

Kensington Presbyterian Church

Growing in faith and sharing God's love since 1786

On earth as it is in Heaven

November 24, 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. If this is how you are worshipping, know that you are not alone... and if you like, you can invite others to join you.

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

Christmas Decorating: today at 4 p.m.

Friday's Fabulous Food & Film Festival: pizza at 6:30, movie at 7:00

Nov 29: **Arthur Christmas** (with Santa played by: James McAvoy, Bill Nighy, Hugh Laurie & Jim Broadbent)

Dec 6: Elf

Dec 13: Dr Who Christmas Carol

National Presbyterian book club for advent

reading *Ponder these things* by Rev. Rowan Williams (previous archbishop of Canterbury). You could join the national discussion, and/or we can have our own group. presbyterian.ca/2024/11/07/ponder-these-things-an-advent-study



PWS&D 2024

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

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

<u>us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?</u> pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09

Jesus & Java: Join us as we share the joys and questions of faith. Thursday, 3:30 pm at Beetz, 5914 Sherbrooke @ Clifton

Contacts

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Zoé Dupont-Foisy (music director)......zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com Rose Ngo Mbenoun (Clerk of Session)..admin@Kensingtonchurch.ca

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
The world belongs to God
the earth and all its people
How good it is, how wonderful
to live together in unity

Love and faith come together

justice and peace join hands If Christ's disciples keep silent

these stones will shout aloud

Open our lips O God

and our mouths shall proclaim your praise

☐ Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.....pg 11 (321)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCnQNwQG5GI



Prayer of Approach
Dear Lord,

You are the Word behind all words, the calm at the core of the storm, the energy that sustains creation.

You are present
in the pain behind the tears,
the laughter in the eyes,
the yearning in the heart.
All these you share,

yet your gift to us is so much more.

So, open us up, Lord, we whose lives are locked, whose thoughts are well rehearsed, whose prayer is predictable.

Open us up to depths we have not explored, truths we have avoided... ways we have not followed... wonders we have yet to admire...

And open us to Jesus, in whom all things are held together for God and for our good.³

To help answer our prayer, we turn to the prayer you gave us to shape our lives...

² iona community daily worship

adapted from A Wee Worship Book 5th ed pg 27

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 Time

After our next hymn those who don't go out to Sunday School will hear Jesus give some advice about how to live. One of the things he says is "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What do you think this means?



Treasure can be like Pirate Treasure - a big box of gold and jewels. Though I think Jesus means 'what you treasure' or 'what you think is really really important'.

What are some things you think are really important?

Do you make sure you live like it's really important? (I really like playing music, but my work and family are more important so I don't do it very much.)

Would Jesus also like what you really really like? (I think Jesus would like much of what goes on at the church, and also likes families... and music.) If you're wondering, think about how your treasure helps people know love, hope, or to feel better (healing).

prayer

Dear Jesus. Thank you that you made so many good things, and help us to see you and your plans in what we treasure.

Amen.

rayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds through the power of your Holy Spirit, so that we will better live lives that honour you.

Amen.

☀ Intro to the readings

We have two texts this morning that Brett Meyer will tell us more about, and some aspects of the Presbyterian World Service and Development.

The first is from the middle of the Sermon on the Mount - the first teaching chunk in the Gospel According to Matthew. This text will be the focus, and it includes a little more than usual in

the lectionary. Consider what ideas develop. What is Jesus describing?

The second is Psalm 107. The whole thing is good and reflects on life for those who turn to God for help, or don't. More important than us is what it says about God. Listen for that.

Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁴ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

Matthew 6: 7-21 Psalm 107: 1-9



Lord's Prayer - arabic

Sermon: On earth as it is in Heaven......Brett Meyer
Gracious God, May the words of my mouth
and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable to you,
O God, our rock and our redeemer.
Open our hearts that we would hear the word you have for us today.
We ask this in Jesus's precious and holy name,
Amen.

Good morning! I'm delighted to be worshipping with you today. I used to attend Kensington regularly before my wife Sarina, a PCC pastor, took a call at Beaconsfield Presbyterian Church in the West Island. She's very recently decided to leave the ministry for now and pursue Doctoral studies in Religion and Culture at Concordia University in Montreal. I'm a professor at McGill University: I direct a research lab focusing on computer engineering and artificial intelligence, and teach related courses to undergraduate and graduate students. I'm here today in my capacity as a member of the committee that oversees the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development. I promise that we'll spend some time today talking about the work PWS&D does, but first I'll set some context with our scripture passages today.

Our New Testament passage today is from the middle of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. According to Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, the Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for God's vision of the kingdom of heaven on earth.⁵ In our reading, Jesus instructs his disciples in alms-giving, prayer, and fasting; most notably, it is in this passage that Jesus teaches his disciples what we call the Lord's Prayer.

