# NA TO

## Kensington Presbyterian Church

# Now & Then... and still coming

November 28, 2021

WELCOME, during these times of physical

isolation we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home. 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)



Road to Emmaus - Michael Torevell

#### 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)......514-486-4559

I 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 **Re-opening:** We are pleased that we will now be able to sing in the building, as well as over Zoom, YouTube, and with the Text.

**Communion:** all who would like to celebrate the Lord's supper are invited to join us next week. If you come in person we have perpackaged elements for you.

**Sunday School:** is available every week for those who are interested. **New Music Director:** we are pleased to announce that Zoé Dupont-Foisy. She brings experience as a choral conductor and involvement in churches. While you may not remember her name, she's also been leading our music on Sunday morning.

Presbyterian College Installation Service for Principal (Roland) and Professor of Pastoral Leadership: Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m., at The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul or on YouTube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i88Hglf51MQ">www.youtube.com/watch?v=i88Hglf51MQ</a>

**Prayer Group:** Thursdays at 9:15 a.m. in 3500 Benny Av (off the Benny Farm Courtyard). Please let Rev. Peter if you would like to join with zoom and this can be arranged.

Calendar: The Presbyterian Church Calendars have arrived - and their full of beautiful art... and other helpful features. If you're interested, contact Howie or Rev. Peter. All the proceeds go to the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS).

#### **CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

Pageant Sunday: Dec 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Blue Christmas: Tuesday Dec 21 at 7:30 p.m.

On the longest night we share a quiet worship service that holds those who experience sorrow or have difficulties at this time of year.

Caroling: date still to be announced

Christmas Eve: Friday, Dec 24 at 7:00 p.m.



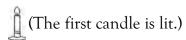
# Approaching God

 □ Hymn: Light a candle.....pg 10 www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vttqd0MdzE (tune only)

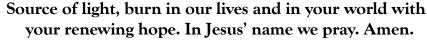
Call to worship & lighting of the candle<sup>2</sup> Hope is a flame that is given by God.

Hope for a new world burns in our hearts. Hope burns in the message of the Law and the teaching of the Prophets.

Hope is revealed in Jesus Christ.



Let us pray:



☐ Hymn: Come thou long expected Jesus.....pg 10 (111)
☐ www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAoIkjPVh64 (organ + choir) www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRAFQCOkjgE (band)

Prayer of Adoration & Confession.....led by Alex Plant Heavenly Father, we come to you, our praises and prayers overflow with hope as the season of Advent opens. You reveal yourself to us, dwelling among us through your son Jesus Christ. You come with power—not to dominate, but to transform. You come with promises—not to give us what we want, but to make all things new. You give us signs of your deep love for the world, your truth breaks fort, setting us free. Your coming is our hope, and so, we offer you our worship in gratitude and anticipation. Come into our lives, O God, and show us how to hope in the face of all

Loving God, we acknowledge that we too easily discourage one another. We often lose our connection with you as we focus on the wrong thing. Forgive us when we lose focus on the wonder and glory of your power and grace. Forgive us for abandoning hope in you so quickly. Forgive us when we underestimate you. Show us your holy presence and awaken us so that we may watch and wait for you, Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that you come to us Lord Jesus.

This we pray in your most precious name. Amen.

- Assurance of Pardon Hear the good news!

The One who comes with justice also comes with mercy.

God has given us his compassion through Christ.

God has forgiven us in the hope you will receive it gladly.

Do not be afraid but rejoice in the God who comes to us.

Amen.

Lord's prayer (feel free to use another version/translation) Let us take a moment to pray the prayer that Jesus teaches 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 Amen.

that is discouraging, for we gather in the name of Hope made flesh, Jesus Christ, your promise, and our desire.

provided by the Presbyterian World Service and Development, 2021



# Listening to God

Prayer for Illumination (Psalm 25:4-5)
Make us to know your ways, O LORD;
teach us your paths.
Lead us in your truth, and teach us,
for you are the God of our salvation;
for you we wait all day long.
Amen.

Intro to the readings

- Today's Psalm is an interesting struggle with hope the trust that things will be better, but that they aren't now.
- Jeremiah also speaks to this from a jail cell in a city facing imminent invasion.
- Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica is likely the earliest writing in the Newer Testament (about 51 AD). He's writing to a congregation that grew out of nothing, rather than a synagogue.

Something to think of when listening is that in this context the word Lord would normally have referred to the Roman Emperor - the highest authority that you don't cross.

How does this passage relate to the other two readings?

Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,<sup>3</sup> or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

Psalm 25: 1-10

<u>Jeremiah 33</u>: 14-16 <u>1 Thessalonians 3</u>: 9-13

Sermon: Now & Then ...and still coming

Dear Lord, please bless these words

and the meditations of our hearts. Amen.

