



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

What's the word on gifts?

December 14, 2025

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.¹ 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

Elections: We are pleased to share that David, John & Roberta have accepted the Call to become Ruling Elders at Kensington.

Prayer Groups:

Zoom: Wednesday 6:30 am [us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)
[pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

Women's Prayer Group: in person Thursdays 2pm
book & video series Oct 23-Nov 27 'When you pray'
and through *What's App*

Bible Study: Wednesday 7-8 pm

Join us in the minister's office and over zoom
as we discuss the upcoming week's main scripture passage.

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



Carolling: Dec 19

7:00 walking to our neighbours and singing

7:30 indoors for hot chocolate, crafts & more singing

Christmas Eve Worship: Dec 24th at 7pm.

Gathering for food: all free

MCT Community Dinner: Dec 20th from 6-9pm

free tickets: info@montrealchildrenstheatre.ca

(also looking for helpers to peel Thursday 5 - 9, and Friday 4 - _

Pot-Luck Lunch: Dec 21st after worship

Pot-Luck Breakfast & Carols: Dec 25th 9:30

Community Christmas Dinner: Dec 25th from 1-7pm

at Concordia BUZZ dining hall. 7141 Sherbrooke West

Drop Box: Food donations are welcome for the local Food Pantry, diapers for young mothers through Head & Hands (who are also in need of hats, gloves, and socks).

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

Orly (Outreach co-ordinator).....orly.kensington@gmail.com

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



Approaching God

🗨️ Call to worship²

Piano: **The prophet Isaiah announced that people of all nations will come to the mountain of the Lord and learn God's ways.**

Windows: **When we look at this suffering world, we know we need to follow God's ways.**

Piano: **Gods word will blanket us like snow to water the fields in spring—bringing forth flowers and joy.**

Windows: **We cling to that promise and light these candles of hope, peace & love, and are inspired by a vision of abundant grace for all who incline their ear—that all needs will be met.**



(The candle of love is lit.)

Let us pray together:

Living God, make us more aware of your presence. We trust your promises and wait with hopeful hearts. Come, Lord Jesus.

🎵 Hymn: Come, let us sing.....pg 9 (412)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zs9o82P_so



Prayer of Approach

Welcoming God,
we gather here, on this third Sunday of Advent
to dedicate time focusing on you
seeking you,
celebrating you

² adapted from liturgy provided by the Presbyterian World Service & Development

and the blessings/gifts you give.

We gather, inclining our ear to hear your word,
and hearing visions of food and drink for all those in need
that your word will meet all our needs
and more.

Your word also reminds us
that too often we chose things that aren't good for us
or chose not to reach out to our neighbours
or those who need help.

We confess that we can be afraid
of what others may need from us
...that we may need to change our ways or ideas

...

Please forgive us
and may your Spirit help us to feel your forgiveness
and live into your reality rather than this pale imitation.

We remember that you spoke a prayer to help shape us
and together we sing 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 Time

Have you ever done something that you were told wasn't a good idea - and then something got hurt? The Bible talks about a time when the Israelites as a group were not living like God wanted, and the consequences weren't good. Many ended up with their homes destroyed and being forced to live in another country. But God said that it wouldn't be forever. They would have a chance to go back home - and it would be good.

One of the passages that describes what it will be like, for those who listen to God, comes from the book of Isaiah (in the Bible) ...and the words have been put into a song we're going to learn.

♪ You shall go out with joy.....pg. 10



Dancing with the Son - Sarah Hale

prayer

*Dear Jesus, thank you for creating a good future
and help us to listen for how we can help.*

Amen.

♪ Hymn: Long ago prophets knew.....pg 11 (121)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v9_SyufaPk
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeLA1LhqFA4 (with Orch)

🧘 Prayer for Illumination

Lord, open our hearts and minds
through the power of your Holy Spirit,
that we may be nurtured by your word and bloom.

Amen.

