

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

We are united (ing) July 16, 2023

WELCOME, to worship. We are offering a variety of ways for people to gather. We are welcoming people to worship n person (with singing), as well as through Zoom, YouTube, and this printable PDF. 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

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

You may use the worship login details us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?

pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNlUrUT09

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

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

New Hope Boutique: The Senior's Centre that meets in our building is reopening their boutique. This will help them raise a little money, and allow isolated seniors to pick up some nice things (mostly clothes). If you'd like to donate anything, please let Rev. Peter or New Hope know.

Contacts

Church Office: 514-486-4559info@Kensingtonchurch.ca Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor)Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca
514-773-4620
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note: that the footnotes are not as thorough as an academic paper.



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

The God of creation makes us one in body!

Let us join hearts and voices in praise of the Lord!

The God of Christ makes us one in the Spirit!

Let us join hearts and voices in praise of the Lord!²



Refugees Holy Family - Kelly Latimore

Prayer of Approach O God of all creation, you alone are God.

And you alone can satisfy our longing for a support that earth cannot give and that heaven will not take away.

Help us, to recognize our common dependence on you, to acknowledge our need of one another.

Across the barriers that divide race from race:

reconcile us, O Christ.

Across the barriers that divide rich from poor:

reconcile us, O Christ.

Across the barriers that divide people of different cultures:

reconcile us, O Christ.

Across the barriers that divide Christians:

reconcile us, O Christ.

Across the barriers that divide men and women, young and old: reconcile us. O Christ.

Confront us, O Christ, with our hidden prejudices and fears

that deny and betray our prayers.

Help us to see the causes of trouble, and our involvement in it.

Teach us to grow in unity with all God's children.

Let the oneness of our worship make us one in love and service.

Amen.³

² Worship Sourcebook S.1.2.2

adapted from Worship Sourcebook \$1.4.1 & S.2.2.2

Assurance of Pardon (based on 1 Peter 2: 9-10)

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

People of God,

all of us together have received God's mercy in Christ. In Christ we are forgiven, redeemed, and made to be a community united in faith.

Thanks be to God.

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 Time

Shane DeRolf wrote a lovely story called The crayon box that

talked (available at the Benny Library). In the crayon box, none of them get along. They are all different. A little girl overhears them fighting, buys them, and brings them home. She takes them all out of the box so they can see what's going on, and uses them all to draw different things... which combined makes a beautiful picture. The crayons learn that they can be different and united.



Dear Jesus,

Thank you for our differences, and that you can do wonderful things with us together. Amen

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that today we may experience unity with each other
and with you. Amen.⁴

⁴ adapted from Worship Sourcebook 3.1.10 & 23

Intro to the readings

Our journey with the letter to the Ephesians continues. The start is to praise God. Then to continue the prayer with God and acknowledge that we need help, and that God will help. Last week we heard the basic reminders that together we try and live out truth and righteousness, to accept God's offers of salvation and the Holy Spirit... and to pray.

Today we move back to the middle of the letter. There's a lot here. I'll be telling you about what influenced me this week. I'm curious about what stands out for you.

Our psalm is one you may know by heart. Feel free to say and translation you are comfortable with.

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

Ephesians 4: 1-16 Psalm 100



Sermon: We are united(ing)

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

Today's passage from Ephesians comes from the middle of the letter. It shifts the perspective. The author goes from writing like a prayer celebrating the promise that is God to the work of living it out. We heard that God has called us... now we try to live it out.

Apparently, in the early church this wasn't easy. They are told to "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" and to "bear with one another in love." You don't have to be

told to 'make an effort and bear with it' if you're getting along.