What's the world coming to? It looks like there's another cold war starting between Russia and 'The West'... or is it between China and the U.S.? and what about Canada and the U.S.? Democracy is collapsing in various countries. In the lectionary passage we didn't hear from, Luke 21, Jesus talks about "distress among nations", and that is definitely true. Take a look at the civil war in Ethiopia and how it's causing distress among other nations, or Australia sending help to the Solomon Islands, or Haiti. And there's the new COVID variant that is starting to trigger countries blocking other countries to try and contain the threat.

And then there's the environment. As if to drive home the dire future predicted at COP26, both our coasts have been experiencing serious flooding that has caused damage to roads, livelihoods, and lives.



www.looper.com/img/gallery/the-terrifying-detail-you-missed-in-wall-es-opening-scene/l-intro-1608234708.jpg

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 19:14

What's the world coming to?

It's a question that was probably being asked as Jeremiah was locked in jail - though not by him. If the city had listened instead of locking him up, they would know. Jeremiah was locked up for delivering God's word (prophecy) that since they had not been living as they should (righteously, or in a way that is right with God), this was going to lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian take over. They thought they knew better how to live, or that it was too hard to change, or that they were just one person... I'm sure you've heard it all before. Whatever the reason, they didn't change and now the Babylonians were arriving. To help defend the city they were, ironically, actually tearing it down themselves to build defences to wall off their lives.

It's a wonder Jeremiah didn't just sit back and say, 'oh well, they brought it on themselves.'

When faced with the question of, 'What's the world coming to?', there's two ways to respond. One is to assume that the "worries of life" (Luke 21: 34) is all we have to look forward to

and to despair. The other is to acknowledge that life is not as it should be, or intended to be, but that good will win out in the end-to have hope.

While much of the book of Jeremiah is about how things will be bad for the Israelites because of



new life after a fire - Craig Hannah

their actions, God does occasionally give him some words of hope. Jeremiah tells those who would listen that God will send someone who will save their world bringing justice and righteousness.

And when he said this, nobody thought he was talking about a lecture series or a philosophical debate on what is justice and what it means to live right with God. Justice and righteousness were personal practices. It meant helping the poor and the vulnerable in society - even 'aliens' or outsiders. Think of Abraham inviting strangers for a meal and sharing valuable water. Think of Jesus reminding people that if you have two coats, give one to somebody who needs it. Think of some of the people I've heard about in this congregation who opened their homes to young people in need of a place to live for a while.

This is part of living a righteous life - or living your life according to God's purposes. What are those purposes? Looking through the Bible we read about love, forgiveness, and reconciliation lifted above self-preservation - with the biggest example being Jesus dying on the cross.

and it doesn't matter why reconciliation needs to happen, why there is pain in people's lives. Is it due to an environmental disaster, or people's choices? Is it due to an economic crisis beyond their control, or commercialism worshipped in Black Friday? It doesn't matter if somebody brings the bad down on themselves, or not... God offers compassion and mercy and grace and love - even if life becomes hard.

And as a people trying to live righteously, we should try to do that too. Help those people who need help, whether it's because of things beyond their control, or they made poor choices. ...and we should include ourselves in that, because we can suffer in life through things beyond our control or because of poor choices.<sup>5</sup>

If you'd like to take a self-compassion assessment, try this: self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/

Compassion can be hard. It's something that takes work and practice.

Like so much in life.

When writing to the Thessalonians, Paul prays that God will strengthen their "hearts in holiness". It's a reminder that we are always changing, and with hope are developing in good ways (in righteousness).

There's another important reminder in this passage. Paul writes of the joy he feels because of them. Often Paul feels joy in Jesus, but here he's talking about a community of people. Community is important. They can help us recognize and celebrate joy. They can help us when we fall. They can help us see hope when we're asking, 'what's the world coming to?'



Embrace 23 - C Aust

Like compassion and love and faith, community takes work. You need to spend time nurturing it, investing in it. While it's important to have some alone time for reflection, it's also important to gather together. Some great church examples include: worshipping together (though perhaps not in person), sharing the FaithTalk questions with somebody (or just talking faith), being part of a group that prayers together (or at least checks in with each other and talks about their prayers), being part of the book club, or 'just' trying to participate in God's coming justice and righteousness.

Because it is coming.

That's what the end times passages are about. No matter what we've done, or other people have done, God is still working through us and with us. No matter how good or bad things feel, God is bringing it all towards a new season of justice and righteousness.

That's what the world is coming to.

But it's not the end.

because we're not there yet.

