

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

September 17, 2023

10:30 a.m.

Sixteenth After Pentecost

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** “Rise Up, Rise Up”

MV 130

Call to Worship (Inspired by Psalm 103)

Bless the Holy One with our whole selves. Praise the Maker of our being!

Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

The Sovereign One endows us with many gifts and equips us to do good work.

Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

Holy Love entered the world without condemnation but with grace and forgiveness, mercy and compassion, redemption and restoration.

Hallelujah! We give thanks for the mighty deeds and the good works of our God!

***Hymn** “Though Ancient Walls”

VU 691

Prayer of Approach

God who calls, it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community. It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another. May we see your ways of being and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives.

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.**

Responsive Reading Exodus 15:1b–11, 20–21

VU# 876

***Hymn** “Would You Bless Our Homes and Families” VU 556 vv. 1, 2, 3

All God's Children

***Hymn** “Would You Bless Our Homes and Families” VU 556 v. 4

Call to Transformation and New Life

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgemental and hyper-critical of our neighbours, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings on others in order to deflect attention from our

mistakes. We withhold and condition forgiveness and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

Assurance of God's unending Love

Beloved, grace has always been part of God's relationship with humanity. God does not want you condemned or held captive by unresolved anger leading to bitterness. Rather, Creator desires you to be released as both forgiven and forgiver so that all may live a life that is whole, free, and flourishing.

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

Romans 14:7 tells us, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves." We are in covenant with God and joined in community with one another. Let us give of our resources as those who live for the good and well-being of all.

Offertory

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory** "What Can I Do"

MV 191

***Offertory Prayer**

Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation. Amen.

Listening for the Word

Sacred Scripture

Exodus 14:19–31

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.' Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so

that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.’ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Matthew 18:21–35

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.’

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

‘For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” And out of pity for him, the

lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of love and care,

we come before you today, glad to know that our lives are intermingled
--- you are in our midst.

We give you thanks for the encouragement and support we receive
from friends, here in our church and wherever we meet them.

We thank you for relationships that have grown stronger
through the courage to forgive and embrace which you inspire in us.

Use us as signs and servants of the new possibilities you create.
God of changed hearts,
renew the future for us all.

Christ our Companion,
make our community one that lives out your grace and mercy.
Today we pray for those among us and around us who are struggling to
live wisely and well,
who seek a way of integrity for the future.
We pray for those who are confronting addictions
or trying to change old habits that are harmful to health:
give them persistence and support.
We pray for those who want to end violence and anger in their lives:
give them courage and wisdom to walk a new way.
God of changed hearts,
renew the future for us all.

We pray for those who have broken the law and now seek to make
amends:
teach them good judgement in action and relationships.
We pray for those who have broken their word and want to rebuild
trust and integrity:
show them how to take responsibility and live it out.
God of changed hearts,
renew the future for us all.

We pray for those who are seeking new work, learning new skills, or
changing employment:

open new opportunities for them.

We pray for all of us who seek new ways to live out our faith

in this church and in this community:

help us communicate God's love in fresh ways so others catch the vision of your love.

God of changed hearts,

renew the future for us all.

And we pray in silence for all those for whom the week ahead will hold deep challenges, and who need your support and ours, to face what the days will bring

Spirit of transforming power, work in us and in all for whom we pray.

Amen.

***Hymn** "River Running in You and Me"

MV 163

Extinguishing of the Christ Candle

See the **light is now changed**. It has taken on a different form.

But it is still here! It's absorbed in you. It clings to you.

Go cradle and share the **Light. Share** it to others as we go about your daily living. **Go and live in the light**, Carriers of the light.

***Blessing**

May the love of God assure you, the hope of God guide you, and the peace of God sustain you as you go receiving and extending God's love in the world. Amen.

***Choral Benediction** "Deep In Our Hearts"

MV 154

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able.