



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

## *What's Mary Magnifying?*

*December 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, 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 others to join you. Clicking on or tapping blue text will take you to a web-site.

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**

**Sunday Singing:** Sundays at 10 opportunity to run through the day's music, and sometimes other tunes.

**Carolling:** Friday Dec 20

6:30 walking to our neighbours and singing (and hot chocolate)

7:30 gathering around the piano

**Blue Christmas:** Sunday Dec 22 at 7 pm

A quiet worship service for those with struggles.

**Christmas Eve:** Tuesday Dec 24 at 7 pm

**Christmas Day:** Wednesday 9:30 am

Pot-Luck breakfast and Carol Sing

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



Mary and Elizabeth - LW Pittman

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

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

**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.

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

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

**Workshop with Rev. Dr. Pat Durer-Walls**

**Biblical Foundations for Narratives of Hope**

online - Sat., Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m

register here: [presbyterian.ca/2024/11/25/online-workshop-biblical-foundations-for-narratives-of-hope](https://presbyterian.ca/2024/11/25/online-workshop-biblical-foundations-for-narratives-of-hope)

### *Contacts*

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## Approaching God



### Call to worship

As we prepare for Christ's coming, we remember your calling to be filled with joy.

**We come knowing that our actions can help alleviate the burdens of others.**

We light the third candle of Advent, a symbol of joy that uplifts the spirit.



(Light the candle of peace)

♪ Advent Song Chorus.....pg 9

May the warmth and brightness of this candle encourage us to act with compassion and courage.

**Holy One, strengthen us by your Spirit to commit ourselves to being people of joy and justice. Fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in you, so that we may overflow with hope.**

**In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.**

♪ Hymn: Come thou long expected Jesus.....pg 9 (110)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAoIkjPVh64](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAoIkjPVh64) (organ + choir)

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



### Prayer of Approach

Loving God,

you come in many forms:

in our dreams of a better world;

in the whispers of those deemed unworthy;

in the movement of your Spirit within.

You come laden with promises:  
the impossible made conceivable;  
the barren made fruitful;  
the birth of a kingdom like no other.

You come heralding transformation:  
the humble lifted up;  
the starving satisfied;  
the weak made strong.

Lord God of the Christ child  
whose coming,  
whose promise,  
whose transforming  
has inspired generations,  
...and us.<sup>2</sup>



Mary & Elizabeth - S Helleman

As we prepare for your coming,  
we reflect on your stories, and our lives.

We see that your love is always there  
...and can be so cautious with caring. . .

We see you working doing impossible new things,  
and we pray for more of the same old. . .  
we are afraid to say, "Here I am."

Please forgive us.

As your Spirit helps us to live into your forgiveness,  
may the prayer you give us help shape us.



The Lord's Prayer (please use a version you are comfortable with)  
**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,**

<sup>2</sup> adapted from *Spill the Beans* #21

**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*

♪ Hymn: Canticle of Turning.....pg 10

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN1\\_iZU-OWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN1_iZU-OWE) (organ)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyqOsuQoJRo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyqOsuQoJRo) (lively band)

## 🧘 Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds  
 through the power of your Holy Spirit,  
 that we may see your glory, and respond.

Amen.

## ✦ Intro to the readings

We're part way through Advent, the season of getting ready for Christ's coming. What can we expect?

Today Mary<sup>3</sup> is going to help us. She reflects on her life and what's happened before in scripture and uses this to interpret what's going on. In the Magnificat she starts by saying "My soul magnifies the Lord" (Magnificat is Latin for magnifies). If you think of this as Mary believing that she makes God bigger, then she's

got a pretty big ego. It's also impossible. God is already bigger than our ability to grasp. Instead Mary is like a magnifying glass that shows a portion of what God is doing in more details.

Let's do that. We'll follow Mary's example of looking back on scripture and her life to see what God is doing - which will help us with our preparations for the Advent of Christ(mas).

Let's quickly run through the stories we've heard this season.

- With Adam, Eve & God we heard that we can't go back after a mistake, but with mercy and forgiveness there is a way forward
- With Abram and Sarai we (you and I) are invited to be a part of God's impossibly big vision
- With Joseph we hear again about forgiveness and are reminded that not only is God with us, but God can re-form people who are hurt into people who can bless others.
- with Moses we heard about the importance of remembering and celebrating what God has done - because this shapes us.
- Then the Golden Calf reminded us that God is not fixed, but is about helping people experience justice (which includes mercy) and love.
- Hannah, Samuel's mother, models giving our deepest desires to God (in her case, having a child) - making God's desires her desires.
- David's desire to build the temple shows how good intentions are only good if that's what God wants us to do (it might be for someone else)
- We heard that the great prophet Isaiah felt unworthy when God asked him to be a prophet, and that into those

<sup>3</sup> As there are many Marys (and Miriams - which is the Hebrew) in the Bible, I'm referring to Mary the mother of Jesus.

troubled times God helped him deliver warnings and hope.

