

**Central Queens Pastoral Charge
United Church of Canada**

December 13, 2020

10:30 a.m.

Third Sunday in Advent -- Joy

Central Queens Mission Statement

Central Queens United Church is a loving and living community called to support the life stages of all people; celebrating joy and sharing in pain. Through faith and fellowship we are united by God's love to live and serve as Disciples of Christ.

Gathering for Worship

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Birthdays & Special Occasions

Quiet Preparation for Worship (Bible is brought forward during the quiet time)

Bible Presentation

***Introit** "Prepare the Way of the Lord" VU #10

***Call to Worship**

Joy to the world!
Jesus the Christ is come.

We look for the Christ to come again,
in words and ways of hope.
Joy to the world!

Joy to the world!
Jesus the light has come.

We look for the Christ to come again,
in words and ways of peace.
Joy to the world!

Joy to the world!
Jesus the Christ has come.

We look for the Christ to come again,
in words and ways of love!
Joy to the world!

Joy to the world!
Jesus, the Living Water has come.

We look for the Christ to come again,
restoring hope, peace, joy and love.
Joy to the world!

As we come and worship, may we find joy
in our hearts, in our minds and in our actions.
Come with joy and worship our God.

Advent Candle Lighting -- Joy

Voice 1 Uncontainable, irrepressible, bubbling up in an explosion
of energy.

Voice 2 What the weary long for, what our children often
embody, what makes the divine smile -- joy.

Voice 1 It cannot be paid for, but is a priceless treasure.

Voice 2 As we hope for your arrival, as we pray
for peace in your living, as we wait and
watch and wonder how you might reveal
yourself to us, God give us joy in your Advent.

Three Candles are lit

Voice 1 Let us pray: Joy is not a commodity that can be bought or sold, but lives deep in the human spirit. Help us to hear that truth and believe it. Enable us to let go of what our consumer culture says will bring us joy --- money, success, a scramble to the top. Help us hear the call of John the Baptist to turn around and begin again. God of love, we were made in joy. May we live joy into our lives. Amen.

We light a candle for joy. May it light the way.

***Hymn**

“People Look East”

VU #9

Prayer of Approach

**Long expected One,
branch of Jesse's Tree,
Star child,
come.
Come to our hearts.
Come to our homes.**

**Come to our lives.
Change us for you,
so that the whole world will hear
glad tidings of great joy
because we cannot hold it in. ⁱ**

With Jesus, we share in the ancient prayer...

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Responsive Psalm 126

VU #850

***Hymn**

"I Can Feel You Near Me God"

MV # 48

All God's Children

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

The people you call to live in harmony with all creation caused rivers to stop flowing.

The people you call to love each other silence shouts of joy.

The people you call to remember the poor forget the least in the community.

The people you call to follow your way of love, compassion and kindness, have turned away from you.

We are those people, God, and we ask for restored hearts that listen to your call and follow.

Silence

Assurance of God's Love

God calls us
because God loves us,
and through history's chosen to seek relationship
with all creation.

Trust in the story of God's faithfulness, and enter once more into
the abundance of life that God offers. Amen.

Presentation of Our Gifts

Offertory Invitation

This Sunday, the Advent theme is Joy. Our scripture readings remind us to rejoice in God. Think of this offering as an opportunity to spread joy in our world, that seems particularly dark these days. Rejoice in the God and give thankfully. We give as we are able, we give as we are called.

Offertory

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

VU #55v. 4

***Presentation of Offering**

***Offertory Prayer**

**The prayers we offer,
the gifts we give,
are like seeds sown in trust
that God's love will water these seeds
and bring new life, hope and joy to those who weep. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Sacred Readings

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and

did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Anthem

Sermon

Pastoral Prayer

Come, Christ Jesus, be our guest
and enter our lives today with your blessing.
We are lonely for you and the peace you bring.
Draw near to us in friendship and faithfulness
so that in this season which combines celebration in the face of
uncertainty, we may know your presence...
and sing with all your people:
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Come, Christ Jesus, be our guide
and show us the way to wisdom and gratitude.
We are thankful for the kindness we know in friends and good neighbours,
in warm houses and warm smiles,

which hold off the darkness and fear for the future.
Encourage us to reach out to those who need your embrace and ours...
so that together we may sing of your presence:
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Come, Christ Jesus, be our hope
and touch us with your healing and grace.
We remember before you all those we know and those known to you alone
who are living with loss or illness this season,
those who face depression or discouragement,
and all who will find it hard to be merry this year.

silence

Shine the light of your comfort into their lives...
as we sing of the hope that dawns in your love:
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Come, Christ Jesus, be our sovereign
and claim your rightful place in our hearts.
Our world is struggling for the justice and mercy you bring.
Draw near to our leaders and all citizens working for peace and justice,
and those striving to contain and heal the effects of the pandemic.
Encourage honourable action and co-operation on all sides.
Give hope to people under oppression
and to those who live with fear or hunger day by day.
Hasten the day when the world's peoples will live as neighbours
reconciled in your truth and freedom. Amen ¹

Responding to the Word

***Hymn**

“Once in Royal David's City”

VU #62

***Blessing**

God sends us messengers of good news into the world,

¹ Pastoral Prayer taken from The Presbyterian Church in Canada: <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>

to plant seeds of life that brings joy and abundance to a world in need. God goes with us, who is: Creator of all life, Redeemer of all life, sustainer of all life. We never walk alone! Amen.

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able.

ⁱ Written by Kate Crawford. Gathering, Advent / Christmas / Epiphany 200602007, page 28.