✧ Intro to the readings

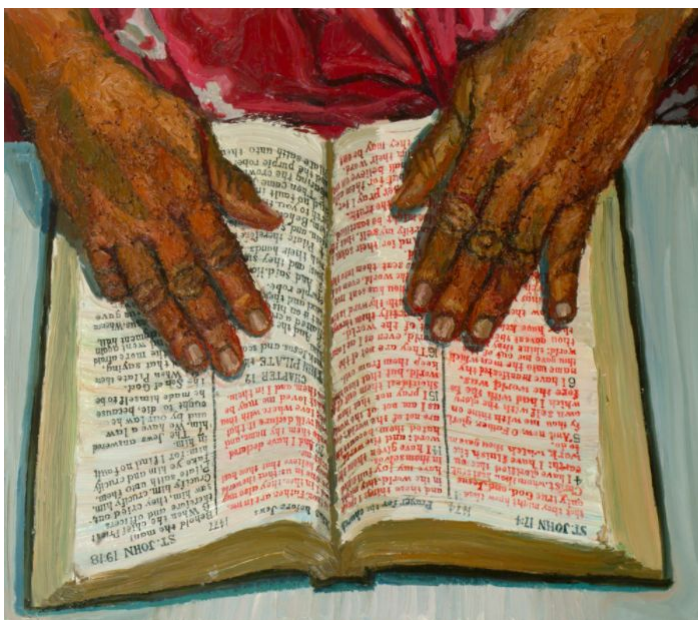
Today's psalm is 145. Well, selected verses of it. I invite you to read it all at some point because it's all good - but a little long for this morning.

Our main reading is from the book of Isaiah. At 66 chapters, this book gets first place in the prophets section of the Bible. In scope it covers over 200 years. If you're thinking that's an impossibly long time for one person... others have noticed that too. Scholars don't think it was all one person. The differences in historical details, writing style, and subject matter suggest at least three sections. The first 39 chapters are messages and descriptions from when the Assyrians took Israel (the northern kingdom) - making it late 8th century to early 7th. The next section (chapters 40-55) takes place during the exile from Jerusalem (southern kingdom) about 200 years later - when Jeremiah and Ezekiel were also delivering the word from God. Then the third part (56-66) is after the return to Jerusalem.


Why, you may ask, if it's from different times and not all one person is it all called Isaiah? The recordings would have started with a person named Isaiah who God chose to deliver messages to the Israelites. The book is organized to deliver a message as a continuation of those initial prophecies through later prophecies and events. The message starts by condemning the collective sin

of the nation, that God will apply corrective judgment through other nations... and does, and then moves to news of restoration. It is a story of consequences for being self centred, God's loyalty/faithfulness, and hope.

Today we're going to hear the last chapter of the second section - aimed at those in exile. As Rose starts reading it, imagine someone standing in a busy market place and trying to get people's attention.



Her Hands on the Word - Sedrick Huckaby

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible,³ or click on the name to be taken to an online version.

[Isaiah 55](#): 1-13

[Psalm 145](#) (trimmed for time: 1-4, 8-9, 13b, 17-21)

³ 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: What's the word?

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

How's your gift shopping going?

As I've been talking to people this week, the topic of gifts came up several times. Parents and grandparents were sharing their struggle with what to get the kids. They struggled with the expectation to give something, but that the kids seemed to have everything already. I suggested giving an experience, but apparently they already have that. I suggested wrapping something from the back of the closet, but they didn't think that would cut it.⁴

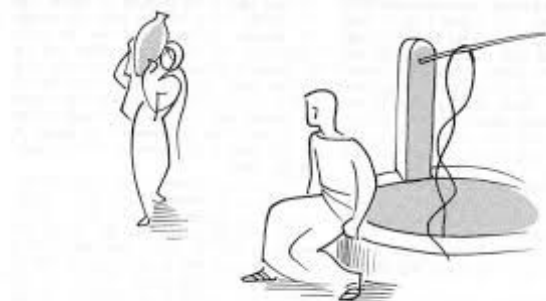
I also heard a piece on the CBC this week about gifts. I think it was with a psychologist. He pointed out that when people remember childhood gift giving times (Christmas/Hanukkah/Eidi) their memories are focused on special foods, usually sweets, and relationships. His advice for a memorable gift is a box of instant cake mix that you make together for breakfast.

