



Kensington Presbyterian Church

Choices

December 11, 2022

WELCOME, to worship. We are offering a variety of ways for people to gather. We are welcoming people to worship in person (with singing), as well as through Zoom, YouTube, and this printable PDF.¹ If this is how you are worshipping, know that you are not alone... and if you like, you can invite those who live with you to join you, or connect with others through the phone or 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)



Dream of St Joseph - Mengs

Contacts

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¹ 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

Advent Devotions: This year we have a lovely Advent devotional from Sanctified Arts. While it is daily, it also contains a variety of activities to invite you closer to God. Rev. Peter can print you a copy, or give you access to an online version.

Family explorations of Christmas around the world and Advent Calendars are also available.

Jesus & Java: Join us as we share the joys and questions of faith.

Thursday, **3:30 pm** at Beetz, 5914 Sherbrooke @ Clifton

Thursday, **7 pm** at 2nd Cup on Monkland @ Old Orchard

Choir: would like you to join them. We practice Sunday at 9:15.

Advent Discussions: The Rev. Bob Faris, moderator of the General Assembly, will be hosting discussions with church leaders of other denominations through advent. For more information visit:

presbyterian.ca/2022/11/01/ecumenical-advent

Hats, scarves, mitts, socks: We are accepting donations for people in the community.

Christmas Pageant Service: Sunday, Dec. 18 at 10:30 a.m.

Join us as we celebrate God in each other

Blue Christmas: a peaceful service: Wednesday, Dec 21 at 7:30 pm

Christmas is not always an easy time. Please join us for this meditative service.

Caroling in the Community: Thursday, Dec. 22 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Christmas Morning: Sunday, Dec. 25 at 10:30 a.m.

A fun worship for Jesus' birthday.

NDG Christmas Dinner: Dec 25 from 1 pm to 7 pm

The NDG Community Council is hosting a Christmas Dinner for everyone, free of charge. It will be held at St. Ignatius Church

Drop Box: We are accepting food donations to help the St.

Monica's Food Pantry, AND items to help the young parents program at Head & Hands (ex. clothing, diapers, toys).

Christmas Presents: Are you wondering what to get friends and loved ones who don't really need something more? We're setting up a Giving Tree that will allow you to donate to a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (including PWS&D and Canada Ministries projects) to a project that you think would be most appreciated by the person you are giving the gift for/to.

presbyterian.ca/donate/giving-tree-kensington-presbyterian-church-montreal



Approaching God



Call to worship & candle lighting

We are people of joy.

**God causes flowers to bloom in the desert;
the wilderness is glad and breaks into song.**

**We open our eyes
and we are surprised by joy in our lives!**

The third candle of Advent
reminds us that we are called to live as people of joy.

**We light this candle, recalling moments of laughter, great
beauty and deep faith.**

(Light the candle of joy)

♪ choir

Let us pray:

Holy One, regardless of what happens in our lives or in our world, may we reflect the warmth and wonder of this flame. Make your church a place of joy and life in our community.

Amen.²



Angel visits Joseph - M Moyers

♪ Hymn: Ye holy angels bright.....pg 11 (606)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAwTDwbVM3o

² from the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)

Prayer of Confession

A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists, Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov,³ taught the world that it only takes a tenth of a second for us to form an impression of a stranger. In other words, it only takes a tenth of a second for us to look at someone's face and determine a stereotype about who they are.⁴

With decisions happening that quickly, it is not hard to imagine why we might need this moment of confession.

The prayer of confession is an opportunity to slow down. We take that tenth of a second and give it room to breathe. We reflect on the decisions that we've made this past week and we ask for God's mercy to be in all of them.

And without fail, God wiggles God's self into the cracks of our lives, and we are made better for it. So with that confidence, let us go to God in prayer:

**God of mercy,
a million times a day
we have the opportunity to be gracious,
to assume the best in others,
to give the benefit of the doubt.
A million times a day
we could choose the better way,
but so often we don't.
Fear and greed kick in.
Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel.
Comparison and critique lead the charge.**

³ Willis, Janine and Alexander Todorov. "First impressions: making up your mind after a 100-ms exposure to a face." NIH: National Library of Medicine. July 17, 2006. pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16866745/.

