things don't happen as we want them to because God is directing it. A good demonstration of this is when a parent sees the child reaching for the glowing red burner on a stove they yell and slap the hand away. The child is hurt and scared, but not as much as if they'd touched the burner. Some situations are just evil, but others may be God protecting us from something worse.

Then there's Paul's advice. Like most advice in a bad situation, it's pretty bad in the moment. It does help to remember that Paul experienced both some form of personal, probably physical, hardship he only hinted at - and was locked up many times. He knew about hardship. Paul shares that his affliction forced him to push through the problems, which helped him to trust God and learn that he could get through hard and painful experiences, which gives him hope when things are bad... and reminds him that in all things - God's Spirit pours love.

Telling someone, 'hey, pain makes you stronger' is a good way to get a slap. But when it's possible to look at the journey with hindsight - it can be possible to see the love and to find hope. It reminds me of a message I heard repeated on the Seminary field trip to Cuba. 'Cuba had been in tough times before and got through it. We'll get through this.' (I'm curious what they are saying now.)

There are times when we wonder why. Sometimes it's just evil,

5 [Genesis 12](#)

sometimes it's God with some plan we don't understand, and sometimes we even figure it out with hindsight.



But in the moment... sometimes the only thing we can do is laugh - which is what Sarah did. It's possible she laughed out of joy, but considering her comments about being past menopause... I think she laughed at the preposterous timing of God.

Which, I believe, is characteristic of God that keeps coming up: being preposterous. Oxford defines it as: "completely unreasonable, especially in a way that is shocking or annoying."

Thinking of Abraham and Sarah. There's the preposterous suggestion we heard last week that they should lead their household away from family and into a nomadic life-style... when they were in their seventies. That said, it worked out.

When Abraham first heard God's promise that he & Sarah would give birth to a great nation... he laughed so hard he fell on

his face (Genesis 17:17). Sarah manages a bit more dignity with her laughter, but still, God's suggestion is preposterous. That said, it's a good thing God promised them. They would have been hoping for a child, especially a son, for more decades than they can remember. It would take a miracle to happen now. The idea was preposterous ...yet, it happened.

Sometimes God coming is preposterously ordinary. Like when Abraham was having a siesta and God walked past like three ordinary people. If God looks ordinary, how are we supposed to recognize the divine? Who do we treat as God? What do we offer them? How do we listen to these possibly ordinary, possibly divine, people? It's completely unreasonable, preposterous, of God to expect this of us ...yet it happens.

Sometimes God combines the miraculous and the ordinary. Take a baby for example - any baby. Every one is a wonder. ...and then there was Jesus. God coming as an ordinary baby. That's preposterous.

Living is complicated. It can be hard and with unreasonable suffering. Living with a God that has a tendency to be preposterous can be annoying. But the shocking aspect of God's unreasonableness can open us to new possibilities, and bring us unexpected (impossible) opportunities to experience wonder.

So, keep a look back, look around, and look ahead for the glory of God.

Amen.



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: All my hope on God is founded.....pg.9 (462)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2oYTtyBSxk>

💬 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: When have you felt wonder (fascination/amazement that stuns you into staying in the moment, and then helps your imagination to drift to the heavens)?
When have you glimpsed God?

Memories: What unhelpful advice have you been given?
What has been helpful?

Values: How can we value God's tendency to be 'preposterous'?

Etching: Share about a time you have asked God "Why?"

Etching: When have you experienced, or heard, of God in something miraculous? in something ordinary?

Prayer: ...that we might see God in all things.

✦ Spirit Sightings

Two families I know that had difficulty having their own children did something that I think is very brave. They became foster parents. In one case there reason was medical, with some potential medical options. However, they felt called and became an emergency foster family.

The other family was two dads who accepted young twins with a difficult background. (Ines and I have borrowed several of their parenting techniques.)

Being willing to open their lives to creating a stable family that models healthy, loving relationships is a Wonder.

✦ 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.....pg (24)
Wonderful Lord,

We come to you because there are things we wish you'd do. We don't understand why you wait when there is such need, so we pray.

We pray for those who need a secure & safe place to live, those who need healthy food, and those who need health care...

We pray that everyone will feel respected and loved...

24

I waited, I waited on you, Lord

I wait - ed, I wait - ed on you, Lord; I
 wait-ed, I wait-ed on you, Lord. You bent down low and re -
 mem - bered me when you heard my prayer.

Words: Psalm 40; paraphrase, John L. Bell (1949-) Music: John L. Bell (1949-)

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♪
 We pray for those in need of healing
 - Pansy's daughter
 - Peggy
 - . . .

♪
 We pray for the election tomorrow,
 and for all our leaders in government, business & the church...

♪
 We pray for your church here at Kensington.
 May we look to see you walking past,
 and invite you in.
 May we engage with you,
 and listen to you

...even when the vision you give us is as impossible as Sarah giving birth to Isaac...

