



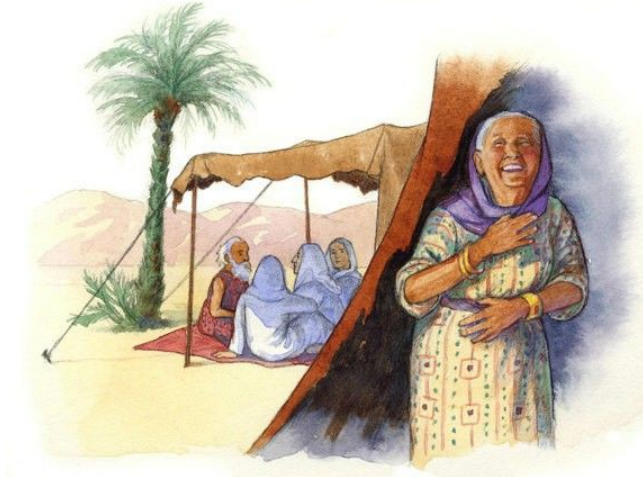
Kensington Presbyterian Church

Are you laughing?

June 14, 2020

WELCOME, during these times of physical isolation 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, or even in small groups 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



Contacts

Church Office: 514-486-4559.....info@Kensingtonchurch.ca
Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor).....Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca
Antoinette (families).....Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca
Kris Epps (music).....Kris@Kensingtonchurch.ca

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

Announcements

Re-opening the Church: Session is working on the details of our re-opening as we wait for the approval of the government. We look forward to seeing you.

In the mean time, if you would like to talk or have a physical distance visit (we can stand at the end of the sidewalk or outside your window), please contact Rev Peter or your elder.

Talk, Walk and Pray with the Moderator: The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is inviting you to join her for talks with people across the country, walking, and in prayer. See her invitation the talks, and prayer list here: <https://presbyterian.ca/gao/moderator/>

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](https://www.kensingtonchurch.ca/COVID-opportunities) web-page. It was written by a registered counsellor who has a Christian perspective.

Free Workshops: from Fuller Theological Seminary (until July 1) <http://formation.fuller.edu/>

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.
- **Youth Class** (12+): Tuesday at 6:30 p.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]
- **Friday Fun:** with Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca

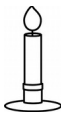
If you are interested, but these times don't work, please contact Peter

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

Approaching God

Prelude: A little prayer.....E Glennie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY2fcYRQXtA>



lighting the candle

Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



Call to worship²

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;

let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God with thanksgiving
and celebrate with music and prayer.**



Prayer of approach & confession

God,

the diversity of your creation is mind blowing.

From lush Laurentian forests,

to the Badlands of Alberta

the waters of the Grand Banks,

and even the cities,

designed and built by those you have partnered with - us.

and in all these places, and other amazing places around the

world, you have created life;

life that soars and swims, walks and climbs.

Your work around us is amazing;

and so is the work you want to do in us.

Sometimes we get it and work with you,

and sometimes we don't, whether through temptation or

lazyness, we don't struggle for the best for all creation - even people.

Jesus, help us to listen and to speak,

to repent of part in injustice,

whether through action or inaction,

and may your Spirit help us to change ourselves

and the world.

In Jesus name.

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, you are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

Amen.



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

² based on Psalm 92

and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

♪ Hymn: All my hope on God is founded.....pg.9
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2oYTtyBSxk>

Listening to God

🧘 Prayer

Lord, open our hearts and minds
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that as the Scriptures are read
and your Word is explored,
we may hear with joy what you say to us today.
Amen.



Intro to the readings

- Our main passage today doesn't start here, so here's a bit of the back story.

What comes before... Sarah's Story³

My name is Sarah. Wife to Abraham. Mother to Isaac. People look up to me. They give me gifts and treat me with respect. But it wasn't always easy, and I'm not proud of some of the things I did.

I rejoiced to be married to Abraham, all those years ago in the land of my people. He was a man of vision. An adventurer. I delighted to join in his adventure. I was not like my friends who had settled into boring lives in Ur. I was a partner in my husband's quest and we both enjoyed the travelling and the uncertainty. I was relieved not to have become pregnant immediately. A child would have complicated things so. But the years went by and we travelled on and there was still no child.

