



Kensington Presbyterian Church

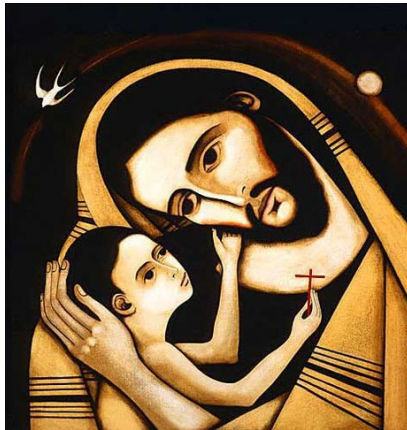
It's a risk

December 20, 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.

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

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

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

Announcements

Blue Christmas: Dec 21 at 7 p.m.

Have you found the last year tough? Perhaps you have lost somebody, or lost dreams, or just feel a little lost and not in the Christmas spirit. Join us for a quiet time of worship that acknowledge those feelings in the context of Christmas.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87094852936?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87094852936?pwd=dzM0aE9RenNBb3JRYTRVeDd3bXg1Zz09)
[pwd=dzM0aE9RenNBb3JRYTRVeDd3bXg1Zz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87094852936?pwd=dzM0aE9RenNBb3JRYTRVeDd3bXg1Zz09)

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 870 9485 2936

Passcode: 7864826

Christmas Eve: Dec 24 at 7 p.m.

Join us for a festive worship - complete with pageant.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84809937801?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84809937801?pwd=T3RaNThNdk9BRVN6UXEwNnNZengyQT09)
[pwd=T3RaNThNdk9BRVN6UXEwNnNZengyQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84809937801?pwd=T3RaNThNdk9BRVN6UXEwNnNZengyQT09)

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 848 0993 7801

Passcode: 7864826

Visiting: The government considers ministers to be essential workers. If you need a visit, please contact Rev. Peter.

Prayer Group: will be meeting through Zoom on Wed. at 11:30 a.m.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78266904325?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78266904325?pwd=dkhMck1ZRXBKTmdvK2VsaHRIOFF1UT09)
[pwd=dkhMck1ZRXBKTmdvK2VsaHRIOFF1UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78266904325?pwd=dkhMck1ZRXBKTmdvK2VsaHRIOFF1UT09)

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 782 6690 4325

Passcode: 7864826

Book Club: Discussion of *The Fault in our stars* on Dec 30.

Re-opening the Church: Session will consider when to reopen the building after Montréal is no longer a 'red zone'. In the mean time, we are continuing to improve our facilities.



Approaching God

note: you should have three candles already lit (hope, peace & joy)

Call to worship²

In this season of Advent, we celebrate God's love.

Soon we will welcome

the beautiful and radical love of God

as Jesus Christ comes to live among us.

We embrace our identity as God's beloved children
and let this truth guide our decisions and relationships.

In our homes and in our church

we offer hospitality,

welcoming those we don't know, those who are in need,

and those who are different from us.

We demonstrate our care for creation

in real and tangible ways through the products we buy,

the food we eat, and the way we live every day.

Together, we are a sign of God's love for the world.



lighting the candle of joy

Prayer of Adoration³

God of extravagant generosity,

in Jesus we discover the depth of your care

and the lengths you will go to save us.

Forgive us when we ignore those in need,

trample your creation

and refuse to share all that we receive from you.

Teach us to love our neighbours, caring for each other

in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

² provided by Presbyterian World Service & Development

³ provided by Presbyterian World Service & Development

♪ Hymn: He came down that we might have
hope, peace, joy, love.....pg 8
<https://youtu.be/3WhJ95xYjBE?t=1653>
(It's not quite the same words, but it gives you an idea.)

Prayer of Confession

Lord Christ,

we confess our willingness to be loved

but also our reluctance to love.

We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love

but also our refusal to forgive.

We confess our eagerness to grasp

your offer of redeeming love

but also our resistance to follow you without question.

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure

to respond as we should.