⁴ 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

Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, Sermon on the Mount: a Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, USA, 2020.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus presents an expansive vision of heaven on earth. In teaching us how to pray, Jesus also teaches us how to live, and reminds us that: there is no life outside of life together; there is no life apart from loving care and support for one another. Let's take a closer look.

In Matthew 6, Jesus talks about pillars of Christian life in community. Jesus assumes that his disciples would give generously, pray regularly, and fast faithfully; he does not work to convince us that these righteous acts be done; he focuses instead on the manner in which they are done. It reminds me of past preaching and teaching by my wife on the Beatitudes at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Quebec.

One Sunday, my wife the Reverend Sarina Meyer introduced the concept of (anavah), the word we see translated in the Bible as meekness. When Jesus says blessed are the meek in Matthew 5, and subsequently references Psalm 37, the meek shall inherit the land, he was calling those gathered around him to be anavim: those who practice anavah. Rabbi Amy Robertson of the BibleWorm Podcast⁶ describes being anavah as "taking up the space in the world that is rightly yours and, not shrinking back from it. And at the same time ... not tak[ing] up space that is not rightly yours." Rabbi Amy also says that This. Is. Hard. We gravitate toward whatever is comfortable, we fall into patterns as individuals, and communities. For some, taking up their Godgiven space means stepping back; for others, it means stepping up.

Anavah lays the foundation for our relationship with Jesus, and each other.

• Earlier, in Matthew 6:2-4, Jesus says, "when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you." Giving alms was

important at the time, and remains so today. Dr. Levine writes in her book, *Sermon on the Mount*, that "care for the poor is so central [to Jewish culture] that the Hebrew terms for 'righteousness' and 'alms-giving' come from the same root" (56). Jesus warns, however, that aggrandizing ourselves in the process is inappropriate.

• Later, in Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus says, "whenever you fast, do not look sombre, but put oil on your head and wash your face." Jesus warns against using fasting as an opportunity to draw attention to ourselves, and our piety. The point of fasting is the act itself, and the time and space it creates to draw near to God.

Jesus talks about prayer in a similar fashion. In Matthew 6:5-7, Jesus says, "whenever you pray, do not do so at street corners, or heap up empty phrases; go into your room and shut the door, and remember that your Father knows what you need before you ask." Again, Jesus tells us to take care not to act self-righteously.

Jesus also says that God knows our prayers before we pray them. But, if the point of prayer is not to tell God what we need, then what is the point? Like alms-giving and fasting, the point of prayer is the relationships: our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. Mind your space.

That we pray at all suggests that we are in relationship with God (Levine, 60). For me, prayer is an opportunity to be open about needs and fears in a way that often doesn't otherwise come naturally. I can be vulnerable in prayer: about the little stuff, and the big stuff. Please, God, help me catch the train this morning ... Please, God, have mercy on my beloved, dying, friend. Here are two questions that I want us to reflect on. What does Jesus tell us about the nature of our relationship with God as he teaches us how to pray? And, what does Jesus tell us about the nature of our relationships with each other along the way?

⁶ Dr. Amy Robertson and Dr. Robert Williamson Jr., "The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:7-15)," BibleWorm, Ep. 425, January 22, 2023.

The first thing I want to draw our attention to is the request, in verse 10, that God's will be done on Earth. Revelation 21:4 says that when God's kingdom comes, God will "wipe every tear from [our] eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." Can you imagine? On earth today, a different refrain is more fitting. For example, Psalm 13:1-2: "How long, oh LORD? Will you forget me forever? ... How long must I bear pain in my soul?" We don't have to look far to see that God's kingdom has not yet come as described in Revelation.

In the next verse, Jesus continues: give us bread for today. This is immediately evocative of the manna from Heaven in Exodus 16:4. God told Moses that the Israelites would be provided for, and they were. Jesus alludes to this story, amongst other things, when he tells us in Matthew 6:19 not to store up treasures on Earth. The manna from Heaven couldn't be stored; any surplus rotted after a day. Jesus also reminds us in verse 25 not to worry, whether about food or other earthly concerns: God will provide. Why, then, do so many people go without?

Now let's step back for a moment, because what Jesus is doing here is interesting. He's talking to his disciples, in a repeat-afterme fashion, helping them commit the prayer to memory, as so many have done in the two thousand years since:

- In verse 9, Jesus says to pray to our Father in Heaven.
- In verse 11, to ask God to give us our daily bread.
- In verse 12, forgive us; in 13, do not bring us, but rescue us. Jesus isn't teaching individuals how to pray on their own; he is teaching a community how to pray—rather, how to be —together. What does it mean to share space?

