

## Kensington Presbyterian Church Growing in Faith and sharing God's Love

since 1786

Going back Sept 3, 2023

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

Communion this week: All who want to know our Lord better are invited to join us the Lord's Supper. If you are celebrating from home you will have to provide your own elements.

Family Food & Film Fiestas: Fridays at 6:30

This week we'll be returning with <u>Inside Out</u> (A Pixar movie with animated emotions). This is a good opportunity to invite someone. Please let Peter know so we have enough food.

BBQ: next Sunday (the 10<sup>th</sup>) after church (noon<sup>ish</sup>). Contributions welcome, or just come along. Another good opportunity to invite someone.

AND Missionary Visit: next Sunday we will have Marijke Rombeek preach and share about her work in Japan.

Pianist ♥: We'd like to thank Oksana Zotova for providing lovely piano playing while Zoé has been on medical leave. Zoé will be back next week.



Good Grief: Sept 23-25

Mary Ellen MacDonald is organizing a series of events to support those who are grieving from various issues, and increase awareness. While she's still working out of Halifax, you can participate through many online (just remember that our time zone is one hour later). <a href="https://www.goodgriefnovascotia.ca/schedule">www.goodgriefnovascotia.ca/schedule</a>

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

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

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

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

## Contacts

Church Office: 514-486-4559 ......info@Kensingtonchurch.ca Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor)......Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca 514-773-4620 Antoinette (families)......Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca Zoé Dupont-Foisy (music director)......zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com

I 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
In this new season
the foundations have been laid
for a new temple of the Spirit
giving life to the heart, mind and limbs.

We turn to God, the eternal in the present, the gift of the future, given form in Christ.

Let us worship<sup>2</sup>

☐ Hymn: All are Welcome......pg 10

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bOiAxwi4U

**F** Prayer of Approach

Living love,

beginning and end, giver of food and drink, clothing and warmth, love and hope: life in all its goodness

We praise and adore you.

Jesus, wisdom and word: love ore outcasts,

2 adapted from Spill the Beans #17

friend of the poor, one of us yet one with God, crucified and risen: life in the midst of death -We praise and adore you.

Holy Spirit, storm and breath of love; bridge builder, eye-opener, waker of the oppressed, unseen and unexpected, untameable energy of life - We praise and adore you.

Holy Trinity, forever one, whose nature is community, source of all sharing,

in whom we love, and meet, and know our neighbour: life in all its fullness, making all things new:

We praise and adore you.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>



☐ Hymn: How firm a foundation.....pg 11 (685)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA4bTqCjLQw

<sup>3</sup> Brian Wren from The book of a thousand prayes ed. Angela Ashwin

# Prayer for Illumination

Lord.

open our hearts and minds

by the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may build our lives, together, on you.

Amen.



Intro to the readings

The book Elizabeth is going to read from isn't in the top ten of the Bible. It didn't even make the Revised Common Lectionary that is, well, commonly used. Still, it is part of the story of the Bible. As such, it did make it into the Narrative Lectionary that I'll mostly be using this year.

Our main passage is from Ezra. This used to include the book of Nehemiah as well, but they got split up when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek. Together they talk about the return of the exiles to Jerusalem. They deal a lot with identity.

Considering how big the exile was, why didn't Ezra make it into the Common Lectionary? I suspect because it has a much more exclusive idea of who God's people are than is found in the Prophets or other books from the same time period (ex. Ester, Ruth, & Chronicles).

Our Gospel reading will be Luke's version of a familiar story and it's a little different. Why? I suspect it's because Jesus told stories more than once and changed things to suit the moment... and it wasn't written down until decades later.

The Psalm picks up themes in both passages.



Reading: Please look up the passages in your own

Bible, 4 or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

Ezra: 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

Luke 6:46-49

Psalm 127





-Sermon: Going back

Dear Lord, please bless these words and the meditations of our hearts.<sup>5</sup> Amen.

What attracted your attention in this story from Ezra? What do you still remember from Elizabeth's reading? What sent your mind wandering?

What captured me was the emotional journey. The memory of the exile. The trauma of watching their centre of life destroyed, and then being forcibly relocated to live with the enemy. Being

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

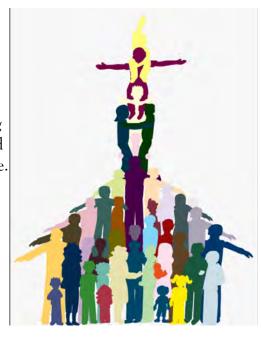
Psalm 19:14

told by God to make your home there - but that one day your children would return. The clinging to this promise. How it breathed hope into the nightmare - a nightmare that became the new normal as the years grew. Then the day comes. Children and grandchildren raised on the stories, and even some greatgrandparents still able to make the journey, are organized. Longtime neighbours give their support - and the people return to their distant home. The crowd is full of excited anticipation.