Come to us anew,

and by your grace, help us to receive you

with joy, as the shepherds;

with gratitude, as Simeon;

with risk, as Joseph

with obedience, as Mary;

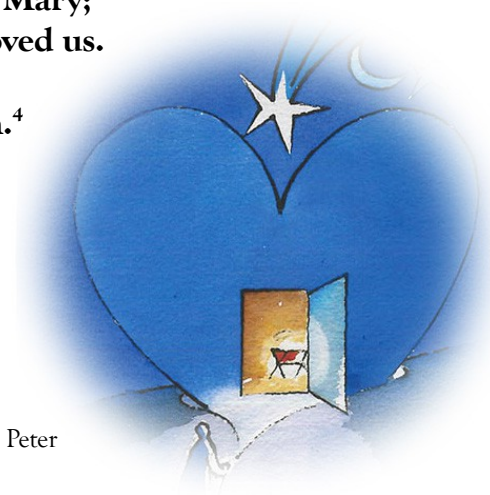
with love, as you have loved us.

Even so:

come, Lord Jesus. Amen.⁴

God's hope - F Peter

⁴ adapted from *Worship Sourcebook* D.2.2.5



Assurance of Pardon

The good news of this Advent season
is God's love and dedication to us.
God will forgive those who want to live more in love.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.



Lord's Prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)

Let us join with Christians throughout the world in praying...

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: People in Darkness.....pg 9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4pkrQuJN4Q>



Wise Men - R Cunningham

Listening to God



Prayer

O God, our beginning and end,

by whose command time runs its course:

 bless our impatience,

 perfect our faith,

 and, while we wait the fulfillment of your promises,

 grant us joy in your Word.

Amen.⁵

Intro to the readings

- Today's theme is love, so I encourage you to listen for the love in these passages.



Reading: Please look up the passages in your own

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

[Psalm 89](#): 1-4, 19-26

[Matthew 1](#): 18-25

Anthem: Born is the light of the world.....Sally deFord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kmDBphyokU>

Sermon: It's a risk

Dear Lord, please bless these words
and the meditations of our hearts.⁶ Amen.

Love.

It's a powerful thing.

Perhaps a feeling, but perhaps more.

It can be so powerful.

It can move move mountains.

It can drive you to do things
you never thought you would - or could

I expect you've experienced this.

In church we often talk about different kinds of love; how Greek has four words for love. This helps us sort things out sometimes - but today we're just going to lump them all into one: love.

In some ways it doesn't matter if the love you feel is for a parent, a friend, something romantic, or God. This is something powerful that will draw you and excite you, inspire you and challenge you. It's something that you will take risks for. That's probably where the phrase comes from that 'love is dangerous'. We will risk the safety of the *status quo* for love; which can lead to anything from trying a new food to death.

Take Joseph for instance. We don't know much about him, but this passage shows that he cares for Mary. He could have charged her with adultery, had her tried, and then stoned to death. He doesn't. He doesn't even divorce her, which would have probably spared her life. He risks marrying Mary... and I suspect the reason

for such a unwise action is love. The Bible has various examples of people arguing with angels; Joseph doesn't protest. He takes the encouragement and takes Mary. He accepts the taint of her shame - something that would lose him work, but he risks it.



And that's not the only story of love and risk here.

God loves not just Mary, but the whole world. Because of that, God is willing to risk it all to come. What sort of risk could God face? Well, none that isn't willingly taken. In this case God comes as Jesus, who while being one with God is also fully human.

Matthew makes a big point of this. Our passage started with verse 18. The first 17 verses are the family tree - linking Jesus to the human family.

Why is that risky?

There's infant mortality - even when crazy kings aren't

killing off the babies over rumours of a new king. This is a culture with no vaccines.

Making matters even more risky, this human Jesus doesn't arrive as a great king with a chef and an army of protectors, but as a baby to a poor family in a barn. He could be mugged or starve. How's he going to lead and make people do what he wants?

It's almost a miracle he survived to be an adult.

Something else risky about coming in person is that personal contact. Things are more, well, personal.

Can you remember a time when your idol let you down? It could have been a musician, or actor, or teacher, or parent. God coming as Jesus risks disappointment - betraying the trust/faith in each other.

Would people be disappointed with the way Jesus came and worked? (Yes, many were.) And Jesus risked facing their rejection like never before. It would be in his face. (which happened)

All of which is harder when not in person. At a distance you can be on your best behaviour, and gloss over the annoying things. But being in person can bring so much more to the relationship.

