



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

More than you can imagine

July 23, 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

Alex Plant: (our student from last year) will be leading worship over the next month. If you have any pastoral care needs, please reach out to your elder or the office.

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

Zoom Prayer Group: will resume in September

Friday Film & Food: will resume in September

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

New Hope Boutique: is grateful for your donations and want you to know that they are making people happy. Thank you. If you wish to donate something, please let Rev. Peter or New Hope know.

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



Trust in the Lord - Ivan Guaderrama

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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 (from psalm 80 & 95)

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.



there is joy in the presence of Jesus - Rebecca Brogan

♪ Hymn: God of mercy, God of grace.....pg 9 (39)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmNyPNojMjE



Prayer of Approach

Blessed be you God,
Creators of the Heavens and the earth.
Lord of all.


and your son, Jesus Christ,
through whom you came to heal
our relationships with you,
with each other
and with the rest of creation.

Sitting here, we admit that we still do things that hurt creation,
ourselves, and you. Sometimes it's what we do, and sometimes
it's by what we don't challenge.

Please forgive us,
and come into our hearts,
so that we can work together and increase the love in the
world.

As we gather,
may your Spirit seep into our souls
helping our roots to draw nourishment straight from your
love.
help us to comprehend the breadth and length and height and
depth of your love until our imagination goes off like
fireworks.
May help share your light to those who walk in darkness.

To help us align our lives with you,
we 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.****

 Assurance of Pardon

Here these words of assurance from Ephesians
Not by our own doing, but by grace
and the Lord's great love we are saved
Thanks be to God.



Listening to God

 Children's Time


Today we're going Stewart is going to read us part of a letter that's in the Bible. The letter was sent to church, and the part we're going to hear is a prayer for that church.

If we would pray for Kensington, what would we pray for?
(ex. Session, Sunday School, Antoinette, Choir, Zoé, health, safe vacations, ...)

Dear Jesus,


We bring things things to you, and ask that you look after them.

Amen


 Hymn: Lord, the light of your love is shining.....pg 10 (376)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nUOfxqPXQ

 Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that today we may experience a glimpse of your vast love.
Amen.²

 Intro to the readings

- Psalm 136. Curiously, it doesn't appear in the three year lectionary. Possibly because it is quite repetitive, however that ties in well to our passage from Ephesians.
- Today is the last in our series with Ephesians. There's more to it, and I suggest your read it. When you get to the bit that seems like marriage advice, remember that that's not what it is. Instead it's an attempt to describe our relationship with God with a relationship everyone knew - like when we describe God as Father. Earthly fathers have faults, so do earthly institutions and relationships. God is glorious.
 - As I wrote in the email invite, today's passage from Ephesians is inspirational. There's a lot in it, but try to just go with the flow this time. Let it nourish you. I do encourage you to spend more time with it this week.

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

[Psalm 136](#)

[Ephesians 3: 16-21](#)

² adapted from Worship Sourcebook 3.1.10 & 23

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: More than you can imagine

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

I don't know about you, but for me the best description of this passage from Ephesians is, "Wow". It's quite a prayer.

Is this what your prayers are like when you pray for someone? or for yourself? Personally, I tend to focus more on the tangible - naming specific issues that people are dealing with: health, safe travels, relationships, justice, etc. While I don't get too specific when we're being broadcast on YouTube, you are in my prayers.

This passage feels like a prayer that goes beneath these real concerns. How would you feel if you knew someone was praying this passage for you? That...

- you would be strengthened in your inner being by the power of the Spirit;
- that Christ would dwell in your heart
- that you would be rooted and grounded in a love that is too big to understand - surpassing knowledge, and even our imagination!

How does that make you feel?

I find it takes the focus away from me and gives me a vision of God that is... mind-blowing. I love that this passage both stretches our concept of God, and touches us personally. It is a prayer for

God to be tangible in our lives. It's a reminder, building on the earlier parts of the letter, that working on this foundational relationship will help all aspects of everyone's lives.

