



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

Passing the test

September 14, 2025

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

We're glad this PDF has come to you.¹ If you're using a device, clicking on or tapping blue text will take you to a web-site. We are also welcoming people to worship in person on Sundays at 10:30, over Zoom, and on YouTube. Know that you are not alone.

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

Prayer Groups:

Zoom: Wednesday 6:30 am

Woman's Prayer Group: Thursday 2:00-3:30 at Cathy's

Food & Film Night: Friday 6:30 pizza followed by Board Games.

Drop Box: Food donations are welcome for the Food Pantry at *Women on the Rise*, and items for children (ex. diapers) for young mothers through Head & Hands.

Contacts

Church Office: 514-486-4559.....info@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor).....Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca
 514-773-4620

Zoé Dupont-Foisy (music director).....zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com

Rose Ngo Mbenoun (Clerk of Session)..admin@Kensingtonchurch.ca

¹ note: that the footnotes are not as thorough as an academic paper.



Prayer of Confession - M Moyers



Approaching God



Lighting of the Christ Candle

Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



Call to worship

The world can be beautiful;

we come to worship you.

The world can be horrifying;

we come to worship you.

With our faith;

we come to worship you.

With our questions;

we come to worship you.

Let us worship the Lord

🎵 Hymn: Crown Him With Many Crowns.....pg 10 (274)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM (at the proms)



Prayer of Approach

Lord, as the days get shorter

and the seasons change from summer to autumn

we remember that everything changes, all the time.

You made it that way and know that it is good.

Why is it we shy away from change?

What are we afraid of?

Change is constant, the earth rotates around the sun,
life begins and ends every moment.

Life is a gift, each of us precious,
each one loved and adored.

Forgive us when we waste the gift of life,
hiding in front of the TV or scrolling Facebook
Life is made for connecting and caring for each other.

Forgive us when we misuse the gift of life,
for those times when we are rude or cruel,
Life is made for being fair and kind to each other;
for loving each other.

Remind us of how precious each one of us is,
of how important it is to treat each other
as we want to be treated.

Guide us through the changes
that come our way,
and help us to find ways to cope with them.

May we always try to offer ourselves for our brothers and sisters,
sacrificing our wants and desires
to help bring in your kingdom here and now.

Amen.²



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.

Amen.³

² adapted from *Spill the Beans* #24

³ *Worship Sourcebook* 2.4.39

 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

We're going to sing a song that comes from one of the prophets in the Bible. Can someone tell me what a prophet is?
[someone who delivers a message from God]

In this case God is speaking through Micah. The people have realized God is disappointed and are wondering what they can do to please God. They suggest sacrificing some animals... maybe even giving their firstborn.

Micah tells them, *'He has told you what is good; and what does the Lord require of you... but to be fair, be kind, and walk everyday with God.'*⁴

...with your brothers, friends, and people you don't agree with.
You always try to be fair & kind.

...and to walk with God (talk with God, remember God).

⁴ [Micah 6: 6, 8](#)



seeking human kindness

Prayer:

*Dear Jesus, help us to remember you
and to be fair and kind ...to everyone.*

Amen.

♪ Hymn: What does the Lord require.....pg 11 (709)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCcMdL8F5lk



Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that we may know you deeply.

Amen.



Intro to the text


Last week we heard about God bringing order in chaos and creating wonders with it... including creating us in God's image. After that it becomes obvious that we weren't created for simply following orders, because people did all sorts of things that weren't what God hoped for. There's the Garden of Eden, and

Cain killing his brother Able. Then there's the tale of Noah and the Flood - including the instruction not to kill people. There's the attempt to build a tower to God, followed by the story of Abram (later called Abraham).

