



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

Why'd he come?

January 14, 2024

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).



Paralytic healed - Jesus MAFA

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

Hymn Sing: Next week in worship we'll have a time when the congregation calls out what hymns to sing from the hymn book. If you'd like a hymn book at home, please let us know.

Birthdays: We would like to wish you a happy birthday, but don't know when. Please consider sharing your birthday with us (you can leave off the year, or celebrate it).

Zoom Prayer Group: Thursday at 6:30 a.m.
[us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)
[pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

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

Friday's Family Friendly Food & Film Fiesta:
 Pizza at 6:30, Film around 7. (RSVP with Peter appreciated)
 Jan 19: **The Muppets Christmas Carol** (rescheduled)

Cafe Rencontre Drop-in: Mondays 10-1 at 5964 av. NDG
 Enjoy some food and conversation. You can also get help with tech questions. A Community Council community worker will be there as well. shadysafar@ndg.ca 514-484-1471

Drop Box: Food donations are welcome for the local Food Pantry, diapers for young mothers through Head & Hands, and cloths & accessories for the New Hope Boutique.

Contacts

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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 (Psalm 103:1-2, 20-22)

Praise the LORD, O my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

**Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.**

Praise the LORD, you his angels,

you mighty ones who do his bidding,

who obey his word.

**Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.**

Praise the LORD, all his works

everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

♪ Hymn: To God be the glory.....pg 10 (350)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU (Royal Albert Hall)



Prayer of Approach

We yearn for you.

Drawn by a need to fill a hole

or to find some peace

or because of the excitement

or simply because it is what we do.

We come to you,

connecting through your Holy Spirit

to you - and to each other.

...one of the many gifts you give us.

We come to you in all sorts of states

filled with faith and joy

or wondering about what you're up to

healthy,

and sick in ways that keep us from you.

Jesus,

help us to see the ways that we sick

the ways that keep us from walking with you

and with those you have gathered around us. . .

Jesus,

May your Spirit help us to hear your voice


to receive your healing

and to walk in your ways.



Prodigal return - Grace Carol Bomer

May the prayer which you left us, and we now sing, draw us closer to you:

 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 the good news:

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Amen.



Listening to God

 Children's Time

How high can you jump?

How far?

How about a little run to the window and back?

Imagine not being able to use your legs? That would be hard.

Nowadays people can have scooters or wheelchairs, but in Jesus'

day those didn't exist. If you couldn't walk ...you were left out of a lot of things.

One of the stories that the adults are going to hear today is about a time when Jesus was at home. So many people were excited to hear what he had to say that they filled his house, ...and stood in the doorway ...and filled the courtyard outside as well. Nobody could move, but they didn't care... except for a small group of friends.

One of them was paralyzed - they couldn't walk (ever!). This person's friends had heard that Jesus could heal people, so they carried him to meet Jesus. But because of the crowds they couldn't get near. So, they went around back and up the stairs to the roof of the house. It was flat and made out of twigs and mud (with some big beams as well). They dug through the roof until they could lower their friend.

When Jesus saw how much faith they had in him, he healed the man. This meant the person could join in with everything that everyone else did. He was a part of the community. Imagine how he felt?



Paralytic healed - Jesus MAFA

What's interesting is that Jesus didn't heal him because he believed that Jesus could. It was the faith of his friends that brought him to Jesus - that brought him healing.

Everyone here sometimes has doubts, that's okay. Together we can believe together (like with the person's friends) and be a part of amazing things.

prayer

Dear Jesus, help us to have faith in you,
and to get help from people when we struggle.

Amen.

♪ Hymn: As Water to the Thirsty.....pg 11 (688)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwTrgFUSFZI

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that we may be healed of all the separates us from you.

Amen.

Intro to the readings

So far in Mark we briefly met John the baptiser, who was telling people to admit their sins and turn their lives back to God. This is to prepare the way for Jesus, who quickly shows up to be baptized. Immediately Jesus is off for temptations in the wilderness, then back for some teaching and calling disciples. These happen so fast it's almost a line each.