This part of the prayer starts with our "inner being". Psychologists would like this. Whether you think of your inner being as your feelings or subconscious, it has a big influence on how you see the world - and react to it. Imagine having the Spirit strengthening your inner being. Imagine having Christ dwelling in your heart. This is the prayer. This is what God wants.

This is a different image than a lamb following Jesus the Shepherd. It's not simply doing what you're told, or trying to be like God, but this is living with Christ. I suspect you've all lived with someone at some time. It can be great when it works well, but it takes work. There's a give and take - and it's not all about you.

I remember a friend of mine getting married and moving into her husband's house. She told me how gracious it was when her new husband didn't try and keep his house the way he'd carefully made it, but intentionally worked with her so that it would be their home. The idea of Christ dwelling in our hearts is comforting. Do we invite God in as a distinguished guest, or as a room-mate? There's a big difference. Do we allow our inner being to change so that Christ can live there?

Letting Christ live with us will root us in God's love. We've all experienced types of love before. They are like God's love, but not as... lovely. Letting Christ live in you will help you be like a tree



planted by the water, whose roots never fail to bring nourishment. The nourishment your roots bring in will give you strength to help deal with those issues I normally pray for: health, travels, relationships, justice, etc. This is a practical/tangible prayer.

After praying for our “*inner being*”, the prayer shifts to our “*power to comprehend*” - our mind. This is something Presbyterians traditionally take pride in. The prayer is that we might be able to grasp “*the breadth and length and height and depth*” of God’s love. Why does this need prayer? Because God’s love is so big. Rich Mullins, a songwriter who wondered deeply, wrote about God being too big for telescopes, *and* too small for microscopes, *and* too close to see (like an ocean for a fish).⁴ “*The love of Christ surpasses knowledge*”.

Part of this means it’s too big to wrap our mind around. So how do we do it? We have to resort to experiencing it. To allowing God to love us deeply - and responding. Love is one of those commodities that the more you use it, the more there is. God knows it can hurt to love deeply (Jesus was crucified), but the more deeply we allow ourselves to experience love, the more we can grasp the breadth, length, height and depth of God’s love. While we can’t wrap our minds around God, we can get a sense of how big God’s love is.

Another aspect of God’s love surpassing knowledge is that it won’t always make sense. This shouldn’t come as a surprise. As much as evolutionary biologists try to have a reason for everything, we all know from experience that love often don’t make sense. I’m sure you can come up with some examples of romantic love that doesn’t make sense - and this reflects some of the depth of God’s love for us. I’d like to share some examples of non-romantic love that also don’t make sense.

- Albert Schweitzer could have had a very comfortable life in Germany as an organist, or minister, or theologian. He was successful in each of these. Instead, he felt there was more need for doctors in Africa. He showed God’s deep love by giving up a life that made sense to retrain and build a hospital in a jungle.
- On a smaller scale, but still important, I read this week about a Theologian giving a talk at a university. On the campus tour he saw a young man with a young woman. They stood out because he was 6’8”... and she was 3’3”. He watched as he gently picked her up and gave her a kiss on the cheek. The Dean giving the tour explained that the man had given up basketball scholarships from prestigious school to come here because this was the school that also offered a scholarship to his sister. The Theologian shared his admiration with the young man. He replied by saying, “Those of us God made 6’8” need to watch out for those he made 3’3”. It’s a nice answer, and it shows the deep love of God that doesn’t make sense.
- Another example of love that is bigger than we can understand are the stories out of the South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission. This process allowed people to escape justice by admitting to what they did, listening to their victims, and agreeing to reparations. While Bishop Tutu expressed his disappointment that the government didn’t follow up on the recommendations, it did force the country to admit to what had happened - and it brought some healing. In a case I read this week a woman forgave the man who roasted her son and husband on a spit. She asked him to collect the ashes so she could bury them, and to come to her house once a month because he seemed to need a mother. She wanted him to

⁴ in an article on ‘Invisible God’ published in Release magazine.

know that she forgave him and loved him - because God does. This is a deep love that is more than we can ask or imagine.



