

Kensington Presbyterian Church

Guide for the Journey

January 9, 2022

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)



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).....zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com

Announcements

Clicking on or tapping blue text will take you to a web-site

Visits: If you would like to talk or have a prayer please contact Rev. Peter anytime. We can have a visit in a manner that you are comfortable with.

Re-opening: With concerns about the rapid spreading of the Omicron variant of COVID, we will be closing the building for a while after Christmas. We will monitor the situation and hope to invite you back to the building soon. In the mean time, please join us over Zoom, YouTube and through this full text version.

Children's activities: if you know of anyone who might be interested, please contact Antoinette.

Metal Health: Grandview Church has made a list of several internet resources that you may find helpful.

<u>kckf.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/links-to-wellness-resources_updated-march-2021.pdf</u>

Christmas Music: If you are looking for more Christmas music, you may want to visit the Songs of Praise at Westminster Abbey www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBqzAXUw4S0
BBC 11 hours of "Christmas around Europe" www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00phg3n/episodes/player
and Daniel Hope's house concert: www.arte.tv/en/videos/107045-000-A/christmas-home-with-daniel-hope

The Chosen: Thursdays Jan 13 to Feb 24 7pm video, 8pm study You are invited to join us over Zoom as we watch and discuss the series *The Chosen* along-side the Biblical stories of Jesus. This video series is a fascinating drama based on what we know of Jesus' followers and the times they lived in. We will consider what is artistic licence and what is revelatory. The discussion will be lead by Rev. Peter.

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



Approaching God



Lighting of the Christ Candle Jésus Christ est la lumière du monde. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

Call to worship²

God lovingly chose us and calls to him this day and always.

We are God's beloved children. Alleluia!

Our lives are rooted in the path that God has laid out for us.

We are called to be like his Son, Jesus Christ. Let us follow him!

God has gifted us with an abundance of blessings. Let us give thanks!

Let us worship God who rules over all creation. Praise be to God!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbQpEdwGEXo

Prayer of Approach³

Heavenly Father, we bring ourselves to you in the awe and wonder of your majestic power. You lead us on the path that you laid out for us. Bound in love and mercy, we humbly give thanks for the light that you have revealed to us through the work of your spirit. Your beloved Son has called us to new life and by his grace, he redeems us from that which drives us away from you.

We praise you for the blessings you give us through Jesus Christ who is one with the Holy Spirit. To you we give all praise, glory and honor, one God, now and always.

Merciful God, we ask that you open our hearts to you. We confess that we often struggle to remain true to you. You promise forgiveness and new life through your son Jesus Christ, but we are often stubborn in holding onto the old and familiar ways which draws us away from you. We cling to destructive habits, we harbor grudges, and we are reluctant to forgive one another.

We sometimes blame the past when we hesitate to explore new possibilities within you. We call upon your merciful grace to forgive us. Have mercy upon us and draw us closer to you so that we might pursue new life in Christ together. This we pray in your holy name.

Amen.



Assurance of Pardon⁴

Hear the Good News! Christ has redeemed you. He invites you to be united with him through the death and resurrection which brings about our salvation. Your sins are forgiven; be at peace with God, with yourself, and with each other.

Amen.



Lord's prayer (feel free to use another version/translation) As we approach God, let us be guided by 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.

provided by Alex Plant

provided by Alex Plant

provided by Alex Plant

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours Amen.

Listening to God

☐ Hymn: Word of God, across the ages.....pg 10 (497) www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTDwv3p5k1k

Prayer for Illumination

God of Epiphany,

we long to hear your holy Word in fresh ways.

Open our ears to the call of your voice.

Open our eyes to the dawning of a new day.

Fill us with anticipation for your future.

Amen.⁵



Three Wisemen on ze moon - Flixro

adapted from Worship Sourcebook F.3.1.2

- This is the starring passage for Epiphany when we remember the Wise Men finding Jesus. I expect you'll see why the other passages were chosen by the lectionary to accompany it.
- Before reading the gospel passage, go through it in your head. Then pay attention to what is in the text, and what is not.
 - To make it a little more complicated, you could also consider how the text is structured. How are the two scenes similar and different?
- Psalm: a prayer for the king... an ideal. It shows what some were looking for in a king.
- Isaiah: As you read this passage, remember that the Jewish people and Israel were always a small nation that was often taken over by larger nations.