- In Ezekiel we see that God is working in outsiders to prepare them to meet God through us and enables us to bring life to each other.
- Jonah's story is crazy and impossible all through it. One big lesson is that we should not assume about outsiders - because when people hear about God they can change for the better.
- and last week Daniel and the Lions reminded us that God is more powerful than anything, can work through outsiders, and wants us to humbly participate in our communities.

We might boil that down to

- Our focus should be on following God
- God enables crazy impossible things
- God invites everyone to join in - us and people who are different (sometimes so different they are enemies)

One last bit of back-story before we hear about Mary. Luke starts, after a traditional greeting, with the story of an angel visiting a priest in the Temple. He and his wife were both great people and good examples. They were descended from the original priests. Their only blight was that over their long life they had never had children. The angel tells Zachariah that he and Elizabeth will have a son. Zachariah doubts this, and so can't speak until it comes to pass.

Let's hear about Mary's reactions...



Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,<sup>4</sup> or click on the name to be taken to an online version.  
[Luke 1: 26-55](#)



Sermon: What's Mary Magnifying?

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

With Elizabeth's help Mary is able to look at what God is doing in the world - through her. She becomes a magnifying glass through which we can notice God.

and what do we notice?

That God is doing the unexpected.  
This includes all the characters so far.

- Zachariah shouldn't be surprised to meet God in the

<sup>4</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



temple, but this role has just become normal - and normally one doesn't notice God at work.

- Elizabeth becomes pregnant well past menopause.
- Mary isn't described with the noble lineage or blameless life that Zachariah and Elizabeth have. She doesn't live in Jerusalem, or even Judea. She's a nobody from nowhere. She hasn't slept with a man - making it even more impossible for her to have a baby than an elderly woman. Yet, she's the one to give birth to the Son of God.

We see in these lives that God does the unexpected, sometimes even the opposite of what's expected. We also see that for those involved it is wonderful, as in 'full of wonder'. Their lives aren't made easier, but are filled with joy and hope.

God does support them with the added difficulties. One way is by being true to past experiences. Mary, Elizabeth & Zachariah can look back at how God has acted before, like we did before the reading, as see the pattern. While I won't go into it today, we can see this in how what is said here reflects those stories.<sup>5</sup> In their lives God is continuing to be consistent with doing the unexpected and impossible and inviting all types of people to join in.

This could be exciting for us because anyone (you, me, the person next door) could be touched by God to be involved in something impossible that will change both our lives, and the world. It could also be a little terrifying - which we're told both Zachariah and Mary felt - though Mary's fear is also mixed with wonder, hence the translation using the word 'perplexed'. Afraid or not, God could invite anyone.

God also invites the formation of community to support each other - the angel tells Mary that Elizabeth is also impossibly pregnant and they support each other in their improbable lives.

5 If you want a quick peek, look up Hannah's song in [1 Samuel 2](#)

Together they can reflect what they see God doing in each other's lives - and the words of the prophet Joel, "*your old shall dream dreams, and your young shall see visions.*"<sup>6</sup> Dreams we hear in Elizabeth's words of blessings and Visions we hear in Mary's song - and later in Zachariah's (after today's passage). They are also both blessed with supportive spouses. We don't know the details, but they are there when they could have left. For us this means the church, Kensington, and other connections.

And God sends the Holy Spirit. Acts is the sequel to Luke and includes the glorious story of Pentecost - when the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples like wind and fire. But this isn't the first time. Chapter one of the Bible talks of the Spirit blowing over the waters. Chapter one of Luke talks about Elizabeth & Mary being filled with the Holy Spirit - who also helps them feel God's love, hope, and presence. What's exciting is that as the story continues we will be reminded that like God's plans, God's Spirit is for everyone. God is present in you, and those around you.

What can this look like now?

I'm reminded of the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian in Nanaimo telling about when a young man walked in with questions. It was perplexing that somebody with no background would walk into a quiet Presbyterian church - but it was one he walked past and he followed 'his instinct'. He kept coming, became a Christian, and felt called to bring this to his job as a nightclub DJ.