God said to Abram, 'Get up. Leave everything you know and keep going until I show you a place. There I'll make a great nation out of your descendants.'⁵ So Abram, his wife & nephew Lot and their families all set out to see what God would show them. Time passed. Lot decided to stay in Sodom. Abraham and Sarah didn't manage to have kids directly, but Ismael was born through Sarah's slave Hagar. One day three travellers came by and Abraham invited them to rest. They said that next year Sarah would give birth to a son - which was laughable as they were both 'well on' in years. After that Abraham and God had a stroll and God shared his plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Though he didn't mention his nephew Lot, Abraham argued with God

about this. God changed the plan and agreed to make sure that anyone good would have a chance to get out first. After Sarah gave birth to Isaac (meaning laughter) she resented having Hagar & Ishmael around. She wanted them gone. Abraham was distressed by this, but God said they would be looked after - and they were. It wasn't easy, and at one point they'd run out of water, Ishmael was crying, and Hagar had given up. We're told that "God heard the boy crying" and sent an angel to reassure them and open up a well. Today's story comes next. Some time has passed as Isaac is now a boy, but we don't know how much.

As we listen to Rose sharing this story, consider what it shows us about God... and ourselves.

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,⁶ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Genesis 21: 1-3](#) [Genesis 22: 1-14](#)
[Psalm 13](#)



Abraham and Isaac - John Swanson

5 [Genesis 12](#)

6 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

✧ Sermon: Passing the test

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

Our main story starts by saying that “*After these things God tested Abraham.*” The idea of testing in the Bible may make you uncomfortable. It’s important to remember this isn’t the only case. Joseph will test his brothers. Jesus will be tested by Satan, and the Pharisees, lawyers, etc. Jesus tested Philip when asking him how to feed the 5000 - and when Philip couldn’t answer Jesus helped him out. You could think of Jesus sleeping through the storming seas as a test for the disciples to trust that God would provide even when Jesus was asleep. (When they failed the test Jesus didn’t chuck them overboard.)

Here God is testing Abraham, but what about? What is God trying to evaluate? The Hebrew word used for ‘test’ relates to giving experience through a trial. What experience is God trying to give Abraham? ...and did he pass?

The traditional view of the story is that Father Abraham is a hero of the faith. This incident is even mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews⁷ - along with the explanation that Abraham knew God could raise people from the dead. After all, the idea of a Father being willing to tie his son down and kill him is disturbing.

Still, God had said to get up and go to a place he would show Abraham... and not for the first time. This is how the adventure had started, and God had led them well so far.⁸ While Abraham probably couldn’t understand how God would fulfill the promise

to provide a great nation through Isaac if he’s dead - the creator of the universe can do anything. It’s also well known that gods can give and take away - do whatever they want. Other people’s gods used them as play things. The Phoenician gods demanded child sacrifices. Abraham had faith that God would provide.

This faith might explain why Abraham doesn’t bother to tell anyone about the plan to sacrifice his son - his wife, his son, his servants. Perhaps his faith is why he says to the servants⁹ “*we will return to you.*” This faith that God will provide an alternative might be why Abraham carries the dangerous items, fire and the blade, while Issac carries the wood.¹⁰ Are these signs of great faith? or is it hiding something horrible?

Because killing your son is horrible.



Abraham and Isaac - McCleary

⁷ [Hebrews 11](#)

⁸ Interestingly, the place God tells Abraham to head to, Moriah, means ‘he sees’. This provides nice bookends for the story as it starts with going to ‘he sees’, and ends with him seeing the Lord provide.

⁹ really slaves, but curiously referred to as ‘lads’. Is this showing some familiarity or affection, or similarity to Isaac?

¹⁰ Christians have long seen a parallel between innocent Isaac carrying the wood for his sacrifice and sinless Jesus carrying the cross (in the Gospel According to John).

Is Abraham a great hero of faith... and God horrible for asking this of him? Is this the God Abraham knows? Is this the God we know?

In Abraham's time every group had their gods - and honestly, it's true now as well - if you shift the wording from gods to other driving sources of values & priorities - like the market economy or secularism. One author I read this week¹¹ shared when his daughter, 6 at the time, wrote him a story for Father's Day. It was about a frog with no friends. It asked her parents to play, but they were too busy working, so it went off and found somebody else. He had to stop and consider what God was calling him to do.