⁴ Wargo, Eric. "How Many Seconds To A First Impression?" Association for Psychological Science. July 1, 2006. psychologicalscience.org/observer/how-many-seconds-to-a-first-impression

**Forgive us for forgetting
that we are descendants of Joseph.
Forgive us for forgetting
that grace and mercy are in our blood.
Forgive us for forgetting
that all belong to you.
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,
and the wisdom to choose a better way.
Amen.⁵**

Assurance of Pardon

Family of Faith, hear this good news:

We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance.
We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community.
We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known.

This is the good news of the gospel.

No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,
God continues to be a God of second chances,
community, and love.

Thanks be to God!

Amen.⁶



Dorothy Day and the Holy Family of the Streets - Kelly Latimore

⁵ by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

⁶ by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

🕯️ The Lord's Prayer (please use a version you are comfortable with)

**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.**



Listening to God

✦ Children's story

Lights are an important part of many Christmas traditions. In northern Europe Advent wreaths are common. In the Ukraine they would traditionally light a candle in a loaf of bread. In Brazil they create trees out of lights. In Argentina they create paper balloons with candles creating lift and light.

Why? because it's a reminder that Jesus coming brings light to the world. It's the same reason we light the candle at the beginning of our worship service.

Right now we're doing something a little different. We have five candles. Four coloured ones, and one white one in the middle. That's because we're in advent, the time when we get ready for Jesus coming... partially remembering Christmas, and partially looking forward to Jesus coming again. Every Sunday we light a new one until we get to the Christmas.

Do any of you have one at home?

Dear Jesus,
Please light our way
to help make the world a better place.
Amen.



Wilderness Blossom (Isaiah 35) - Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

🎵 Hymn: Lo, how a Rose e're blooming.....pg 11 (151)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlnGvyZwKzQ



Prayer for Illumination

God, we long to be like Joseph;
to hear your voice — loud and clear,
for invitations to something deeper,
and to be able to do our part.

With gratitude we listen.

Amen.



Intro to the readings

- The prophesy delivered by Isaiah was while they were in exile in Babylon. While you haven't experienced that, you probably have felt trapped at some point. What would these words mean to you?
- Today's gospel reading does not follow on from last week's passage where Mary was visited by the angel. That was in Luke, this will be Matthew. It does come write after the list of generations leading from Abraham through King David to Joseph.
 - As you get ready to listen, think over the story of Christ's birth. This is Matthew's telling of it.
- The psalm gives advice, and what will happen.



Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁷ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Isaiah 35](#): 1-10

[Matthew 1](#): 18-25

[Psalm 146](#)



Sermon: Choices

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

⁷ 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

Life is full of choices:

- what to wear
- to come to church, or join online,
or read the print version
- to greet your neighbour, or not

And there's risks with every choice. Take the one about your neighbour. Getting to know someone takes time and effort... and you may not like them. Then what if you commit a 'faux pas' - you would forever be embarrassed with them, and what if they told your other neighbours? You also don't know what demands they might make of you. What if they ask you to water the plants while they're gone? What if they unburden their soul on you? It could all be too much.

or it could be fantastic. COVID led to people saying and doing a lot of negative things to each other... and to people reaching out and supporting each other like never before - especially neighbours who finally spend enough time at home to notice each other. This week on CBC radio they've been sharing stories recognizing good neighbours. I didn't hear many of the stories, but I heard some about people sharing their struggles and supporting each other. My own experience involved choosing to make comments beyond the weather and ask about challenges and hopes. This led to us having a stronger connection - to the point where we're having some of our old neighbours over this afternoon to make cookies.

Getting there involves choices and risks.

Joseph is faced with a bigger choice, and risk. He lives in a society where honour and shame are very important - and is contagious. You can see where this is going. Mary is pregnant,

and not by her husband. This is dishonourable. By associating with her he will be tainted, and lose status and work. Does he choose to join their houses?

What about love? That wasn't why people married back then. It was about joining houses. You probably know stories about this from royalty in past centuries. Well, it wasn't just royalty.