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

Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14 Isaiah 60: 1-6

Matthew 2: 1-12



Sermon: Guide for the journey

Dear Lord, please bless these words and the meditations of our hearts.⁷ Amen.

The Bible is an amazing collection of books. You might describe it as magical. People have been reading it for thousands of years and still find surprises in it. Perhaps more amazing is that

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

Psalm 19:14

you can read the same passage every year and find new connections in it - revelations if you like, or epiphanies.

Take, for example, the story of the Three Kings. You probably know it by heart. You may have been one in a Christmas pageant. You've heard sermons trying to help you understand some of the hidden assumptions. This is helpful because there are things that the writer assumed we'd know as a Christian back in the first century. And not just any Christian. This gospel was probably written for Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah - or at least were considering the idea. We think this because there's explicit connections to the Bible in it (what we now call the Older Testament).

One of those assumptions would be that everyone knows that King Herod was not just a collaborator with the enemy Romans, but also held onto his throne by killing any competition including members of his family.

The original listeners would also have distrusted the Magi. Anyone called a Magi wouldn't be Jewish (and to drive the point home they ask for 'the child who has been born king of the Jews'). The term Magi is linked to astrologers (who study the stars for meaning), Zoroastrian priests (who believed the creator would send a saviour - and they would come from the east/Persia), and with magicians. While magicians and astrologers would be popular with Roman aristocracy, good Jews (including early Christians) knew the Bible spoke against them. Magi were not to be trusted.

So, as you think of this story try to listen with their ears. Know Herod is a dangerous king, and that the foreigners aren't to be trusted.

There are also assumptions you bring to the text. They are shaped by the Christmas pageants, hymns, and the way our mind

creates stories to help the world make sense.

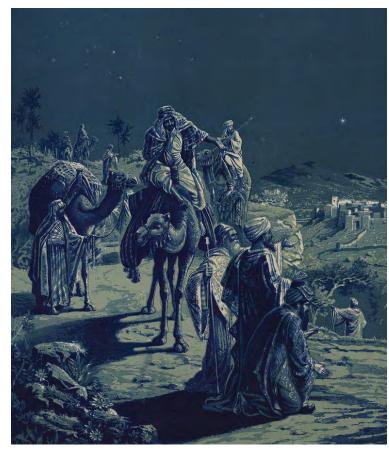
The most popular assumption is that there were three kings when only two are mentioned in the text - King Herod and the baby born 'king of the Jews'. If you assumed there were three kings bringing gifts to baby Jesus - don't feel bad. For one thing, we sing about it in the hymn. But the tradition goes back much further. Calvin tried to change people's belief in this "childish Papal error" - and failed.



Where did the idea come from that they are kings? It could be because the gifts were very expensive. Though it's probably because of the passage from Isaiah that mentions kings coming, and gifts of gold and frankincense. While the lectionary has also made this connection, it doesn't seem to be one the writer of Matthew wants to make. Why do I say that? Because while he does refer to the Bible a number of times, he doesn't here.

Why three? When trying to imagine this scene we latch onto there being three gifts. Curiously, the tradition in Syria, where there have been Christians since pretty much the beginning, is that there were 12 Wise Men. The text doesn't tell us.

We also place them in the barn with the shepherds and everyone else - like in so many pageants. In the text they come to a house. Mary, Joseph and Jesus have settled down. Is Jesus still a baby? We don't know. Herod orders all the children under 2 killed, so he seems to think that Jesus could have been a baby or a toddler. The text doesn't tell us.



The text does tell us a number of things. There are parts of the story that go beyond being just a part of the Christmas pageant and apply to our life. It's advice that will feel obvious, but it is still

good to be reminded of it.

It needs to be dark to see the star. While this can be left as a detail of the story, it is also true about life. We usually need to be going through 'dark' parts of life to look up for a star - for God. If we focus on following God, then we can be led to an epiphany.

Another aspect that is good to remember, especially in dark times, is that they travelled together. These are important times to not be alone - to have companions. Perhaps you need to find some companions; perhaps you can be one for someone in need.

