



Kensington Presbyterian Church
Growing in faith and sharing God's love
since 1786

Ridiculous Promises

September 15, 2024

WELCOME, we come to you from the un-ceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation.

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).



Announcements

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

Choir: Sunday mornings at 9:45.

Zoom Prayer Group: Wednesday at 6:30 a.m.

[us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

[pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

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

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

'Film' Series: Sept 20th with pizza at 6:30 followed by board games.

New Hope Fundraising Dinner: Sept 20th

Drop Box: Food donations are welcome for the local Food Pantry, diapers for young mothers through Head & Hands.

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

Rev. Peter Rombeek
 Kensington Presbyterian Church



Pondering God's Promise - Courtney Vander Veur Matz

Contacts

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Approaching God



Lighting of the Christ Candle

Jésus Christ est la lumière du monde.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



Call to worship

Our God flings stars into space and says,
“See! You are all my children,
each and every one.”

**We come, the stars in the skies,
the sand on the shore,
all God’s children everywhere,
drawn to God,
drawn to love,
drawn to worship.²**

♪ Hymn: Rejoice in the Lord always.....pg 8 (421)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXLggugGkFA



Celebration - John Swanson



Prayer of Approach

Creator of the stars
that shine in the night
guiding people home.
You are amazing.

You have been since before the beginning,
forming the stars
whose light we are only seeing now.
forming stories,
whose light still guides us home.

As we gather and share your stories
we catch a glimpse of how you want people to live
and it seems impossible.
May your Spirit help us not to be discouraged
but to have faith in your vision,
...to trust you

And Jesus, please forgive us when we don’t.

May we be like the disciples who follow you,
making mistakes along the way,
but learning through practice
and repeating the prayer that you gave them to live by.

Let us join together in saying the Lord’s prayer:



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.**

✦ Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news...

To all who turn from sin in sorrow,
to all who turn to God in hope,
this is God's Word of grace:

We are accepted, we are forgiven, we are loved.

This gift we have from God.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.³



Listening to God

🗨️ Flip Chart

Brainstorm what are the most amazing things you have seen or experienced. . .

🧘 Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that we accept your wonderful promises.
Amen.

³ Worship Sourcebook 2.4.39



Intro to the readings

Today the children's time, readings, hymns & sermon are all going to be combined.

Today's key passage goes way way back to near the beginning of the Bible. It may seem odd to go to something so old to shine some light on our lives now, but they do help us when it's dark. Think of it as like stars. The light from a star on the other side of our Galaxy takes 66 000 years to get here⁴ - and they help provide light when its dark.




Leading into today's stories God had tried working with everyone, but it wasn't working. So God decided to focus on one family and use them to show the world how good it is to trust and love God - and how God loves the world.

⁴ www.mpg.de/11549037/mapping-spiral-structure-milky-way#:~:text=47%2B00.05%20on%20the%20opposite.was%20about%2036%2C000%20light%2Dyears.

God chose Abram and Sarai (Abraham and Sarah). At the time they were old enough to be grandparents... except they hadn't had any kids, so they weren't.

Let's hear two passages where God makes promises to Abram. They were a few years apart. Listen to what is promised. Would you trust these promises?

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁵ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Genesis 12: 1-4](#)

[Genesis 15: 1-6](#)



Sermon:

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

Abram was wondering what the point was to his life if it didn't lead to anything. With no kids, everything he'd accomplished would just disappear. What's the point? (Have you ever wondered what the point is for doing things?)

Then God shows up and invites Abram into the bigger picture. Perhaps like taking a star that's all by itself; no friends or family around for light-years - and then God shows that its part of a larger consternation, guiding sailors who would otherwise have no hope.

God invites Abram into something bigger by making a few promises:

- to make him great
- to bless him

...and that he will bless everyone in the world

- to have kids
- more blessings than the stars in the sky.

These are BIG promises.

Scientists don't know how many stars there are in the sky, but a guess is that there are 100 Billion in the Milky Way⁶ - which is just our Galaxy. God promises more blessings than that.

And while the promise is that Abram and Sarai will be blessed - it is also that through them everyone in the world will be blessed! That's also a lot (currently over 8 Billion⁷).

and it includes us.

Let's sing a song that reflects that.