As is usual when we read passages from the Bible, our experiences shape what we see in them. This week I think Isaiah 55 is about gifts. It even supports what the psychologist said.

The passage starts with a basic need: water. It's hard to focus on anything when your basic needs aren't met. God's word here starts with, "Come to the water." That said, the word quickly expands to food and wine and milk - all you can take, without price. It reminds me of other stories in the Bible. There's a passage back in Isaiah 25 about God hosting a feast for all nations

⁴ Another great idea is to go to the 'gifts of change' with the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). It's something that makes the world better and doesn't clutter up anyone's home. It might even expand somebody's horizons or open a discussion about the church & God.
presbyterian.ca/donate/gifts-of-change

of the best food and drink. The first miracle in the gospel of John is Jesus turning water into wine - in ridiculous abundance. And there's another story in John about Jesus sitting by a well. There he discusses the gift of water - and that while the Samaritan woman can give him some refreshing water, God can give her living water. All she has to do is incline her ear and accept the gift and she will never have thirst/need again.⁵ And this is part of what's going on here. God is offering to meet the needs of everyone who thirsts - physical and more.



Give me a drink of water (4.7)

woman at well - Annie Vallotton

Another part of this gift is God offering to “*make with you an everlasting covenant*”. In case you don’t remember, a covenant is a serious commitment to someone, a sacred vow. This is about relationships - a vital gift. God created us to be in relationships - with God, other people, and creation. When that’s missing, we are not well. God’s giving his word that we can depend on a sure & solid relationship of love. That this relationship between God and the people will be so full of hope, peace, love, & joy that nations will come to find out more - and the gifts of God’s love will be shared.

In verse one it says this is “*without price*”, but is it really? Verse two questions how we spend our money on things that aren’t really good for the community. It reminds me of a

conversation at the morning prayer group about the commercialism of Christmas; it’s focused on gifts for ourselves rather than God’s gift of Jesus. Verse two questions what we spend our money on, and that God’s gift to us doesn’t cost money... but I don’t think it’s really “*without price*”.

The passage tells us to only “*eat what is good*”, to “*incline your ear*” and “*Seek the Lord*”. The wicked are to “*abandon their way of life, and the unrighteous their way of thinking*.” While this isn’t about giving up money, it is giving things up. Some of it is actually things - like products that will still be in our landfill in seven generations. Eating only what is good can refer to our viewing intake: such as TV and social media. Taking time to look for God, listen to God, and avoid thinking in ways that are unrighteous (ie. not right with God)... this involves changing the way we live and think. This involves giving up things and ways. It’s a cost.

Is this required? Must you pay this cost to receive the gifts of God? Part of the word here is that “*my thoughts and not your thoughts, nor are my ways your ways*.” This comes right after the line about anyone who turns to God will be forgiven. God’s justice isn’t about punishment or retribution; it’s about love, hope and healing. God doesn’t even come back to us saying, ‘hey, you own me’, or ‘I helped you, now it’s your turn to help me.’ God’s ways are not our ways. This is the awkward balance of God’s gift given “*without cost*”, yet there are consequences to not “*eating what is good*”.

You could think about somebody offering you a coffee. If you don’t take it, you can’t enjoy it. If you push it away, you may end up with hot coffee everywhere.

This passage talks about God’s word. You could think of this balance as words. If somebody gives you a compliment? What about if they try to speak a correction to you? Both can be a gift,

depending on how you receive them.
...sadly, changing our ways is hard.



Desert Blooming, Namaqua

As we get to the end of this section of Isaiah we are reminded about the nature of God's word. Like rain that falls in a desert, God's word transforms those who listen. Lives will bloom in ways nobody could imagine. *"You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song... instead of thorns, there will be mighty trees and beautiful flowers."* This is God's gift for those who let their hard surface relax and soak in God's word. They will receive God's gifts of love, hope & healing.

