



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

## *What sin? What future?*

*September 8, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 9:30.

**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:** Will be starting on Sept 20<sup>th</sup> with pizza & board games

**New Hope Fundraising Dinner:** Sept 20<sup>th</sup>

**BBQ (free):** at St. Ansgars on Grand and NDG starting around 12:30.

There will also be a bake table & plant sale.

<sup>1</sup> note: that the footnotes are not as thorough as an academic paper.



Adam and Eve - Wenzel Peter

### *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 (Matthew 11:28-29)

Hear this invitation from Jesus

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.

Let us worship God.

♪ Hymn: For the fruits of all creation.....pg 10 (802)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBXHDbesb7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBXHDbesb7k)



Adam & Eve 1909 - Edvard Munch



### Prayer of Approach

Creator God,

who lifted up the mountains and formed the dry land;  
whose hands shaped us out of the dust of the earth;  
breathing life into us

so that we could share in the wonder and delight  
of what you do.

Jesus,

it's still amazing that you walked through the dust of this earth  
to show us how to live - to lead us into your Kingdom.

You continue the message of the prophets  
reminding us to seek first the Kingdom of God,  
and not think that we know better.

Because we don't know better...

We've been taught that we should be specific when we say sorry,  
and so, in silence, we admit to you our failings. . .

Before God, with the people of God, I confess  
to my brokenness: to the ways I wound my life,  
the lives of others, and the life of the world

**May God forgive you,  
Christ renew you  
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

Amen.


**Before God, with the people of God,  
we confess to our brokenness:  
to the ways we wound our lives,  
the lives of others  
and the life of the world**



May God forgive you, Christ renew you  
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.  
**Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit stays with us,  
leading us into forgiveness  
and into a closer relationship with you.

Help us LORD to live the prayer you teach your students.  
Let us sing together 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.**



### *Listening to God*

#### Children's Story

The composer of the next song, Karen Lafferty, wrote it one night after a Bible Study. It's based on some teachings of Jesus,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The confession section is from the Iona Community's daily prayer.

<sup>3</sup> found in: Matt. 6:33, Matt. 7:7, Matt. 4:4

and it's good advice. Let's go over the words before we sing it:

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
{try and live the way God thinks is right}  
and all these things shall be added unto you.  
[feeling peace, love, ...]  
Alleluia [praise God]

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;  
[if you're living as God thinks is right]  
seek and ye shall find;  
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.

We do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

prayer:

Dear Jesus, help us to put you first  
so that everyone can know comfort and love.

Amen.

♪ Hymn: Seek ye first.....pg 10 (625)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LMQfOp9w8k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LMQfOp9w8k)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVTZ9DmnXvM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVTZ9DmnXvM) (interesting version)

#### Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds  
through the power of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may ourselves better... and listen to you.  
Amen.

## ✧ Intro to the readings

We have three readings today. The longer one is sections from Genesis chapter 2 and 3. This is the second, though older, creation story. The one told about Seven Days and the one set in the Garden of Eden both tell us truth about God and relationships, but emphasize different aspects of it. We're skipping the geography lesson and the account of the human being divided into two.

As you listen, pay attention to what you assume and expect, and what you actually hear. To help things stand out a bit our reading will be a combination of the New Revised Standard Version, Presbyterian Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, and Jewish scholar Robert Alter's *Genesis* translation.<sup>4</sup>

There will be a short passage from Luke with Jesus responding to a question from his disciples.

And a psalm that I find describes the feeling of today's theme very well.



<sup>4</sup> I wanted to check something in Alter's translation, but my copy was at the church. An internet search found chapter three online. You can read it here: [www.mifami.org/eLibrary/Alter-Genesis-Ch3.pdf](http://www.mifami.org/eLibrary/Alter-Genesis-Ch3.pdf)



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

[Genesis 2](#): 4b-7, 15-17

[Genesis 3](#): 1-8

[Luke 11](#): 1-4

[Psalm 32](#)



Sermon: What sin? What future?