We can all relate to this. We hear about people not getting along in the news all the time. This week one labour conflict ended and another started. There are violent conflicts in Palestine, Manipur (India), Ukraine, and many others. More than that, we can relate on a personal level. I'm sure there have been times when somebody you love is difficult to get along with, or when it takes an unimaginable effort to maintain peace with neighbours or those you're trying to do things with.

and then there's the church. This letter was written to

churches, not the world at large. It's the people in the churches that are being reminded to show "humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." ...and a few verses later we are all reminded to "speak the truth in love". Why? Because we should be living together in unity.

The church has struggled with this since the beginning. Paul's letters are among the earliest writings in the Newer Testament -



Embodying Forgiveness - Bernard Racincot

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

and they include him encouraging people to get along. If we scan the history of the church we find a church dividing more than uniting. There's the east/west split between Constantinople and Rome. There's the reformation - which included lots of arguing, killing, and more dividing ...and people in the church kept having disagreements about God (and politics, but officially God & God's will). There are some good examples, such as when several Presbyterian denominations put aside their differences and formed the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Sadly, division is not done. Within the Presbyterian Church in Canada some congregations are looking at leaving because of differences in how to interpret the Bible and what love looks like. There's even a new denomination that's been started to keep what they like about the PCC, but not what they disagree with.

Ephesians tells us that God has given us "unity in the Spirit". Where is it? How come this unity isn't working? We've been given guidance; we've been given the Holy Spirit. We've had a couple of thousand years to practice... and we still can't live together in unity.

One of the reasons is a misunderstanding of what living in unity means.

It's easy to think that unity means being the same. It also makes life easier. If you only have to deal with people who are like you then there's less conflict... which means more peace... which is the goal... right?

Except that God doesn't think that unity means being the same. There are many many examples of this - there's the diversity of creation around you; the diversity of disciples Jesus gathered (labourers & white collar, men & women, etc); and that God gives a diversity of gifts to people (more on that in a minute).

This means learning to appreciate people who are different, and creating space for them. It means, as we heard in today's reading, being humble and gentle with your opinion. Living in unity with difference is difficult, *and* allows for a more beautiful life. Any attempt to create unity by making everyone the same will fail.

That said, we're also warned against accommodating everything. Today's passage talks about "We must no longer be infants, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming." Figuring out correct beliefs and actions is hard work. It can mean not going along with society. One course I took in seminary looked at the church in 1930s Germany as the majority of it went along with society - and Hitler. While there was some Biblical justification for it, everyone now sees it as an atrocious mistake. Another example was the slow movement to shift from a doctrine that allowed slavery to one that condemned it. This lost lots of people lots of money. It was hard. It was good. When it comes to what diversity to allow and what to challenge we are challenged not to be infants, but to figure it out. What helps people to focus on God? What brings God's love, hope & healing? Unity means diversity, but not everything is allowed.

Living in unity is also not a thing to be attained. It's not a destination, but a process. We all know that living means change. The simple facts of aging drive that home. When we stop to reflect, it's true with our interests too - and our relationships. A Benedictine monk once gave me marriage advice. Over the last 1500 years Benedictines have learned a bit about living together. People change, relationships shift, and it's important to talk about it. When we assume everything stays the same there are problems. Living together through change is living in unity.

Again, it's not easy. As somebody said to me this week, even the promise of change for the better doesn't make change easy. Ephesians reminds us to "speak truth in love" - with the implication that it is important to have hard conversations. Yesterday I received an email promoting workshops to help ministers starting new churches turn conflict into an opportunity. Our Presbytery is organizing a workshop in the fall to help congregations have hard conversations and deal with conflict. This has nothing to do with congregations who may or may not leave. It's about dealing with the after effects of the pandemic. (Anyone who wants to can come. The skills can be used in any situation.) Speaking truth in love can be hard. It brings with it fears of offending someone or making them angry. We worry the situation may change for the worse. As Ephesians told us last week, and again this week, it's important to live out truth - with humility and gentleness. Without truth, we can't live together in unity.