We're told that Joseph was a righteous man. This means he lived according to God's way. Normally this would mean he followed the law. In Deuteronomy (22: 22-27) there are instructions about dealing a man having sex with a women engaged to another man. If it happens in a town, and she doesn't call for help, then they are both to be stoned to death. If Joseph is a righteous man, then it sounds like he should call for a trial.

Except he doesn't. He chooses to try and save her the public disgrace of a trial, not to mention save her life. For Joseph, this doesn't gain him anything. With either the trial or divorce he is going to lose the connection with Mary's family, and he won't lose any status in the community. His choice shows something more than a business arrangement. His choice shows a different way of treating people - with grace and mercy.

This is a different way of living with each other than the Deuteronomy instruction about cutting the bad out of society. It is a different form of righteousness. This living of grace and mercy over the law is one that will come up again and again in Matthew.

What's this mean for us?

I noticed that through COVID people were really getting on each other's nerves. It's getting better, but we still aren't healthy yet. I've had to deal with a number of them in the last month. When someone says something that bugs, or even hurts you, how

do you choose to act? You could try and see that the person is publicly shamed. Or you could take a deep breath and try and assume that they are doing the best they can. You could show some mercy and grace in talking to them privately. Share how you feel in a way the other person doesn't feel beaten up or driven out of the community. Try to do it in a reasonable and respectable way.

Though, in the end, that's not what Joseph does. God invites him to take this a step further. He's asked not to choose reasonable or respectable. He's asked to risk his career and family. He's asked to live this mercy by living with the problem.



Courageous Choice - Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

In disagreements children are taught to make “I” statements rather than accuse. It’s the start of a conversation that avoids assumptions. The offending person hears the effects of what they did; they have a chance to explain what their intention was. Together they can explore how to heal the community. This helps develop understanding of how the other person takes what you say - because just speaking truth doesn’t make it righteous. Sharing perspectives and experiences is risky. There’s the chance the other person may strike out and hurt you. It may require help from the community to do this safely. There’s also the risk you may need to expand your truth. Joseph’s idea of right definitely expanded.

COP15 is another opportunity to explore Joseph’s choice. It’s a UN conference on bio-diversity that is currently going on here in Montréal. We could use it to publicly shame other countries that are damaging the environment. Or we could choose to talk with others about where we see that they are letting down the environment. Or we could take it that step further. We could choose to work together: admitting where we still need to improve, sharing what we have learned, and then go even further by sharing our lives to make the changes. In this case, the ‘our’ means Canada... and me and you.

One of the encouraging things I’ve heard from this conference is that they are listening more to the indigenous peoples. While their science can look different, they have much wisdom in how to support balanced bio-diversity. Perhaps this is an example of God working in the margins to bring healing to the world.

A teaching that you can find in the Bible, but is more commonly expressed by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). The idea is that choices will last seven generations. It’s not a precise measure of time, but say around 200 years.

Four or five generations ago one of my ancestors chose to come to North America and preach the word of God. His faith, and choice, impacted his children, and their children, and so on. Faith in God has been important in our family. I suspect his choice contributed to me becoming a minister - even before I heard his story.

What would have happened if Joseph hadn’t accepted Mary?

What choices are we making?

and how are they shaping the next seven generations?

I was going to say that the choices you made this morning aren’t big ones, but I suspect every choice is. What you choose to wear and have for breakfast impacts what you buy, which impacts the people who made it and how they live. It impacts how people see you and relate to you. All this impacts the future.

It could become overwhelming.

Instead, I’d encourage you to remember that you are one of the people in the family tree. I don’t say ‘just’ one, because you are important. Listen for dreams about bringing God’s generous love into the world - even if it sounds crazy.

And live to better choices.

To God be all the glory.

Amen.



Holy Family - Ukraine



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: When Joseph was bridegroom.....pg 12
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG_uPXHt-6s (just music)

💬 FaithTalk: These are some questions for you to discuss with somebody... or many somebodies. Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

Wonder: Consider Joseph accepting the offer to raise the Son of God. What would that be like?

Wonder: Consider that Joseph adopted Jesus into his family. How's that impact your thoughts on step-fathers/mothers?

Values: What does it mean to be 'righteous'?

Memories: Share about a time when you had to choose between the reasonable or acceptable option, and one that was demanding but would show God's love more?