This brings us to our Psalm for today, Psalm 107. Verses 4-6 say, "Some wandered in desert wastes, hungry and thirsty... they cried to the LORD... and he delivered them; he led them by a

straight way until they reached an inhabited town." God saved the people by leading them to other people: people who satisfied the thirsty, and who filled the hungry with good things (verse 9). "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!" (vv 1-2a) The redeemed, whose prayer for rescue was answered by God's work through ordinary people. People just like us.

Jesus is not instructing the disciples to consider, and pray for, their individual needs alone; Jesus is teaching them, and teaching us, to pray for, and therefore be attentive to, the needs of the community, and everyone in it. Jesus is instructing the community that follows him to bring God's kingdom of Heaven to Earth by caring for each other. Why? Because when our bread doesn't rain from heaven, where else might it come from? Us. It comes from us.



That's some context for why the Presbyterian World Service and Development exists. If you are unfamiliar, PWS&D is the international relief and development arm of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and its work is made possible by the generous gifts of Presbyterians from across Canada. PWS&D partners with local organizations in countries around the world with two goals: to invest in sustainable development, and provide emergency relief to those fleeing or coping with conflict and disaster. PWS&D also supports groups welcoming refugees to Canada. Unfortunately, there is a seemingly bottomless need for such work in the world today. However, PWS&D is not working alone: it collaborates and cooperates with a wide variety of organizations

around the world, such as: the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, an agency supported by a coalition of 15 Canadian churches, that organizes emergency food assistance and climate resilient food programs worldwide; and, the ACT Alliance, a coalition of more than 140 faith-based organizations that spends more than \$2Billion a year worldwide.

For instance, in 2022 Pakistan was hit by devastating flooding, affecting 33M people; experts estimated that almost 85,000 square kilometres were underwater. That's an area larger than the entire province of New Brunswick. PWS&D raised over \$60,000 for emergency relief, and with the assistance of other churches, the Canadian Foodgrains Banks, and Global Affairs Canada, led a \$2M food assistance project there that provided assistance to over 6000 families for four months. More recently, PWS&D has responded in similar fashion to earthquakes in Afghanistan and Nepal.

Another country that PWS&D has done much to support in recent crises is Malawi. Few countries are expected to be hit as hard by the consequences of climate change as Malawi, and it has been devastated by cyclones twice in recent years: Cyclone Ana in 2022, and Cyclone Freddy in 2023. The flooding that resulted from Cyclone Freddy displaced over half a million people. PWS&D provided \$70,000 directly, and raised matching funds from a variety of other organizations, resulting in a total budget of \$700,000. This funding was used for two months of food assistance for 2500 families, as well as seedlings for the 2023-24 growing season: immediately feeding those in immediate need, and laying the groundwork so they may feed themselves in the future.

A representative from one of our partners in Malawi joined us in Toronto earlier this year, Mphatso Nguluwe-Chikhwaza. Mphatso is the Director of the Synod of Livingstonia Health Department in northern Malawi. PWS&D doesn't only work on disaster relief, nor only on projects related to food assistance or agriculture. In Malawi, Mphatso's work with PWS&D focuses on educating youth about sexuality and reproductive health. Mphatso says, "when a child marries a child, and has a child, the cycle of poverty continues." In the Mzimba district of Malawi, more than 70% of women aged 20-24 were married before turning 18. 29% of teenage girls get pregnant. And, not only is maternal mortality high, 30% of those that die are adolescents. Mphatso works with men, women, boys, and girls, to protect children from abuse, ensure everyone knows their rights and responsibilities, and to build communities where young women understand that "you can be out of school and not be pregnant."



These are just a few examples of the work that PWS&D does, to: feed those in immediate need, develop sustainable access to more and better food; support health and education, and prison ministries; and, otherwise advocate for human rights, especially the rights of women, children, and marginalized communities worldwide. As a committee member, I have the privilege of following in detail the work PWS&D does across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. I will also have the opportunity to travel, visit our partners, and see first hand the impact of the generosity of Canadian Presbyterians. I am delighted to have been called to serve the Lord in this way. If you are interested in supporting PWS&D, or helping advocate for it and the causes it supports, I encourage you to talk to Reverend Kim, and visit the PWS&D website. There are a variety of ways to get involved!

"There is no you and God, without you and your fellow human." That's what Rabbi Amy Robertson says about the Lord's Prayer (Ep. 425). The Lord's Prayer is more than a convenient pattern for supplication, much more than a to-do list of everyday concerns. With it, Jesus teaches us to ask that earth mirror heaven, that God's will be done; as such, it's a call to thoughtful,

attentive, loving care and action in the world. As Dr. Levine writes, "the kingdom of heaven occurs [on earth] when people take Jesus's words and live them." Jesus calls us, as anavah, to step into the space created for us and serve each other.