So, one of the reasons it's hard to live in unity is that we can have the wrong idea of what it means. We can slide into the idea that it means living the same, when it really needs diversity. We can then go too far and try to allow anything. We can hope that when we experience unity everything will just stay like that, but there's always change... and sometimes we need to be told that to honour the truth of the situation.

This is hard, and God helps us.

One way God helps is that we are given gifts. In this passage we are told about "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers". Passages in other letters include different gifts. I'm not going to go into the specifics of each gift. Each of them are things that people are good at - skills or talents. I will assure you that everyone has gifts from God. You have them. Everyone in Kensington has gifts... and everyone outside Kensington. We have diverse gifts - with the opportunities and challenges that brings. All these gifts are "to equip the saints for the work of service, for building up the body of Christ".

A way that tangles up unity is when the gifts from God are used by someone for their own good, or to make a church more prestigious, or are not used at all. If we are not all working to help others and build up the body of Christ through prayer, teaching, wisdom, etc... then unity will not be possible. This might mean doing something out of your comfort zone at first, but if it is a gift you have then it will fit - and if not, you will hopefully receive a humble and truth-full conversation. In all things though, God is willing to help.

One last way God helps bring unity is simply by being our God. When we are focused on God we become part of 'one body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith & one Lord who is above all through all and in all.'

God wants us to be united, but not the same, but not letting people do anything they want. God wants this because God loves us, and wants us to love each other... this creates some limits, and invites truthful living together. To do this, God gives everyone skills/gifts to help. Like everything else, they change, but their

purpose doesn't. We are to help each other to become closer to God.

And with God's help, we will live together in unity.

and to God be all the glory Amen.

Responding to God

☐ Hymn: Come down, O love divine......pg 12 (386)
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDqktutl

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

Etchings: Identify a gift/skill/talent you see in your discussion partner, and how it can help 'build the body of Christ'.

Memories: Tell about an experience with 'other' Christians. What was the same? different? How did you feel? How was this good?

Values: What is an issue you have with another group of Christians?

Pray about this.

Wonder: Think about some of the issues between Christians.
Imagine what it would be like if we all respected
each other. What is something you could do to build
unity in the body of Christ?

Values: Is there an issue that for you is a no-go? Explain why.

Prayer: ...for help in bringing more unity to the body of Christ.

*Spirit Sightings

I'd like to share several workings of the Spirit this week. Two involve questions that were nurtured into birth, and the other is an important observation.

I was asked this week what I meant last week about God sending evil. I hope I didn't say that because it's not what I meant. Last week's passage from Ephesians 6 talks about the devil trying to spoil God's plans... and that the devil is in the same place as God and Christ (*in the heavens*). A helpful way to think about this would be that there is a spiritual dimension from which God and the devil influence this world with blessings and temptations. Please reach out if you'd like to talk more.

In response to The Thunder on Thursday, one of my boys asked if God was angry. While adults tend not to ask that question about thunder, it is sometimes asked in response to tornadoes and other tragic events. The answer is the same: no. Sometimes a disaster is just nature. Sometimes it's due to human influence. Either, scary weather is not because God is angry.

After the storm I heard an interview about how to deal with trauma from storm damage. The psychologist interviewed worked with people in Fort McMurry and other natural disaster zones. He said that the factor that had the strongest impact on a person's recovery was being part of a supportive community. While church's are not the only places someone can find unity, we can be a good one. This can also be an inspirations for churches on how to build a larger body of Christ - to work on building stronger relationships within the congregation, and with our neighbours & colleagues outside. God will work through strong relationships to create unity and bring healing.

🗼 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

Sovereign God,

we give you thanks for calling us your children and for entrusting us with the care of your creation.

Help us to feel the many textures of your global tapestry. Unstop our ears, that we may hear your Word spoken in many languages.

Breathe into us the sweet aromas of life, that we may taste the fruits of your reign.

Even now, Lord, even in Asia, so vast, so deeply rooted in tradition; where your church is small, but where religion is great,

Lord, teach us respect.