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

Asking questions is good. This is one of the ways God created us to learn. One of the tricks is to figure out what's a good question.

Before my Presbytery declared that I could become a minister they put me on the hot seat and asked me anything they wanted. It's not an unusual process. This week I heard about somebody's experience in the Bible Belt. He was asked if he believed the snake talked. It was obviously a question to find out how literally he interpreted the Bible. In response, the prospective minister answered that it wasn't a fair question to ask. A talking snake wasn't an issue in the story. In thinking of questions, this is an important idea. It's not a question of if there are good or bad questions, but are they appropriate, or not, for the context. An important part of interpreting the Bible is considering what is important in the passage - and what isn't. This helps judge if what you take from it is fair.

What should we ask from today's passage? As soon as you heard it you probably had impressions come back from Sunday

<sup>5</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

School and Adam & Eve references in books and TV shows. This week I found the differences between those Sunday School and cultural versions and what is in the text quite interesting - and raising questions.

A question I've pondered with friends, and you probably have too, is why does this even happen. Why did God put the tree there and then say, 'Eat whatever you want, but not that nice one in the middle.' Why put the ban on knowing good and evil? Why create the temptation? Why create the snake? ...and the story isn't concerned with any of that - making this not a good place to answer those questions.

A little after our reading stopped, God asks the woman what she had done. She replies, "*The serpent tricked me, and I ate.*"<sup>6</sup> Often the snake is portrayed as evil or Satan incarnate - though is this fair to the text? Miguel De La Torre, a Hispanic theologian, points out that the evil snake and Satan aren't in the text. Nobody seems afraid of the snake. The snake also doesn't tell Woman or her man to eat the fruit - it just asks a question and changes how things are seen. De La Torre suggests that perhaps the snake has the role of the Trickster found in many cultures, rather than that of evil. How would that change our ideas? This would be something interesting to explore in a Bible study, but let's consider more about the text and assumptions.

There's the woman. While she tries to shift the attention to the snake, much of Christian history blames women for original sin. This term is used not only to refer to the first sin, but to the breaking of the whole of creation<sup>7</sup> - which is a lot to be blamed for. It's true that the actions in the story change the way the world works. It offers an explanation for why life is hard, but it doesn't single the woman out. Using the story to subjugate women, or

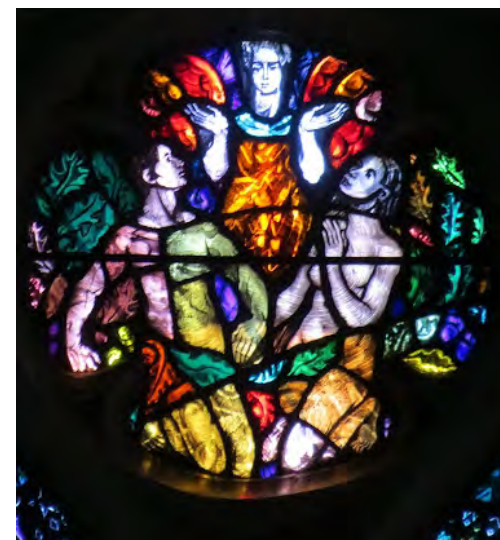
just as a scapegoat, is unfair to the text.

In Sunday School we learned about this story and sin. While the 's' word isn't used, I think it's fair to say that sin is a turning point in the story. A good question to ask is, 'what's the sin that twists the story?'

With this version of the creation story (rather than the '7 Days' creation story) God wants somebody to "till and keep" the earth. If we go back to the Hebrew, 'till and keep' means to serve to protect creation. There's a job opening and God forms people to do the work. It's a different emphasis from what I remember in Sunday School. The difference is interesting, and still related to sin. Putting ourselves before creation has become the way the world works (which is basically the definition of systemic sin or original sin), and is a choice. We're shaped by it, and we chose it. It's a sin. But the sin in this story is more than not doing our job.