On arriving, it's not as expected. How could it? Rocks from the walls are still tumbled all around, but life has grown as well. Over the decades weeds became trees. Living continued. Rocks had been collected and homes rebuilt. Jerusalem may not be the grand city of memory, but those who were left behind and brought by the previous administration had built their lives there. It's neither the destruction nor grandeur of the tales. This brings a swirl of contradictory emotions; joy and grief.

To understand the trauma of this emotional journey I expect we'd have to talk with refugees or indigenous peoples. That said, I still relate to the emotional journey. I've moved to different cities and experienced living surrounded by a different culture. This was by choice and doesn't have the trauma, but it does include the strangeness. You may have always lived here, but we can all relate to the experience of being forced from our places of community by pandemic mandates. We are still recovering from the stress, anxiety and suspicion. Like those in exile, we were given hope. We were told the pandemic would end and we would be released - allowed to return. An advantage they had was that it was clear cut. The King said it, and it was so. We didn't have a clear end to the pandemic. Still, we have experienced the joy of going back to our communities of friends - and the grief that all is not as it was. It's okay to experience both at the same time.

The emotional journey was what pulled me in at first. Then I noticed the story of community. This is emphasized in the passages we skipped. There's a listing of the families that returned - making me think of people. We're told how the King of Persia supported them, and their neighbours. The impression is that they are not Jewish. This is a good community that supports people who are different than they are.



The story changes when they return. We're told, "they were in dread of the neighbouring peoples." Who were these "adversaries" (Ezra 4:1)? Why the dread?

It wasn't the neighbouring nations (also probably under the Persian King). We're told they traded with those neighbours to get mighty cedars from Lebanon to build with.

This leaves the people who were already living there. Despite both being all part of God's people, it seems that they had difficulties getting along. It's not surprising. If you have around fifty thousand people move into an area already populated - there will be issues. Who gets the nice house location? How is the water used? What about the Olive trees or fields? There would also be differences in how to worship God.

One summer I helped in a congregation that had divided into two services the previous fall. With the summer decline in numbers they looked forward to worshipping together again - but

there was conflict. It seems that in less than a year they had developed different worship cultures about clapping. One group felt it was good to show recognition; the other felt it turned worship into a performance. Everyone was surprised by the shift. Once they communicated their assumptions they accepted their differences and worked together at what they had in common. Imagine the changes after a few generations.

If you keep reading Ezra you'll find that the locals offer to help rebuild the temple. They point out both groups worship the same God - and they are soundly turned down. Then the text then accuses them of bribing officials to stall the building process.

It's interesting, sad, and familiar that the returning exiles accept help from the foreign King and neighbours, and not from those who also worshipped The One God. Sometimes it's hardest to get along with people that we share a lot in common with. I suspect it causes us to focus on the differences. Maybe it's because our assumptions are let down. I've heard people wonder why they should believe what Christians say when they can't even agree among themselves. It's hard when we forget our foundation.

Sometimes we can be like the people building the new Temple in Ezra. We build a foundation. We look at it and celebrate - praising God. Except, it's about us. Or we look at what's here and think of greatness gone by - and grieve ...or both. The first event I went to after starting here was the Pancake Dinner. There somebody told me about the days when Kensington had 1800 people. Behind that comment was some grieving as we were also celebrating our community. We need to remember that neither the building nor the past are solid foundations for our lives. Only God is.

In the beginning of this book "the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus". God isn't waiting in Jerusalem; God is working through an foreign king. This should not be surprising to anyone. God is the Lord of lords and King of kings. Also, the prophets repeatedly talk about how God will gather all people - not just the chosen people.

Sadly, the people we hear about in Ezra and Nehemiah have a more restricted sense of identity. Later when Ezra comes he will teach people good things about following God... but mandate that anyone not a true-blood be sent packing. This includes spouses and children. Then Nehemiah comes to rebuild the wall. This sounds like a good idea, but is it in line with God's vision? Is it built with God at the foundation, or their identity?

The Psalm and the story from Jesus both remind us of the needs for the Lord to be the foundation. This is hard. Nehemiah ends by looking at how the people are not following God's ways... again.

Is it impossible? No. It's just hard to keep our focus. That's why we have churches. To help each other keep Jesus as our cornerstone. To help us see how God is working in the world. To help us become witnesses for God. From all this, beautiful and diverse communities do grow - like we are here - giving us opportunities to celebrate and praise The Lord.

As they said when celebrating the foundation of the new Temple, "For God is good, for his steadfast love endures forever".

To God be all the glory Amen.



# Responding to God

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 three things to celebrate right now. Etching: What ways of thinking or being have been restorative in your life?