However, that doesn't stop us from living it. Jeremiah, Paul, and many others in the Bible offer us visions of what it will be like when Jesus comes again. They don't all agree on the details, but they do on the sense of it. It will be glorious. God will gather everyone, and God will be recognized. There will be judgment, and we will be recognized for who we are. There will be love and mercy and reconciliation. It will be beautiful beyond description.

and if we accept these visions of hope, then let's live into them. Imagine a musician who believes their songs would sell, but never bothers to record them. Who would believe they're serious? If you believe something will happen, would you not do what it takes? In this case, write the songs and make the recording. Or in the case of Jesus coming again and bringing justice and righteousness, trying to live that out?

One writer I read this week was reminded of a story by a strong Christian, the Lord of the Rings, and a specific conversation between Frodo and Sam. Frodo is tasked with bringing the most powerful and corrupting weapon to destruction. It is incredibly hard. Sam is his gardener and companion. Their conversation reminds us too of many important points: the difficulty of being in the story, the hope of remembering the end of it, and that there is good in the world even on dark days. It even shows that through fellowship with others we can be helped to see the hope.



Here's the text from the movie version.<sup>6</sup>

FRODO: I can't do this, Sam.

SAM: I know. It's all wrong. By rights we shouldn't even be here. But we are. It's like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones

that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were. And sometimes you didn't want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy. How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened. But in the end, it's only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something. Even if you were too small to understand why. But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back only they didn't. Because they were holding on to something.

FRODO: What are we holding on to, Sam? SAM: That there's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo. And it's worth fighting for.

So remember what the world is coming to - a good ending, find people to share that journey with (in the Bible, history, and your community), and live into that future.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

# Particular Conf

# Responding to God

<sup>6</sup> www.pulpitfiction.com/notes/advent1c book version: www.thetolkienforum.com/wiki/Sams-Speech

FaithTalk: These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies. This week they are a little more personal than usual. Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

Memories: Did you have any advent practices growing up (ex. advent calendar)?

Wonder: Why does the preparations for Christmas always start with stories of troubles. Why doesn't it go straight to Baby Jesus?

Wonder: What would it be like to hang decorations in advent that lament injustice and reminded us of God bringing justice & righteousness into the world?<sup>7</sup>

Values: How do you practice compassion with others? with yourself? (consider taking this self-compassion assessment: <a href="mailto:self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/">self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/</a>)

Actions: How could you build or strengthen your community - both for you and them?

Actions: If you knew that Jesus would be coming again this Dec 25<sup>th</sup> and the world as we know it would end, what would you change in your life?

Action: Find a daily advent devotional, or ask Rev. Peter.

## ╆ 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.

## **♪** Prayers of the people

This prayer is mostly taken from *The Worship Sourcebook*, <sup>8</sup> and is both fitting for this first Sunday of Advent, and a bit different form our normal pattern.

As we pray, I'll be thinking of

- global and more local political tensions (or open conflict such as in Ethiopia and Haiti), and woman in Afghanistan.
- the environment, with issues to come and issues here in BC and Newfoundland.
- students with the weight of the end of their semester
- people who are sick
- the new COVID variant... and all the familiar issues as well
- and celebrating with Alfonso, who (God willing) will be getting married on Dec 15 in Cuba.

Please include issues that the Holy Spirit has laid on your heart.



adapted from D.4.4.4.2

<sup>7</sup> idea from daily devotion at uhill.net/daily - accessed Nov 23, 2021.

God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all nations and all peoples under the rule of your lordship through Jesus Christ. We know about, believe in, and hope for that future advent of the kingdom because we know about, believe in, and find as the source of all hope your first advent in Bethlehem. As we enter into this new season today, help us to be expectant people. Bend our thoughts and aspirations beyond the moment, beyond what we can see in front of us at any given time.

In Advent we sing about our having open hearts for you to enter in. May we, by the grace of your Spirit, be open indeed, Father. Make us open to the ways your kingdom can influence our decision making at work, at school, and at home. Make us open toward others, enabling us to see each and every person we meet as Jesus among us. Make us open to opportunities to serve others, to serve your whole creation out of devotion to you and to your Son, who showed us what true service is all about when he came down into a virgin's womb to salvage the universe you fashioned in the beginning.

As people whose hearts are open, we share our concerns for your needy world. This Advent season sees a world of war and rumours of war - of conflicts big and small. It is easy, O God, for us to see why this world needs saving, but sometimes it is not so easy to believe that in Christ it has already been saved. Help us as Christians to find in Jesus' birth long ago a true reason for hope in this present moment. And then lead us to be workers for peace, agents of healing in this world gone mad. . .

Lead to a better time those who are unemployed right now, who are worried about family finances, and who wonder what the new year may hold. We also pray for those who are working more hours than is healthy for them and their families. Grant them all security and peace. Also grant that this new church year will hold new and good and wonderful opportunities to share the gifts you

have given to them. . .