♪ Hymn: Amigos de Cristo.....pg 9 (476)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ley_edlhtzY

The thing with these promises is that they are impossible. People that old can not have children. It's just not reasonable or responsible to believe such things. Not only that - years go by with no sign of the promises coming true. ...It's no wonder that Abram gets discouraged. Don't you?



5 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

6 imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/science/objects/milkyway1.html
7 worldpopulationreview.com/

What would this be like here? (because the story shines a light on our lives now) It's God promising that Kensington can have a BIG impact in Montréal - in Québec - with a government that is intolerant of religion and non-francophones. Kensington will share God's love, hope & healing with so many that it'll be like the stars in the sky.

and you will be a part of it.
I'm sure you can think of all sorts of reasons why not - and they will be good reasons. But God is promising that you will be a part of this constellation that helps others find the way home.

Can you believe these promises?


Let's sing song and Abram & Sarai (Abraham & Sarah) and these promises.

♪ Hymn: To Abraham and Sarah.....pg 10 (478)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0SM91H0clw

How do you respond when somebody promises something you think is ridiculous? Do you trust the promise?

Perhaps, but only if your trust/faith in the person is bigger than the ridiculous promise.

Let's hear from a couple of more Bible passages.

 Reading:
[Hebrews 11](#): 1-16+
[Psalm 33](#)

How does that faith happen? Some people are more generous in trusting others, but even then it needs some work. Brené Brown talks about building trust as being like a marble jar. Every time you trust somebody with a little something and they don't let you down, it's like dropping a marble in the jar. Gradually your relationship builds and you can trust them with more of yourself. To put it another way, you look at what that person has done.



It can be the same with God. Some people are more generous in trusting God, and some need to check the marble jar. God's marbles come in a variety of ways. There's the light that shines from the old stories - like those in the Bible. This is why there's a big list of reminders in Hebrews. There are also the amazing things we listed earlier on the Flipchart. There's examples in our lives - perhaps a time of pain when others stood with you, or a time of need when others helped, or a time when you were brave enough to take a ridiculous risk, with unexpected blessings. Maybe it's a time when you thought you were blessing someone else, and discovered you were blessed in return.⁸

Let's take a ridiculous idea: God is going to use a church that was once big, but now isn't, with people who are busy or tired... or both, to be a witness to those who don't know anything about God. It can sound crazy, but it's happening. The movie night is getting people who don't go to church to gather with those who

⁸ There's a beautiful book about this call *God in the Alley: Being and Seeing Jesus in a Broken World* by Greg Paul about his experiences in downtown Toronto.

do - and they not only share their lives, but we also talk about God in our lives. It's not forced. There's no examination. It's like the disciples who just shared what they experienced, and used that to figure it out. It's similar with Jesus & Java. We're also getting new people coming on Sunday. This shows that God's dream of using you to bring blessings to the world isn't crazy.

Through Jesus we are inheritors of Abram, some of the stars. I'm going to invite the children to take some stars and place them on your hand.

As inheritors of Abram, we also receive the promise that God will bless us - and use us to be a blessing to others.



Ash Wednesday - Lisle Gwynn Garrity

To God be all the glory
Amen.



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: Joyful joyful.....pg 11 (410)
<https://youtu.be/mtvxwsiRge4>

✧ Spirit Sightings

Just briefly, I am blessed to be part of a national committee considering the future of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). We had a couple of days of meetings this week, and it was wonderful - the people, but more so the way we started with

scripture and the Holy Spirit guided us to see how God is calling the denomination.

It's possible to see the reasons why something won't happen, but we have faith that God is doing good things.

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

Do what you feel safe (and practice stretching a little).

Etching: Identify a relationship that you value. Share how was it built?

Values: Share some examples of why you are doing FaithTalk with the person you are doing it with. (and if you are doing it alone, please think of someone who might try some little marbles with)

Wonder: What crazy ridiculous promises might God be calling Christians to? Kensington to? you to?

Prayer: ...pray that your/our faith in God's dream will be strong enough to step into the unknown.

✧ Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on our **website**: kensingtonchurch.ca. 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.



Prayers of the people

Loving God,
 you promised Abram that he would be great,
 and we are still talking about him today.
 you promised Abram that he family would be as numerous as the
 stars, and through adoption, here we are.
 you promised Abram that he would bless all the world,
 and through Jesus, we are.

Thank you for keeping your promises.