Then Jesus exudes authority when teaching at the synagogue. Immediately after he heals someone, then is off to Peter's house and heals his mother-in-law, then crowds show up and there's more healing. The next day, after seeking a quiet prayer time, they start a tour of surrounding towns - and there's a fourth healing.

Today we start chapter two. The narrative slows down a little. We start to get some details. For example, Jesus has a home. (If you're confused by this, it's because in Matthew he doesn't... but that also comes up later in the story. Perhaps he sold it to fund the ministry?) What other details are given?

...also listen for what people are struggling with, and what they are asking.

Our psalm ends with the words, "*we are dust*". It's easy to take this negatively, but don't. This is just acknowledging God made us from the stuff of creation - dirt (or Adam in Hebrew). Instead, ask 'what does the psalm say about what God is doing?'



Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,² or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Mark 2](#): 1-22

[Psalm 103](#): 1-14



Sermon: Mark this Beginning

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

In chapter one Jesus burst onto the scene in Capernaum. We have the impression people were surprised & excited. They were amazed at the authority of his teaching... and appreciated that he healed people.

This isn't Jesus' hometown. They don't know who he is.³ When they hear that Jesus is back in town, they gather around to listen to what he says. They watch what he does. They wonder, and ask questions.

² 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

³ though neither did they - but that's another story.

Do you ever wonder about Jesus? Do you wish you knew, or understood, God better? Have you asked, 'What's God up to?' Well, this is a good thing. Asking questions is how God created us to learn (if you're not sure, spend some time with children). People in today's reading were asking, 'Why did he say that?', 'Why is he with them?', and 'Why do you act like you do?'

Now, asking questions is good - and these are good ones to ask. Though, how they went about asking them isn't great. Instead of asking Jesus why he said what he did (about forgiving sins) they grumble inside. If left inside, the grumbling will make them bitter - inside and at Jesus. Then they start grumbling with each other. A little venting can be okay when it's part of letting go. Here we have the impression it's just building steam - which can lead to hurtful explosions. The next question they have about Jesus they take to his disciples. If they are seeking clarification, then this is good. If they are trying to get others to see how Jesus is wrong and to turn against him... well, that's bad. People can act like this intentionally, or out of fear of directly addressing an issue. I expect you've experienced all these behaviours. As the story continues in Mark, we'll see how it turns out.

Today, we have some good questions as people, including the scribes, try to figure out who Jesus is and what he's up to.

They actually receive an answer to their first question. 'Who is this guy?' When Jesus says, "Child, your sins are forgiven." they questioned in their hearts "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ...and they are partially right.

Blasphemy is typically when someone is not respecting God - such as acting like God. While sins can be hurting someone, they

always involve hurting God. Everyone is one of God's children, and God is protective - and then there's instances of directly going against God's wishes. Since God is hurt, God is the one who must forgive. Therefore, when Jesus forgives someone's sins he is stepping into God territory. This would normally be blasphemy, except it isn't... because he is God. Sadly, I think these scribes were too busy being offended to process his answer.

I wonder about us. We recognize Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God... but perhaps we have lost the idea of what God does. Do we ever think of blasphemy?



The second question was 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' They are asking about what Jesus is up to. Jesus overhears and steps in with the answer. "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick?" Jesus is about healing people, or saving them from their suffering, ...about reconnecting them with God, ...about reconciling or forgiving them - this is all healing.

The paralytic was physically healed - by Jesus saying that his sins were forgiven. Does this mean the person was paralyzed because he sinned? Assuming someone is suffering because they've been bad is common. It's possible the person was doing something they shouldn't have, and this was the consequence. It's also possible that the word sin here is less about an action that's, apparently, not worth mentioning, and more about the state the person is in. Being paralyzed, he is disconnected from being able to participate in the community - including the cultural ways of connecting with God. Sin separates us from God. By healing him, Jesus enables the person to reconnect with the community and God - which is what having your sins forgiven does. (Please never assume that someone is sick or suffering because they have sinned.) Here is Jesus bringing health to the sick.