Another choice is taking from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. It's an understandable choice. What's wrong with wanting to be wise? The Bible praises wise people. It says things like, "*Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.*" (Proverbs 4:5) What's wrong with taking a bit of wisdom?

One explanation for why this is bad is lost in our translations. For those who understand the meaning behind the Hebrew, the



6 [Genesis 3:13](#) (New Revised Standard Version)

7 There's a very interesting Doctor Who story that explores the concept of Original Sin. (*The Beast Below* with Matt Smith and Karen Gillan)

term used here for ‘good and evil’ does not refer to a moral code. It is about the knowledge of good and evil gained through experience... and trying to get it simply by eating some fruit rather than living it is wrong. It doesn’t work. I’ve seen it in many TV series. As the main characters struggle with life there’s a somebody in the town who is always trying to get ahead without doing the work. It never works, though they help lighten the mood. When I’ve seen this in real life it’s not so funny. Have you seen people try and get ahead without doing the work? to be wise without the experience? Do you remember trying it?

This can be called ‘thinking you know better.’ In this case, it’s thinking you know better than God. This isn’t respecting God, or yourself - which makes it a sin. This is a bit like the Sunday School lesson of disobeying instructions, but gives space to try everything else - and to ask questions.

An interesting warning that comes out in the text is about assumptions or accuracy. The woman believes (incorrectly) that she’s not allowed to touch the tree. When she does and nothing happens she goes further and eats the fruit... and everything changes. Her man has no issues with participating.

Now they were told by God that after they ate the fruit they would die. They would end... except they didn’t.

Did God lie?

I don’t think so. I think death did happen, but also the modelling of how to move forward.

The death was to the life they had. By acting like they knew better than God showed they didn’t trust God. They killed that relationship. Instead of making them powerful, they realized they were exposed to everything... especially God. They were naked; they were ashamed.

Living with a broken relationship with someone is draining. It doesn’t matter if they were a friend, colleague, or are family. It doesn’t matter if it’s your relationship with creation... or with The Creator. Living in sin saps your soul. In each of these relationships the sin could come out of assumptions, like the woman and her understanding that the rule included not touching. Or perhaps you read a text and assume it’s insulting. The brokenness could come out of thinking that you know better and just doing things your way - like taking the fruit despite being warned that this is the one not too. It could come out of not ‘tilling and keeping’ the relationship - serving and protecting. These can apply to our relationships with people, creation, and God.

Perhaps you have felt like the psalmist?

*“my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer”*

The question is: is this the end?

No.

Life doesn’t stop when relationships break;  
it doesn’t stop with sin.

But how to continue?

In our story with the Human, the Woman & the Snake... there are consequences, and there is mercy. God shows them that forgiveness is the way forward.

Our other passages tell us more. The psalm sings about “*Then I acknowledged my sin to you,... and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*” Step one is to ask God for forgiveness - because everything involves God. Whether the brokenness is because this is how the



world works, or by choice, or accidentally - try to be specific. This is like when you were taught to say, "I'm sorry." - and it's important.

It's also important to ask for forgiveness from others. This is so important, and hard, that it is part of the prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples.

and I would like to add another to the list that has come up at Jesus & Java - the need to forgive yourself. There are times when things happen in our lives that we regret. It might be regret over taking a new job... or not taking one. Regret of not pursuing a friendship, or in not setting better boundaries. When the regrets start, as the psalm says, to weigh heavily on you and suck your life out of you... this is a sign that you need to forgive yourself.



Embodying Forgiveness - B. Racincot

We may not be able to stay in the Garden in Eden, but with mercy and forgiveness there is a way forward with each other, ourselves, and with God.

*To God be all the glory  
Amen.*



## *Responding to God*

♪ Hymn: Forgive us as we forgive.....pg 11 (751)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Li5P7\\_JRAk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Li5P7_JRAk) (just tune)

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

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

Memories: Go through the Garden of Eden story, and then compare it with the text. What sorts of additions have you heard?

