



Kensington Presbyterian Church

Conditional Love!?

May 17, 2020

Welcome & announcements

For now we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home.¹ This doesn't mean you have to do them alone. You can invite those who live with you, or connect with others through the phone or computer.

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

Each of these **events** will happen through Zoom. Email Rev Peter for the log-in details: Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca

- **Prayer Time:** Tuesday morning prayer at 9 a.m.
- **Zoom Café:** Thursday at 3 p.m.
Join Rev. Peter for coffee (not included):
- **Worship:** Sunday at 10:30 a.m. [and the text version]
- **Game Party & Bible time:** with Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca

If you are interested, but these times don't work, please contact Peter

Free Workshops: available from Fuller Theological Seminary
<http://formation.fuller.edu/>

Mental Health: If you are experiencing anxiety, please contact us. You may also be interested the mental health 1st Aid Kit on our [COVID opportunities](#) web-page. It was written by a registered counsellor who has a Christian perspective.

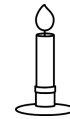
Please continue to check out the website <https://kensingtonchurch.ca/> or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KensingtonChurchNDG/>

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

Approaching God

Prelude: Allegretto in C minor, D 915.....Schubert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE8OXcogobg>



lighting the candle

Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



Call to worship

Let us worship the eternal God,
the source of love and life, who creates us.

**Let us worship Jesus Christ,
the risen one, who lives among us.**

Let us worship the Spirit,
the holy fire, who renews us.

**To the one true God be praise
in all times and places,
through the grace of Jesus Christ.**



Prayer of adoration & confession

Our Father,

You come to us, offering advice and wisdom,
offering us your love.

Our Mother,

you come to us, nurturing and loving us,
even when we struggle for independence,

Jesus,

you come to us, serving and fighting for others,
being the love of God in human flesh.

Holy Spirit,


growing our relationship with God,
and staying with us, not matter what.
With your help,
We can recognize your love for us,
and we do want to respond in kind.
But sometimes we don't.
We now come before you, confessing our sins.
unison

We are sorry Jesus.
While we do love you, we sometimes don't show it.
God, our creator; while want to,
we don't always do what you ask.
We sneak in little things for ourselves and make comments
about others that hurt them and you,
and even us.
Holy Spirit, you try to guide us,
but we become distracted,
following other voices that break your dreams for us
and the world.
We are sorry for the hurt we cause.
Please forgive us for our sins.

Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Before you were betrayed you talked with your disciples, and you assured them that even in what was to follow, betrayal and death, you would not abandon them. These words are true for all those who believe. God's love is true, and we are forgiven.

 **Lord's Prayer** (feel free to use another version/translation)
As a part of turning God's way, we pray the prayer Jesus gave us.

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.



♪ Hymn: Come down, O love divine².....pg 9
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDgktutI>

Listening to God



Prayer

God of life,
your Spirit raised Jesus from dead.
Your Spirit inspired the prophets and writers of Scripture.
Your Spirit draws us to Christ
and helps us to acknowledge him as Lord.
We ask that you will send your Spirit now
to give us deeper insight, encouragement, faith, and hope
through the proclamation of the Easter gospel.
Amen.



2 Angel & Shepherds - Marcia Carole

Intro to the readings

- our passage continues Jesus' farewell speech from last week... and actually repeats some of the passage. The full scene starts in John chapter 13 and continues to the end of chapter 16.



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

[John 14: 12-17](#)

(you could also read the whole section from John 13 to 16)

[Psalm 67](#)

Sermonette

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

Today's lectionary passage has a couple of great verses in it for these COVID times. Jesus says that he will "do whatever we ask" and that God "will give us another helper". That's pretty good.

Have any of you asked God to get rid of the coronavirus? To stop people dying in the care homes? To fix things so the isolation rules can be lifted and we can safely visit - and even hug - our family and friends again?

I suspect so, at least on a small scale... so why hasn't it happened?

What's with this simple promise of Jesus?

Does God not live up to it? What sort of relationship is this?

Maybe it's simple... like math,⁴ because the verses before these promises sound like math to me.