...which would be a nice place to stop, except it misses a big part of the passage. This talk of gifts has fallen into one of the criticisms of Christmas - it's become very individualistic or self-centred.

The 'you' that is addressed isn't you... it is 'all y'all' or 'youse' - it is all of our society - our nation, and *"nations that do not know you"* (verse 5). The gift of abundance is not just for you, or even us Christians... it is for everyone.

This week I followed-up on something I heard about at the

national meetings I go to. It's called the Halo Effect.⁶ This measures the socio-economic benefit that a religious congregation contributes to its local community. According to their research, for every dollar in an urban congregation budget, they save the city \$3.39 in providing social services and other benefits. That's a pretty good gift.

But the God's word is more than that. It is about saving creation, people, and us from poor choices - from our sins. It's the gift of a beautiful way of living that will bring love, hope & healing.

To God be all the glory

Amen.

Response to God - Phil Irish



Responding to God

♪ Hymn: I heard the voice of Jesus say.....pg 12
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUVCpF8-VuE

💬 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: What were important Christmas moments/events/gifts for you as a child? other times?

Wonder: How could we take the gift of God's word out of the church and into the nation?

Actions: Consider giving people 'gifts of change' through the Presbyterian World Service and Development

⁶ haloproject.ca

(PWS&D). It won't clutter up homes or give cavities; it will make the world better, and might open a conversation about the church & God.

Values: Over the next week, how will you 'incline your ear' and 'seek God'? (hold each other accountable)

Values: Offer a way of life or thinking that you want to change to live more righteously (right with God). Pray, be patient, and hold each other accountable. (If this is new to you, it's easier to start small.)

Prayer: ...think of somebody you think needs to hear God's word of love, hope & healing. Pray for them... and be aware God might use you.

✧ Spirit Sightings

Education is very important, and educating girls is known to have a significant impact on the welfare of a community. Sadly, Sapna & Raksha, 12 and 10, had the girls' school in their village closed - until it was reopened with help from the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D). Now, everyday they get food for the body and the mind. The community is also benefiting as enrolment is growing.



✧ Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on our **website**: kensingtonchurch.ca. Just click the '**Donate Now**' button, and then the pretty button. It gives you various options that are easy to follow.

You can also donate through **interac e-transfer**. Our name is Kensington Presbyterian Church and the e-mail address is info@kensingtonchurch.ca.

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

✧ Prayers of the people

This week we will be passing around the prayer book and saying something based on what people write in it. You are welcome to create your own prayer based on this one from Spill the Beans #25.

O God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, freely given to us because you love us.

In this season of Advent
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
our thoughts turn to food and drink,
to presents and decorations,
to all the different expenses that this season brings.

Thank you, Lord,
for all the food we will share together over the coming weeks.
Remind us that not everyone is so lucky;
there will be many who will have little or nothing to share.

Lord, we pray that one day everyone would enjoy a meal
and never have to worry if they will eat or drink tomorrow.

Thank you, Lord, for our friends and families,
for get-togethers and parties,
for fun and laughter.

Remind us that not everyone enjoys this time of year;
there will be many who have no one to visit
or who find this time of year difficult, sad and isolating.

Lord, we pray that one day we will learn to be sensitive
to others who feel differently from us
and be open to listening to them
and making time for them.

Thank you, Lord,
for words,
for giving us a way
to express ourselves.
Remind us that not everyone has the freedom
to use words the way we do.

Lord, we pray that one day everyone will be free
to use words without fear of the consequences
they might bring.

Thank you, Lord,
for simple pleasures,
for cold dark mornings
and warm snuggly blankets.
Remind us that not everyone
likes the darkness or has a place
to keep warm and dry.

Lord, we pray that one day
everyone will find light,
even in the darkness
and that they will have a place
to be warm and safe.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear all our prayers.
Amen.