♪
 Sometimes you close off possibilities,
 things that people are hoping for.
 We pray for these people,
 that your Spirit will give them strength and comfort...
 Sometimes we close off possibilities,
 often out of fear.
 We pray that you may open us
 like you opened the tomb on Easter morning.

♪
 Thank you Lord,
 for creating wonderful occasions,
 and being in the ordinary too.
 May we see you,
 and join you,
 in both.

In Jesus name
Amen.

♪ Hymn: Lord, whose love.....pg 10 (722)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=So9Va9L8N8E

✦ Benediction
 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
 the love of God
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
 be with you
 Amen.



Open my eyes, that I may see

OPEN MY EYES 8 8 9 8 with refrain

Ab Eb7/Bb Eb7 Ab6 Ab

1. O-pen my eyes, that I may see glimps-es of truth thou hast for me;
 2. O-pen my ears, that I may hear voic-es of truth thou send-est clear,
 3. O-pen my mouth, and let me bear glad-ly the warm truth eve-ry-where;

C7/G Fm C7/E Fm C7 Fm Bb Eb

place in my hands the won-der-ful key that shall un-clasp and set me free.
 and while the wave-notes fall on my ear, eve-ry-thing false will dis-ap-pear.
 o - pen my heart and let me pre-pare love with thy chil-dren thus to share.

Refrain
 Ab Eb7/Bb Eb7 Ab

Si-lent-ly now I wait for thee, read-y, my God, thy will to see;

(Eb/Bb Ab/C) Ab7C# Db(6) Eb7 Ab

o - pen my eyes:
 o - pen my ears: il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!
 o - pen my heart:

Words: Clara H. Scott (1841–1897) Music: Clara H. Scott (1841–1897)

Words: public domain Music: public domain

Winnipeg Inner City Missions (WICM) is an outreach ministry supported by gifts to Presbyterians Sharing that welcomes and embraces all people living in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba. WICM works towards healing and reconciliation and provides temporary housing, employment services, as well as programming for children and youth. The staff and volunteers of WICM work tirelessly to provide a safe, inclusive space that inspires lifelong learning and building social and personal well-being for all people in the community. WICM recently welcomed Beverly Burkard as its new executive director. Beverly is a welcome addition to WICM, bringing with her an extensive background working with charitable and non-profit organizations, including Sage Journey, Agape Table and Red Road Lodge.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, June 18 (National Indigenous Peoples Day Sunday) We pray for all those who are working to revitalize Indigenous language, culture, governance and spirituality. We give thanks for Indigenous leadership in the church and this country.

Monday, June 19 (National Indigenous Peoples Day) We give thanks for Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and all Indigenous people working for the rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities.

Tuesday, June 20 On World Refugee Day, we remember all who've had to flee their homes and seek refuge in unfamiliar places and with people who are strangers. We pray for God's blessing on all those who welcome refugees with open arms of love.

Wednesday, June 21 We pray for refugees in times of unthinkable suffering, and we give thanks for Presbyterian World Service & Development partners providing relief to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Ukrainian refugees in Poland and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Thursday, June 22 We give thanks and pray for the staff and volunteers at Winnipeg Inner City Missions in Manitoba as they work tirelessly to meet people's physical and spiritual needs.

Friday, June 23 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Oak Ridges in Ontario.

Saturday, June 24 We give thanks for clubs in Haiti that teach children about food security and environmental protection with support from the church through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

All my hope on God is founded

MICHAEL 8787337

F (/G) Cm6/Eb Bb/D Gm C 9 F (/G) Cm

1. All my hope on God is found - ed who does still my
 2. Hu - man pride and earth - ly glo - ry, sword and crown, be -
 3. God's great good-ness reigns e - ter - nal, deep in wis - dom,
 4. Dai - ly does Al - might - y Giv - er boun - teous gifts on
 5. Still from earth to God e - ter - nal sac - ri - fice of

Gm/D D9 G C11 Fsus2 - 1 F6 Dm/B Em7

trust re - new; through all change and chance God guides me,
 tray all trust; what our care and toil es - tab - lish,
 pass - ing thought; light and life are all God's splen - dour
 us be - stow, God's de - sire our soul de - light - ing,
 praise be done, high a - bove all prais - es prais - ing

A Dm7 Em7 C/E Fmaj7 G7 C F/A F7 Bb (/G)

on - ly good and on - ly true. Love un - known,
 tower and tem - ple, fall to dust, but God's power,
 bring - ing beau - ty out of naught. Ev - er - more
 pleas - ure lead - ing where we go. Love will stand
 for the gift of Christ, the Son. Hear Christ call

Cm/A Daug Gm Aaug/C# A7 Dm (7) G6 C 9 F

God's a - lone, calls my heart to be God's own.
 hour by hour, is my tem - ple and my tower.
 from God's store new-born worlds rise and a - dore.
 at God's hand; joy will wait on God's com - mand.
 one and all: you that fol - low shall not fall.