"¹²the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in

³ If you'd like a new Bible with helpful notes, I recommend the 'Life with God Bible' NRSV from Renovaré. ISBN 0061834963 or for the more academically inclined, The New Oxford Study Bible NRSV

⁴ Initially I was thinking of a 'old math' and 'new math' comparison. Here's a video from 2014 that explains (seriously) what they think is the difference. Two methods. What do you think? Simple?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6Ap3BAI0Yc>

*fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.
13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."*

It sounds like

if you believe, **and** do the works that Jesus does
then Jesus will do whatever you ask

and then later Jesus says,

"15If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever."

Which sounds like:

if you love Jesus **and** keep his commandments
then we will receive another helper like Jesus.

Is this a good reading of the text?

It's simple.

But does help from God depend on us believing/loving and doing? Because I thought God loved us unconditionally?

Is our relationship with God a conditional relationship? What commandments are we meant to follow? How do we show our love? How do we get God under our control?

These are good questions... but before we go there I just want to say we're starting on the wrong foot. The problem with those questions is that God's love is unconditional. There is nothing you do that earns it.

Just look through the Bible. Think of the stories in it. I can't think of one in which God says, "Okay, since you didn't do your part yet, I'm outta here." Yes, there's Noah and the flood, but God is still helping people... who later behave badly.

This isn't a simple math equation. It's not a matter of us doing x and then God does what we want. That's not the nature of our relationship.

God loves us, unconditionally. While we may do things that disappoint or hurt God, we are still loved. There are consequences to our actions, positive and negative... and we are still loved.

God doesn't help us because we love Jesus, or because we've followed the commandments... but because God loves us.

Chances are that all of us have had a relationship with someone who tried to manipulate you into doing what they want. Maybe instead of asking you if you want to go for a walk, they try and convince you how a walk would be good for you. If they're more manipulative they'll turn the heat up so the house is all stuffy and you need to go outside. The sad part is that if instead of trying to force you to do their will, they had asked you then you would have said yes... because you still like them.

Unless, of course, you've seen the weather warning, or you've been 'used' by them too many times.

God isn't a push over; you can't make God do our will - no matter how manipulative you are.

Now, that last relationship I described about going for a walk isn't a particularly healthy one.

However, think of a really good friendship. In it, you want to do what makes the other person happy. Today's passage says, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." It's not math, it's a relationship. If you love Jesus, then you will want to make Jesus happy. You will want to do what Jesus asks.

The longer two people love each other, the more they know

what the other is thinking. They more they can anticipate the other, and do something to make them happy.

And it's like that with Jesus too.

Wait a second Peter, you might say, you're describing a two way street. The passage sounds like us going to Jesus, but what about Jesus coming to us and doing what we want?

Well, first off, Jesus did come to us.

and building on that, God does adapt to us. Aside from the whole coming as a person to be more relatable thing, think of the stories like Moses at the burning bush. God asks Moses to go tell Pharaoh to 'let my people go.' and Moses gives all sorts of reasons why it should be somebody else. Finally God adapts and calls up Aaron to be the spokesperson.⁵

The bigger factor in our relationship with God, is that God knows about the weather warnings. God knows if it's a good idea for us to go for a walk now or not. God knows what's best for us, and life goes better when we trust that.

Which is actually how we 'get the good stuff'. It's not because we get God to do what we want; it's because we get that God knows what we should want.



C Mattix - tree with lights in it

Jesus say,

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

What's Jesus talking about? He could be referring to the 10 Commandments about how to relate to God and others. Or he could be referring to the summary of the Law given in the other Gospels, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'⁶

However what makes the most sense here is that Jesus is referring back to an earlier part of this same speech to the disciples. He has just told them ([John 13: 34](#)), "*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.*"

And how does Jesus love us?

Well, Jesus became human: being born, growing & dying - for us. But for the disciples sitting there after dinner listening to Jesus give what has become known as his farewell speech, there was what he did before starting to talk.

He washed their feet
like a servant.⁷

To love Jesus is to love others like Jesus - to help them without expectation, unconditionally.

Which isn't easy, but, Jesus says, if we do that than we will find that we're not alone. That God will send a helper to be with us. One like Jesus. One who will support us. One who will live in us - not a phone call away, but right here with us - with you.



