

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

February 23, 2025

10:30 a.m.

7nd After Epiphany

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** “Born in Human Likeness”

MV #47 x3

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 37)

Come, beloved, and set aside your fear.

We come, trusting in God’s steadfast promises.

Let meekness be our strength.

May love shine brightly in us.

Strengthen us in our waiting and our working.

May evil fade and goodness flourish.

May God’s grace rest upon us as we gather.

***Hymn** “Come, Let Us Sing”

VU #222

Prayer of Approach

Holy Love,

bear in us a new beginning.

**Soften our hearts, still our minds,
and draw us gently into your embrace.**

**Hold the worries, the weariness,
and the wanderings of our lives in your care.**

Gift us with the renewing energy of your Spirit.

Meet us in our fatigue and fears.

**Form in us a deeper commitment
to your vision of the beloved community.
Mold us with Christ's love,
that we may be agents of your blessing,
bringing light and hope to the world.
Let the cup of our lives overflow
with the fullness of your desire.
In your Holy name, we pray.**

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 37:1–11, 39–40

VU #763

***Hymn** "This is the Day"

MV #122

All God's Children

Hymn "This is the Day"

MV #122

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

Jesus teaches us a different way: "If you love those who love you, what's the reward? Even sinners do that. Love your enemies, do good, and lend without expecting anything in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High." Friends, in this, joy has space to grow. May we discover it as we offer our gifts to God.

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

VU #55 v.4

***Offertory Prayer**

**Generous God,
thank you for pouring your holy love into our lives.
Bless these gifts we bring,
that they may grow into more than we can imagine.
Bless us, that we might live in gratitude,
sharing freely, expecting nothing in return.
Through the way of Jesus,
stretch our hearts, minds, and lives**

**to be channels of your grace.
Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

God of wisdom,
your Word is life and light.
By your Spirit, open our minds to see,
teach our hearts to love,
and strengthen our wills to follow
Jesus, your Living Word.
Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Genesis 45:3–11, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to

preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, “Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.”

And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Luke 6:27–38

‘But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

‘If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive

as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.’

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of all life and each life:

you created us and set us in relationship with each other
in families and neighbourhoods,
in communities and countries,
in cultures and nations.

Today we give you thanks for all the gifts of home life and
community celebration

that bring meaning and encouragement to our lives.

Thank you for the blessings we know

through the contributions of those who have gone before us.
Help us offer what we can
to sustain the wellbeing of our community and country,
so that all who make it their home will find security and dignity.

God of the whole human family,
hear our prayers for your world.

God of our faith and our future,
there are so many pressures we face today,
so many problems without simple solutions.
Draw near to anyone who is struggling in economic difficulty,
and all those burdened by challenges to their health and
happiness.
Ease any conflict in homes and workplaces
and inspire solutions that express mutual respect and deeper
understanding.
Help us share with others the hope we find in your presence.

God of the whole human family,
hear our prayers for your world.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
you call us to live together in peace and unity.
We pray for our neighbourhoods and the nations of this world.
Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment,
show us how to work for reconciliation.

Where violence and fear turn neighbour against neighbour, or
nation against nation,
equip leaders to work for justice that will bring peace.
Help us build a world where children enjoy a future
filled with good health and happiness.

God of the whole human family,
hear our prayers for your world.

God, our hope and our help,
send your Spirit to equip our congregation with skill and resilience
to weather whatever challenges and opportunities lie before us.
Strengthen friendships, new and old,
and make us a source of encouragement and connection to each
other. Help each one find a place and a purpose in our ministry,
for it is as your children that we gather. Amen.

***Hymn** “Eternal, Unchanging, We Sing”

VU #223

Changing the Light

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**

May you be blessed with the courage
to still the storm of revenge with love.

May gratitude flow through you,
a river that freely shares with all.
May you find, time and again,
the merciful embrace of the Holy One,
wrapping you in healing and peace.
And may God's love empower you
to shape the world with forgiveness.
Blessings upon you all!
Amen and Amen!

***Choral Benediction** "I Am the Light of the World"

VU #87 v.1

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able.