Here in this place, you see the needs and hurts of our community during this new holiday season. Be with the students who are worried about end of semester assignments and exams. Be with the parents who are concerned about the direction their children are going. Lift the clouds of depression from those who wrestle with their emotions. Minister to those who have chronic pain and give them some relief. Be with those going into surgery, struggling through physio and pain, swimming with mental illness. Bring healing we pray. . .

You alone see us as we are, Lord God, and so we beg for you to nurture us according to our needs, to minister to us according to our hurts, to heal us in all those places where you see that we are broken or sick. . .

But despite whatever happens in our lives or whatever is going on at this present moment in our various hearts and minds, still we do adore you, God of wonder and God of glory. We worship you; we lay our hearts open before you. So as we come to you at your table in a little while, come also to us by your Spirit. Our hearts are open. Be born in us anew this day so that every day we may spread the increase of your peace. In Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we pray.

Amen.

\* Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:!3)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all
Amen.



#### MISSION MOMENT

## **Embracing Education** in Afghanistan

Khadija is five years old and attends a community-based school in Laghman, Afghanistan. Khadija's older sister did not have the opportunity to attend school, so the Grade One student has wholeheartedly embraced her studies. "I love going to



school every day and meeting my friends there. My favourite subject is mathematics." Through the support of Community World Service Asia, a partner of Presbyterian World Service & Development, Khadija and her friends also received school supplies. "One day, after completing my studies, I will become a traffic police officer and guide people in the right direction," said Khadija, smiling.

#### DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, November 28 (First Sunday of Advent) We pray that our hope is nourished during Advent as we prepare to receive Christ among us again.

Monday, November 29 We pray for congregations seeking God's direction in changing times, that they are steadfast in hope and learn to be patient and prayerful when times are challenging.

Tuesday, November 30 (Feast Day of Andrew the Apostle) Just as Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus, we pray for help and guidance to be like Andrew and introduce others to Jesus.

Wednesday, December 1 (World AIDS Day) We pray for all people affected by HIV and AIDS.

Thursday, December 2 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Newfoundland.

#### Friday, December 3 (International Day for Persons with Disabilities)

We pray for the Respite Ministry of St. Columba, a parish of the Presbyterian Church of Mauritius, that offers support to families caring for persons with learning disabilities.

**Saturday, December 4** We give thanks for the vital support the church is helping to provide to those with HIV through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

# Hope for Single Mothers in Somalia

For single mothers living in internally displaced persons camps in Somalia, life is a balancing act. Time is split between caring for their infants and tireless efforts to find work to afford necessities like food.

Single mother Fatuma lives in one such camp with her daughter, Hawa.

At just under two years old, Hawa weighed less than 14 pounds. Despite Fatuma working three jobs, a prolonged lack of nutritious food meant Hawa had lesions on her skin and was terribly anemic-she needed a blood transfusion immediately.

Fatuma brought her daughter to a nearby clinic supported by PWS&D.

"She spent 12 days in the stabilization centre where she was given medicine, nutritional feeds and received a transfusion. I was also given meals while she was admitted," she shared.

Now, Fatuma can once again hold her daughter close, knowing Hawa has made a full recovery.

This Advent season help make sure children have access to nutritious food so that they can lead healthy lives.

\* This project is a collaborative effort led by Development and Peace with matching funds from the Government of Canada at Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

WeRespond.ca







Words: David Wood © 2012 Music: Adapted from a Chorale by Conrad Kocher (1786–1872); harmony, William Henry Monk (1823–1889), Carman H. Milligan (1909–)

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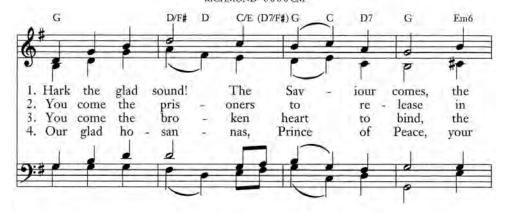


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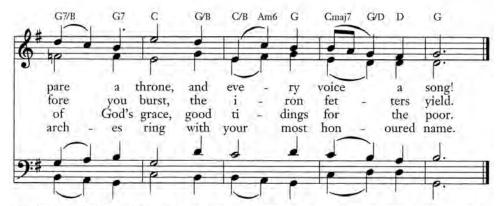
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118 Hark the glad sound RICHMOND 8686CM







Words: Philip Doddridge (1701-1751), Scottish Paraphrases, alt Music: Thomas Haweis (1734-1820); arrangement, Samuel Webbe the younger (1770-1843)

> NOVELLIDEL 70, 7071 Now & Then... and still coming

#### 111

### Creator of the stars of night

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM 8888 LM





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