Help us learn

from those who express faith in you in different ways. Deepen our understanding of customs that are unfamiliar. Help us discover new ways to witness in this ancient land.

Even now, Lord, even in the Middle East, the cradle of the church, the land many faiths call holy, and now the place where the pain of the cross is so vivid, where the dry earth is watered by the tears of suffering, free your people from their warring madness.

Teach us mutual respect, that the captives might be freed and the frightened might be comforted.

Even now, Lord, even in Latin America, where your church stands faithfully with the weak and the poor, where martyrs are made and drugs dictate,

bring peace to our neighbours, O Lord.

Tear down the barriers that divide
and build bridges
that bring people together for the common good.

Even now, Lord, even in Africa,
where your church grows rapidly,
where faith is exuberant,
but where there is famine and oppression,
break the cycle of suffering among our sisters at

break the cycle of suffering among our sisters and brothers. Help us to listen, learn from their faith, and to respond in ways that bring hope and life.

Even now, Lord, even in the North Atlantic countries, where so much affluence causes so much indifference—North America & Europe, lands with so much to give yet a land held prisoner by possessions & history—help us to assume the role of a servant, as Jesus did.

Even now, Lord, even in Québec, where your church struggles for respect

Help us to build relationships with our communities, that shows love, respect and unity.

and in our homes Lord, we ask you to grant us peace and healing for those in need...

Open our eyes to all parts of your creation even now, Lord, even if what we see frightens us. Help us to trust you to guide us as we act faithfully.⁶

We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

J Hymn: We are one in the Spirit.....pg 13 (471)

<u>www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL5bT_Ezeq8</u> or

<u>www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZY9kS1Fu0A</u>

May the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. The One who called you is completely dependable.

Amen.



⁶ adapted from Worship Sourcebook S.4.4.19

ev. Peter Rombeek Kensington Presbyterian Church

Sunday, July 16

MISSION MOMENT

After their summer crop failed and they lost their agricultural loan, Moolo and his wife Babbri, who live in Pakistan, were in financial trouble and were going hungry. Given the gravity of their situation, they managed to receive food assistance from PWS&D's partner in their community. The amount received was sufficient to cover some other basic needs and meant that the elderly couple could use their small savings to



provide daily medication to their son Chandan, who has epilepsy. With their remaining savings, Moolo hoped to open a small store, but his eyesight was deteriorating. Babbri stepped up and opened the store herself, remarking, "It is because of this aid that we are not under debt, or we would have sold our goats to pay for food. But we are not in debt and still have our goats!"

DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, July 16 We pray for those who are anxiously awaiting the results of medical tests, that they may know God's love and peace.

Monday, July 17 We pray for the generosity to share our blessings with those in need, and to give from all we have, trusting in the abundance of God's provision.

Tuesday, July 18 We pray for the Rev. Mary Fontaine as she begins serving the PCC as Moderator of the General Assembly.

Wednesday, July 19 We pray for chaplains in hospitals and long-term care homes as they provide comfort, offer hope and minister during moments that matter.

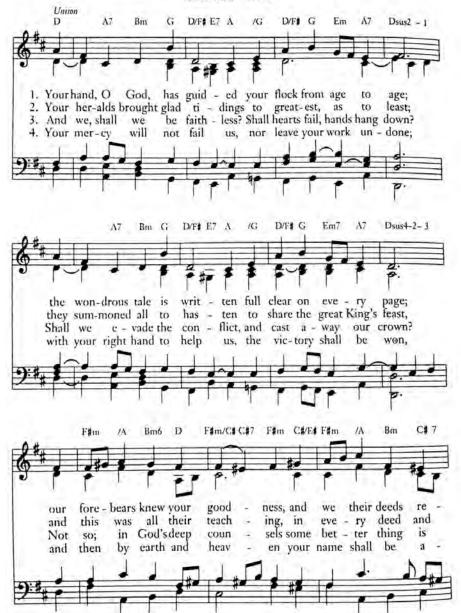
Thursday, July 20 We pray for children and young adults at camp, and for the counsellors and camp staff who ensure their safety and provide guidance and care.