The Wise Men ask for help. They are wise *and* they ask for help. I don't know about you, but I'm not very good at asking for help. I don't want to impose on others who have their own problems. If others can do it, then I figure I should be able to as well. Neither of these are wise statements. Hopefully I'll learn.

They ask Herod... I'm not sure that was wise. They didn't say, 'we've come to celebrate the birth of your son.' - mistakenly assuming Herod had a baby he'd allow to inherit the throne. They also didn't go to the local wise people or priests. They go to the king and ask to honour the one who will take the throne from him. Regardless of Herod's temper, was that wise?

And there are times when something is true, but doesn't make sense. This whole story is an example of that.

There's Herod, who acts like a king. He lives in the capital city. He orders people around, demands answers, and exercises the power of life and death - but he's not The King. We see this when the Magi don't obey him and he fails to kill Jesus (in the next part of the story). Instead, The King is a little boy in a small town who has no army or servants. It doesn't make sense.

The scribes don't realize that the Messiah has been born, even though they are the experts. When asked by some outsiders, they can pull out the relevant passages. However, they don't seem to act on it. The leaders of the chosen people don't gather around to

worship their saviour. Instead, it's the outsiders who do that. It doesn't make sense.

Perhaps the most unlikely element is the Magi themselves. They are not acceptable people. They worship a foreign God. They practice forbidden ways. They live contrary to the Bible. Yet, they are the first in Matthew to see the signs. The first to look for the Messiah. The ones to find a child and recognize what he will be. They are the first to worship Jesus. This would have been crazy to the first listeners.



Nativity - James B Janknegt

Sometimes we forget all that is here, but there are some elements that speak to us here and now - revealing God's ways to us.

We should pay attention to what parts of the story we bring to it, what the story hints at, and what it might assume we know. (don't be afraid to read the Bible, but I can recommend a some

good Bible with notes8).

And from this story in particular...

- when you're in the dark, look for God's star
- find travelling companions
- ask for help (and be careful who you ask)
- pay attention to outsiders, they may know more about God than you
- don't be surprised by the unexpected, or even the unreasonable.

To God be all the glory Amen.

MANY

Responding to God

- 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).

Values: Thinking of the magi trying to figure out where to go, do you seek advice when trying to figure out decisions? Who do you go to? Why them?

Action: Do you need a travelling companion?

Could you be a travelling companion for someone?

(This does not mean knowing everything.)

Wonder: If God can be revealed to people you wouldn't

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

expect, how can you listen to their experience? Who do you not expect God to be revealed to? (How to check that it is God?)

Etching: Look over some of your favourite hymns. What do the words say about God and faith? What does the music say? Have they shaped your understanding of God?

Actions: For some light 'research' into the influence of the Wise Man story, you can watch A Cosmic Christmas in which three aliens visit earth in the present (1977) to learn about the star and Christmas.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wxKQR9kTmo

╆ Spirit Sighting

The Holy Spirit inspires and helps people help others. She helps bring justice. She also helps people to know God. This can happen in many ways. Usually it's through somebody telling their friends. Sometimes it's bigger, like through the TV shows like *The Chosen*. This isn't to say this series is perfect, but it is helping people to challenge their assumptions about God, and questions the assumptions of the makers. What's great is that it leads people to wonder about God, and hopefully to reach out.

╆ 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 9

Jesus, you are the light of the world,
and the darkness cannot overcome
you.

We bring you the darkness of our earth, damaged by greed and neglect.

Give us your light, God of creation.

We bring you the darkness of our world, where their are leaders acting out of greed,

where there are wars and rumours of wars, where violence and starvation have driven people from their homes.

We also bring you the pain of the families grieving from the Iranian shooting of flight 752.

Give us your light, God of peace & justice.

We bring you the darkness of our nation, as we struggle with accepting people who are different in language and race, beliefs and values, in identity.

Give us your light, God of love.

We bring you the darkness of our relationships, people not looking, not speaking, not listening, not forgiving. **Give us your light, God of grace.**

We bring you the darkness of bodies: those who are sick with the pandemic, and those trying to help them.



⁹ painting: Prayer of illumination - M Moyers

those who are sick of the pandemic, with the stress and isolation, those who are suffering with uncertainty in work, school, and relationships, and those who are sick for other reasons, and in other ways.

Give us your light, God of healing.