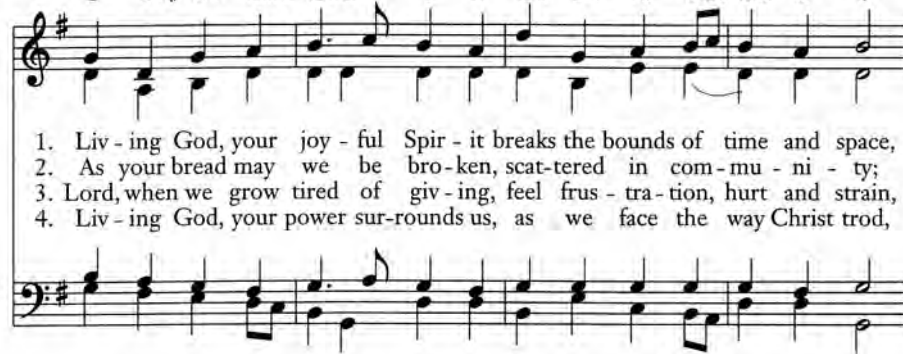
Words: German, Joachim Neander (1650–1680), translation, Robert Bridges (1944–1930), alt
 Music: Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

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Living God, your joyful Spirit

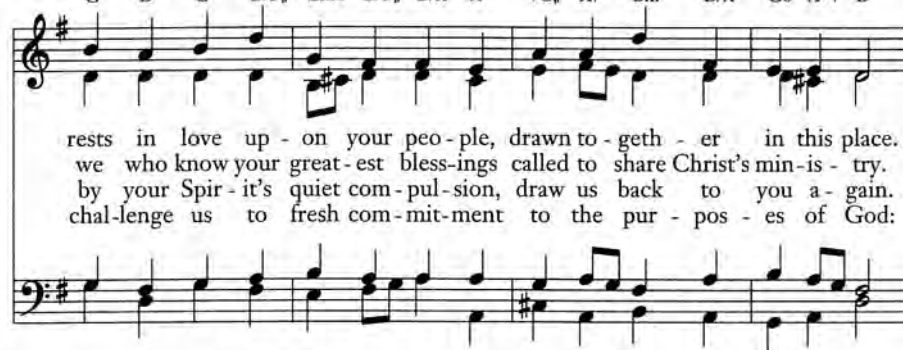
REX GLORIAE 8787 D

G D/F# Em Dm/C G/BG /D D G/B Em C6 Em/B G/D D G



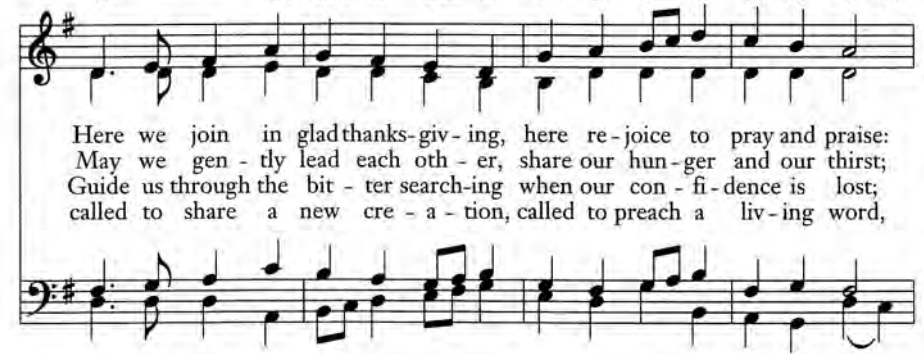
1. Liv - ing God, your joy - ful Spir - it breaks the bounds of time and space,
 2. As your bread may we be bro - ken, scat - tered in com - mu - ni - ty;
 3. Lord, when we grow tired of giv - ing, feel frus - tra - tion, hurt and strain,
 4. Liv - ing God, your power sur - rounds us, as we face the way Christ trod,

G D G D/F# Em6 D/F# D/A A /C# A7 Bm D/A G6 A 7 D



rests in love up - on your peo - ple, drawn to - geth - er in this place.
 we who know your great - est bless - ings called to share Christ's min - is - try.
 by your Spir - it's quiet com - pul - sion, draw us back to you a - gain.
 chal - lenge us to fresh com - mit - ment to the pur - pos - es of God:

D Am G/B D C/E G Em D G Bm D7/A G D /C



Here we join in glad thanks - giv - ing, here re - joice to pray and praise:
 May we gen - tly lead each oth - er, share our hun - ger and our thirst;
 Guide us through the bit - ter search - ing when our con - fi - dence is lost;
 called to share a new cre - a - tion, called to preach a liv - ing word,

G/B D /C G/B D/A G Em G/D D /C G/B Em C G Dsus4-3 G



Lord of all our past tra - di - tions, Lord of all our fu - ture days.
 learn that on - ly through our weak - ness shall we know the strength of Christ.
 give us hope from des - o - la - tion, arms out - stretched up - on a cross.
 prom - ised all the joys of heav - en, through the grace of Christ our Lord.

Words: Jill Jenkins (1937-) Music: Henry T. Smart (1813-1879) Alternate tune: Abbot's Leigh

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