Then God started to talk to Abraham. And Abraham told me what God said: How we would be the parents of a great nation, more numerous than the grains of sand by the far off sea. But still there was no child. We were still partners in an adventure. But I would catch him looking at me with bewilderment. He would go into the emptiness of the desert and this God of his would tell him all over again that he would have a child. But God never spoke to me about it. Every month I hoped; and every month I knew myself to have failed.

So I decided one day that I had to take charge of my life before it fell apart altogether. God insisted that Abraham was going to have descendants, but didn't do anything about it: I had better organise something. So I suggested a surrogacy. I had a young slave who was of childbearing years. Let her provide Abraham and me with a child. The baby would be ours as the slave was ours. I

³ excerpt from *Sarah's Story* by Margaret Harvey in *Bare Feet and Buttercups*, Wild Goose Press.


told Abraham that God would want us to use our initiative so that God's plan could work out, and he was easily persuaded. Hagar, that was her name, conceived immediately. And my world changed. As I watched her young body swell with the child that should have been mine I was consumed with resentment. I hated her. I am not proud of how I behaved at that time. I know I made life unbearable for her - so unbearable that at one point she actually ran away. She and the child she was carrying.

At last the child was born. Ishmael, 'God hears'. Named because Hagar had discovered that God heard her and answered her when she cried to him for help. Why did God not speak to me?

'This is my son, Ishmael. May he live in your sight,' Abraham told God. 'Yes,' said God. 'But he is not the one.' But God said nothing to me.

Then one day we had visitors. . .



 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁴ or click on the name to be taken to an online version (NRSV).

[Genesis 18](#): 1-15

[Genesis 21](#): 1-7

[Romans 5](#): 1-8

⁴ 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

Message: Are you laughing?

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

What stood out for you in the passages?

Specifically the one about Sarah & Abraham? . . .

Last time I preached on this passage it was all about the hospitality to strangers. Abraham says he'll bring a little water and bread, and brings them a feast for a king. Which is the polar opposite to what his guests will experience next in Sodom.

This time, what stood out was the laugh.

"Sarah laughed to herself."

I wondered why.

Why did this stand out for me? Perhaps it's because after about 3 months of physical distancing and about 3 weeks of protests about systemic injustice I could use a laugh.

but I also wondered about Sarah's laugh.

I wonder what sort of laugh it was? . . .

Was this a laugh of joy? Happiness bubbling up from her belly at the thought of her childhood dream coming true?

Was this a laugh of relief that she would finally be able to fulfill her duty in providing a son to her husband?

Was this a laugh of surprise? Perhaps Abraham hadn't told her about God's promise in the previous chapter to have a son - and how he had laughed in response to that. Perhaps the surprise was that one of these strangers would say she's to have a child.

Maybe the laugh was past surprise and into disbelief. Was this really the time that God was going to give them a son? Now that

she's well past childbearing years. This is ridiculous!



and perhaps the laugh was even beyond that. Perhaps it was a response to the years and years of disappointment & frustration in herself and in the eyes of her husband. The years of pity or mocking in the eyes of others. The years of pain and suffering. With a body well past children, she'd probably become resigned to this pain... and now this stranger says, "I'll be by again next year, and by then I know Sarah will have a son."

Really?! After all these years? What's God playing at? What's with the wait?

I don't know if she asked that question, but I think it's a good one.

There are times in the Bible where God waits before helping, such as when the Israelites became slaves in Egypt. And then there's God leading them the long way through the desert to the Promised Land. The explanation is that they were learning to depend on God and not on their own strength. Another way of

looking at it is that they were learning to be a part of God's team, and not to strike out on their own.

There's a lot of speculation on why Jesus hasn't returned yet and ended this age. An answer that makes sense to me is that we are still practising how to live God's way. I also usually take to heart Jesus saying not to worry about it.

Now, Abraham & Sarah weren't perfect, but nobody in the Bible is - except Jesus. God still works with people. And as for the idea that they need to learn to depend on God, well, they've been following God's directions. Why the wait for the promise to be fulfilled - especially when this causes suffering?

It reminds me of the promise that African Americans were made for equality many many years ago.⁵ How long O God?⁶ And there's the promise in Canada that all people will be treated equally. How long O God? Both these promises were made by people - but Lord, you promise that one day there will be justice for all. How long O God?