The good news is that we are not alone, however small and impotent we may feel contemplating the consequences of a litany of bad news from the world over. Not only is Emmanuel, God with us, transforming earth into heaven as we speak, but the same fellowship that brings us together for worship, that gathers us for communion, or coffee, also unites us in shared purpose. In teaching us how to pray, Jesus also teaches us how to live, and reminds us that there is no life outside of life together, no life apart from loving care and support for one another. Together we have done great things in the past, and can continue to do so in the future, and not for our own sakes, but for the glory of God.

Amen!



Responding to God

☐ Hymn: Oh For a Closer Walk with God.....pg.12

www.youtube.com/watch?v=363UCo6Wkys

Jonah the Prophet - Sargis Babayan

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: Have you ever met a missionary or somebody who left 'home' to help the hungry, thirsty, stranger, sick, or prisoner (Matthew 25:31-46)? What do you remember of their story?

Values: What do you treasure?
Why do you treasure this?
Consider how this is a part of God's Kingdom.

Actions: What is a good way to balance doing things 'in secret' so that only God notices, and inspiring others to join in helping 'thy Kingdom come'?

Actions: Check out the Presbyterian World Service and Development website: presbyterian.ca/pwsd or that of Presbyterians Sharing: presbyterian.ca/sharing

Prayer: ...for the ongoing work/ministry of the PWS&D and our partners.

* Spirit Sightings

We heard many ways the Holy Spirit is working through PWS&D and our partners, but I'd also like to share a local moment.

This week at Jesus & Java somebody shared their worry about what sort of retirement funding they would have. Somebody else immediately offered both words or reassurance, but also offered

to go with them to Services Canada and help get solid answers to their questions. Having a safe space to share our anxieties, the courage to share them, and people willing to help us are all signs of God's Spirit at work.

Offering

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

Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your name.

You Lord, are singularly amazing. There is no one like you - in your power - in your justice - in your love.

Let us experience your glory. . .

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

We thank you for the glimpses of your kingdom that we see already. . .

For the relationships that support us;

for the safety we experience;

for the love and joy we know.

We pray and look forward to the day when all injustice has disappeared and everyone lives filled with your peace and love. . .

We pray for those who are lost in the kingdoms of this world, and don't know peace, mercy, love, or hope.

Give us today our daily bread, . . .

Today we pray especially for those who are struggling to have enough food, who are without a home, who need a community and friends, who aren't able to go to school or receive medical care.

We pray for those whose bodies, minds or souls need healing...

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lord, please untie the knots of failure binding us, as we release the ties we hold over other people's faults. . .

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil Jesus, you know the challenges we face, please help us. . .

For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, ... now... and forever...

Amen.

☐ Hymn: O Master, let me walk with thee.....pg 12 (642) www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdmeFsNRtAE

Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:13)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.

Amen.



MISSION MOMENT Sunday, November 24

In Nicaragua, Urania is a 27-year-old mother who has many goals that she has not been able to achieve since becoming pregnant at the age of 17. Forced to drop out of high school, she dedicated herself to working to give her daughter the best. Now a single mother of two girls, earning an income has become increasingly



difficult. With the support of PWS&D's local partner, who is working to empower young women and girls, Urania was able to start a café business. This initiative provides an income, as well as a flexible schedule that allows her to accompany her daughters in school and activities. She resumed her high school studies, improved her self-esteem and feels like an example for many young women.

DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, November 24 (Reign of Christ) Almighty and everlasting God, wrapped in glory; as you are compassionate, make us kind; as you are just, make us doers of justice; as you are one, unite us in the name of Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Monday, November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) We pray for the healing and wellbeing of women who experience violence. May God's unfailing love guide our actions to build more equitable and just communities where all women may flourish and violence is ended.

Tuesday, November 26 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Niagara.

Wednesday, November 27 We pray for those seeking God's light and warmth on personal spiritual retreats at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, that God might meet them in moments of comfort and inspiration.

Thursday, November 28 We pray for the Christian Medical Association of India and for Dr. Priya John, General Secretary, as they work towards building a just and healthy society and serve the church in its ministry of healing.

Friday, November 29 We give thanks and pray for coaches involved in Cyclical PCC and the New Beginnings program who help ministers continue Christ's ministry in new ways.

Saturday, November 30 We pray for the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee as it encourages Presbyterians to understand and appreciate other faith traditions, and to live in good relationship with people of other faiths.





Words: German, Joachim Neander (1650-1680); translation, Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878); alt Music: Stralsund Gesangbuch 1665; Words: this version, copyright @ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1997



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