

Kensington Presbyterian Church

Growing in Faith and Sharing God's Love since 1786

You're Invited!

August 6, 2023

Welcome to worship! We offer a variety of ways for people to gather. We welcome everyone to worship in person (with singing!), as well as through Zoom, YouTube, and this paper/digital outline. No matter how you worship, you are not alone! You are always welcome to be part of our community of faith, and you are also welcome to invite others to join you or to connect with the community!

If you have prayer requests, suggestions to add something new, or you just want to talk, you can always reach out to your elder or if you have a pastoral care emergency, you can contact Rev. Susan Brasier at (514) 842-3431 who is filling in for Rev. Peter as he enjoys a vacation with his family.



Alexander Plant
For Kensington Presbyterian Church

Announcements

Family Fun Day: The Montreal Children's Theatre will be hosting a Family Fun Day on Saturday, August 19th starting at 4 PM. There will be a BBQ and plenty of fun activities! Join us at Leduc Park (*right across the street from the church*). Everyone is welcome and if you would like to volunteer, please contact our Office Admin Sandra Holder.

Jesus & Java: We are continuing to hold Jesus & Java on Thursday, August 10th at 3 PM! Join us as we enjoy a time of fellowship and discussion! We will meet at Beetz Café located at 5914 Sherbrooke St. West.

Zoom Prayer Group and Friday Film & Food: We are pausing both of these for the next few weeks. We'll resume in September.

New Hope Boutique: New Hope is thrilled to be opening their boutique and express their gratitude for our continued support. If you wish to contribute to the boutique, please let New Hope know!

Contacts

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Pastoral Care Emergency: Rev. Susan Brasier | (514) 842-3431

Family Ministries: Antoinette | antoinette@kensingtonchurch.ca

Music Director: Zoe Dupont-Foisy | 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

God is the source of all faithfulness
We give thanks as we witness God's graciousness
God's presence is near to all his people
Let us reach out our hand to the Lord
God watches over his creation with love and compassion
We praise God's holy name for ever and ever

Hymn: Come, let us sing to the Lord our song (412)

Prayer of Approach

Mysterious and merciful God, we give thanks for your gift of abundant life all around us. When the sun rises and the earth blooms around us, when evening falls and we find ourselves in a quiet place, we witness your hand in creation's beautiful bounty.

You are the source of life and love itself, bringing healing and comfort to those who seek your loving presence. We see the work that you do in your people's lives.

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Yet, we confess that while you show us the way of compassion and forgiveness, we neglect the suffering of others. We blame and judge each other in the moments you call us to act with kindness and mercy.

Free us from our obsession of greed and from grievance. Open our hearts so that we may embody Jesus' teachings and walk in his way. We humbly ask this in your most Holy Name as we sing the prayer that Jesus Christ taught his 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

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Know that in Christ, you are forgiven. Forgive one another, and be at peace with God, with yourself and with each other.

Listening to God

Children's Time

Have you ever received an invitation to something? Perhaps it was a birthday party or a wedding. Maybe you were invited to speak to a group of people or you were invited to go on a trip. Think about the things that were there at the event. Maybe there was some good food, some entertainment, or perhaps a social time?

Did you know that God invites us to things as well? Today, we are going to explore what it means to be invited and how we can invite others to join alongside us.

Dear Jesus, thank you for the invitation you give to us to join together in worship and community. Encourage us to invite others into our own lives. Amen.

Hymn: Sing them over to me (498)

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, your Word sustains us as we seek your guidance in our lives. Send us your Spirit so that we may know your wisdom and live it out for the sake of Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Intro to the Readings

Both Psalm 145 and Isaiah 55 talks about the invitation that God gives us, as we are watched over and given mercy and compassion. The Psalm expresses the invitation that God gives to us, while Isaiah takes that invitation and invites us to invite others to join with us.

Readings

Psalm 145:14-21

Isaiah 55:1-5

Sermon: You're Invited!