Tree of Life - Mark Cazalet

Which is how this powerful passage ends; that God “*who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish far more than all we can ask or imagine.*” The letter to the Ephesians starts by praising God for being amazing, and for offering us salvation. It then admits

that we need it, and only God can change us - save us. And that this isn't just for the chosen people, but everyone who accepts. The letter will go on to consider how we can live into this wonderful gift. Before that is today's passage that reminds us of how God's love is bigger than we can comprehend... and that it is at work within us.

This mighty love is at work in you and me. I believe it's at work in everyone... though some people don't want to risk loving deeply, or have been hurt and need healing, or want lives they can comprehend. Despite that (or because of that) God's love, that can accomplish abundantly more than all we can ask or imagine, is at work within us.

What does that thought do to your prayers? Do you try to be realistic? Are you cautious so you won't be let down (a valid concern)? What if we go back to the basics and pray that the Spirit will strengthen our inner being; that Christ will dwell in our hearts; that we might comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth that is the love of God - so that we might be filled with God.

Imagine what life would be like
and pray.

and to God be all the glory
Amen.



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: Hymn Requests

If you would like to borrow a hymn book, please let us know.

🗨️ 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: Share some memories of feeling loved, cared for, secure, safe, valued, ...

Etching: Share a story (big or small) where someone did something that didn't make sense, but showed love.

Wonder: If God's love can do more than we can imagine... what's the limits you can imagine? Keep trying to "one-up" each other.

Actions: Brainstorm together how you could love God more deeply.

Prayer: ...pray Ephesians 3:16-21 every day this week. You could even repeat it for different people.

✦ Spirit Sightings

This week I heard two stories that start in Food banks. Both were from people who never imagined being food insecure.

The first story was somebody who was feeling very defeated by their situation. An eccentric stranger plopped their bags down in front, made eye contact and said, "It will get better." Defying the imagination, these words penetrated and hope grew... and the person's life did get better.

In the other situation Tony Colley unexpectedly found himself out of work. He found a part-time job with a caterer and was surprised by the amount of unused food. This led to him taking his business experience and starting a company (B12give.ca (Be one to give)) to rescue excess food and redistribute it to places that could use it, such as shelters.

In the first situation, the person definitely recognizes that the Holy Spirit was strengthening their inner being. I don't know what Tony thinks, but this sounds like something is God inspired

✦ 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

Thank you God,
for being such an
inspirational teacher.
For not being a leader who
forces people to join you,
But one who cause people to
what to follow you,
and to tell others about the love they find with you.



We thank you for the words we heard today.

The confident cry that your love is steadfast and never ceases.
We pray, inspired by reading Ephesians, that your Spirit will
strengthen your church here at Kensington, and all of us in it...
May this strength help us to live honest relationships,
and strive to live righteous lives with you...
May we create space in our hearts,
for you to live with us.

Out of our commitment to you,
we will realize your commitment to us - and your love.
Your love, that is so vast there is no way we can truly comprehend

it, yet... help us to do just that. To know your the power of
 your love in our bones, deep in our inner being...
 and may this fill us up so that we can also love deeply
 all that you have created
 in a way that makes no sense,
 but which fills the world with your love.

Jesus, we help us recognize that your Spirit is at work within us,
 and that this will change not just our lives, but the world.

Fill us with your love,
 until our imagination explodes with wonder.
 and everyone we meet will be filled with your hope, peace &
 love.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.
 Amen.

♪ Hymn: Jesus loves me.....pg 9 (373)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=d83mtUCxd_w

✦ Benediction: Ephesians 3: 20-21
*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish
 abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in
 the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.*
 Amen.



The PCC's partnership with Theological Education by Extension in Malawi began 45 years ago when the Rev. Charles Scott helped establish a lay training program at the request of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Blantyre Synod and other churches. The distance learning program is open to anyone who wants to study the Bible and theology. It has opened doors for women and working church leaders who want to deepen their biblical and theological knowledge and be better equipped to serve. During these challenging times, the Rev. Chimwemwe Mitengo, Executive Director, is thankful for the PCC's continued partnership and support through Presbyterians Sharing.

DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, July 23 We give thanks and pray for the Rev. Chimwemwe Mitengo, Executive Director of Theological Education by Extension in Malawi, which equips lay leaders and pastors.

Monday, July 24 We pray for the grace to use our gifts, whether speaking or serving, to bring glory to God and to minister to others as faithful stewards.

Tuesday, July 25 We pray for Cedar Tree Ministries, an outreach ministry for Indigenous people on Vancouver Island, and the Rev. Yong Wan (Joey) Cho.

Wednesday, July 26 We pray for congregations that do not have the resources to call a minister. May God be their refuge and strength while sessions and presbyteries search out new models for providing pastoral care.

Thursday, July 27 We pray for the summer school at the Vancouver School of Theology, that learning will inspire, encourage and renew leaders in their service to the gospel.

Friday, July 28 We pray for Indigenous communities that live with the consequences of Typhoon Morakot in Taiwan in 2009.

Saturday, July 29 We give thanks for Atlantic Mission Society members as they glorify God and support the PCC through prayer, study and service.

God of mercy, God of grace

1. God of mer - cy, God of grace, show the bright - ness
 2. Let the peo - ple praise you, Lord; be by all that
 3. Let the peo - ple praise you, Lord; earth shall then its

of your face. Shine up - on us, Sav - iour, shine;
 live a - dored. Let the na - tions shout and sing
 fruits af - ford. Un - to us your bless - ing give;

fill your world with light di - vine, and your sav - ing
 glo - ry to their gra - cious King; at your feet their
 we to you de - vot - ed live, all be - low and

health ex - tend un - to earth's re - mot - est end.
 trib - ute pay, and your ho - ly will o - bey.
 all a - bove, one in joy and light and love.

Words: Psalm 67; paraphrase, Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847), alt Music: Conrad Kocher (1786–1872); arrangement, William Henry Monk (1823–1889)

Words: public domain Music: public domain

Jesus loves me, this I know

1. Je - sus loves me, this I know, for the Bi - ble tells me so,
 2. Je - sus loves me, this I know, as he loved so long a - go,
 3. Je - sus loves me still to - day, walk - ing with me on my way,

lit - tle ones to him be - long, they are weak but he is strong.
 tak - ing chil - dren on his knee, say - ing, "Let them come to me."
 want - ing as a friend to give light and love to all who live.

Refrain
 Yes, Je - sus loves me! Yes, Je - sus loves me!

Yes, Je - sus loves me! The Bi - ble tells me so.

Words: Anna Bartlett (1821–1910); revisions, v.2,3, David Rutherford McGuire (1929–1971)
 Music: William Batchelder Bradbury (1816–1868) CCLI #4440603

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376 Lord, the light of your love is shining

SHINE, JESUS, SHINE 9 9 10 10 6 with refrain (13 9 13 10)

Intro

Unison

1. Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing in the midst of the
 2. Lord, I come to your awe - some pres - ence, from the sha - dows in -
 3. As we gaze on your king - ly bright - ness, so our fa - ces dis -

dark - ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, Light of the
 to your ra - diance; by your blood I may
 play your like - ness, ev - er chang - ing from

World, shine up - on us. Set us free by the
 en - ter your bright - ness. Search me, try me, con -
 glo - ry to glo - ry: mir - rored here may our

Words: Graham Kendrick (1950-) Music: Graham Kendrick (1950-)

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truth you now bring us.
 sume all my dark-ness. Shine on me; shine on me.
 lives tell your sto - ry.

Refrain

Shine, Je - sus shine; fill this land with the
 Flow, riv - er, flow; flood the na - tions with

Fa - ther's glo - ry; blaze, Spir - it, blaze, set our
 grace and mer - cy; send forth your word, Lord, and

1. hearts on fire. 2. let there be light!