6 [Joel 2: 28](#)

They pondered with prayer and asked practical questions - but also said “yes Lord”. St. Andrew’s now supports a nightclub church combining floor shaking beats with thoughtful open discussions. None of them saw this coming, but it is building faith and reaching out.<sup>7</sup>

So how does this help us prepare for the Advent of Christ - the coming of the Messiah? Like Mary:

- prepare to be perplexed (and probably worried) - though it will help people grow in faith and share God’s gifts of love, hope and healing.
  - Take time to ponder.  
God’s patterns and others are a big help here.
  - Probe. Asking questions about details is okay - Mary did it.
  - And be willing to go along. Tell God “*Here I am.*”
- Literally do all this, and God knows what will happen.

and  
To God be all the glory  
Amen.



Visitation - Mary South

<sup>7</sup> [www.standrewsnanaimo.ca](http://www.standrewsnanaimo.ca)  
[www.upperlvlworship.ca](http://www.upperlvlworship.ca)



## Responding to God

♪ Hymn: Blest be the God of Israel.....pg 11 (752)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9AuunN2CNc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9AuunN2CNc)

- ☞ 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: Describe a wedding you really appreciated.
- Memories: What has God done in your community (Kensington or otherwise) that is worthy of praise and humble celebration?
- Actions: Can you be like Elizabeth and describe for someone else what God is doing in their life (including details of who and what)?
- Etching: Mary interprets God’s actions through her experience of God. What’s your experience of God/Jesus/Spirit? How have you seen/experienced/felt God, and what does this show about God?
- Actions: If we are incapable of living God’s way without letting God’s Spirit in, how can we do that?
- Prayer: ...that we will see the wonder-full actions of God bringing love, hope & healing into the world... and that we can say, “Here I am.”

## ✦ Spirit Sightings

I want to mention two places where the Holy Spirit has been at work. One is the Montreal Children’s Theatre Community Dinner last night. I don’t know how many people were here, but in many rooms there were people enjoying food, entertainment, and each other’s company last night. The Children’s Theatre isn’t a church, but God’s Spirit is working there.

God's Spirit also works more intimately.

*O amor de Deus actua nas pessoas, levando-as a amar.*

Years ago Josue and Jane knew each other back in Brazil, but their lives went in different directions. During COVID God's Spirit moved them to reconnect - despite the distance of years and 7000 km. As they talked and spent time together through their computers their relationship grew. About a year and a half ago Jane moved to Montreal, and then exactly a year ago they were married. Due to government rules and having COVID I couldn't be there to officially share God's blessing - however they would like their marriage blessed, and to share this with you.

*No primeiro aniversário do seu casamento, vamos celebrar e abençoar o seu casamento.*

Looking back through scripture we can see many aspects of love. There's the deep devotion & service between Ruth and Naomi. There's the loyalty of David and Nathan. Joseph and his family remind us that love doesn't undo our mistakes, but can allow forgiveness to make a way forward. The Song of Songs tells of lovers' passionate delight. And through it all there's the hope and joy in God's steadfast love that lasts forever.

Looking back at your lives you can see the loves that have shaped you so that you can love each other.

Josué e Jane, que sejam abençoados com o amor transbordante de Deus.

Josue and Jane, may you be blessed today and every day,  
with all the blessings of God's overflowing love.

Know that you are not alone.

Look around.

You are in community.

Your family may be 7000 km away,

but you have family here too.

But stronger and more faithful than us is God.

*Também tens família aqui - e Deus.*

May God be with you

helping your desires to align with each other, and with God  
to lead you through dark valleys to green pastures.

May Jesus be with you during family dinners,  
date nights, and days spent apart.

May the Spirit be with you in discussions,  
both the heated and the joyous.

helping you to know and listen to yourselves,  
each other,  
and God.

may the Three in One be with you

along each step of the journey you take.

*Deus estará convosco em cada passo da vossa viagem.*

**Amen**

♪ Hymn: Let's praise the Creator.....pg 11  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-y8xnzD61TA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-y8xnzD61TA) (tune on organ)

### ✦ Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on our **website**:  
[kensingtonchurch.ca](https://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

Dear Lord,

We thank you for your steadfast love  
that we can see through the stories of scripture  
the lives around us,  
in ourselves.

We pray for those who do not feel loved...

May you find a way for them to know that you love everyone.  
and if you have a role for us,  
may your Spirit help us say, "Here I am."