Is there anything better than a free meal? You know that feeling of joy, maybe mixed in with a little excitement and gratitude, when you show up to an event and there's a free meal put on? Sometimes it's part of a conference or gathering where the organizers provide some sort of lunch for participants who attend panels of speakers and other events of the day.

Often those lunches are quite enjoyable, with some spaghetti and a little bit of salad. Or, if you've ever been to a funeral where the church provides

those little sandwiches that somehow taste better than the ones you make at home? It's always a blessing to share moments of fellowship at a funeral over a meal, remembering the times spent with those who have passed away, renewing existing relationships, and finding peace and comfort in God's presence among his people gathered together to give thanks for the life of loved ones.

During my first undergraduate program, I was very fortunate to be connected to an outreach program called The Open Table. Their mission is to offer hospitality to students and young adults in Ottawa. They operate as an ecumenical ministry supported by multiple denominations in the Ottawa region, and they provided meals once a month to University students. It was a wonderful experience to meet new people and enjoy a meal together. As a University student, we never turned down a free meal.

Imagine the joy of receiving an invitation to a free meal. Imagine the joy of being the one to serve that free meal, knowing that the work that you do to feed others is good. And it's not just the physical action of inviting someone to sit at the dinner table

and sharing a meal. There is a spiritual connection that is formed along the way. When we spend time together, we establish those bonds with our neighbours. Especially when we spend time with those who we meet for the first time. The familiarity of those we know is a comfort to our social mindset.

Sometimes it's awkward to socialize with someone you've never met before. Maybe it might be easy for you. Our experiences with one another are diverse. Much like what we read in Isaiah, our relationship with God is for everyone. There is no condition placed on those who are invited to come to the waters or to approach what is good.

Our relationship with God starts as simultaneously independent and communal. There is an intimate relationship with God when we pray silently amongst ourselves. There is also a communal relationship when we gather for worship. The nature of God's invitation is the same.

We are called as Christians to accept the invitation, while also being asked to become the ones inviting others. God wants us to share our

abundance with others, not just in the physical sense in the form of a free meal or time spent together in worship. Not with just those who we are familiar with. We are called to help extend that invitation to everyone. God calls upon all people to come to him, and we as a church must strive to imitate that calling in a loving compassionate way.

When we worship at Kensington, there is no requirement to get into the sanctuary. We don't have membership cards that must be presented to get into the building. While we do have members and adherents, visitors and regular attendees, that kind of membership holds a level of responsibility and acknowledgement rather than a prerequisite to join in worship. There may be people who never seek membership in the church, and that doesn't make them any less valuable to the community.

God does not place a label or a limit on whom we should reach out to. Instead, God shows us that the abundance that is provided is for all. There is no limit to the kindness and compassion of Christ, shared through us. So when we look out amongst ourselves, what do we feel compelled to do? Are we drawn more towards the familiar, those we socialize

with regularly? Or could we take a step outside of our comfort zone and approach someone new?

It is good for us to expand ourselves. Sometimes it's in the small steps when we discover a new relationship or something about ourselves that lets us grow in faith. It was my singing voice that brought me here to Kensington just a few years ago. It was stepping outside of my comfort zone to find myself in a new congregation to worship with. There were some churches I attended where it left a not so good impression.

No church is perfect. Otherwise, everyone would be attending that one church. Rather, I felt God was directing me to somewhere specific. For what particular reason, I still do not know. But what I do know, is that one interaction led me here, leading worship with you today.

God's everlasting covenant invites us all to join in and allow ourselves to witness the goodness of Christ. Through our witnessing, we share it with others. Not in a judgemental or harsh way, but lovingly and openly. We are not called to judge those who live different lives than our own,

threatening eternal damnation if they don't follow Jesus Christ. We are not called to berate and harass our neighbours into coming to church in the name of 'saving their souls'. Rather, our invitation must be rooted in God's love

Sometimes, all it takes is a meal shared together or a form of outreach that shows the wider community that we are not trying to force conversion onto anyone. God's invitation is open to all, and so we must be as well. Let us reach out to those who we know and those we don't know. Let us do so in a spirit of love and compassion. And when you invite them, do not do it in a way which is judgemental or condescending.

