

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

December 10, 2023

10:30 a.m.

Second Sunday in Advent

PEACE

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 communion, we are united by God's love to live and serve as Disciples of Christ.

Gathering for Worship

Prelude

Welcome

Welcome in the name of the Christ.

Welcome to this place of worship, situated on the unceded traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people.

Welcome to this place of retreat and refuge, worship and wonder.

It is good to be here.

It is indeed good to be together.

Announcements

Birthdays & Special Occasions

Lighting the Candle of PEACE

Reader One - Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in our hearts, we light a candle of peace...

Reader Two - Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been remade into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace...

(Light the 2nd candle in your Advent wreath.)

Reader One - May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Reader Two - May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One - Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

Hymn "Jesus Came Bringing Us Peace" MV #33

Prayer **Living God, we thank you for faithful people of every age. We pray that we, too, may have faith, in spite of the darkness of our times, and may we look for the coming of Jesus into our world. Amen.**

Bible Presentation

***Introit** "Hark the Glad Sound" VU #29 v.1

***Call to Worship**

Keep shadows without and light within;
 let your face shine that we may be saved.
Keep fear without and justice within;
 comfort, comfort your people.

Keep chaos without and life within;
may those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
Keep despair without and hope within;
deliver us that we may rejoice.
Come, O Advent God,
and reveal your promise in us now.

***Hymn**

“There's a Voice in the Wilderness”

VU #18

Prayer of Approach

Comfort us, O God,
with the comfort that strengthens us for the world.
Comfort us, O God,
with the comfort that encourages us to trust you.
Comfort us, O God,
**with the comfort that inspires us
to be messengers of peace.
That our world may be transformed,
and that it may begin here,
in this place and among these people.**
Comfort us, O God,
with the comfort that renews our living and our worship.

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 85:1–2, 8–13

VU #802

*Hymn “Hey! Hey! Anybody Listening?” *All God’s Children* vv. 1, 2

Time for All Ages

*Hymn “Hey! Hey! Anybody Listening?” *All God’s Children* v. 3

Call to Transformation and New Life

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

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

For the seeds we have planted called "injustice,"
that destroys the land and the community,
where some have and others have nothing,
forgive us.

For the seeds we have planted called "conflict,"
that ruins the earth and the lives of many,

and were only weeping silence can fully tell the story,
forgive us.

For the seeds we have planted called "imbalance,"
that bears the fruit of frazzled lives
where Sabbath way is neglected and restoration is unknown,
forgive us.

For the seeds we have planted called "prejudice,"
that disfigures the beauty of nature and the faces of your people,
where what is said and unsaid disfigures love,
forgive us.

For the seeds we have planted called "faithlessness,"
that cares nothing for the ground or the lives of your people
where blessing is never offered and worth never celebrated,
forgive us.

Assurance of God's Unending Love

But you, O God, have looked kindly on us:
you speak peace into the hearts of your people.
Here steadfast love and faithfulness meet,
righteousness and peace kiss,
faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and uprightness from the sky.
Your love calls us into healing,
into renewal, into justice, for all people.
May we journey, renewed,
across a reshaped land,
that proclaims your presence among us,
and prepares the way of love.

Presentation of Our Gifts

Offertory Invitation

We believe in the God of 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** “As With Gladness Men of Old” VU #81 v.3

***Offertory Prayer**

We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the enrichment of the beloved community. Let these gifts usher peace into this world and signal to the people that God is with us. Amen.

Listening for the Word

Sacred Readings

Isaiah 40:1–11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’

A voice says, ‘Cry out!’

And I said, ‘What shall I cry?’

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
‘Here is your God!’

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1–8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight”’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God in whom we live and move and have our being:
as we gather our thoughts in prayer,
we are aware of so many challenges –
in our own lives, in the lives of those we care about
and in the world around us.

We wonder how you will reveal yourself
in response to so many different needs.

We know you are with us in the pain and joy of our lives.

We are never left alone.

We pray for those who are in the headlines this week,
for situations that concern us deeply,
and for all who cry out to you in the face of overwhelming odds:

Keep silence.

Draw near to them with courage and wisdom.

We pray for those who are suffering in quiet corners of our
community, remembering: those who are ill; those who are
bereaved; those who struggle with poverty or unemployment;
and all who face barriers through discrimination or disability:

Keep silence.

Draw near to them with compassion and support we pray.

We pray for those who are waiting for something significant –
for a birth or a death,
for diagnosis or treatment,
for important news or a new opportunity:

Keep silence.

Draw near to them in peace and faithfulness.

We pray for those struggle with their faith

and those who have given up on you
because of actions taken in your name that betrayed your love;
Keep silence.

Draw them back to you in this season of wonder and love
as we pray.

Responding to the Word

***Hymn** “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” VU #2

***Blessing**

Send us forth to become
to peace we wish to see in this world.
And as we go,
May Steadfast love and faithfulness meet
May Righteousness and peace embrace
May Faithfulness spring up from the ground
And May righteousness look down from the sky.
Amen.

***Choral Benediction** “Glory to God In the Highest” MV #124

*Please rise as you are able.