Paul's letter to the Romans recognizes that there will be suffering in following God - and I don't find his words particularly comforting: that our suffering produces endurance, which produces character, which produces hope.

We can't tell Sarah, 'chin up dear, your suffering is going to make you stronger and give you hope.' That would be horrible - and it's not Paul's point. I think we need to remember that Paul is talking from the perspective of somebody experiencing the suffering. This isn't some answer that can be applied by somebody outside the experience. And Paul has another point. That it's about experiencing God.

5 While I didn't refer to it directly, last week I intended to give this link to Martin Luther King Jr's 'A Letter from a Birmingham Jail'. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail>

6 <http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Psalm+13>

Which is something we can bring back to Sarah's story.

She might tell us about this experience of how God surprised her with the promise in the first place, and then surprised her again by keeping that promise in a way she never imagined. It was so crazy, she laughed to herself.

And that with God, nothing is 'to yourself'. God knew, and God didn't let it slip past. That said, Sarah wasn't punished for laughing, or lying about it. I can even imagine God having a smile while saying, "Oh yes, you did laugh."



And while I'll never find out what sort of laugh Sarah had, I do take some comfort that God follows through on promises; that God did break the norms of the society and speak to Sarah; and the endurance and character I see in Sarah, and numerous other seniors I know, despite their suffering.

Perhaps Paul was right. This give me hope,
and sometimes a laugh.

to God be all the Glory
Amen.

♪ musical moment: Be thou my vision
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZfD5KrH5d8>

Responding to God

FaithTalk

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

Wonder: What sort of laugh do you think Sarah had?

Memories: Share a time when you cried out, "How long, O Lord?" (Psalm 13).

Etching: What promise of God do you most want to see happen?

Actions: Is God calling us to participate in helping the promise you thought of happen? or is this something we need to leave up to God?

Activities:

Sometimes we try to take over God's work, & sometimes God is waiting for us to take some responsibility.

- While it's hard to share a meal with people, brainstorm how else you could show hospitality.
- You don't need to physically join the protests against injustice (thinking of concerns about the coronavirus), you can write letters to politicians and other leaders.
- Here are some thoughts, reads & views to hear different experiences - and then share them.
 - https://www.credenceandco.com/resources/newsletter/blog-post-june2020/?mc_cid=d1d78339d2&mc_eid=77f252ae7f
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/books/25-books-about-being-black-in-canada-1.5596949>
- Imagine together what the world would be like with everybody treated equal

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.

♪ **Anthem:** He's got the whole world in his hands
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoS6c_arYnl

🙏 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

Dear God,

we come to you now in this world that knows joy and sorrow, laughter and pain.

As this time of physical isolation is becoming less constrained and less clear cut, we ask for your wisdom on how to mingle with others.

We ask for your help in recognizing our physical, mental and spiritual needs - and that these needs be somehow met. . .

Thinking of these basic needs, we pray for those who are struggling with various types of illness. May they seek the help that they need, and receive it. . .

We also pray for those who provide help in hospitals, care homes, the CLSCs, the St. Andrew's Foundation, and by just being neighbourly. . .

God, it is wonderful that your Spirit has gathered such a diverse group of people here in Kensington. People from a variety of geographic, educational, economic and religious backgrounds. People of different ages. People with different interests. Thank you for bringing us into community so that we can practice living in your Kingdom where we are all your precious children.

This isn't just a time to recognize physical illness, but also social illness. Jesus, we need your help to listen and to speak, to repent of ways we have contributed or left unchallenged, and to change the way society breathes and moves. . .

Jesus, help us to remember your promises of justice, hope, & love and may your Spirit help everyone to experience them.

In Jesus name

Amen.

♪ **Hymn:** One more step along the way we go.....pg. 8
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38Ew6LSMXxs>

Sending & Benediction

As you go from this time,
know that God is with us,
and will keep the promises made to us... and through us.