Wonder: What building blocks does your life still need to allow love to flow?

Wonder: What building blocks does Kensington need to build on God?

Prayer: ...that Christ will continually be our cornerstone

## \* Spirit Sighting

It was wonderful to come back and reconnect with some of you. I look forward to catching up with you all. (Please reach out and set up a good time.) Your stories and the way that our congregation continues is a witness to the work of God's Spirit.

## ╆ 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.

All donations are gratefully received and support God's work in our local and extended community.



#### Communion

□ Hymn: O Holy Father.....pg13 (529)

Invitation to the table
I would like to invite you to the table.
It's not my table, or the churches. This is God's table.

Maintenant, c'est le temps de se rassembler autour de la Table de notre Seigneur.

Parce que

C'est la volonté de Dieu que tous ceux qui veulent connaître Jésus devraient partager ce repas.

So, come,
you who have much faith,
and you who would like to have more,
you who have come often
and you who have not joined for a while,
you who have tried to follow
and you how struggle.<sup>6</sup>

As we come together to share the Lord's Supper, we also come together with a statement of faith that we share

<sup>6</sup> very adapted from Iona Wee Worship Book 4th ed

with Christians of many types, around the world and through the centuries.

## Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

**♣** Great prayer of thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Praised are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, the solid foundation all there is.

Through your love,
the stars blaze
the earth twirls
and life breaths
in this temple of your creation.

Now we join with the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

When we built on our own,
trying to secure our own identity,
you sent the prophets
to remind us how to build our communities
Then you offered Jesus to be our cornerstone.
inviting us to build a home
where all are welcome.
A home build on vulnerability & sacrifice;

A home build on vulnerability & sacrifice; build on a love greater than the universe A life reminding us of the strength of this foundation.

...Together, we proclaim the mystery of the faith.

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

As we wait for the Messiah's return, may your Holy Spirit continue to stir us, so that we would have the awareness and strength to build with you.

As we look at the world
we celebrate the beauty of your creation,
and what we can create as well
We praise you for the joy we can find in community.

and we grieve the state of aspects of this home. Lord we pray for:

- students. We celebrate that we can offer children an education, and pray for them as they start a new year...
  - we also pray for the teachers and staff that support them
- We pray for places of conflict & uncertainty, such as Ukraine & Gabon...
- and we pray for those who are sick...

Lord, we lay these concerns, and others, at your feet, because we know that your steadfast love lasts forever.

Lord God,
as we gather at your table,
we pray that as we share your bread and your cup.
your will make them alive
so that we may be closer to you
and be strengthened by you until you come again.

Let us join together in speaking the words Jesus taught us to pray, saying:

Cord's Prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)
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
now and forever.

Amen.

Words of Institution

On the night before he met with death, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to God he broke the bread and shared it, saying "This is my body; it is broken for you."

"Ceci est mon corps, qui est rompu pour vous"

[take and eat]

In the same way, he took the cup of wine after dinner and said, "This is the new relationship with God, sealed in my blood Take this, all of you, in remembrance of me."

"Cette coupe est la nouvelle alliance en mon saunt; faites ceci en mémoire de moi"

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. [take and drink]

Prayer after Communion Loving God,

We thank you for this time with you, for your Spirit that brings us to you, and your love that grounds us.

With you are our foundation, may we join your magnificent dance bringing love, hope & healing to the world.

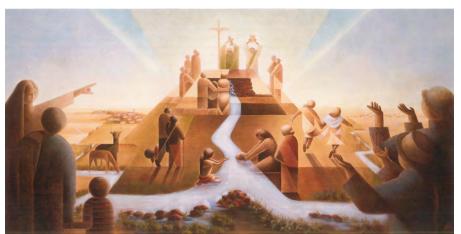
In Jesus name, Amen.

☐ Hymn: Now let us from this table rise.....pg 13 (556)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQdymHAvMpM

Benediction (Romans 15:13)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may about in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Rev. Peter Rombeek for Kensington Presbyterian Church

#### Sunday, September 3

#### MISSION MOMENT

Parbati Damai lives in Nepal with a spinal cord injury she endured after falling down a hill three years ago. During that time, her family took her to the local hospital for emergency treatment, where she underwent multiple surgeries and started using a wheelchair. However, with her husband and sons working during the day, she was often left at home in



her wheelchair for 10 to 14 hours daily, causing pressure sores to develop on her body. Parbati's local health facility couldn't provide her with the help she needed, so they referred her to the Green Pastures Hospital for further treatment. There, with the support of PWS&D's partner, she received treatment and counselling free of charge. Parbati hopes to complete her treatment and return home soon.

#### DAILY PRAYERS

**Sunday, September 3** We pray that Atlantic Mission Society groups will be creative in their planning and consistent to God's call as they begin a new program year.