♪ Hymn: There's a wideness in God's mercy.....pg 9 (tune 585)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfyZIJUHKpU

✦ 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.



412 Come, let us sing to the Lord our song

FORNEY 9 8 8 9

C C/B Am G6 F G

1. Come, let us sing to the Lord our song;
 2. O thirs-ty soul, come drink at the well;
 3. You dwell a - mong us and cause us to pray, and
 4. Des-erts shall bloom and moun - tains shall sing

Em Am Am/G F G

we have stood si - lent - ly too long;
 God's liv - ing wa - ters will nev - er fail.
 walk with each oth - er fol - lowing your way;
 to the de - sire of all liv - ing things.

C C/B Am G6 Fmaj7 G

sure - ly the Lord de - serves our praise, so
 Sure - ly the Lord will help you to stand,
 our pre - cious bro - thers and sis - ters will grow
 Come, all you crea - tures, high and low;

Dm G Am Em F G C

joy - ful - ly thank God for our days.
 strength - ened and com - for - ted by God's hand.
 in the ful - fill - ing love they know.
 let your prais - es end - less - ly flow.

CCLI #4440603

Words: Jim Strathdee (1941-) Music: Jim Strathdee (1941-); arrangement, Jean Strathdee (1944-)

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Kingston Press, Inc.

PRAISE TO GOD

31 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

G Em C D G Am D G Em D7 G

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide-ness of the sea.
 2 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of the mind.

G Em C D G Am D G Em D7 G

There's a kind-ness in God's jus - tice, which is more than lib - er - ty.
 And the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.

Em Dm C Dm Am E Am D G Em D G A7 D

There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heaven.
 If our love were but more faith - ful, we would glad - ly trust God's word,

G Em C D G Am7 D G Em D7 G

There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment given.
 and our lives re - flect thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of our Lord.

WORDS: Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

MUSIC: Dutch melody; arr. Julius Röntgen (1855-1932)

IN BABILONE

8.7.8.7.D.

Dec 14, 2025

What's the word on gifts?

The Trees of the Field

1 You shall go out with joy — and be led
4 forth with peace; — the moun-tains and the hills will
8 break forth be - fore you; there'll be shouts of joy, —
11 — and all the trees of the field will clap, will
15 clap their hands. And all the trees of the
19 field will clap their hands, — the

22 trees of the field will clap their hands, —
25 — the trees of the field will clap their hands —
29 — while you go out with joy. *Repeat ending*
33 *Song ending* joy. — *Optional extended ending* joy. And shout when
37 you go out with
41 joy! —

WORDS: Steffi Geiser Ruben (based on Isaiah 55:12)

MUSIC: Stuart Dauermann

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Long ago, prophets knew

THEODORIC (PERSONENT HODIE) 6 6 6 6 6 with refrain

Em /C# Bm/D Bm

1. Long a - go,
2. God in time,
3. Ma - ry, hail!
4. Jour - ney ends!

D/F# D G /F# Em /D A/C# (Em/B) F#m/A D/F# G /B

pro - phets knew Christ would come, born a Jew,
God in man, this is God's time - less plan:
Though a - fraid, she be - lieved; she o - beyed.
Where a - far Beth - lehem shines, like a star,

D G D/F# D A/C# Bm Em9 /C# F#m A F#m Bm

come to make all things new, bear all peo - ple's
he will come as a man, born him - self of
In her womb, God is laid, till the time ex -
sta - ble door stands a - jar: un - born son of

Em /D /C# /B F#m/A G F#m Bm A /G /F# /E

bur - den, free - ly love and par - don.
wom - an, God di - vine - ly hu - man.
pect - ed, nur - tured and pro - tect - ed.
Ma - ry, Sav - iour and do not tar - ry!

D Refrain Em/D

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!

D Em/D D Bm E

When he comes, when he comes, who will make him wel - come?
(last verse) we will make him wel - come!

Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-) Music: Piae Cantiones, 1582; harmony, Gustav T. Holst (1874-1934)

Words: copyright © 1971 by Hope Publishing Co. Music: harmony, copyright © J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd. CCL1 #4440603

I heard the voice of Jesus say

KINGSFOLD 8 6 8 6 D CMD

Em (/D) C D/C G/B Em D (G/B D7/A) G Am C

1. I heard the voice of Je - sus say; "Come un - to me and
2. I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly
3. I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's

Dsus4-3 G/B Csus2-1 (/B) Am7 D G/B A7/E D (/C) G/B D7/A

rest; lay down, thou wea - ry one, lay down thy
give the liv - ing wa - ter; thirst - y one, stoop
light; look un - to me, thy morn shall rise, and

G /B C6 Am6 Em Bm Em (D7/F#) G C6 D G

head up - on my breast!" I came to Je - sus as I was,
down, and drink and live!" I came to Je - sus, and I drank
all thy day be bright." I looked to Je - sus, and I found

G Am G/B C Dsus4-3 G/B Csus2 /B Am

wea - ry and worn and sad; I found in him a
of that life - giv - ing stream; my thirst was quenched, my
in him my star, my sun, and in that light of

G Em7-6 D (/C) G/B D7/A G /B C6 Am6 Em

rest - ing place, and he has made me glad.
soul re - vived and now I live in him.
life I'll walk till trav - eling days are done.

Words: Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) Music: English traditional; arrangement, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Words: public domain Music: arrangement, copyright © Oxford University Press
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MISSION MOMENT Sunday, December 14

Shaibu Mohammed, a 7-year-old boy from Gbanterago in northern Ghana, was born with a disability caused by prolonged labour, and has never walked. Due to a lack of transportation, his parents were unable to enroll him in school. One day, Shaibu's mother walked to the PWS&D-supported Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) office to report her son's situation and seek help. After a home visit and assessment, the CBR team provided Shaibu with a tricycle. Additionally, the Inclusive Education Officer coordinated with Gbanterago Primary School for his enrollment. Grateful, his mother said, "My child can now go to school like other kids in our community. What a great relief! Thank you so much for this kind gesture."



DAILY PRAYERS

Sunday, December 14 (3rd Sunday of Advent) Give us joy, O God, as we prepare to welcome Christ among us again.

Monday, December 15 We pray for military chaplains who bring guidance and support to our troops and their families. May their presence be a constant reminder of God's presence, especially at those times when people feel estranged from home and family.

Tuesday, December 16 We pray for those who serve in ecumenical leadership; may our shared witness persevere, rooted in grace, justice, and reconciliation.

Wednesday, December 17 We give thanks for the Presbyterian Heritage Centre in Carlisle, Ontario. May it serve as a monument of God's enduring faithfulness to The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Thursday, December 18 (International Migrants' Day) We pray for outreach ministries such as the Newcomers Mission in Peterborough, ON, that offer care, encouragement, and practical support to newcomers to Canada.

Friday, December 19 We pray for Knox College students as they complete the fall semester and journey through this Advent season to Christmas. We ask for rest and renewal in time spent with family and friends.

Saturday, December 20 We pray for all who are travelling during Christmas holidays, that they remain safe and enjoy their respite time.

Gaza Aid Brings Relief



As violence persists in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, humanitarian needs on the ground are extreme and the ability to deliver aid continues to be challenging.

With thousands of families displaced, schools and hospitals bombed, thousands of children killed, and famine conditions, the impetus to act is greater than ever.

Despite the challenges, PWS&D has been responding through ecumenical networks and partnerships at ACT Alliance and Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide food and other humanitarian assistance where and whenever possible.

Ibrahim was a participant in a recent Canadian Foodgrains Bank food distribution. The food package he received made a big difference—not only easing his financial burden but also improving his son's health.

"This food parcel alleviated his suffering and provided my child with the necessary food," he shared. "Food aid distributions like this are essential."

This Advent season, faithfully respond to help provide food and humanitarian assistance for people in crisis.