We also pray for those who need healing...

We pray for people living in uncertain situations,  
whether it's wars,  
or unstable governments,  
or unstable homes.

and if you have a role for us,  
may your Spirit help us say, "Here I am."

We thank you that we have a place to gather to worship you.  
and we pray that religious freedoms will not be further taken  
away.

We pray for the government of Québec,  
that they will learn ways to preserve their identity  
that also provides space and respect for difference.  
and if you have a role for us,  
may your Spirit help us say, "Here I am."

Today we especially thank you for the stories of the Bible,  
for Mary & Elizabeth,  
and for all who carry Jesus into the world.

**Amen.**

♪ Hymn: Oh for a World Where Everyone.....pg 12 (730)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp9\\_xQvG6k8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp9_xQvG6k8)

## ✦ Benediction (Ephesians 3:20-21)

*Now to him who by the power at work within us  
is able to accomplish abundantly far more  
than all we can ask or imagine,  
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus  
to all generations, forever and ever.  
Amen.*



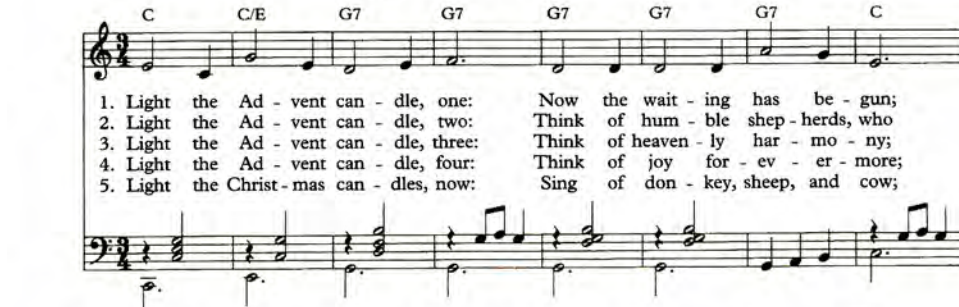
Mary visits Elizabeth - Barbara Februar



# Advent Song (Light the Advent Candle)

2090

C C/E G7 G7 G7 G7 G7 C



1. Light the Ad - vent can - dle, one: Now the wait - ing has be - gun;  
 2. Light the Ad - vent can - dle, two: Think of hum - ble shep - herds, who  
 3. Light the Ad - vent can - dle, three: Think of heav - en - ly har - mo - ny;  
 4. Light the Ad - vent can - dle, four: Think of joy for - ev - er - more;  
 5. Light the Christ - mas can - dles, now: Sing of don - key, sheep, and cow;

E E7 Am F C/E C G7 G7



we have start - ed on our way, time to think of Christ - mas day.  
 filled with won - der at the sight of the child of Christ - mas night.  
 an - gels sing - ing "Peace on earth" at the bless - ed Sav - ior's birth.  
 Christ Child in a sta - ble born, gift of love that Christ - mas morn.  
 birth - day can - dles for the King, let the al - le - lu - ias ring.

Refrain  
C C/E G7 G7 G7 G7 G7 C



Can - dle, can - dle, burn - ing bright, shin - ing in the cold win - ter night;

E E7 Am F C/E C G7 C



can - dle, can - dle, burn - ing bright, fill our hearts with Christ - mas light.

Congregation: Unison

WORDS: Mary Lu Walker (Luke 2:1-20)

MUSIC: Mary Lu Walker

© 1975 Mary Lu Walker

ADVENT CANDLE SONG  
77.77 with Refrain

110

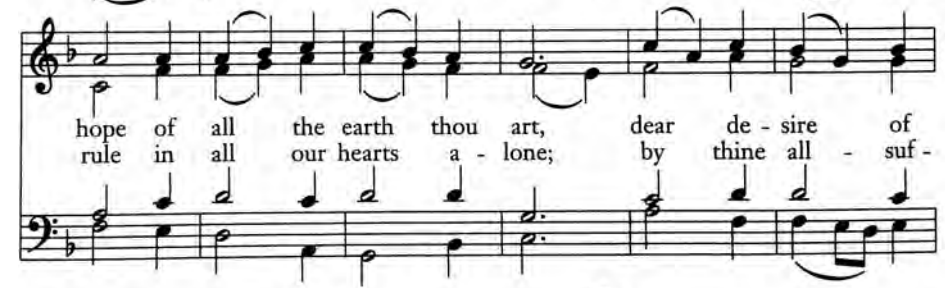
# Come, thou long-expected Jesus



1. Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy  
 from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our  
 2. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er; born a child and  
 born to reign in us for - ev - er; now thy gra - cious



peo - ple free;  
 rest in thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion,  
 yet a king;  
 king - dom bring. By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it



hope of all the earth thou art, dear de - sire of  
 rule in all our hearts a - lone; by thine all - suf -



eve - ry na - tion, joy of eve - ry long - ing heart.  
 fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