You promise that all who follow Jesus' way
 will know your love, hope & healing.
 You promise that your Spirit will be with us always,
 and she is.
 You promise to help with the difficulties in living your way.

Thank you for keeping your promises.

Jesus, we ask that you be with those who are:

- afraid that following your way might be uncomfortable
- worried that your plan is ridiculous
- who feel that there is nobody around for light-years who cares
- who are sick

Thank you for the faith we have,
 and help us to trust you more.

In Jesus name.

Amen.

♪ Hymn: To God be the glory.....pg 12 (350)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU (Royal Albert Hall)



Sending & Benediction

As we leave this place,
 let us step out in faith
 and in confidence.
 We have a God in whom
 we can truly trust
 and in whom we have faith.
 So let us live in that faith,
 serving the one who has faith in us.
 And may his blessings be with you
 this day and always.⁹



Rejoice in the Lord Always 586

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4 (KJV)

① Unison

Re - joice in the Lord al - ways: a - gain I say, Re - joice!

②

Re - joice, re - joice, and a - gain I say, Re - joice!

③

Re - joice in the Lord al - ways: a - gain I say, Re - joice!

WORDS: Philippians 4:4
MUSIC: Unknown

REJOICE
Irregular meter

MISSION MOMENT Sunday, September 15

After participating in the New Beginnings program, which guides congregations through a renewal process to discern God's call for their future, St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, ON, is exploring innovative ways to engage with their community. The congregation is turning faith into action by fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities and their families. They have created a multi-sensory space where individuals with sensory sensitivities can find comfort and engagement. They hope to offer respite programming and support groups for caregivers who demonstrate a commitment to walking alongside them in their journey. The New Beginnings program receives funding from Presbyterians Sharing.



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, September 15 We give thanks for congregations like St. Giles Presbyterian Church in St. Catharines, ON that engage in intentional ministry to support children with special needs and their families.

Monday, September 16 We pray for congregations in transition, and for those who serve as their ministers and interim moderators. May God's Spirit guide them as they continue in their journey of discernment.

Tuesday, September 17 We celebrate the ways our congregations work together to support Presbyterians Sharing by sharing their gifts, time and talent—serving on committees and participating in advocacy campaigns, learning experiences and other opportunities to serve.

Wednesday, September 18 We pray for the families of Paul McLean (working with the church in Taiwan), Blair Bertrand (working with the church in Malawi), Joel Sherbino (working with the church in Malawi), and Lora Nafziger (working with United Mission to Nepal).

Thursday, September 19 We give thanks and pray for those who serve on the Canadian Ministries Grants Committee as they fulfill their responsibilities with wisdom, compassion and discernment.

Friday, September 20 We pray for members and leaders of the Atlantic Mission Society as they hold their Annual Meeting from Sept. 20–22 in Truro, NS.

Saturday, September 21 (International Day of Prayer for Peace) We pray that love and compassion drive out senseless violence around the world and ask God to protect PWS&D partners delivering humanitarian aid to uprooted families.

476 Amigos de Cristo / Friends of the Lord

AMIGOS DE CRISTO Irregular with refrain

Refrain

F **C**

A - mi - gos de Cris-to; we're friends of the Lord; a -
we've been for - giv-en, and we've been re-stored;

C7 **1. F** **2. F** **Fine** **Last time**

mi-gos de Cris-to; we're friends of the Lord. For Lord. Lord.

F **Bb** **F**

1. Friends of the cov - e-nant re - newed each morn;
2. Born of a fam - i - ly, the young and old,

F **G7** **C**

bap - tized and lov - ing it, we've been re - born.
we'll be on hand to see new life un - fold.

F **Bb** **F**

Gift of the dove is ours for - ev - er - more. A -
We un - der - stand the need to be made whole.