May your Spirit give us companions on the road, the wisdom to ask for help, and epiphanies along the way.

Jesus, light of the world, be our morning star. and may we reflect your light to the world.

Amen. 10

☐ Hymn: We three kings......pg 11 (173)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBwL3y-Wlms



May Christ be revealed to you. filling your heart with hope for our journey.

Amen.



¹⁰ influenced by F.4.4.4 & F.4.4.9

Rev. Peter Rombeek for Kensington Presbyterian Church

Sunday, January 9

MISSION MOMENT

We are God's people, called to serve God with our many gifts. We belong to a denomination that is connected by faith, governance, history and mission. Presbyterians Sharing is one of the ways that Presbyterians across Canada work together to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, sharing God's love and hope in our communities, in Canada and around the world. Gifts to Presbyterians



Sharing help build strong congregations, serve vulnerable people, walk with Indigenous people, seek justice and share God's love. When we work together, we can accomplish so much more than we ever could on our own.

DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, January 9 (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 10 We pray for congregations across Canada as they faithfully support the ministries made possible through Presbyterians Sharing.

Tuesday, January 11 As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay's arrival in Taiwan, we pray for peace and justice for the people of Taiwan.

Wednesday, January 12 We pray for Syrian refugees and host communities in Lebanon, and we give thanks for the church's support of Presbyterian World Service & Development programs and partners that provide aid to this deeply struggling country.

Thursday, January 13 We pray for the members and work of the International Affairs Committee.

Friday, January 14 We give thanks for the leadership and ministry offered by LGBTQI2+ people in the church.

Saturday, January 15 We pray for the people who gather and serve at Edmonton Urban Native Ministry in Alberta, and we give thanks for their mission and ministry.

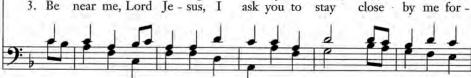


Away in a manger

CRADLE SONG 11 11 11 11



1. A - way in a man-ger, no crib for a bed, the lit-tle Lord
2. The cat-tle are low-ing, the ba-by a-wakes, but lit-tle Lord
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask you to stay close by me for -





Je - sus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus! Look ev - er, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil-dren in