⁵ starts in Exodus 3, but keeps going into 4 <http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Exodus+3>

⁶ [Mark 12: 28-34](#), [Luke 10: 25+](#), [Matthew 22: 34-40](#)

⁷ [John 13: 3-9](#)

So, where does that place us in relationship to the question of COVID, and asking God to make our lives easier?

Is God not answering those prayers because we're not in tune with what God wants? or because we aren't being loving enough?

No.

I don't think that's the relationship God has with us. I think God's relationship is as one who comes into the midst of things and tries to show us the way forward. God did that through Jesus - and now God is present through what in this passage is called the Advocate or Helper, and normally we just call the Holy Spirit.

Present in us - you and me ...and other people too.

But what about COVID?

to quote today's passage, "the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these.... because the Spirit abides with you"

Wow!

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - Holy and One.

Amen.

♪ musical moment: Prelude in C major, BWV 939.....Bach
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_Uq3luXBRA

Responding to God

Activities

Games showing connections between each other - and the importance of clearly communicating

- ABC love: first person says, "Something that shows love is ____"

and says something starting with A. Then the next person repeats that and adds something beginning with B. . .

- blind art:
 - sit back to back: one partner is blindfolded and draws and object that the other describes
- Balloon support
 - supporting the balloon between you and your partner, cross the line & back
 - start with balloon between your foreheads... no hands and no floor. How about back-to-back?
 - record times for friendly competition
- in partners, sit back to back on the floor. Then you both stand up without using your hands.
- with a partner: You each hold one leg up and together 'walk' down and around the chair and back. [not sure if this really works without hopping]
- person blindfolded. Their partner guides them verbally around the 'landmines'.

FaithTalk

These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies.

Wonder: Why doesn't God give us what we ask?

Values: Who was/is your best friend? Describe your relationship? What do you value about it?

Memories: What is a time you have found it hard to be a friend? to be loving?

Wonder: Can you share a time when it's been hard for others to be a friend to you?

Etching: What is a time that you have received and object or service without deserving it and with no expectations? How did it make you feel? How did you react?

Actions: Part of loving others is praying for them. Share concerns and joys you have heard about, then pray together.

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.

Mailing a cheque or signing up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) are also good options.

♪ Anthem: If It's Magic.....Stevie Wonder
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_0p0vj9q_0

Prayers of the people

Note: if you would like specific prayers included here (like with our prayer book), please send an email to:
prayer@Kensingtonchurch.ca

This pattern of prayer invites you to add thoughts that are with you. Here are some things that I will be praying about:

- the people working in the food industry, and city services, hospitals, and so much else that keeps our society functioning
- those living and working in our care homes
- those who are sick
and those needing attention physical or mental help, but having difficulty because of the coronavirus issues
- that we haven't heard of anyone associated with Kensington suffering from COVID19 yet
- all the small businesses that are struggling to survive
- that so many people are working together to find ways to both make this time work, and to find a safe way for it to end
- that people are dreaming that when this 'situation' ends the world doesn't go back to the way it was - but to a better way.

Response: Lord, come to bless us

and fill us with your Spirit.

Generous God,
we thank you for the wisdom of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to help us understand better what you want us to do...
Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit.

We ask that you strengthen us to serve you better...
Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the fruit of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to help us see in our lives the love of Jesus...
Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the gifts of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to prepare us for the work you have given us...
Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the healing of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to bring wholeness
where there is sickness, division, and sorrow. . .
Lord, come to bless us
and fill us with your Spirit.⁸

Generous God,
Jesus promised you would send your Spirit to us,
to continue the work of Christ,
in bringing your love to the world.

⁸ modified from the Worship Sourcebook Q.4.4.6

Knowing that your Spirit is teaching us,
we bring our prayers to you.

In Jesus' name
Amen.

♪ Hymn: Love divine, all love excelling.....pg 10
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cj-fUaa7bpg>

Sending & Benediction

May you love of God grow in you this week, and in the way you live your life. May you know the presence of the Holy Spirit in you and those around you. May this give you strength & hope, and may Christ's love in you shine so that they world may know hope in God's love.

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

Postlude: Ev'ry time I feel the spirit.....Barbara Hendricks
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Eufjb5R334>



Prayer Partnership

These are invitations compiled by the Presbyterian Church in Canada for our prayers. They were created months ago, and so serve as a reminder that there is more than COVID19 in our world. (That said, I did adapt some.) Should you add these prayers to your own, you will be joining with others throughout the church.