I've noticed that some families are like this. They get along okay when at a distance, but put them all in a house over the Christmas holidays and arguments start. Even families that live together all the time - isolate them during COVID and tempers rub raw.

But the personal connection is important.

For a spell I shared a large apartment with several other Christians. This was more than splitting the rent, it had been set

up as an attempt to live as an urban Christian community. One of the lessons they learned before I arrived was that if something was important, especially if it was a problem, then it needed to be said in person. When notes were left then misunderstandings and misinterpretations happened and things got worse.

People had not been getting the message of God's love and care. The Older Testament is full of stories about that. Nature tried to remind people. Prophets tried to remind people. Their songs/psalms tried to remind them of God love.

Take, for example, today's psalm. "*I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.*" But it's also a good example of the other side. Near the end it asks, "*Lord, where is your steadfast love of old*"⁷ Thankfully that's not the end of the psalm or the story.



A personal touch was needed.
and so God came, in the flesh.



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: The hands that first held Mary's child.....pg 10
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dXR4Flt-zY>

FaithTalk: Please explore these questions with somebody, or many somebodies. Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

Etching: What's your favourite love story/movie/song?

Memories: Share a time when love led you to take a risk. How did it turn out?

Actions: How do you express love (show you care)?

Values: God loves you so much it was worth coming as Jesus. How do you respond to that?

Values: God loves the world so much that it was worth coming as Jesus. How do you respond to that?

Actions: In John 13: 34 Jesus gives his disciples "*a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.*" Come up with examples of how God loves us (Biblical or life). What can you/we do to love others?

Offering

Financially, we have set up donation options on **our website**.

Just click the '[Donate Now](#)' button, and then the pretty button. It gives you various options that are easy to follow.

You can also donate through **interac e-transfer**. Our name is Kensington Presbyterian Church and the e-mail address is info@kensingtonchurch.ca.

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

In today's passage, God being flesh is the climax of Joseph's dream. God will come and be among you. Emmanuel - God is with us... in this baby that Mary will give birth to.

And it won't be like some high king with a great palace and defended by a mighty army. Mary isn't a queen, she's a poor young woman. She's engaged to marry Joseph, a humble labourer. Yet, this baby will show what it is like to be with God. This baby will teach us how to be with God.

When Jesus grows up he doesn't avoid his fans when he's tired, but continues to feed them. He doesn't avoid the critics, but continues to engage with them. He doesn't let anybody be ignored or in need, but reaches out to heal the brokenness in people's bodies, minds, relationships, and souls. He gives all that he is. It's a love that risks everything... and, as we know, allows him to be betrayed and killed.


But as Paul writes, "*Love never ends.*"⁸ The depressing scene of the crucifixion is not the end of the world. Neither is anything that we are going through.

God's love is here.

Always.

Christmas is a reminder of that. God risking so much to show us love, and inspiring others, like Joseph and Mary, to risk as well. You could think of it as the beginning of the greatest love story, but it's not. It starts with creation. God created out of joy and love, and will be with us through it all whether we realize it or not. God's love is here.

*To God be the glory
Amen.*

 Prayers of the people
We bless you, our God,
mighty sovereign power,
gentle caring mother,
You do not forget your children.

We bless you, our God,
for your great gifts to us:
creation - fragile and fascinating,
Scripture - revealing your truth.

And you bless us. . .
with your forgiving love,
with the vision of your kingdom,
shedding light in our darkness.

Bless us and disturb us God
with that vision of your kingdom,
and as we voice our hopes to you now,
may they strengthen us,
restore us
and move us. . .

We pray for those caught up in wars around the world;
soldiers, refugees and those who hold fast
to the reasons for the fighting. . .

We pray for the homeless
excluded from what the rest of us are going,
cold, struggling to keep a hold of who they are. . .

We pray for those who are ill,

coping with pain, fearing the worst,
and for health professionals who seek to heal. . .
(Peter M. is partway through his treatments and is doing ok)

We pray for those people struggling in relationships
especially at this 'family time'
when the cracks can so easily break open. . .