But back to Abraham's neighbours. Their god stories involve competition, fights, killing, and treating people as play things. Whatever their gods want goes. But the God of Abraham is not like the others. Creation brought peace. It was good. Abraham and God go for walks and talk. They sit around at dinner and laugh. They look at the stars together and talk about the future. God will share decisions with Abraham, and Abraham will argue God's wrong. God doesn't smite Abraham, but listens and changes. Does this sound like a God who would ask a father to kill his son, his only one, whom he loves?

If that's not the sort of God we know, then what sort of test is this? Is it really about having blind faith?

A few chapters earlier, after God and Abraham had had shared lunch and talked about Sarah becoming pregnant, they went for a walk. We're told that the Lord thought, *"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness*

and justice".¹² The Lord and Abraham then discuss/argue about what should be done about the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This is important and could shed light on today's passage. It tells us that God values *"righteousness and justice"*, and hopes that Abraham will teach this to his children... and all the nations. Abraham seems to do okay in arguing for the strangers of Sodom and Gomorrah. Is the request to sacrifice Isaac a test to see if he really understands God and will stand up for *"righteousness and justice"*? Is this a question of blindly following the rules or doing what's right?

Did Abraham pass the test?



Jonah and the cave of the earth - Baumgartner

If we move forward in the story we'd see that while Isaac is spared, only Abraham is mentioned returning to the two servants. He then goes to live in Beer-sheba, not Hebron where Sarah is living. There's no record of Abraham speaking with Isaac again. When he gives instructions for Isaac finding a wife it is done through a servant. A bigger sign might be that there is no record of God and Abraham talking again. It might just be sparse

11 Leonrad Sweet. *Out of the question... into the mystery*

12 [Genesis 12](#): 17-19

details in the Bible, but after this test all the relationships that are most precious to Abraham seem broken.

I'm not convinced he passed the test. And if he didn't pass, then what was the test about? Perhaps seeing if Abraham would be willing to stand up for "*righteousness and justice*"?

What does all this tell us about God?

That God doesn't want us to be mindless creatures, but companions who will ask questions. God is looking for a relationship.

This tale, and many others, also tell us that God does not give up on us. Assuming that Abraham did fail the test, God still follows through with the promise to make a nation out of his descendants - and that from him all nations were blessed (through Jesus).

What's this say about us?

We should question whether what is happening is in line with what else we know about God. If we hear God calling us to go do something, is it consistent? Is it in line with "*righteousness and justice*"? Does it echo the words we sang from the prophet Micah, "*what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God*"? As Christians we understand God best through Jesus.¹³ Jesus challenges people, society, and the church... to totally embrace loving God and others.

We won't always succeed - that's part of being able to make choices. However God will always be there - because God has faith in us.

To God be all the glory, Amen.

¹³ We also understand that Jews have a different relationship.



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: All my hope on God is founded.....pg.12 (462)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2oYTtyBSxk

🗣️ 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: Share a story about somebody doing what was right instead of what they were told.
Memories: When have you had to make that choice?
Wonder: How can we support each other in doing what is right?
Wonder: What does it mean to live faithfully to God?
Actions: Ask God questions.
Prayer: ...that we will know God better and become better followers.

✦ Spirit Sightings

Thinking of a couple of examples of not doing what you're told to do what is right I'm reminded of three stories.

- my Opa rejected the authority of the Nazi occupiers in the Netherlands and helped with the resistance hiding people
- Ines and I broke the COVID bubble rules to look after a friend's child while she was isolated in the hospital having a baby.
- and Mother Teresa. While she didn't defy orders, she left the convent without any support to help the poorest of the poor.
- ...what examples can you think of?



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 people¹⁴

This week we will be passing around our prayer diary and having a prayer based on that. You are welcome to create your own prayer based on this...

O Lord God,

Creator above us,

Spirit within us,

Lord ahead of us,

open us to yourself,

that we may become transparent to ourselves.

Make us masters of ourselves,

that we may be the servants of others.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

we bless you for the gift of our lives.

We bless you

for the invisible fibres of loyalty and trust

that bind us to the people we love and care for,

for fidelity in our marriages,

for care and love for our children,

for the gifts you've allowed us to discover within ourselves,

and for the gifts other people have given us

by giving of themselves.

