

Kensington Presbyterian Church



Feeding Time

August 2, 2020

Welcome, during these times of physical isolation we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home.¹ This doesn't mean you have to do them alone. You can invite those who live with you, or connect with others through the phone or computer, or even in small groups outside.

If you have any prayer requests, ideas, or just want to talk, please reach out to your elder or the office info@Kensingtonchurch.ca (as Rev Peter is away from Aug 4-24).

Announcements

Worship Live: You can join us live over the internet - Sunday's at 10:30.

If you would like to join us, please contact the office for details. info@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Re-opening the Church: After considering recommendations from the government and the Presbyterian national office, Session is looking forward to resuming worship in the building Sept 13th - with various precautions, such as cleaning of the building and physical distancing.

Visiting: In the mean time, if you would like to talk or have a physical distance visit (we can bring a chair and sit at the end of the sidewalk or outside your window), please contact your elder or your elder.

Talk, Walk and Pray with the Moderator: The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is inviting you to join her for talks with people across the country, walking, and in prayer.

See her invitation the talks, and prayer list here: <https://presbyterian.ca/gao/moderator/>

Please continue to check out the website <https://kensingtonchurch.ca/> or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KensingtonChurchNDG/>

Contacts

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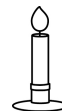



Approaching God

Prelude:



lighting the candle
Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.



 Call to worship

L: O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name

P: **Make known his deeds among the peoples**


L: Sing to him, sing praises to him

P: **Tell of all his wonderful works**

L: Glory in his holy name

P: **Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice**

All: **O give thanks to the Lord**

 Prayer of approach

Surprising and mysterious God, you come to us when we least expect it, calling us out of our routines and our plans, inviting us to follow Christ on a great journey of faith. We praise you for the many ways you comfort and guide us. In our moments of fear, you speak to us with words of reassurance. In our moments of doubt, you reach out your hand to save us. In our moments of turmoil, you bring calm to the storm. We place our trust in you this day and every day, and worship you as our Redeemer and Saviour in the name of Christ, our Lord and friend. Amen.

Unison Prayer of Confession

Merciful and patient God,

**We confess that we still live in fear and doubt,
even though we have been touched by
your saving grace.**

**You call us to live with courage and perseverance,
yet we give up too easily and opt for the safer route.
You encourage us to be bold in our faith
and steadfast in our fight for justice,
yet we remain silent in the face of
inequality and violence.**

**Forgive us all the times we have left you down.
Renew our lives through your mercy and grace.**


Assurance of Pardon

Friends, brothers and sisters in Christ,
Now faith is confidence in what we hope for
and assurance about what we do not see.

Yet, faith is also a gift.

For it is by grace that we have been saved, through
faith -

And this is not from ourselves, but a gift of God.
So let us know beyond doubt and accept deep in
our hearts,
that we are accepted, that we are loved and
forgiven by God.

 Lord's Prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)
As we turn towards God, we pray the prayer Jesus gave us.

**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
now and forever. Amen.**

♪ Hymn 324: Great is thy faithfulness.....pg 418

Listening to God

👤 Intro to the readings

- Following the feeding of 5,000, we continue our journey with Jesus to the middle of the sea of Galilee.

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

[Matthew 14: 22-33](#)

Meditation



Prayer

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you. O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Message: Water Walking Faith

“If you want to walk on water, you’ve got to get out of the boat”. A catchy saying, and the title of a book written by author and pastor John Ortberg. It actually is quite an inspirational book, challenging readers to step out on the risky waters of faith, to recognize God’s presence in one’s life, to grow through failures, to learn to discern between faith and foolishness, to wait upon the Lord, and to connect more deeply with God.