And for the deepest hopes of our hearts, we pray now. . .

Into the mess of this world an fragile child will come -
yelling in the night for his mother,
needing milk and clean linen. . .
We pin our hopes on you, little baby,
our God
pushed out into the world,
through pain and into poverty.

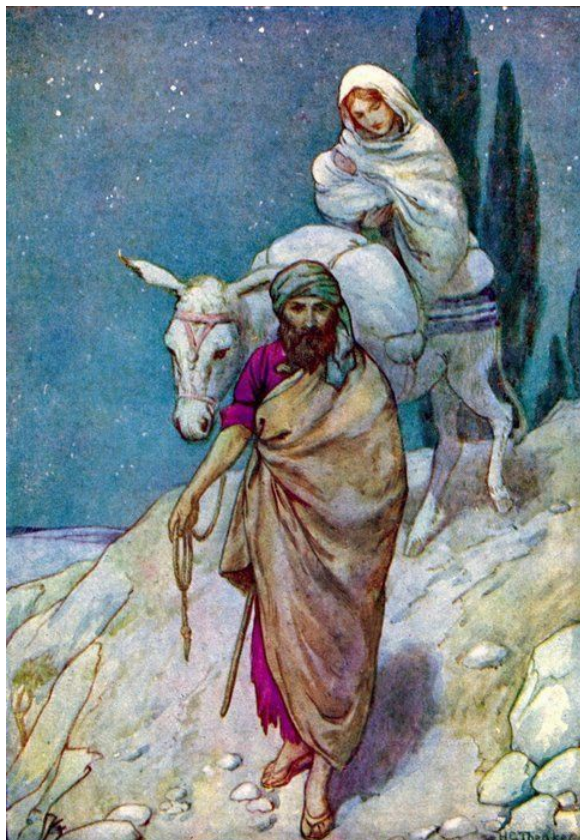
Our God is with us and our hope is reborn.
Amen.⁹

♪ Hymn: O come all ye faithful.....pg 10
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5rMQ6P12WY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcsGcflr2R0> with Elvis

Benediction

*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 love.
Amen.*





HE CAME DOWN

He came down that we may have love; he

came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

have love; hal - le - lu - jah for ev - er - more.

G Cantor
Why did he come?

Sunday, December 20 MISSION MOMENT

Prayer Jesus said: "Those who welcome the stranger, welcome me." We give thanks for the Kalunba refugee ministry in Budapest, Hungary, and for Director Dóra Kanizsai-Nagy.



Preparing a Place of Welcome

Being forced to flee from one's home and ending up in a foreign land is terrifying. There are often language, social and cultural barriers in the new place that make settling very difficult. Rani Ibrahim, the leader of the Newcomer Mission at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Peterborough, Ont., sees it as his calling from God to make this transition easier for those in his community. He does this through social programming, accompaniment services and prayer gatherings. With support from Presbyterians Sharing, this mission has helped hundreds of people experience the love of God and provided people with a sense of belonging in Canada.

DAILY PRAYERS

Monday, December 21 We pray for the Rev. John Wilson who serves as the convener of the Ministry and Church Vocations Committee for the Presbytery of Algoma and North Bay.

Tuesday, December 22 Gift-giving God, we pray that you move us to greater generosity with all the gifts entrusted to us so that we might bear witness to your love.

Wednesday, December 23 We thank God for people who pray, opening their hearts to God's direction, trusting in God's faithfulness, and holding others up in care.

Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) Christ was born as one of us and in him God shows how much the world is loved. We pray that the light of God's love bless and fill the world with peace.

Friday, December 25 (Christmas Day) For Christ there was no room in the inn: we pray for shelter for those who are homeless. Christ had to flee his birthplace: we pray for the safety of all refugees. Christ read scripture in the synagogue: we pray for God's wisdom to guide us.

Saturday, December 26 God of love in whom we hope, we pray that you send your peace to people who are vulnerable, unemployed, anxious, hurting and to those who experience violence.

A Mother's LOVE

In Afghanistan,
Murzia had several difficult pregnancies,
including two miscarriages.

When Murzia learned that she was pregnant with her fourth child, she was
determined to have a different experience.

