

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

**December 18, 2022**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Fourth Sunday in Advent**

**Love**

**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**

**Lighting the Candle of Peace**

**Reader:** The first candle is to remind us of the prophets.

**Candle is lit**

The second reminds us of John the Baptist.

**Candle is lit**

The third reminds us of Mary.

**Candle is lit**

The fourth reminds us of the coming of Jesus.

**Candle is lit**

God will give you a sign, a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us'. (Isaiah 7:14)

**\*Hymn** "A Candle is Burning" VU #6 vv. 1, 2, 3, and 4

**Gracious God, as you came to those who have gone before us, you come to us now in Jesus. Help us to recognize you in those around us and to care for our neighbours as we do for ourselves. Amen.**

### **Bible Presentation**

**\*Introit** "Angels We Have Heard on High" VU #38 v.3

### **\*Call to Worship**

We come seeking a sign from you, Emmanuel, God with us.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may embody your love.**

We come seeking to worship you, the One who dwells with us always.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may embody your love.**

We come seeking to witness your presence, a child to be born in a coming night.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may embody  
your love. (Inspired by Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19)**

**\*Hymn "Let us Build a House"**

**MV #1**

### **Prayer of Approach**

**God of love –  
ferocious love, fierce love, unending love, everlasting love –  
we gather in this place with gratitude for the ways your love has  
called us out of coldness and into warmth.  
We know of your care, and we stand in awe of your  
unending presence.  
Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel.  
Stir up your influence in this place.  
Give us life, as we call on your name  
as we worship you in spirit and in truth.**

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

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, which 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 80:1–7, 17–19

VU #794 Part One

**\*Hymn** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child”

VU #46 vv. 1, 2

### **All God’s Children**

**\*Hymn** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child”

VU #46 v. 3

*Children may retire to Sunday School*

### **Call to Confession**

We gather together in this season of Advent  
anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy  
and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair and uncertainty.

### **Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

God, our shepherd – Restorer of our souls,  
In a world full of hopelessness,  
We have sometimes forgotten that you have shown your hope in  
endless ways.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your  
hope.**

In the mirey mess of the world,  
We have sometimes neglected to lean into your peace that  
transcends comprehension.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your  
peace.**

In a culture shrouded in doom and despair,  
We have often forgotten how to experience your joy.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your  
joy.**

In a moment when it is easier to hate others because they believe  
differently, love differently, live differently, vote differently – we  
have forgotten how to love beyond the bounds of what separates  
us.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your  
love.**

**Stimulate our memory, O divine Creator.**

**Remind us that in our weakness, we find your transforming  
presence.**

### **Assurance of God's Unending love**

God has never left us nor forsaken us.  
God is Emmanuel in the face of crisis,  
Emmanuel, in the midst of calamity  
Emmanuel, in the presence of tribulation.  
God with us, helping our unbelief, bringing us back to life,  
reminding us that we are light. Let that be for us good news.

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Offertory Invitation**

We believe in a God of justice and righteousness, and God believes in us to carry forth the mission of loving and caring for community. Let us now share our gifts and resources so that we may continue to walk humbly with God and with neighbours.

### **Offertory**

**\*Presentation of Offering** “Called by Earth and Sky” VU #135

### **\*Offertory Prayer**

**We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the enrichment of this beloved community and beyond. Let these gifts do justice in the world so that all may know they are loved by God. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Sacred Word**

#### **Isaiah 7:10–16**

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself

will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

### **Matthew 1:18–25**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’, which means, ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

### **Anthem**

### **Sermon**

## Reflective Music

### Responding to the Word

#### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

*Sung response is to the tune of "What Child Is This" VU #74*

Come, Christ Jesus,  
be a guest in our hearts and our homes this Christmas.  
Enter our lives today with your blessing.  
We are grateful for the wonder you bring  
into a world so full of complaints and criticism.  
Draw near to us in friendship and faithfulness,  
so that in this season of celebration,  
we may know your presence and can sing with all your people:

*Sung Response: Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.*

Come, Christ Jesus,  
be our guide through the darkening days and the chill of winter.  
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.  
Encourage us to reach out to those who need your embrace and  
ours, so that together we may sing of your presence:

*Sung Response: Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.*

Come, Christ Jesus,



be our hope in the uncertain times in which we find ourselves.  
Touch us with your healing and grace.

We remember before you 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 any who will find it hard to be merry this year.

Shine the light of your courage and comfort into their lives  
so that we may sing together in your love:

*Sung Response: Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of  
Mary.*

Come, Christ Jesus,  
claim your rightful place in our hearts.  
Our world is struggling for the justice and mercy you bring.  
Draw near to all leaders and all citizens working for peace and  
justice. Encourage honourable action and co-operation on all  
sides. Give hope to people under oppression  
and 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  
so that all may know the joy we sing:

*Sung Response: Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of  
Mary.*

Amen.

**\*Hymn**            "Joy Is Now in Every Place"

VU #45

**\*Blessing**

Go forth knowing that you are loved by God  
Go forth leading a life that is a sign of God's grace.  
Go forth with anticipation for the restoration that is to come.  
And in that going,  
may God bless and keep you,  
may God's face shine upon you,  
may God be gracious to you,  
and give you peace.  
Amen.

**\*Choral Benediction**    "Hope Shines as the Solitary Star"    MV #220

\*Please rise as you are able.