Bb **F** **Bb** **F** **C7** **F** **Refrain** **D.S.**

mi - gos de Cris-to; we're friends of the Lord. A -

Words: Latin American traditional Music: Traditional

Words: public domain Music: public domain

To Abraham and Sarah

THORNBURY 7 6 7 6 D

D A7/E D/F# G D/F# E7 A /G D/F# G Em7 A Dsus 2 - 1



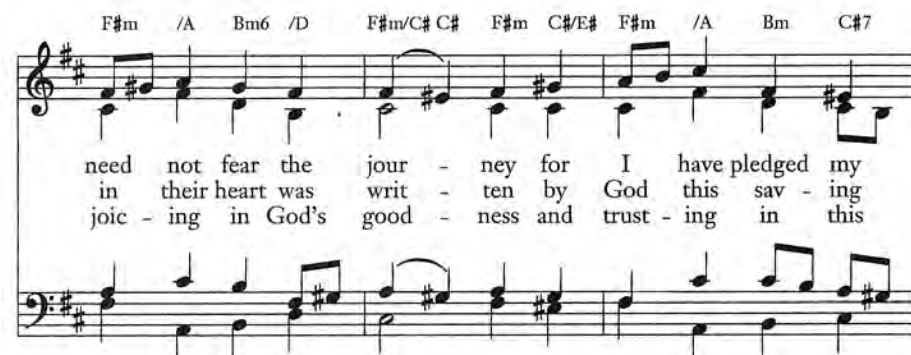
1. To Ab-ra-ham and Sar - ah the call of God was clear: "Go
2. From Ab-ra-ham and Sar - ah a - rose a pil-grim race, de -
3. We of this gen-er - a - tion on whom God's hand is laid, can

F# Bm G D/F# E7 A /G D/F# G Em7 A7 Dsus4-2 - 3 D



forth and I will show you a coun-try rich and fair. You
pend-ent for their jour - ney on God's a - bun - dant grace, and
jour-ney to the fu - ture se - cure and un-a - fraid, re -

F#m /A Bm6 /D F#m/C# C# F#m C#/E# F#m /A Bm C#7



need not fear the jour - ney for I have pledged my
in their heart was writ - ten by God this sav - ing
joic - ing in God's good - ness and trust - ing in this

F#m (Bm/F# F#m) A/G D/F# A7/E D /C# G/B D/A E/G# A



word:
word: "that you shall be my peo - ple and
word:

D/F# (A7/G D/A) A7 Bm /A G A7/G D (Em A7 D)



I will be your God."

Organ

Words: Judith Fetter (1937-) Music: Basil Harwood (1859-1949)

Words: copyright © Judith Fetter, 1984 Music: copyright © the executors of Dr. Basil Harwood. Used by permission.

Joyful, joyful we adore you

1. Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore you,
 2. All your works with joy sur - round you;
 3. You are giv - ing and for - giv - ing,
 4. Mor - ning stars, a - wake the cho - rus;

God of glo - ry, Lord of love. Hearts un - fold like
 earth and heaven re - flect your rays; stars and an - gels
 ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blessed, well - spring of the
 mor - tals, join with eve - ry part, for what joy is

flowers be - fore you, o - pening to the
 sing a - round you, cen - tre of the un -
 joy of liv - ing, o - cean depth of
 set be - fore us as Christ's love joins

Words: Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933), alt Music: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827);
 arrangement, Edward Hodges (1796–1867) Words: public domain Music: public domain

sun a - bove. Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness;
 bro - ken praise. Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain,
 hap - py rest. God Cre - a - tor, Christ our Sav - iour,
 heart to heart! Ev - er sing - ing, march we on - ward,

drive the dark of doubt a - way; giv - er of im -
 flower - y mead - ow, flash - ing sea, chant - ing bird and
 all are yours who live in love. Teach us how to
 vic - tors in the midst of strife; joy - ful mu - sic

mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
 flow - ing foun - tain, join to praise you joy - ful - ly.
 love our neigh - bour; lift us to your joy a - bove.
 - leads us sun - ward in the tri - umph song of life.

To God be the glory

1. To God be the glo - ry, who great things has done!
 2. Oh per - fect re - demp - tion, the pur - chase of blood,
 3. Great things God has taught us, great things God has done

God so loved the world!—free - ly send - ing the Son,
 to eve - ry be - liev - er the pro - mise of God,
 and great our re - joic - ing through Je - sus the Son,

who yield - ed his life an a - tone - ment for sin,
 the of - fen - der, re - pent - ing, be - lieves,
 but pur - er and high - er and great - er will be

and o - pened the life - gate that all may go in.
 through Je - sus' a - tone - ment, full par - don re - ceives!
 our won - der, our glad - ness, when Je - sus we see!

Refrain G

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear God's voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the peo - ple re - joice!

Oh come to the Fa - ther through Je - sus the Son,

and give God the glo - ry, who great things has done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby (1820–1915), alt Music: William H. Doane (1832–1916)

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