Values: How does the idea that people were created to work change the idea of the Garden of Eden? Do you still want to go?

Wonder: Speculate what would have been the difference if gender and sex and never become involved in the Garden of Eden story?

Actions: Identify a relationship that weighs you down (with a person, yourself, creation, or God). Be specific - at least with yourself. Ask for forgiveness... and perhaps help with the repercussions.

Prayer: ...that we may have the humility to accept our sins, and the courage to ask for forgiveness

## ✦ Spirit Sightings

In 2003 Csilla Bertalan & the Reformed Church in Romania responded to God's call and opened a place for underprivileged children to receive nutritious food and homework tutoring. This helps them to reach the potential that God has created them for - and in a caring Christian environment.



This is one of the organizations supported through Presbyterians Sharing.<sup>8</sup>



### Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on our **website**: [kensingtonchurch.ca](http://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](mailto:info@kensingtonchurch.ca).

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



### Prayers of the people

Lord God

Creator of the universe

We thank you for the wonders of creation,

especially the beautiful ones like sunsets and puppies...

...help us to appreciate the wonder of it all

<sup>8</sup> You can read more here: [presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/Mission-in-Action-Samuel-House-Romania-2019.pdf](http://presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/Mission-in-Action-Samuel-House-Romania-2019.pdf)

even insects and microbes...

We thank you that we live in a country where education is available. We pray for the students as they start their new year, and we pray for the staff and teachers as they try to help the students to reach the potential you have placed in them...

We also pray for the teachers who believe in you.

May they be given safe opportunities to give you credit for the wonders they are teaching...

We also pray for Samuel House

and it's ministry to support children and their families, sharing God's love in ways that fill bellies and minds...

Jesus, we pray for those who are sick,

sick with microscopic bugs like COVID...

sick with literal bugs, like bed bugs...

sick with a body or mind that brings them pain. . .

and we pray for those who suffer and are not expected to recover..

and for their families. . .

May they all know your peace and healing in their souls

Jesus, we also pray for situations that need forgiveness. . .

may your Spirit help bring healing and mercy.

and to help us to always have hope

because through you, there is a way to love, hope & healing.

In Jesus name.

**Amen.**



♪ Hymn: The Clay Stained Hands of Love.....pg 11 (296)  
[youtu.be/w36w2keM2iY?t=2611](https://youtu.be/w36w2keM2iY?t=2611)

✦ Benediction

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Chris,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.<sup>9</sup>  
Amen.*



9 2 Corinthians 13:13

## MISSION MOMENT **Sunday, September 8**

At Samuel House, a ministry of the Reformed Church in Romania, vulnerable children receive nutritious food and homework tutoring so that their potential can be realized in a caring Christian environment. Responding to

God's call, Csilla Bertalan first opened the doors in June 2003 to welcome underprivileged children living in difficult circumstances. Csilla is grateful to God and partners for their support in transforming so many young lives. She shares, "I am grateful that the PCC has been standing beside us in this mission. Thank you!" Gifts to Presbyterians Sharing have been supporting Samuel House since 2014.



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### DAILY PRAYERS

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**Sunday, September 8** We give thanks for teachers at Francisco Coll School in Guatemala who equip students with skills and knowledge that will help them succeed in furthering their education.

**Monday, September 9** Dear Lord Almighty, we pray for those who work to build relationships that are broken in our communities. Continue to hold our leaders from the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches in your care as you guide those working for peace and unity.

**Tuesday, September 10** We pray for search committees in vacant congregations as they discern who God is calling for them to invite to be their new minister.

**Wednesday, September 11** We pray for Samuel House, a ministry of the Reformed Church in Romania, and Csilla Bertalan, Director, as they serve underprivileged children in Romania.

**Thursday, September 12** We pray for Edmonton Urban Native Ministries, which runs a drop-in centre out of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and the people it serves.

**Friday, September 13** We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Brandon.

**Saturday, September 14** We pray for sessions as they help the members and adherents of their congregations grow in faith and participate in the ministry of Christ locally and around the world.