Paralytic healed - c.504

Later he calls Levi, a tax collector, to join him as a student. This would have been shocking and caused tension. (The TV series *The Chosen* shows this very well.) The tax collectors were

people who chose to work for the occupying force. The Romans were bad, but that was who they were. Tax collectors were locals who chose to actively help subjugate their own people - and who lived off the proceeds. They weren't the sort of people a good man hangs out with. As Levi was by the shore, he might even have collected taxes from Peter and the other fishermen... making him personally not very popular with the other disciples. Jesus enjoying a feast at a tax collector's house... from the crowd's point of view he was having a lush banquet they couldn't enjoy, but paid for by money taken beyond their taxes. How would you feel? No wonder they asked what Jesus was doing.

In a way it reminds me of something somebody shared with me back when the Presbytery was talking about the ordination of people identifying as LGBTQ+. They recalled an incident about 25 years ago when a minister who was openly homosexual had to leave the Presbyterian Church. This person told me they objected to the minister not because of their sexuality, but because they went to bars. This is long before my time, so I don't know what was really going on, but I wonder where Jesus would have been? or would go now?

Despite how people might have felt, Jesus invites the tax collector to join him. Levi is saved from being an outsider and invited back into healthy relationships. You could say that he is healed.

All through this story Jesus is teaching: at his house, along the shore, and answering questions later. We don't have a lot of details, but we do have examples of what he does. Jesus is willing to shock and offend people in order to restore others to a healthy relationship with God. He will not let there be any barriers to bringing the Reign of God into people's lives - to bringing healing.

And healing is the answer to the third question. 'Jesus,' they ask, 'why don't you have your disciples fast?' Jesus doesn't criticize those who fast, but he does point out what everyone was feeling in chapter one... there's something wonderful going on. What's exciting? Healing. There's physical healings. There's the restoring of people back to their communities. Sinners and tax collectors are sitting at the table with Jesus. They didn't even have to go through John and be baptized first. People are being reconciled with God. There's forgiveness.

This is amazing and wonderful healing. It's perhaps a bit broader than we normally think. People's lives are being brought back to God, and that is the only place we can be healthy. Through Jesus, this is possible... for those of us who fancy ourselves wholesome like the scribes, or as sinners.

Thanks be to God
Amen.



Responding to God

🎵 Hymn: Sometimes a Healing Word is Comfort.....pg 12 (768)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvOVIM5OIGM

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

Etching: Share a time when you have felt deeply accepted - imperfections and all.

Memories: Can you remember a time when people in a church seemed to resent somebody? Could you directly ask why? Did you have grumblings stay inside you?

Wonder: Could Jesus healing people be more about their

relationship with God & each other than the physical issues? If so, how does that affect your expectations when praying for healing?

Values: If blasphemy is disrespecting God by doing what should be done by God... what are some current examples?

Values: How do you deal with questions/frustrations you have about somebody's behaviour? Could you handle it better?

Prayer: ...that we can share in the healing that brings us all closer to God.

✦ Spirit Sightings

Two things to highlight this week.

We received a thank you letter from the Chairman of the board for the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Homes Foundation. He thanked us for our donation - especially Howie and Barbie for their work with the cards and calendars. The money will help improve the life of the residents at the residential centre, and to support their Senior Support Program - which helps seniors in many Presbyterian congregations to age well (usually helping with navigating health care and staying in their homes).

I also had somebody after church ask me about the Bible, and then somebody else came into my office this week with various Bible questions. This makes me think we should bring back the question hour. This time I'm thinking of having it monthly after church on the first Sunday of the month. I invite you to let me know



what you have questions about. Are there passages you wonder about? Are you curious about the church about how we're different and the same? Do you wonder about sin, or prayer, or ecology, or war, or ...