Etching: What is a choice one of your ancestors made that has shaped/impacted you?

Wonder: In the Isaiah passage, the Israelite were being held captive by the Babylonians. What are we being helped captive by?

Prayer: ...to have dreams for how to help God love reign, and the courage to follow.

✦ Spirit Sightings

When Aruk was a small child, he contracted polio, losing partial use of his legs. For a long time, when people looked at him, they only saw his disability.

One day, a staff member from the Garu Community-Based Rehabilitation program in Ghana noticed Aruk. Aruk received a tricycle through the project, as well as the opportunity for an

education. Aruk received training and a loan to start a business - also through the Garu program. He started small - selling mobile phone credits under an umbrella. Now Aruk has earned enough money to move into a permanent shop.

Reflecting on the help he received through the Garu program and what is now possible for him, Aruk comments, "I am so grateful."

The Garu Community-Based Rehabilitation project is a program of The Presbyterian Church in Ghana and supported by PWS&D⁸.



✦ 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

God of step-fathers and adopted parents,
 God of angel messengers and newborn kings,
 we bow our heads today with praise on our lips.

For who else but you
would pick two ordinary folks to be God's parents?
And who else but you
would assume the best of fragile human hearts?
The answer is no one,
for you alone are our God,
and in your grace and in your devotion,
you open the door for us to see a new day.

So today we pray:
help us to be like Joseph,
who reminds us that grace is within reach.
In a word full of competition,
help us choose celebration.
In a world full of scarcity,
help us choose abundance.
In a world of war and violence,
help us choose peace and grace.
In a world of divided lines,
help us choose connection and relationship.
In a world of quick assumptions and stereotypes,
help us choose curiosity and compassion.

There are so many choices,
yet, sometimes we don't see any options.
Sometimes we don't see a way forward,
or even see the part that you are playing.
though we know that you are present.

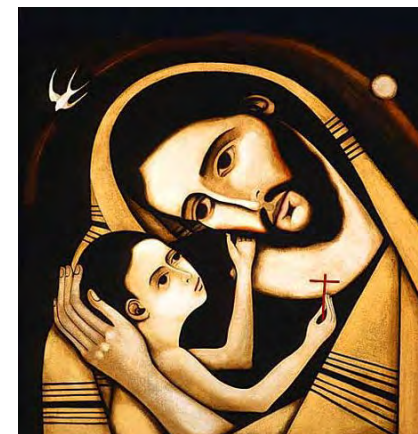
Lord, we pray for places in conflict,
such as in the Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia & Taiwan.
We pray for the talks at COP15,

that they may make practical and helpful plans
to preserve your creation.
We pray for people who need healing,
in their bodies,
in their minds,
in the souls.
We pray for relationships that need healing

Help us to chose ways that will transform lives for the better,
even if we are transformed too.
May this story of Joseph rattle something loose in us.
May this story of Joseph help us drop the need to be right,
or to be the best,
or to have it all figured out,

May this story of imperfection sew grace into our bones.
May we catch glimpses of your love in our world.
May we shake off the dust of our old selves
and live into something new.
And may we be a little more like Joseph,
but mainly, may we be a little more like you.

In Jesus name
Amen.⁹



⁹ adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

♪ Hymn: Oh for a thousand tongues to sing.....pg 12 (374)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbiQ17uulKU

✦ Sending & Benediction

*As you leave this place, may you go knowing that
from generation to generation,
we have been claimed and loved.
From generation to generation,
God has been by our side.
From generation to generation,
we are not alone.*

*The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow
knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth,
saying, "Go be the person you are called to be,
love wildly, do justice, and come back soon."
May it be so.
Amen.¹⁰*



¹⁰ by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

In Nepal, 70-year-old Dhani Gharti found a boil on the sole of her foot. When she sought treatment, Dhani received a diagnosis of leprosy. Despite taking medication for a year, Dhani's wound kept coming back. One day, Dhani's friend told her about the Presbyterian World Service & Development-supported Shining Hospital, a Christian hospital run by the International Nepal Fellowship, where she thought Dhani could get more successful treatment. **"Every time I visit the Shining Hospital with my wounded foot, the nurses always welcome me and give the best medical care.** They always show love and care while dressing my wounds," shared Dhani.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, December 11 (Third Sunday of Advent) Give us joy, O God, as we prepare to welcome Christ among us again.