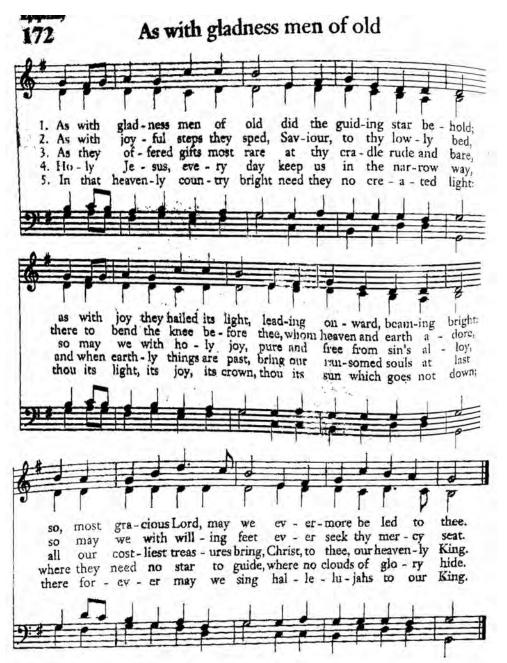




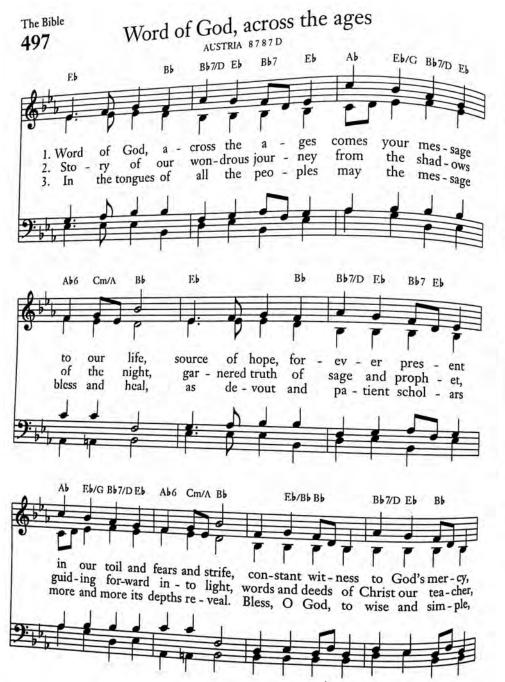


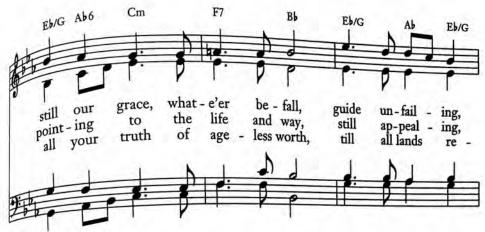
Words: v.1, 2, Little Children's Book for School and Families c. 1885; v.3, Gabriel's Vineyard Songs 1892; alt Music: William James Kirkpatrick (1838–1921); harmony, Eric H. Thiman (1900–1975)

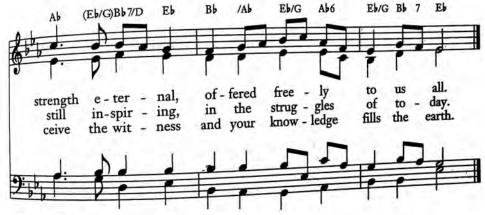
Words: public domain Music: barmony, copyright © The United Reformed Church in the UK/Oxford University Press



Words: William Chatterton Dis (1837-1898) Music: Conrad Kocher (1786-1872); harmony, William H. Monk (1823-1889); descant, Sydney H. Nicholson (1875-1947)







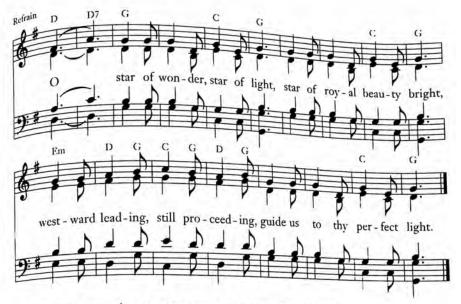
See also: Austria 483

Words: Ferdinand Q. Blanchard (1876-1968), alt Music: Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) Words: copyright © 1953, renewal 1981 by The Hymn Society. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Hope Publishing Co. Music: public domain

We three kings

KINGS OF ORIENT 8886 with refrain





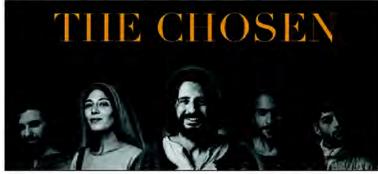
Words: John H. Hopkins Jr. (1820-1891) Music: traditional carol; arrangement, John H. Hopkins Jr. (1820-1891)

Words: public domain Music: public domain



Rev. Peter Rombeek for Kensington Presbyterian Church





Thursdays Bible Study

7 p.m. video 8 p.m. discussion

Please join us during the following study times:

Episode 1: Thursday, January 13th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 2: Thursday, January 20th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 3: Thursday, January 27th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 4: Thursday, February 3rd,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 5: Thursday, February 10th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 6: Thursday, February 17th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Episode 7: Thursday, February 24th,

7 p.m. Streaming of the video,

8 p.m. Bible study led by Rev. Peter

Following Jesus what was it like? what is it like?

You are invited to join us in watching and discussing an exciting video series on the life of Jesus and the disciples.

This series was discovered for us by Ines. She writes, "I find this show fascinating as it gives the gospels more depth and background."

The creators describe it like this, "The Chosen is based on the true stories of the gospels of Jesus Christ. Some locations and timelines have been combined or condensed. Backstories and some characters or dialogue have been added. However, all biblical and historical context and any artistic imagination are designed to support the truth and intention of the Scriptures. Viewers are encouraged to read the gospels." (from the disclaimer at the beginning)

We'll inviting you to watch an episode a week. We'll follow it with a discussion on how this version helps us see things we didn't before. Rev Peter will also be there to help sort out the artistic imagination from biblical truth. This will also include a Bible Study based on a theme from the episode.

You can find it on their website: watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen and on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6sHNLmYbAM

If you are interested in joining this virtual "Bible Study" please let us know.

Peter@KensingtonChurch.ca