# 69 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

LUKE 1:46-55

Em C D Em

1 My — soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the God of my  
 2 Though — I am small, my — God, my all, you — work great —  
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a stone will be  
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re - mem - ber who

C D Em G

heart is great, and my spir - it — sings of the won - drous —  
 things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the depths of the  
 left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your jus - tice —  
 holds us fast: God's — mer - cy — must de - liv - er —

D Em C Em G

things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your  
 past to the end of the age to be. Your ver - y  
 tears ev - ery ty - rant — from his throne. The hun - gry  
 us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp. This sav - ing

D Em

sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my weak - ness you  
 name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would  
 poor shall — weep no more for the food they can  
 word that our fore - bears heard is the prom - ise which

C D Em

did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
 for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
 nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - ery  
 holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

G D Em C Em

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain G D

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the

Em C D Em

fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the

C D Em C Em

dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to • turn!

Words: Rory Cooney (b. 1952), based on the *Magnificat*, © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.  
 Music (STAR OF COUNTY DOWN 8.6.8.6 D refrain 9.8.10.8): Irish traditional; arr. Rory Cooney © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.



## Blest be the God of Israel

MERLE'S TUNE 13 13 13 13

Unison

1. Blest be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free,  
 2. Now from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has come,  
 3. On those who live in dark - ness the sun be - gins to rise,

who vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty.  
 a Sav - iour who will lead us to our e - ter - nal home.  
 the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes;

The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of res - cue and re - lease;  
 Be - fore him goes his her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,  
 to guide the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.

God shall ful - fill the prom - ise to bring the gift of peace.  
 the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the mes - sen - ger of day.  
 Oh bless our God and Sav - iour with songs that nev - er cease!

Words: Luke 1:68-79; paraphrase, Michael Perry (1942-1996) Music: Hal H. Hopson (1933-)

Words: paraphrase, copyright © 1973 by Hope Publishing Co. Music: copyright © 1983 by Hope Publishing Co. CCLI #4440603

## 986 Let's Praise the Creator

1. Let's praise the Cre - a - tor, who gave us each oth - er  
 2. The love that we wish them, the love that we pray for  
 3. In vows that are hon - ored, in kiss - ing and bless - ing

In friend - ship and kin - ship to cel - e - brate life.  
 Is strong - er than storms and more gen - tle than breath,  
 May hap - pi - ness shine like the gold of a ring.

Let's sing our de - light in this man and this wom - an,  
 En - dures ev - 'ry trou - ble, is self - less and faith - ful,  
 In pas - sion - ate joy and com - pas - sion - ate car - ing

The prom - ise of joy as a hus - band and wife.  
 More pre - cious than life and more last - ing than death.  
 May theirs be the gifts that true lov - ing can bring.

Text: Shirley Erena Murray, b.1931, © 1992, Hope Publishing Company  
Tune: KREMSEK, 12 11 12 11, Valerius' *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626, harm. by Edward Kremser, 1838-1914



730

## Oh for a world where everyone

AZMON 8 6 8 6 CM

G/B G D G D7 Em D G D7/F# G D

1. Oh for a world where eve-ry - one re - spects each oth - er's ways,  
 2. Oh for a world where goods are shared and mis - er - y re - lieved,  
 3. We wel-come one world fam - i - ly and strug - gle with each choice  
 4. The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the fool - ish ones are wise.  
 5. Oh for a world pre - par - ing for God's glo - rious reign of peace,

G /B C G/D D7 G

where love is lived and all is done with jus - tice and with praise.  
 where truth is spo - ken, chil - dren spared, e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.  
 that o - pens us to u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.  
 Tell all who mourn: out - casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.  
 where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

Words: Miriam Therese Winter (1938-) Music: Carl G. Gläser (1784-1829);  
adaptation, Lowell Mason (1792-1872) in Modern Psalmody, 1839

Words: copyright © Medical Mission Sisters, 1990 Music: public domain



Elisabeth greets Mary - Hasse



Veselka