

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

**March 10, 2024**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Fourth 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**

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 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 "Don't Be Afraid" MV #90

### Call to Worship

In this season of Lent, we make our way to the cross,  
**we remember the steps that led Christ there: betrayal and fear,  
but also trust in God, and love for humanity.**

In this season of Lent, as we make our way to the cross, we strive  
to follow Christ's example: to admit betrayal and fear that are  
part of life,

**to embrace trust in God and love for humanity.**

So we may make our journey, and let us worship God.

\*Hymn "God of Still Waiting" MV #20

### Prayer of Approach

**All-present and all-caring God,  
we gather this day drained by another week.  
We are like a parched desert, empty and in need of  
replenishment.**

**Visit us with your presence, saturate us with your Spirit,  
and bathe us in your streams of living water,  
that our lives might acknowledge and worship you.**

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** Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22      VU #831 Parts 1 & 2

**\*Hymn** “Jesus Loves Me”      VU #365 vv. 1, 2

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

**Hymn** “Jesus Loves Me”      VU #365 v. 3

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

When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation, which begins with our reconciling with God. Trusting in our Partner in grace, let us make our confession, first in silent prayer.

*Offer prayers of silent confession*

## **Prayer of Transformation and New Life**

**Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful.**

**We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do.**

**We love with condition.**

**We judge and condemn.**

**We cast the first stone and keep the logs in our own eyes.**

**We do not turn to you as the source of our healing.**

**Forgive us, we pray. Forgive and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and action. Amen.**

## **Words of Grace**

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Amen.

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

## **Invitation to Generosity**

As yeast rises to create bread, so do the rising of our gifts multiply the love of God in the life of the world. Give of your treasure, whatever it may be, however large or small. And trust God will use it for the building of the kin-dom of God that is emerging among us.

## **Offertory**

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

**\* Offertory** “We Give Our Thanks”

MV #187

### **\*Offertory Prayer**

**We offer these gifts as Thanksgiving sacrifices, that the works they enable will tell of God's deeds with songs of joy. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Sacred Scripture**

#### **Numbers 21:4–9**

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For

there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### **John 3:14–21**

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. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light,

so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

## **Anthem**

## **Sermon**

## **Reflective Music**

### **Responding to the Word**

#### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Gracious Lord, we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression, and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence. We pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression, help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them, and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle, help us to remember that you fed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish, and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others tempts us not to speak up for the least among us,

help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers, and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive, help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you, and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world, help us to remember your sacrifice, and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves in serving you and our neighbours.

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers. Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children.

Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self-honesty and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror. Amen.

**\*Hymn** “Bless Now, O God, the Journey”

VU #633

### **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.



**\*Benediction**

Go out and nurture this world so that new life will rise. Let go of that which binds you to distraction and isolation. And look towards your days with the hope of a single grain multiplying into the abundance of God's joy and love. Amen.

**\*Choral Benediction** "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights"  
VU #108 v. 1

**Postlude**

\*Please stand as you are able.