Monday, December 12 We pray for the medical staff at the Shining Hospital in Nepal as they treat illnesses with support from the church through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Tuesday, December 13 We pray for chaplains serving in hospitals, retirement homes and other health-care facilities across Canada.

Wednesday, December 14 We pray for Indigenous women in Guatemala as they learn their rights and are empowered to exercise them with support from the church through Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Thursday, December 15 We pray for the members and work of the Atlantic Mission Society.

Friday, December 16 We pray for those struggling with spiritual and mental health during the holidays. May they reach out for help and find faithful and supportive spiritual care providers.

Saturday, December 17 O God, you are the giver of life. We pray for the church throughout the world. May God renew its worship, nurture its growth, empower its witness and restore its unity as we continue Christ's ministry.

Ye holy angels bright

DARWALL'S 148TH 666688

C G/B C Am G6 F C/E G/D C G

1. Ye ho - ly an - gels bright, who wait at God's right hand, or
 2. Ye bless - ed souls at rest, who ran this earth - ly race, and
 3. Ye saints, who toil be - low, a - dore your heaven - ly King, and
 4. My soul, bear thou thy part, tri - umph in God a - bove, and

C Am G/B/C D /C G/B C G/D D 7 G C F G7/D

through the realms of light fly at your Lord's com - mand, as - sist your
 now, from sin re - leased, be - hold the Sav - iour's face, your prais - es
 on - ward as ye go some joy - ful an - them sing; take all God
 with a well-tuned heart sing thou the songs of love! Let all thy

Am C/E G/D C F/A C F G7/D C/E Dm/F C/G G 7 C

song, for else the theme too high doth seem for mor - tal tongue.
 sound, as in God's sight with sweet de - light ye do a - bound.
 gives; through good or ill, praise our God still who ev - er lives!
 days till life shall end, what - e'er God send, be filled with praise.

Words: Richard Baxter (1615–1691); revision, John Hampden Gurney (1802–1862), alt
 Music: John Darwall (1731–1789); harmony, William Henry Monk (1823–1889)

Words: public domain Music: public domain

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing From ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With sweet - ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing As proph - ets long have
 mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
 air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark - ness ev - 'ry -
 woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness

sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
 kind, To show God's love a - right, She bore to
 where, True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
 know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright

cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
 us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
 death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

Text: German, 16th cent., sts. 1–2, 4; Friedrich L. C. Layritz, 1808–59, st. 3;
 tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2, alt.; tr. Harriet R. E. Spaeth, 1845–1925, st. 3;
 tr. John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4

Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesang, Köln, 1599; setting: Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

Text and music: Public domain

ES IST EIN ROS (Rhythmic)
 76 76 6 76

B. 11, 1–2, Maj. 1:29–21; B. 6 2:14–15; Luke 2:1, 18

When Joseph was bridegroom

MUELLER: 11.11.11-11

Capo 3: (D) F (G) B \flat (D) F

1. When Jo - seph was bride-groom and Mar - y the bride,
 2. So, Jo - seph con - sent - ed to take sec - ond place
 3. In touch with an an - gel, in - spired by a dream,
 4. O God, who called Jo - seph to fa - ther your son,

(A7) C7 (D) F

the date of their wed-ding was his to de - cide,
 and save his be - lov - ed from cer-tain dis - grace;
 a - ware that things some-times are more than they seem,
 and see, as a trades-man, your will be - ing done,

(G) B \flat (D) F

for Mar - y was preg-nant and Jo - seph be - guiled,
 in - formed by what Mar - y pro-claimed in her song,
 con - front - ed by God in sound, si - lence, and sight,
 teach us when re - luc - tant to stay on your side

(A7) C7 (D) F (Em/G) G \flat /B \flat (A7) C7 (D) F

till Ga - briel con - vinced him to par - ent God's child,
 he kept faith though fear-ing that much might go wrong.
 all Jo - seph de - sired was to do what was right.
 like Jo - seph, to dith - er, then dream, and de - cide.

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.