We bless you

for useful jobs to do,

for leisure to enjoy,

for fun to have,

for homes to live in,

for bodies to touch,

for love to share.

We pray to you

for our friends and the people we care about,

for people whose life has somehow become boring and lusterless

whose marriages have lost their tenderness,

whose health is poor,

whose hope for the years ahead is dim,

and whose death is near.

We pray for peace.

Let all who think lightly of making war

be converted to think strongly of making peace.

We pray

for people for whom

today is another day of trying to find something to eat,

for people in our world for whom

today is another day lived under the yoke of oppression,

for people who have no friends and are desperately lonely,

for people who have lost somebody so close to them

¹⁴ [Worship Sourcebook 4.4.4](#)

that they are almost dying with grief,
and for people today who are dying.

O Spirit of Christ,
give us a joy that outlasts our sorrows,
give us a hope stronger than the despair of our discouragement
and give us a new belief that we have reason to rejoice—
to be glad for who we are because you made us and gave us life,
and all we have is a gift from you.

In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior,
Amen.

♪ Hymn: God be with you till we meet again.....pg 11 (621)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXq3van1aOs

✦ Sending & Benediction (from Philippians 4:6-7)
*Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let
your requests be made known to God.*

*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
Amen.



MISSION MOMENT **Sunday, September 14**

Next week (on September 21) we will celebrate the global event, International Day of Peace. Established by the United Nations in 1981, it allows individuals, groups, and nations to reflect on and take action to promote peace within their communities. Today, peace can feel distant as wars and emergencies unfold in Sudan, Gaza, Ukraine, Haiti, Yemen, and elsewhere. Yet, even in the darkest moments, inspired by our faith, we find hope in the work being done to bring relief. PWS&D is committed to fostering peace by providing lifesaving aid, psychosocial support, hygiene kits and medical supplies to those affected by conflict in the world. As we mark this day, let us reflect on Jesus' words: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, September 14 We pray for PCC camps hosting fall retreats and school groups this season. May the camps serve as a sanctuary, offering rest, renewal, and opportunities for outdoor learning to guests of all ages.

Monday, September 15 We pray for presbytery student committees listening for God's voice with humility, love, tenderness, and trust in the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit as they journey with and support candidates for ministry.

Tuesday, September 16 We pray for the people, ministries and mission of the Presbytery of Essex-Kent.

Wednesday, September 17 We pray that faith groups will work together to pursue unity in a world that is filled with conflict.

Thursday, September 18 We pray for the staff at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre. In the midst of their busiest season of the year, may they be blessed with patience, compassion and abundant energy to serve those seeking sanctuary amid God's creation.

Friday, September 19 We ask for strength, wisdom and encouragement for members of the The Atlantic Mission Society as they serve God in their work.

Saturday, September 20 We give God thanks for the ministry of the Rev. Don Muir who is retiring as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly after serving for 22 years.

Crown him with many crowns

DIADEMATA 6 6 8 6 D SMD

Descant

5. Crown him the Lord of years, the end of time,

D Bm G D/F# G A7/E D A

1. Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb up - on the throne: hark,
 2. Crown him the Son of God, be - fore the worlds be - gan; let
 3. Crown him the Lord of life, who tri-umphed o'er the grave, and
 4. Crown him the Lord of peace, whose king - dom is at hand; from
 5. Crown him the Lord of years, the Source, the End of time, Cre -

Cre - a - tor of the spheres in maj - es - ty sub - lime.

D A/C# Bm /D E /D A/C# E7/B A D Esus4-3 A /G

how the heav - en - ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own! A -
 all who tread where he has trod, crown him the Son of Man, who
 rose vic - to - rious in the strife for those he came to save. His
 pole to pole let war - fare cease and Christ rule eve - ry land! A
 a - tor of the roll - ing spheres in maj - es - ty sub - lime. All

All hail, Re-deem-er, hail, for you have died for

D/F# D A7/E D/F# G B7/F# E D/F# E/G# A /G

wake, my soul, and sing of him who died to be your
 eve - ry grief has known that wrings the hu - man breast, and
 glo - ries now we sing who died and rose on high, who
 ci - ty stands on high; Christ's glo - ry it dis - plays, and
 hail, Re-deem - er, hail, for you have died for me; your

me; praise shall not fail through all e - ter - ni - ty.