Ephesians 3:20-21, NRSV

*Now to him who by the power at work within us
is able to accomplish abundantly far more
than all we can ask or imagine,
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*



Postlude: A Change Is Gonna Come

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>

A Light in the Community

Kenora Fellowship Centre is one of nine Indigenous ministries supported by generous gifts made to Presbyterians Sharing. Known in the community as "Anamiewigummig," meaning House of Prayer in the Ojibway language, the drop-in centre offers basic essential services such as food, shelter, showers, clothing, laundry and transportation, in addition to offering skills training courses and health and wellness programs. Even more, the centre offers a place of hope, encouragement and safety for those who come through its doors, many of whom are displaced, living in poverty or struggling with addiction and mental health issues. Please pray that this ministry would continue to be a light in the community and a safe space where people can find the healing love of Christ.



Presbyterians Sharing reaches out with the love of Christ

DAILY PRAYERS

Monday, June 15 God of new beginnings, we give thanks for the renewal experienced in congregations.

Tuesday, June 16 We pray for the Rev. Gavin Robertson who serves as the convener of the Ministry Committee for the Presbytery of Kootenay.

Wednesday, June 17 We pray that the Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, will be restored to full health as he recovers from a medical condition.

Thursday, June 18 We celebrate in prayer for the 525 latrines that have been constructed in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai by Presbyterian World Service & Development's partner in Malawi.

Friday, June 19 We pray for Dr. Bernard Sabella, Executive Secretary, and the staff of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees as they work tirelessly to provide services to Palestinian refugees.

Saturday, June 20 (World Refugee Day) We give thanks for congregations and groups engaging in refugee sponsorship to help provide sanctuary for those fleeing conflict and violence.

One More Step Along the World I Go

Unison

1 One more step a - long the world I go,
 2 Round the cor - ners of the world I turn,
 3 As I trav - el through the bad and good,
 4 Give me cour - age when the world is rough,
 5 You are old - er than the world can be,

one more step a - long the world I go; from the old things
 more and more a - bout the world I learn; all the new things
 keep me trav - el - ing the way I should; where I see no
 keep me lov - ing though the world is tough; leap and sing in
 you are young - er than the life in me; ev - er old and

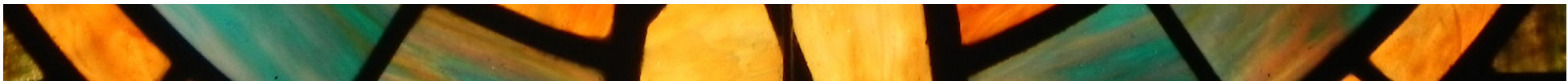
to the new, keep me trav - el - ing a - long with you:
 that I see you'll be look - ing at a - long with me:
 way to go you'll be tell - ing me the way, I know:
 all I do, keep me trav - el - ing a - long with you:
 ev - er new, keep me trav - el - ing a - long with you:

Refrain
 And it's from the old I trav - el to the new; keep me trav - el - ing a - long with you.

The English pacifist and hymn writer Sydney Carter was involved in both Anglican and Quaker communities. Of his hymns, including this one, he notes, "They are songs which can be sung in a Christian context, but they all had to mean something to me because I was often on the edge of not believing."

WORDS: Sydney Carter (1915-2004)
 MUSIC: Sydney Carter (1915-2004); arr. Lionel Dakers (1924-2003)

SOUTHCOTE
 9.9.7.9.Ref.



462 All my hope on God is founded

1. All my hope on God is found - ed who does still my
2. Hu - man pride and earth - ly glo - ry, sword and crown, be -
3. God's great good-ness reigns e - ter - nal, deep in wis - dom,
4. Dai - ly does Al - might - y Giv - er boun - teous gifts on
5. Still from earth to God e - ter - nal sac - ri - fice of

trust re - new; through all change and chance God guides me,
tray all trust; what our care and toil es - tab - lish,
pass - ing thought; light and life are all God's splen - dour
us be - stow, God's de - sire our soul de - light - ing,
praise be done, high a - bove all praise - es prais - ing

on - ly good and on - ly true. Love un - known,
tower and tem - ple, fall to dust, but God's power,
bring - ing beau - ty out of naught. Ev - er - more
pleas - ure lead - ing where we go. Love will stand
for the gift of Christ, the Son. Hear Christ call

God's a - lone, calls my heart to be God's own.
hour by God's store is my tem - ple and my tower.
from God's hand; joy will wait on God's do - re.
at one and all: you that fol - low shall com - mand.
not fall.