

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

**March 5, 2023**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Second Sunday in Lent**

**Central Queens Mission Statement**

**Central Queens United Church is a loving and living community called to support the life stages of all people; celebrating the 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 of the Christ Candle**

There was a person who did such amazing things - said such wonderful things - that great crowds of people followed him everywhere. One day they ask him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am the light."

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

**Bible Presentation**

**\*Introit** "God in the Darkness"

MV #17 v. 1

God in the darkness, God of holy dreaming,  
giver of hope, and pledge of our redeeming,  
Spirit of truth, our memory and meaning,  
come and renew us.

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### **Call to Worship**

We are gathered in the presence of God.

**We do not meet alone.**

Like Abram and Sarai,

**we pause to worship God.**

In desert and on mountain top,  
in city and countryside,

**God journeys with us and blesses us.**

We worship and live in the presence of God.

**We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

**\*Hymn** "Praise the Lord with the Sound of Trumpet"

VU # 245

### **Prayer of Approach**

**Holy One, you call us, as you called Abram and Sarai, to a journey into the world with faith. When days are sunny and the path is easy we travel with confidence in you. When nights are dark, and we are filled with questions and doubts, draw us close and whisper to our spirits. We pause on our journey to praise**

**you for being with us to guide our steps. We rejoice that you lead us into love and bless us so that we might be a blessing to others.**

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,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.**

### **Psalm 121**

VU #842

**\*Hymn** "Teach Me, God, to Wonder" VU #299 vv. 1, 2

### **All God's Children**

**\*Hymn** "Teach Me, God, to Wonder" VU #299 vv. 3, 4

### **Call to Transformation and New Life**

Let us bring to mind things that separate us from one another and, therefore, separate us from God. With quiet confidence in the silent grace and quiet movement of God, let us open our hearts to God transforming presence.

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

**God, our Holy Friend, we admit to you and to each other, that our words and deeds become tangled. We set out to do what seems to be good, only to discover that we have hurt someone. We rely on our knowledge and experience, only to discover that we have been foolish. Sometimes we pretend to be thoughtful of others, yet we are thinking only of ourselves and our agenda. Holy Friend, we present this tangled web of our lives to you. With your patient love and power to recreate, untangle our lives, free what is knotted, mend what is broken, and bring balance and harmony into our lives, we pray. Amen.**

### **Sung Assurance of God's unending Love**

**"Don't Be Afraid"**

**MV # 90**

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
my love is stronger than your fear.  
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger  
and I have promised, promised to be always near.**

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
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Don't be afraid. My love is stronger**

**and I have promised, promised to be always near.**

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Invitation to Generosity**

God has blessed us through this community of faith. In thanksgiving to God, let us freely and with joy present our offerings for the blessing of all God's people and all God's creation.

### **Offertory**

#### **\*Presentation of Offering**

**"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"**

**VU 149 v. 4**

#### **\*Offertory Prayer**

**Holy Friend, we present our offerings and our lives to you. We share our bounty, a gift from you. We share our lives, growing in you. Bless the gifts we offer. Bless those who offer them. Bless those who will be touched by them. May the circle of blessings and blessed ones grow wide. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Sacred Scripture**

**Genesis 12:1–4a**

Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

### **John 3:1–17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

## **Anthem**

## **Sermon**

## **Reflective Music**

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Lord God, you are our keeper,  
shade in the heat of the world’s troubles,  
light in every shadowed time of life.  
In all our comings and goings we are yours.  
And so we thank you for your care which sustains us,  
and offer you our trust for those things we can do nothing about.  
Thank you for the energy to focus on the things we can do day by day, putting our love and care to work in community and creation.  
By the power of your Spirit, bless us with the insight and passion to act in hope. May your wisdom guide us in all things.

Attentive God,  
we bring our concerns for the world to you in these uncertain times.

We think of Abraham and Sarah setting off to an unknown land and pray for people on the move:

for those seeking safety and shelter, fleeing violence;  
for those settling into a new home or community;  
for those who must travel, whatever the conditions.

God, our Companion

**Walk with us on the way.**

We think of the Psalmist looking to hills  
and we pray for people seeking help:  
for those seeking help for the earth itself as its fragile balances  
are threatened;  
for those seeking help to make ends meet as bank balances are  
threatened;  
for those seeking help for vulnerable people to right the balance  
of justice.

God, our Companion

**Walk with us on the way.**

We think of Nicodemus turning to Jesus with questions in his  
heart and we pray for people seeking answers:  
for those with health challenges, seeking diagnosis and  
treatment; for those researching problems and policies, seeking  
to better our common life; for those wondering if you exist, O  
God, wondering if you have a purpose for them.

God, our Companion

**Walk with us on the way.**

We think of Jesus, calming his disciples amid their fears,



challenging us all to follow him in love and faithfulness  
for he is our Companion on the way. Amen.

### **Responding to the Word**

**\*Hymn** “We are Pilgrims”

VU #595

### **\*Blessing**

May we continue our journey on the holy path of life.  
May we take the turns that enhance right relationships.  
May we pause to accompany others on the way.  
May we journey with the Holy One,  
through Lent into the renewed life of Easter  
toward the horizon and the dawn.

**\*Choral Benediction** “I Am Walking a Path of Peace”

MV #221

### **Postlude**

\*Please stand as you are able.