

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

March 16, 2025

10:30 a.m.

Lent II

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

***Introit** “Spirit, Open My Heart”

MV #79

Bible Presentation (Bible is brought forward during the singing of the Introit)

The Candle of Peace

On the second Sunday of advent, we lit a candle to remind us that we are called to be a people of peace. We rest in the glow of that candle now.

(A moment of silence)

As we reflect on the wars and conflicts that continue to unfold in many parts of the world, we recognize how we have fallen short of our commitment to finding peaceful solutions to our differences and building stronger communities.

We mourn our inability to live in lasting harmony with one another, often turning to tools and methods that only deepen the pain of those already suffering. As we gaze upon this candle, symbolizing peace, we feel how far we still are from the harmony and true connection we know is possible, leaving us questioning whether peace can ever truly be achieved.

As the shadows of Lent comes closer, we extinguish this candle of peace, for today, as we strive to fully and faithfully work toward making the dream of peace a reality for all, now and forever.

(One Candle is extinguished)

Hymn “Throughout these Lenten Days and Nights”

VU #108 v. 1

Call to Worship

When the world around me is disturbing, where do I turn?

A psalmist says, “The Lord is my light and my salvation.”

When I am afraid, what can I count on?

“The Lord is a fortress protecting my life.”

We gather in the light of God’s protection.

We come to pray, praise and sing.

Let us worship God together!

***Hymn** “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

VU #651

Prayer of Approach

Gracious God, make us ready to welcome you.

Let our eyes find you in the faces of those we meet.

Let our ears hear your whisper in the world’s soft murmur.

**Open our hearts, wide as the sky, to the wisdom you offer,
and to the paths you lead us down.**

**In this these moments, may we come to know you,
not as we have before, but in ways we have yet to imagine.**

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 27

VU #753–755

***Hymn** “One More Step Along the World I Go”

VU #639 vv. 1, 2, 3

All God’s Children

Hymn “One More Step Along the World I Go”

VU #639 vv. 4, 5

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

**Loving Protector,
when the world stirs in chaos,
we are startled,
distracted by loud voices
and the promises of easy answers.
Forgive us, God,
for straying from you,
for letting our fears pull others
away from the quiet light of your presence.
Teach us to act not from fear,
but from the stillness of faith,
from the certainty of your nearness.
Help us to slow our breath,
to see you in the spaces within us**

**and all around us.
Amen.**

Words of Grace

No matter how far our hearts wander,
no matter how stubborn our resistance,
God longs to gather us back,
as gently and surely as a hen
pulls her little ones close beneath her wings.
Let yourself rest in that embrace,
in the quiet truth:
you are restored,
you are held, you are loved, you are returned.

***Sung Response:** “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

VU #958

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

With hearts full of gratitude for all we have received,
and for the joy that comes in giving and sharing,
let us offer our gifts,
small and great,
to the work of God
through this sacred place,
where love and light are woven into every act of kindness.
May our offerings, given freely,
be a blessing to all.

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory “In Gratitude and Humble Trust”**

VU #544

*** Offertory Prayer**

**Dear God,
take these humble offerings,
our resources, our time, our very lives,
and use them as you will.
Bless them,
turn them into something greater than we can imagine—
something that touches the hearts of others,
something that whispers of your love in quiet corners,
something that moves like a river,
flowing toward justice and grace.
Multiply them,
as you multiply the seeds of the earth,
so they might grow,
so they might reach,
so they might heal.
May our lives, offered in love,
be a small part of the grand, beautiful work
you are doing in this world. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

God of wisdom,
Your Word is the light that illuminates the path before us,
showing us the way you would have us walk.

As the scriptures are spoken,
let your Holy Spirit move among us:
gentle as the wind,
quiet as the first light of dawn,
helping us to hear,
helping us to understand.
Guide us,
not just in thought,
but in the living of your truth,
so that our lives might reflect the light
you so freely give. Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Genesis 15:1–12, 17–18

After these things, the word of God came to Abram in a vision:
"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be
very great."

But Abram said, "O God, Sovereign, what will You give me, for I
continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of
Damascus?"

And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave
born in my house is to be my heir."

But the word of God came to him: "This one shall not be
your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your
heir." God brought Abram outside and said, "Look toward
the heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count
them." Then God said to him, "So shall your descendants
be." And Abram believed God, and God reckoned it to him

as righteousness.

And God said to him, "I am the One who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess."

But Abram said, "O God, Sovereign, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

God said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

He brought them all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

And when the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

On that day God made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

Luke 13:31–35

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."

Jesus said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'See, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed

outside of Jerusalem.'

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.'"

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

☐ God of strength and comfort,

- In the stillness of Your presence, we pause amid life's whirlwind.
- We set aside distractions to offer prayers for the world You love.

☐ We remember before You:

- All people in their daily life and work—
 - Families, friends, neighbours, those we work with, and those we pass by but do not know.
- Be with all who feel the weight of these times—stressed, weary, and worn.
- (Silence)

☐ We remember this community:

- Our church, nearby congregations, and all who serve in leadership.

- Help us support each other and look to the future with hope.
- (Silence)

☒ We pray for our world:

- Our country, governments, and those who work for justice, freedom, and peace.
- Send Your Spirit to speak for the voiceless and challenge oppression.
- (Silence)

☒ We pray for those who suffer:

- Victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.
- Those rebuilding after disaster or loss.
- Those in sorrow, danger, or trouble.
- Bring them comfort, courage, and the kindness of neighbors.
- (Silence)

☒ We pray for those people and situations that weigh on our hearts this day.

- (Silence)

***Hymn** “O Jesus, I Have Promised”

VU #120

***Benediction**

Friends,
 fed by the quiet grace of these moments,
 go out into the world with courage—
 like a bird soaring into the open sky.
 Let the blessings of God wrap around you,
 the love of Christ ignite your heart,
 and the Holy Spirit be the wind beneath your wings,
 carrying you forward,
 today,
 and always. Amen.

***Choral Benediction** “May the God of Hope Go with Us” VU #424

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able.