Next month we'll start with The Bible - the whole thing. (Please let me know if you're interested.)

✦ Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on our **website**: kensingtonchurch.ca. 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

God of love and light,
today we heard how you are merciful and gracious;
that you have compassion on your children.
We heard how you offer healing
to our bodies and souls.

Healer God,
We pray for all who need your healing.
For those whose bodies need help. . .
We pray for Karen's surgery,
for those who have appointments,
and for those who are recovering, such as Rhona.
For those whose minds need healing. . .

and for those whose spirit needs you to reach out to them. . .

May they feel your touch
and know your healing.

We also pray for healing in places of conflict.
This week we have heard of more fighting in the Middle East and we know there are many wars being fought that aren't receiving attention, such as in Ecuador. . .
We also pray for the new government in Taiwan and the challenges they face. . .
Lord, we don't know how to make people listen and stop killing, and so we pray that you will find a way to change this current.

May they feel your touch
and know your healing.

We also pray for those who are experiencing isolation, whether this is due to winter weather, or health, or their friends and family moving and dying. . .
We also pray for those who are isolated because they have had to move for work, or safety, or due to disasters like the earthquake in Japan. . .

May they feel your touch
and know your healing.

Through this all,
help us to remain faithful,
to ask our questions openly,
and to know your joy and peace.

Help us to remember the gifts you have given us,
 such as a health care system,
 safe streets in our community,
 and a congregation here at Kensington.
 and Lord Jesus,
 we are especially grateful for your steadfast love
 and faith in us.

In the name of Jesus, the Christ,
Amen.

Praise the Lord - M Moyers

♪ Hymn: God be with you till we meet again.....pg 12 (621)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXq3van1aOs

✦ **Benediction** (Numbers 6:24-26)
*The LORD bless you and keep you;
 the LORD make his face to shine upon you
 and be gracious to you;
 the LORD turn his face toward you
 and give you peace.*



Sohdi became the sole provider for her family when her husband died a decade ago. A farmer in Pakistan, she plants various crops, but droughts and floods have disrupted food production for three years. In 2021, Sohdi received aid through the Humanitarian, Early Recovery and Development project, supported by PWS&D, which provided food aid to households in need. This assistance enabled her family to eat properly even during times of failed harvests. The project also provided support for women artisans to improve their skills and market their goods, making them more resilient for the future. Sohdi is grateful for this support that allowed her to stay out of debt. Now, she dreams of her son's wedding as well as sending her other children to school.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, January 14 (Baptism of the Lord) Let us remember our baptism and pray that we will live in ways that fulfil the promises made on our behalf, and may we boldly confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Monday, January 15 We pray for 2SLGBTQI+ student groups and their teachers as they build communities of respect, learning and support in their schools.

Tuesday, January 16 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Westminster

Wednesday, January 17 We pray for Winnipeg Inner City Missions as staff work to provide a healthy community for children, youth and families—many of whom have suffered intergenerational trauma and systemic injustices from residential schools.

Thursday, January 18 (World Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)
 We pray for the members and work of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

Friday, January 19 We pray and give thanks for Dr. Bernard Sabella who retired after serving 25 years as Executive Secretary of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees.

Saturday, January 20 We pray for the developing French ministry at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, through its Théologie Pratique (Practical Theology) program.

To God be the glory

G /B D 7 G /B D G

1. To God be the glo - ry, who great things has done!
 2. Oh per - fect re - demp - tion, the pur - chase of blood,
 3. Great things God has taught us, great things God has done

C G (/B) A9 (/C#) D

God so loved the world!—free - ly send - ing the Son,
 to eve - ry be - liev - er the pro - mise of God,
 and great our re - joic - ing through Je - sus the Son,

7 G /B D 7 G /B D G

who yield - ed his life an a - tone - ment for sin,
 that when the of - fen - der, re - pent - ing, be - lieves,
 but pur - er and high - er and great - er will be

7 Csus2 C6 G D G/D D7 G

and o - pened the life - gate that all may go in.
 through Je - sus' a - tone - ment, full par - don re - ceives!
 our won - der, our glad - ness, when Je - sus we see!