Sunday, May 17 We pray for Dr. Priya John, the first Indian woman to serve as General Secretary of the Christian Medical Association of India.

Monday, May 18 We pray for Presbyterians leaders at the Cyclical PCC annual 'gathering' this week. May they be inspired and encouraged as they learn more about church planting.

Tuesday, May 19 We pray for Captain Kim Barlow, who serves as a regular force military chaplain in Gagetown, NB, and for her ministry of presence with members of the Armed Forces.

Wednesday, May 20 We pray for the continued work and ministry of the recipients and nominees of the Woman of Faith Awards.

Thursday, May 21 (Ascension Day) We praise God for Canadian farmers participating in growing projects with Presbyterian World Service & Development partner Canadian Foodgrains Bank, helping combat hunger around the world.

Friday, May 22 We pray for the migrant labourers who work in our fields and processing plants to but food on our tables

Saturday, May 23 We pray for those in need of healing today.

Sunday, May 24 (Healing and Reconciliation Sunday) We pray that hearts and minds will be opened to continue learning the truth about the harm of colonization and the Indian Residential School system. We pray that all Canadians will work for the healing and well-being of Indigenous communities.

Come down, O Love divine

DOWN AMPNEY 6 6 11 D

D A/C# D Asus4-3 G Em6 D 6 A/C# Bm A/C# E7sus4-3

1. Come down, O Love di - vine, seek now this soul of
 2. Oh let it free - ly burn, till earth - ly pas - sions
 3. Let ho - ly char - i - ty mine out - ward ves - ture
 4. And so the yearn - ing strong, with which the soul will

A D G A G/B D Em/G D/F# G6 Em7 Asus4-3 7 D

mine, and vis - it it with your own ar - dour glow - ing;
 turn to dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing;
 be, and low - li - ness be - come mine in - ner cloth - ing;
 long, shall far out - pass the power of hu - man tell - ing;

Bm Dmaj7/F# G D F#m E7 A C/E (D7) G D Em 6 D/F# (G) A

O Com - fort - er, draw near, with - in my heart ap - pear,
 and let your glo - rious light shine ev - er on my sight,
 true low - li - ness of heart, which takes the hum - bler part,
 for none can guess its grace, till we be - come the place

Words: Italian, Bianco da Siena (13??-1434); translation, R.F. Littledale (1833-1890), alt
 Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
 Words: public domain Music: copyright © Oxford University Press from The English Hymnal

/G D/F# G A G/B D /F# G6 Em7 Asus4-3 7 D

and kin - dle it, your ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.
 and clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.
 and pride in earth - ly glo - ry scorns with loath - ing.
 where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes a dwell - ing.



Love divine, all loves excelling

HYFRYDOL 8787D

F C F Bb/D C7/E F C Dm C F/A C7/G F /A

1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, joy of heaven, to
 2. Breathe, oh breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to eve - ry
 3. Come, al - migh - ty to de - liv - er, let us all thy
 4. Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less

Bb6 Dm C F F /A C F Bb/D C7/E F C Dm C

earth come down; fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing,
 troub - led breast! Let us all in thee in - her - it,
 grace re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn and nev - er,
 let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion

F/A Gm6 F /A Bb6 Dm C F Am Dm7 Dm

all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art
 let us find the prom - ised rest; take a - way our
 nev - er more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be
 per - fect - ly re - stored in thee, changed from glo - ry

Gm C7 Dm C7/E F /E Dm Bb6 Am Gmsus4-3 Bbmaj7 C7sus4-3

all com - pas - sion, pure, un - bound - ed love thou art;
 love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;
 al - ways bless - ing, serve thee as thy hosts a - bove,
 in - to glo - ry till in heaven we take our place,

F Am Gm C7 F /A C Bb C

vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion;
 end - of faith as thy be - gin - ning,
 pray and praise thee, with - out ceas - ing,
 till we cast our crowns be - fore thee,

F/A Bb /D F/C C7 F

en - ter eve - ry trem - bling heart.
 set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 lost in won - der, love and praise.