**Monday, September 4** We pray for students returning to theological studies this fall. Increase knowledge, piety and love for God and God's church in all of them.

**Tuesday, September 5** We pray for presbyteries that are struggling to care for ministers and congregations as completely as they would like. May they be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

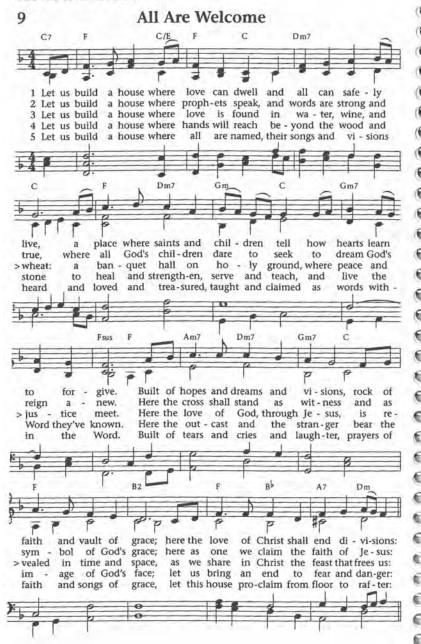
**Wednesday, September 6** We pray for the Rev. Amanda Currie, serving as synod clerk for Saskatchewan.

**Thursday, September 7** We give thanks and pray for the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon, equipping ministers and Christian educators in the Middle East for over 90 years.

**Friday, September 8** On **International Literacy Day**, we pray for the millions of children who, due to poverty, conflict and other challenges, lack the opportunity to learn. We give thanks for PWS&D-supported programs that work to provide many of them with educational opportunities.

**Saturday, September 9** We pray for WMS members who are serving God by supporting Christian students in their witness as they start a new school year.







## A Prayer of Indigenous Peoples, Refugees, Immigrants, and Pilgrims

270

Triune God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
we come before you
as many parts of a single body;
people drawn from every tribe,
every nation, every language;
some indigenous-peoples of the land;
some refugees, immigrants, pilgrims,
people on the move;
some hosts, some guests;
some both hosts and guests;
all of us searching for an eternal place
where we can belong.

Creator, forgive us.
The earth is yours and everything that is in it.
But we forget.
In our arrogance we think we own it.
In our greed we think we can steal it

In our arrogance we think we own it.
In our greed we think we can steal it.
In our ignorance we worship it.
In our thoughtlessness we destroy it.
We forget that you created it
to bring praise and joy to you.
That you gave it as a gift, for us to steward,
for us to enjoy,
for us to see more clearly

Jesus, save us.
We wait for your kingdom.
We long for your throne.
We hunger for your reconciliation,
for that day when people, from every tribe
and every tongue will gather
around you and sing your praises.

Holy Spirit, teach us.
Help us to remember that the body
is made up of many parts;
each one unique and every one necessary.
Teach us to embrace the discomfort
that comes from our diversity
and to celebrate the fact that we are unified,
not through our sameness,
but through the blood of our Lord
and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Triune God, we love you. Your creation is beautiful. Your salvation is merciful. And your wisdom is beyond compare. We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.

### How firm a foundation

ST. DENIO 11 11 11 11 D 7 G G/D G C Am D Em Lord, - da - tion, ye saints of firm foun with thee; oh be not dis mayed! 2. "Fear not, am call thee to 3. "When through the deep I wa - ters 4. "When through fi - ery path - way shall lie, tri - als thy 5. "The soul that on Je - sus hath leaned for re pose D 7 G G/D D Em Am ex - cel - lent word! faith in God's laid for your God, and will give thee still aid; am thy For flow, thee o - ver of woe shall not the riv - ers grace, all - suf ply: - fi - cient, shall be thy sup my his foes; will not- I will not- de sert to



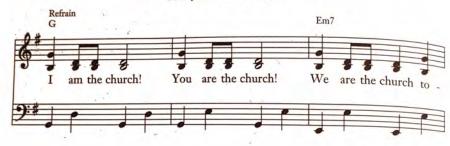
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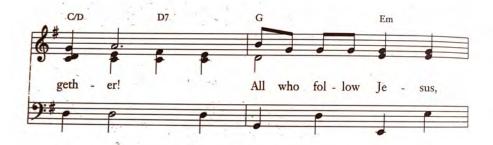
#### The Church

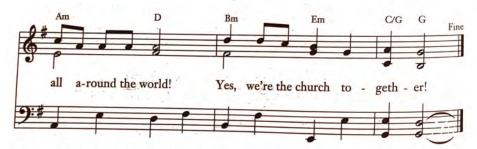
#### 475

## I am the church! You are the church!

PORT JERVIS 7786 with refrain







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### Now let us from this table rise



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