

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

December 3, 2023

10:30 a.m.

First Sunday in Advent

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 Hope

Reader One: When I look around, I see shadows of hunger. So many folk, nearby and around the world, will go to bed hungry tonight...

Reader Two: When I look around, I see shadows of injustice, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer — and someone somewhere will fall asleep under a bridge tonight...

Reader One: In the face of hunger, we light a candle of hope...

Reader Two: In the face of injustice, in the face of despair, we light a candle of hope...

(Light the first 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 hope is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, God's hope is at hand!

Hymn "Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope" 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 injustice 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, oh advent God,

and reveal your promise in us now.

***Hymn**

“All Earth is Waiting”

VU #5

Prayer of Approach

Our cry is one of longing, O God,

for restored relationship with you.

As we enter the season of Advent

the longing is at its greatest.

It can be hard to find you in our world,

yet we believe you are here with us,

renewing all that is broken.

Come among us and, in flesh, abide with us,

that we may witness your presence around us,

and be filled with a new vision of your world.

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 80:1-7, 18-19

VU #794 Part 1

***Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful"**

VU #60 vv. 1, 3

Time for All Ages

***Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful"**

VU #60 v. 4

Call to Transformation and New Life

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

We come singing songs of hope, this morning.
Though we may not be inspired much right now, **we still sing.**
Though it may take us some time to sit with our hampered thoughts and sift through the growing pile of despair, **we still sing.** In spite of everything outrageous and sad—though we may be beyond belief, depressed, confused and mad— some of us got dressed, and some of us made it out of bed or out the door and **we still sing** of hope.

God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could— that you have not left us nor forsaken us—that our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in the valleys of death. And so, **we still sing, too.**
Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope even when it seems impossible to bear.

Hope must be there.

Fear never wins.

The work begins in us.

Assurance of God's Unending Love

Let us know that God gives us unmerited hope for a future, peace like a river, joy everlasting, and love. No misstep can separate us from the love of God. Amen.

Presentation of Our Gifts

Offertory Invitation

As recipients of the generosity of God, let us share our generosity with each other and the community.

Offertory

***Presentation of Offering** “As With Gladness Men of Old” VU #81 v. 3

***Offertory Prayer**

For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community
we dedicate these gifts.

For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission
we dedicate these gifts.

**Let these gifts strengthen our call to do justice, love mercy, and
walk humbly. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Sacred Readings

Isaiah 64:1–9 *We are the clay; you are our potter.*

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity for ever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Mark 13:24–37 *The Son of Man coming in the clouds.*

‘But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

For our broken world we pray,
may our living renew this world with hope.

Oh God of this world, make your face shine
and let your light reveal injustices.

Where there is brokenness between communities -
between cultures and language and race -

may we live out our prayer for healing with our lives.

May our living renew this world with hope.

Silence.

O God of this world, make your face shine and let your light expose our unfairness.

Where there is conflict between people -
between nations and religions and culture -
may we live out our prayer for peace with our lives.

May our living renew this world with hope.

Silence

Oh God of this world, make your face shine and let your light reveal all our untruth.

Where there is prejudice between folk -
between leaders and neighborhoods and ourselves -
may we live out our prayer for diversity with our lives.

May our living renew this world with hope.

Silence

Oh God of this world, may your face shine and
may your dream transform our reality.

Where there is poverty among us -
in the hungry, the marginalized and the poor -
may we live our prayer for justice with our lives.

May our living renew this world with hope.

Silence

Amen.

Responding to the Word

***Hymn**

“I See a New Heaven”

VU #713

***Blessing**

Go forth with the gift of hope
guiding you toward the path of peace.
Go forth with the gift of joy
guide you toward the path of love.
Go forth with anticipation,
trusting that God will bless and keep you,
God's face will shine upon you,
and God's grace will never leave you.
Amen.

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

*Please rise as you are able.