Refrain G G/B D7/A G D

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear God's voice!

D G/B D7/A G

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the peo - ple re - joice!

D7 G /B D 7 G /B D G

Oh come to the Fa - ther through Je - sus the Son,

G7 Csus2 C6 G/D D G/D D7 G

and give God the glo - ry, who great things has done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby (1820–1915), alt Music: William H. Doane (1832–1916)

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As water to the thirsty

OASIS 767666446

1. As wa - ter to the thirst - y, as beau - ty to the eyes, as
 2. Like calm in place of clam - our, like peace that fol - lows pain, like
 3. As sleep that fol - lows fe - ver, as gold in - stead of grey, as

F6(maj7) F6 F6(sus2) Gm7 Fsus4 - 3

strength that fol - lows weak - ness, as truth in - stead of lies, as
 meet - ing af - ter part - ing, like sun - shine af - ter rain, like
 free - dom af - ter bond - age, as sun - rise to the day, as

Gmsus4 C Fmaj7 Dm Em7 A A7 Dm

song - time and spring - time and sum - mer - time to be,
 moon - light and star - light and sun - light on the sea, so
 home to the trav - eler and all we long to see,

Gm Csus4 - 3 Am7 Dmsus4 - 3 Bbmaj7 - 6 Csus4 - 3

is my Lord, my liv - ing Lord, so is my Lord to me.

Am Dmsus2 - 1 Gm Csus2 - 1 Bb F/A Gm7 C7 F

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-) Music: T. Brian Coleman (1920-) CCLI #4440603

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Sometimes a healing word is comfort

WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT 989888

Gm /Bb D Gm Dm Eb Cm6 D Bb Cm D Gm/Bb

1. is com- fort: eas- ing the grieved or
 2. re - mem- bers: call- ing up days of
 Some- times a heal - ing word 3. is an - gry: giv - ing a name to
 4. takes chanc - es: go - ing where no one
 5. will lis - ten: hear - ing the voice - less

Cm D Gm /Bb D Gm Dm Eb Cm6 D

anx - ious heart, giv - ing as - sur - ance of our car - ing,
 joy or pain, let - ting the past re - new the pres - ent,
 dis - con - tent, shin - ing a light on sin or griev - ance,
 yet has been, fac - ing the dan - gers of the des - ert,
 in - to speech, let - ting the pat - tern of the sto - ry

Bb Cm D Gm/Bb Cm D Gm D Gm F Bb /D

treas - ur - ing each and eve - ry part.
 till hope can mend and move a - gain.
 call - ing a peo - ple to re - pent. Come, break the si - lence!
 hop - ing for shel - ter at the inn.
 move us to learn what it can teach.

Eb6 F7 Bb F Gm D Eb Cm7 D Gm

Let us tell the Word that makes us free and well.

Words: Patrick Michaels (1954-) Music: George Neumark (1621-1681)

Words: copyright © Patrick Michaels, 1992 Music: public domain CCL No, 4440603

God be with you till we meet again

RANDOLPH 9889

Unison D /F# G Em7 Asus4 - 3 D

God be with you till we meet a - gain;

Harmony D E/D A/C# F#m D6 E 7 Asus4-3 /G D/F# G D6/F#

1. lov - ing coun - sels guide, up - hold you, with a shep - herd's
 2. un - seen wings pro - tect - ing, hide you, dai - ly man - na
 3. when life's per - ils thick con - found you, put un - fail - ing
 4. keep love's ban - ner float - ing o'er you, smite death's threat - ening

Em /D A/C# A7 Unison D D7/F# G Em7 Asus4-3 D

care en - fold you:
 still pro - vide you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 arms a - round you:
 wave be - fore you:

Words: Jeremiah Eames Rankin (1828-1904) Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

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