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## For the fruits of all creation

AR HYD Y NOS 12 12 8 8 12

F /A Bb F/A Gm /Bb C Am Bbsus2-1 C6 7 F

1. For the fruits of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God;  
 2. In the just re - ward of la - bour, God's will is done;  
 3. For the har-vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God;  
 for the good we all in - her - it,

Bb/DF Bb/D F/A Bb Cm Bb/D Dm Gm F/A Bb6 Dm Gmsus9/Bb F/C C

for the plough-ing, sow-ing, reap-ing, si-lent growth while we are sleep-ing,  
 in our world-wide task of car-ing for the hun - gry and des-pair-ing,  
 for the won-ders that as-tound us, for the truths that still con-found us,

F/A Bb F Gm /Bb C Am Bbsus2-1 C6 7 F

fu - ture needs in earth's safe-keep-ing, thanks be to God.  
 in the har-vests we are shar-ing, God's will is done.  
 most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-), alt Music: Welsh traditional

Words: copyright © 1970 by Hope Publishing Co. Music: public domain

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## Seek ye first

SEEK YE FIRST Irregular

D F#m G D G D Asus4-3

1. Seek ye first the king - dom of God and his right-eous - ness,  
 2. Ask, and it shall be giv-en un-to you; seek and ye shall find;  
 3. We do not live by bread a - lone, but by eve - ry word

D F#m G D G D Asus4-3 D

and all these things shall be add-ed un-to you.  
 knock, and the door shall be o-pened un-to you. Al-le-lu, al-le-lu - ia!  
 that pro - ceeds from the mouth of God.

Words: Karen Lafferty (1948-) Music: Karen Lafferty (1948-) CCLI #4440603

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## Forgive our sins as we forgive

BANGOR 8 6 8 6 CM

G Cm G7/D Cm /Bb Ab Fm Cm G7/B

1. "For - give our sins as we for - give," you  
 2. How can your par - don reach and bless the  
 3. In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the  
 4. Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls, and

Cm Gm/Bb Cm D7 G /F Cm/Eb G7/D Cm Eb/G

taught us, Lord, to pray, but you a - lone can  
 un - for - giv - ing heart, that broods on wrongs and  
 truth we dim - ly knew: what triv - ial debts are  
 bid re - sent - ment cease; then, bound to all in

Ab Bb Eb (/D) Cm (/Bb) Abmaj7 Cm/G G7 Cm

grant us grace to live the words we say.  
 will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?  
 owed to us, how great our debt to you!  
 bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.

See also: Bangor 6 232

Words: Rosamond E. Herklots (1905-) Music: William Tans'ur's Harmony of Syon 1734

Words: used by permission of Oxford University Press Music: public domain

God the Holy Trinity

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## The clay-stained hands of love

LITTLE MARLBOROUGH 6 6 8 6 SM

Unison

Gm Cm6/G Gm7 Cm/G 6 Gm Cm 9 F7 Bbmaj9

1. The clay-stained hands of love cre - a - ted hu - man form.  
 2. The heal - ing hands of love gave speech and sight and strength.  
 3. The wound-ed hands of love showed life had con - quered death.  
 4. The hid - den hands of love are build - ing up the church.  
 5. We sing our praise, O Love, for your life - giv - ing hands.

Bb Ebmaj7 Cm7 Dm7 Ebmaj7 Cm9 Dm7 Gmsus4-3

Praise love that made us from the earth, the love with clay-stained hands.  
 Praise love that came to touch and heal, the love with heal - ing hands.  
 Praise love that came in ser - vant form, the love with wound - ed hands.  
 Praise love that works with liv - ing stone, the love with hid - den hands.  
 O Mak - er, Sav - iour, Spir - it, God, we sing our praise to you.

Words: Richard D. Leach from Songs for the People of God 1980 Music: Jack Noble White from Songs of the People of God 1980

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