In Afghanistan, late-night deliveries are often not attended by health care
professionals. Even during times when medical staff are available, many
women do not have the transportation or finances necessary to access
their services.

Murzia's determination paid off when one of her peers advised her of an
affordable treatment option, close to her home.

She decided to visit the PWS&D-supported health centre. There, she was
able to receive months of neonatal support and was assisted with a prompt
and hygienic delivery of a healthy baby boy by the dedicated staff.

"I am a very happy mother. My newborn is healthy, and my health has
Improved, too," Murzia enthusiastically shared.

This Advent season
help mothers deliver
healthy babies with
access to safe,
clean and affordable
maternal health
services.



WeRespond.ca



The development and relief agency
of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Rev. Peter Rombeek
for Kensington Presbyterian Church

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People in darkness

PEOPLE IN DARKNESS 10 6 10 5 11 8

1. Peo-ple in dark-ness are look-ing for light.
2. Peo-ple with sick-ness are pray-ing for health. Come, come,
3. Peo-ple in trou-ble would like to be free.
4. Peo-ple in sad-ness are try-ing to sing.

come, Je-sus Christ. Peo-ple with blind-ness are long-ing for sight.
Peo-ple in pov-er-ty want to have wealth.
Peo-ple with ar-gu-ments want to a-gree.
Bells in the stee-ple are wait-ing to ring.

Come, Lord Je-sus Christ. These days of ad-ven-ture when

all peo-ple wait are days for the ad-vent of (1) love.
(2) hope.
(3) peace.
(4) joy.

Words: Dosia Carlson (20th cent.); v.4 Ken Stright (1952-), Jeanne Stright (1953-) Music: Dosia Carlson (20th cent.)

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Music: copyright © Dosia Carlson, 1983

The hands that first held Mary's child

NOEL 8 6 8 6 D CMD

F C F (Gm/Bb) C7/G F C /Bb F/A F Bb/D Bb F

1. The hands that first held Ma-ry's Child were hard from work-ing wood,
 2. When Jo-seph mar-veled at the size of that small breath-ing frame,
 3. "This Child shall be Em-man-u-el, not God up-on the throne
 4. The tools which Jo-seph laid a-side a mob would lat-er lift

C Dm Bb F C F Dm F/A /C C7 F

from boards they sawed and planed and filed and splin-ters they with-stood.
 and gazed up-on those bright new eyes and spoke the In-fant's name,
 but God with us, Em-man-u-el, as close as blood and bone."
 and use with an-ger, fear and pride to cru-ci-fy God's gift.

Dm E° Dm/F Gm6 A7 Dm (A7D Dm) Dm6 C/E Dm C/G G7 C

This day they gripped no tool of steel, they drove no i-ron nail,
 the an-gel's words he once had dreamed poured down from heav-en's height,
 The ti-ny form in Jo-seph's palms con-firmed what he had heard,
 Let us, O Lord, not on-ly hold the Child who's born to-day,

F/A C7 D7 (Gm6/D) Gm6 F/A C Dm F/A F/C C7 F

but cra-dled from the head to heel our Lord, new-born and frail.
 and, like the host of stars that beamed, blest earth with wel-come light.
 and from his heart rose hymns and psalms for heav-en's hu-man word.
 but, charged with faith, may we be bold to fol-low in his way.

Words: Thomas H. Troeger (1945-) Music: English traditional; arrangement, Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900)

Oh come, all ye faithful

1. Oh come, all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant; oh
 2. God of God, Light of light,
 3. See how the shep-herds, sum-moned to his cra-dle,
 4. Sing, choirs of an-gels, sing in ex-ul-ta-tion;
 5. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap-py morn-ing;

come ye, oh come ye to Beth-le-hem.
 born un-to Ma-ry, the vir-gin blest,
 leav-ing their flocks draw nigh with ho-ly fear;
 sing, all ye ci-ti-zens of heaven a-bove:
 Je-sus, to thee be glo-ry given;

Come and be-hold him, born the King of an-gels:
 ve-ry God, be-got-ten, not cre-at-ed:
 we too will thith-er bend our joy-ful foot-steps:
 "Glo-ry to God in the high-est!"
 Word of the Fa-ther, now in flesh ap-pear-ing;