D/F# G D/F# Em7 A D /F# G D Asus4-3 D

Sav - iour and your match-less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 takes and bears them for his own, that all in him may rest.
 died e - ter - nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
 there the na - tions "Ho - ly" cry in joy - ful hymns of praise.
 praise shall nev - er, nev - er fail through all e - ter - ni - ty!

Words: Matthew Bridges (1800–1893), Godfrey Thring (1823–1903), alt Music: George Job Elvey (1816–1893); descant, Richard Proulx (1937–)

Words: public domain Music: descant, copyright © Richard Proulx

What does the Lord require of you

MOON Irregular

1. What does the Lord re - quire of you?

2. Jus - tice, kind - ness,

3. To seek jus - tice, and love kind - ness,

Bb F/A Gm Dm/F

* Verses enter successively; repeat each verse with subsequent verses.

Repeat ad lib Last time

What does the Lord re - quire of you? you?

walk hum-bly with your God. God.

and walk hum-bly with your God. God.

Eb Bb/D Cm7 F Bb Bb

Words: Micah 6:8, paraphrase, Jim Strathdee (1941-) Music: Jim Strathdee (1941-)

Words: paraphrase, copyright © Desert Flower Music, 1986. Used by permission. Music: copyright © Desert Flower Music, 1986. Used by permission. CCLI #4440603

God be with you till we meet again

RANDOLPH 9889

Unison D /F# G Em7 Asus4 - 3 D

God be with you till we meet a - gain;

Harmony D E/D A/C# F#m D6 E 7 Asus4-3 /G D/F# G D6/F#

1. lov - ing coun - sels guide, up - hold you, with a shep-herd's

2. un - seen wings pro - tect - ing, hide you, dai - ly man - na

3. when life's per - ils thick con - found you, put un - fail - ing

4. keep love's ban - ner float - ing o'er you, smite death's threat - ening

Em /D A/C# A7 Unison D D7/F# G Em7 Asus4-3 D

care en - fold you:

still pro - vide you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.

arms a - round you:

wave be - fore you:

Words: Jeremiah Eames Rankin (1828-1904) Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Words: public domain Music: copyright © Oxford University Press from The English Hymnal CCLI #4440603

All my hope on God is founded

MICHAEL 8787337

F (/G) Cm6/E♭ B♭/D Gm C 9 F (/G) Cm

1. All my hope on God is found - ed who does still my
 2. Hu - man pride and earth - ly glo - ry, sword and crown, be -
 3. God's great good-ness reigns e - ter - nal, deep in wis - dom,
 4. Dai - ly does Al-might-y Giv - er boun - teous gifts on
 5. Still from earth to God e - ter - nal sac - ri - fice of

Gm/D D9 G C11 F#sus2 - 1 F6 Dm/B Em7

trust re - new; through all change and chance God guides me,
 tray all trust; what our care and toil es - tab - lish,
 pass - ing thought; light and life are all God's splen - dour
 us be - stow, God's de - sire our soul de - light - ing,
 praise be done, high a - bove all prais - es prais - ing

A Dm7 Em7 C/E F#maj7 G7 C F/A F7 B♭ (/G)

on - ly good and on - ly true. Love un - known,
 tower and tem - ple, fall to dust, but God's power,
 bring - ing beau - ty out of naught. Ev - er - more
 pleas - ure lead - ing where we go. Love will stand
 for the gift of Christ, the Son. Hear Christ call

Cm/A Daug Gm Aaug/C#A7 Dm (7) G6 C 9 F

God's a - lone, calls my heart to be God's own.
 hour by hour, is my tem - ple and my tower.
 from God's store new-born worlds rise and a - dore.
 at God's hand; joy will wait on God's com - mand.
 one and all: you that fol - low shall not fall.

Words: German, Joachim Neander (1650–1680), translation, Robert Bridges (1944–1930), alt
 Music: Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

Words: this version copyright © The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1997 Music: copyright © Novello & Company Ltd.