But the central problem I have with the book, is its opening conditional clause: ‘If you want to walk on water’. You see, I

really don’t want to walk on any water, and I suspect most of you do not either. I really prefer the safe confine of a solid ground, of knowing that I will be supported when I take that next step, of having a firm foundation of life and faith, of not having to deal with the unknown, the irrational, or the miraculous. I like having to believe in things that I know to be true, and to trust in a proven and trusted source. Getting out of any boat to walk on any water is just not my cup of tea, no thank you very much.

Which is what makes the story be Peter walking on water that much more remarkable.

We continue, through the Revised Common Lectionary, following the footsteps of Jesus, in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus had just finished feeding the five thousand, on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee, in a somewhat deserted place, not too far from the fishing village of Capernaum, the home town of a number of disciples including Matthew, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

After the miraculous feeding, the Scripture informs us that, “immediately [Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after Jesus had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.” (Matthew 14:22-23).

This other side of the lake, or more specifically towards the southern side, is roughly a 21km journey, not an easy sail by boat, especially not during the evening. It is somewhat puzzling why Jesus would send the disciples across the lake without him. The Bible didn’t say. It is equally puzzling why

the disciples didn't object to such a request, to make that journey in the evening, especially given that there were a number of seasoned fishermen among the group.

Last summer, I had the chance to visit Israel with my wife Daisy. It is a life long dream of ours, to visit the so-called Holy Land, the place where faith, both Hebrew and Christian, all began. We were part of a large study tour organized by the Bible Society from four different countries - with almost three hundred pilgrims jammed into six tour buses. As customary, we visited the lake of Galilee on a sight-seeing boat (reportedly converted from an actual fishing boat, but who knows). That particular tour departed from the archeological site of Capernaum, took us to the middle of the lake and back. It was sunny with mild wind and mesmerizing wave, a relatively smooth ride. What stood out to me when we were on the emerald green water, looking towards the horizon on all sides, are the steep hills surrounding the lake.

You see, the Sea of Galilee is the second-lowest lake in the world (after the Dead Sea), about 200 meters below sea level. Its geography, when weather conditions aligned, naturally invites wind from four sides to be funnelled rapidly down the middle, creating dangerous gusts and crashing waves.

Peter and the rest of the disciples should've known this, should've have just parked their boat on shore, to wait out the night, and to wait for the return of their teacher after his solitary time of prayer. Yet, they complied with the direction of Jesus, and set off on a potentially treacherous journey into the night. So it is no surprise, that we are informed in the following verse, "but by this time the boat, battered by the

waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them." (v.24).

During my tour of the region of Galilee, we were taken up to a mountain (more of a hill) on the shore of the lake near Capernaum. Although the Bible never specify the location, but that mountain/hill was believed to be the site where Jesus first sat down in Matthew chapter 5, and preached the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with the Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". It is also believed to be the site where he returned with the disciples post-resurrection, in Matthew chapter 28, and gave the Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

On that mountain/hill, the entire region can be seen clearly on a sunny day. Decapolis (or a group of ten cities) to the east, Tiberius (the newly constructed 1st century capital) to the west, and the region of Gennesaret to the south. On that same mountain, probably, was where Jesus, in today's passage, went up to pray alone, after sending the disciples off into the middle of the lake, in the middle of the night.

My point is when the storm hit the boat, Jesus knew it, saw it, but left the disciples to deal with it through the night. Perhaps there is a lesson there for us. Sometimes, God intentionally leave us to deal with storms of our lives, just so we be battered and bruised, to be reminded of our smallness and to re-remember our total reliance on our maker.

Coming back to the Scripture passage, in verse 25, “And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” (v.25-27)

Fear, being afraid, is a natural human condition, an instinctual human response. One could even argue that fear is what keeps humanity as a species alive, as we are conditioned to fear and to flee from dangers, known or unknown. In the case of the disciples, already battered by the storm, now seeing a ghostly figure walking towards them through the same storm, their fear is absolutely understandable.

But fear can also paralyzed us - it closes our eyes to what is true, closes our hearts to what is good. Have you noticed how many times in the Bible when humankind encountered the divine - be it a messenger, an angel, or even God himself - the initial responses were always that of fear? Have you then noticed the same comforting assurance from the divine was always “do not be afraid”. Easier said than done.

