

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

**March 23, 2025**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Lent III**

**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 (Refrain x2)

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

## The Candle of Joy

On the third Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle to acknowledge the joy that runs through our veins and reigns in our hearts. We rest in the glow of that candle now.

### *Silence*

As we reflect on the idea of joy, it may feel out of place in our present times. We might hesitate to express our own joy fully or to reach out to someone who is struggling to find happiness in their own life.

As we gaze upon this candle representing joy, our hearts may find it hard to rejoice in our present climate. So much is going wrong, so much suffering is being allowed to happen in the lives of so many, how can we feel good in the midst of all this?

As the shadows of Lent draw near, we extinguish one candle of joy, just for today, as we seek to comfort and be comforted in times of trial.

*Candle is extinguished.*

**Hymn**    “Throughout these Lenten Days and Nights”                      VU #108 v.1

## Call to Worship

You who are thirsty:  
**come to receive living water.**  
You who are hungry:  
**taste the bread that satisfies.**  
You who long for connection:

**receive the fellowship of this community,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.**

You who search for love:

**experience the love of Jesus expressed in music, prayer,  
community, word and action.**

May this time of worship fill and refresh you.

**Let us worship God together!**

**\*Hymn** "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"

VU #560

### **Prayer of Approach**

**Holy One, Keeper of Mystery and Wonder,  
draw us into the sacred circle of your presence.  
Bind us together in spirit and truth,  
that we may receive you and one another  
with open hearts and expectant souls.  
Let the rhythms of worship shape us,  
the words of scripture transform us,  
and the movement of your Spirit awaken us.  
Keep us ever open to the unexpected,  
that we may glimpse your hand at work in the world  
and discern your purpose unfolding within us.  
In the name of the Holy and the Eternal. Amen.**

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 63:1–8

VU #781

**\*Hymn** “Seek Ye First the Kingdom”

VU #356 vv.1, 2

### **All God’s Children**

**Hymn** “Seek Ye First the Kingdom”

VU #356 v.3

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

**Gracious God, you who see beyond our failings and frailties,  
soften our hearts when we are quick to judge.  
Too often, we turn away from those who disappoint us,  
forgetting that your grace is wide enough for all.  
Help us to see with your eyes—  
to recognize the slow unfolding of growth,  
to cherish the quiet fruits of kindness and faithfulness,  
to trust in the work of your Spirit in every soul.**

**Forgive us when we falter,  
when we dismiss others too quickly,  
when we doubt that we, too,  
are worthy of your calling.  
Teach us to walk gently,  
to nurture with patience,  
and to love with the great, generous heart of Christ.**

**In your mercy, shape us anew,  
that we may be bearers of your light,  
keepers of compassion,  
and sowers of peace in a world longing for grace.**

**Amen.**

### **Words of Grace**

God's ways are deeper than the ocean,  
wider than the sky,  
woven through time and eternity.

Where we see only faults,  
God sees the journey.  
Where we cling to judgment,  
God pours out mercy.  
Where we would turn away,  
God reaches out with love.

By the grace of Christ, the ancient wellspring of life,  
we are forgiven.  
Set free to walk the path of peace,  
held always in the heart of God.

Amen.

**\*Sung Response: "Halle, Halle, Halle"**

VU #958

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Invitation to Generosity**

From the abundance of creation and the work of our hands, we are invited to give.

Let us offer our gifts with grateful hearts, may they bring light where there is darkness, hope where there is struggle, and love where there is need. In so doing furthering God's work in this church and beyond. Our morning offering will now be presented.

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

**\* Offertory "In Gratitude and Humble Trust"**

VU #544

**\*Offertory Prayer**

**O Giver of life and Keeper of all,  
from your hand we have received,  
and to your care we return.  
Take these gifts, the work of our hands,  
and take our lives, shaped by your love.**

**Bless and weave them into your purpose,  
that they may bring light to shadowed places,  
hope to the weary, and peace to the restless.**

**In the name of Christ, our path and our guide.**

**Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

O God of wisdom, ancient and ever new,  
we turn to the sacred words of Scripture,  
seeking your truth as the river seeks the sea.

By your Spirit, kindle light in our minds,  
soften the soil of our hearts,  
and open our ears to hear your voice  
woven through the words of old.

Speak to us in this moment,  
that we may walk the path of Christ,  
your Living Word,  
our guide and our way.

Amen.

### **Sacred Scripture**

#### **Isaiah 55:1–9**

1. "O, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

2: "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food."

3: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."

4: "See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples."

5: "See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you."

6: "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;"

7: "let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord."

9: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

### **Luke 13:1–9**

1. At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.



2. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?"
3. No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.
4. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?"
5. No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."
6. Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.
7. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?'
8. He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it.
9. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

## **Anthem**

## **Sermon**

## **Reflective Music**

## Responding to the Word

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of Hope,  
When the world is confusing and frustrating,  
you bring light and hope.  
We give you thanks for lessons learned,  
for changes of heart,  
for fresh discoveries made,  
and new paths followed.  
We pray this day for those who are confused or afraid,  
for those who feel anger or despair.

*Silence.*

**O God, give us hope in our time.  
Turn our hearts to you.**

God of Peace,  
there is so much conflict, hostility,  
and antagonism  
around us and within us.  
Personal relationships are often tense;  
the world community is at odds.  
We pray for understanding to prevail  
in relationships at home and at work,  
in our community and our country.  
And we pray for diplomacy to alleviate conflict  
and threat among nations,  
especially holding before you

(add names of conflict zones in the world)

*Silence.*

**O God, give us peace in these times.  
Turn our hearts to you.**

God of Joy,  
we give you thanks for moments of joy  
and celebration in our lives,  
for small pleasures given and received through times of isolation.  
We remember those who feel left out or bitter,  
those who are anxious or in distress.  
We pray for those who face loss  
and hardship in these uncertain times,  
and all who know sorrow and suffering,  
naming before you those on our hearts this day.

*Silence.*

**O God, give us joy in our time.  
Turn our hearts to you.**

God of community and compassion,  
we thank you for your steadfast presence  
in the face of all that brings uncertainty  
and worry these days.  
Bless our congregation;  
inspire us to consider renewed ministry and mission.  
Reawaken our love for one another  
and our desire to worship and serve together in Jesus' name.  
Sustain leaders who feel exhausted by the challenges they've  
faced and renew our stewardship with gratitude for your love.

*Silence.*

**O God, give us strength in our service.  
Turn our hearts to you.**

God of grace,  
receive these prayers and the unspoken prayers of our hearts.

**\*Hymn** “Will you Come and Follow Me”

VU #567

**\*Benediction**

Go in peace, wrapped in the love of the Holy One.  
Stand firm in kindness, walk steadfast in truth.  
Seek not vengeance but offer mercy,  
lift up the weary, shelter the weak,  
bind the wounds of the sorrowful,  
and honour the divine spark in all.

Love and serve God,  
who weaves love through all things, seen and unseen.  
And may the blessing of the Almighty—  
Maker, Christ, and Spirit—  
be upon you now and always.

Amen.

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

**Postlude**

\*Please stand as you are able.