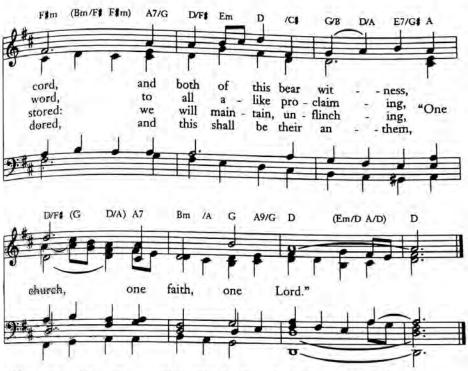
Friday, July 21 We pray for ministers and lay preachers who seek to help us understand what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Saturday, July 22 We pray for the children and spouses of ministers.

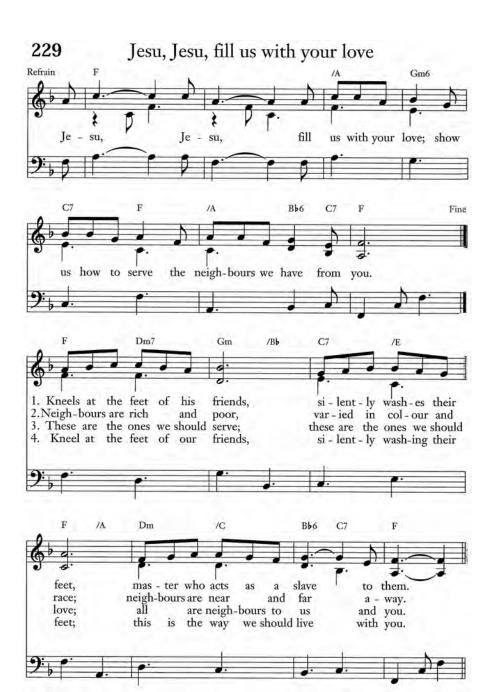
Your hand, O God, has guided

THORNBURY 7676D





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Systemic Economic Inequality

Poverty in Canada and across the globe continues to seriously impact the lives and well-being of many. According to Statistics Canada's most recent data, 7.4% of Canadians lived in poverty in 2021, which was up from 6.4% in 2020. The causes of poverty are complex, but a major factor is systemic economic inequality.

Economic inequality is easy to spot, given the growing gap between people with wealth and people experiencing poverty. Speaking about systemic economic inequality names that there are social and economic structures creating and contributing to that growing gap. Not everyone starts at the same economic baseline. Racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and other social ills erect barriers to economic security. Add in that wealth is more easily created when you already have wealth to draw on—as economic inequality compounds generationally—and it becomes very clear that our economic systems are not set up to foster equality.

Too often our narratives about poverty blame those who are struggling, rather than looking at the systems that reinforce inequality, racism and economic vulnerability. Stop-gap measures like charity or temporary programs to help people "get back on their feet" may provide some relief but don't address the underlying structural problems. To break the cycle, structural change aimed at creating a more level economic baseline is needed.

What can you do?

- Advocate! Identify programs and policies that tackle economic inequality, including instituting a guaranteed livable income (where all people have sufficient income to meet basic needs) and encourage the government to meet its poverty reduction targets. For template letters, see the poverty reduction section of the PCC's Letters to Government page: presbyterian.ca/justice/letters-to-the-government.
- Learn more! Access Citizens for Public Justice's most recent resource on poverty trends in Canada: cpj.ca/category/research-poverty-in-canada.
- Track! Find whether Canada is meeting its poverty reduction goals: statcan.gc.ca/en/topics-start/poverty.

Come down, O Love divine

DOWN AMPNEY 6611 D







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We are one in the Spirit

WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT Irregular with refrain







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