God's invitation does not threaten, it provides hospitality. When our choir gathers to sing each Sunday morning, there is always an invitation to join their chorus, that's how I did it. When we put on a Christmas pageant, there is always an invitation to join as part of the production or even to the behind-the-scenes work. When we livestream online to people who watch over Zoom or who watch over YouTube, we must extend ourselves to

those we do not see. There are so many people online who reach out to churches in a digital way.

It's difficult sometimes because we don't see them. The church up until less than 5 years ago never had to deal with something like that. In all the thousands of years of history, the changing politics and societal developments, the suffering caused by our misguided efforts to spread the Gospel and the work we do now to facilitate healing in the face of that pain, the church has never had such an open invitation before.

The ancient world was much smaller than it is now. Today, we have the potential to reach out to people living in almost every country and territory in the world. People we will never meet, people we thought we would never reach out to in our wildest dreams. It is so simple for us to reach out to people from the other side of the world. People living in Australia or New Zealand can easily be watching us right now. Although the likelihood of that happening is low, that invitation was not truly possible 5 years ago.

God is directing us to open ourselves to others, even to others who we do not see. Let us embrace the openness of God's invitation to eat that which is good, to partake in the hospitality that ministers to the poor and the rich, to the hungry and the satisfied. Let us never forget that our calling as Christians is to live out the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people, not some people or just the people we know, to all people.

So let's do that, let us go out into the world, and share the invitation with everyone we meet and even those we don't meet. God has invited us in, let's go out and invite others to join us. Thanks be to God, Amen.

Responding to God

Hymn: Guide me, O thou great Redeemer (651)

FaithTalk

These are some questions for you to discuss with someone (or a group of people). Practice some of these throughout the week, and remember to stretch yourself a little and try something new!

Memories: Think about an event you were invited to and how you felt receiving the invitation.

Wonder: If God invited you to a party, how would you respond? What kind of party would God host?

Actions: Invite someone out for coffee or a time of fellowship. Chat about your life and what you do at the church (or perhaps what you would like to do).

Spirit Sighting

On Thursday, some of us got together for Jesus & Java. It was my first time being there and we had 9 people including myself take part. It was a blessing to see so many of us come out and take over the little patio space at the café. We chatted about all sorts of things, some about FaithTalk questions, and others about their everyday lives.

God's invitation isn't simply to worship and praise him together. It also involves the fellowship, the time spent together sharing one another's stories and thinking about elements of our faith that play role in our everyday lives.

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 also 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

O Lord our God, we give you thanks for the invitation you give to us to experience your goodness in the chaos of our lives. For the blessings you have surprised us with, we give you thanks. In every moment in our lives, we are grateful for the strength and courage found in your presence. Grant us wisdom and patience to face the challenges in our lives, and help us to trust in your goodness even in the midst of doubt and fear.

Aware of our own needs and the needs of others, we remember Christ's compassion and offer our prayers for the world, seeking your guidance so that your healing touch can be felt by all of your people. We pray for those who hunger, both physically in areas of famine and homelessness, and spiritually where the unpredictable nature of society grips onto us, trapping us in our own self-centred ways. Grant us the means to reach out to those who

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need your presence made known to them. We pray for those who ensure loss, both materially and socially. Comfort those who mourn, and grant them your peace which surpasses all understanding.

We pray for the leaders in our communities and around the world. As they face the problems that arise to the people around the world, grant them the wisdom and courage to inspire cooperation and compassion in the face of greed and selfish behavior. Guide them to your righteous path.

We pray for those who offer hospitality to others, wherever they are. May you encourage them to keep aware and alert to the needs of those who are familiar and those who are visitors and strangers. Open our hearts so that your goodness will touch those we meet. This we pray in your most precious name. Amen.

Hymn: All the way my Saviour leads me (699)

Sending & Benediction

As you go out into the world, living out the calling that God gives you, may God our Maker fill you with confidence, Christ our Saviour bring you peace and comfort, And the Holy Spirit renew your energy to greet the gift of each new day. Amen.