This is where Peter’s request is so remarkable, in verse 28, “Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.”

Faith, or *pisti* in Greek, has two necessary and intersecting components - that is belief and trust. ‘To believe’ is more of an intellectual assent, of knowing and affirming what is true.

It does not necessary require iron-clad proof, but rational thinking certainly helps. Whereas, ‘to trust’, it is more of a surrendering, to give in to what you believe, to even stake your life on it.

Charles Blondin, the 19th century French tight rope walker made his fame performing unimaginable feat before cheering crowds. On July 15, 1859, he hung a rope across the Niagara Fall, and as his fans looked on with shock and awe, Blondin crossed back and forth seemingly with ease while carrying a pole, then in a sack, then on a bicycle, then pushing a wheelbarrow. After demonstrating his mastery with the wheelbarrow on the tightrope, while the crowd watched with ‘oooohed’ and ‘aaaaahed’, Blondin asked his audience, “Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?” Of course the crowd shouted that yes, they believe! It was then that Blondin posed the question - “Who will get in the wheelbarrow?” Of course, none did². Evidently, Blondin’s cheering fans believed, but not trusted.

Peter, on the other hand, believed in Jesus, and upon being invited to cross that threshold, to come, to step out of the boat, he trusted. “So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” (v.29-30).

I don’t think we should be too harsh on Peter. It was after all during a storm, with winds, waves, and let’s be honest... WALKING ON WATER. One could really only take on so belief and trust before fear and doubt become too

² Creative Bible Study,

overwhelming. Faith, let's be honest at least in the way we practice, has its limit.

Peter, when push comes to shove, as he began to sink into the water, called out to his master, "Lord, save me!". In verse 31, "Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Faith, according to the author of Hebrews in chapter 11:1, is "the assurance of things hope for, the conviction of things not seen". Faith, according to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8, is also a gift from God, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.", and in Philippians 1:29, "For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well."

It is in such an understanding of faith, as God's gift to us that we come to know and proclaim in Living Faith 6.1.2 that, *"God brings us to faith in many ways. We may have trusted in God from childhood; or our faith may have come later in life. Faith may come suddenly or only after a struggle to believe. Whatever the spiritual journey we have traveled, God honours our faith, great or small."*

It is with such an understanding of faith that I have come to re-evaluate the words of Jesus to Peter, not as a rebuke, but as a continuing invitation to follow him, in belief, in trust, and in faith.

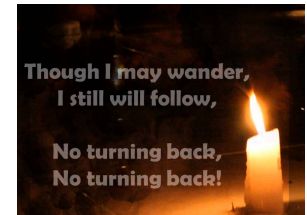
You of little faith, why did you doubt?

Don't you know that I am the Lord God who created the heaven and earth, who commands winds and seas, even storms in your life? Haven't you come to realize that faith is not based on your own ability to believe, or your own willingness to trust, but entirely based on my gracious gift to you, through the death and the resurrection of Christ. Haven't you come to realize that walking on water does not hinge on your ability to float, but hinges entirely on my invitation to 'come'. The same invitation I had given to you before, as I give to you now again: Come and follow me! Come!

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

♪ musical moment:

I have Decided to Follow Jesus



Responding to God

Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on **our website**.

Just click the ['Donate Now'](#) button, and then the pretty button. It gives you various options that are easy to follow.

You can now 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.

♪ Anthem:



👤 Prayers of the people

Note: Those taking part in the Sunday service will have the opportunity to name specific concerns they would like to be included in this prayer.

♪ Hymn 675: Precious Lord, take my hand.....pg 863

Sending & Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Ghost,
be with you all. Amen.

Que la grâce du Seigneur Jésus-Christ,
l'amour de Dieu
et la communion du Saint-Esprit
soient avec vous tous. Amen.

postlude:

