

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

**March 9, 2025**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Lent I**

**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**

## The Candle of Hope

On the First Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle to represent our hopes for a brighter world. We rest in the glow of that candle now.

*(A moment of silence)*

As we reflect upon the uncertainty of the times we are part of right now, we acknowledge how hard it is to remain hopeful that everything can get better, that everything will change, that tomorrow we long for is even possible, let alone attainable. As we gaze upon this candle representing hope, we feel as if we are trying to keep that small flame alive in the midst of drenching rains and forceful winds, becoming more and more exhausted in the midst of this relentless storm.

As the shadows of Lent come closer, we extinguish our candle of hope, just for today, as we seek to reconnect with whatever it is that keeps us going, keeps us coming back, keeps us grounded in the faith that makes us who we are.

*(One Candle is extinguished)*

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

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

**\*Introit** “Spirit, Open My Heart” MV #79

## Call to Worship

Are you restless and unsettled? You have come to the right place.

**Let us worship God!**

Are you hungry for love and hope? You have come to the right place.

**Let us worship God!**

Are you searching for direction? You have come to the right place.

**Let us worship God!**

Do you have love to share? You have come to the right place.

**Let us worship God together!**

**\*Hymn** “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”

VU #684

## Prayer of Approach

**Whether we come with hearts light or heavy,  
whether our path is clear or hidden in mist,  
God is already here, waiting to meet us.**

**In the hush of this place,  
in the warmth of gathered community,  
in the longing of our hearts,  
the Holy stirs within and among us.**

**Let us open ourselves to the Presence  
that has always been and always will be –  
a love that surrounds us,  
a light to guide us,  
a mystery that holds us.**

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 91:1–2, 9–16

VU #807–809

**\*Hymn** “Fairest Lord Jesus”

VU #341 vv. 1, 2

## **All God's Children**

**Hymn** “Fairest Lord Jesus”

VU #341 vv. 3, 4

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

**O Gracious One,  
you hold us in the hollow of your hand,  
yet when shadows gather and storms rise,  
we forget your nearness.**

**In our fear, we cling to comforts that do not last,  
knowing they will never truly satisfy.**

**We grasp for control,  
forgetting that life is a gift, not ours to command.**

**Forgive us when we turn to distraction instead of to you.**

**Calm our restless hearts,  
draw us back to your steady presence,  
and set our feet once more on the path of trust,  
guided by your word and your beloved child, Jesus.**

**Amen.**

### **Words of Grace**

Even before we turn towards God,  
God is reaching out –  
like the warmth of the sun breaking through mist,  
like a gentle hand steadying us on the path.

With mercy deep as the sea  
and grace wide as the endless sky,  
God gathers us in,  
forgiving what has been,  
healing what is broken,  
and calling us into new life.

In the name of Christ,  
we are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God.

### **Presentation of Our Gifts**

## **Invitation to Generosity**

All that we are,  
all that we have,  
is a gift from the hand of God.

Let us not give what we can do without,  
but what speaks of our love and trust –  
offering the first fruits of our hearts and our lives  
in gratitude for the One who gives so freely.

With thankful hearts,  
let us offer our gifts to God.

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

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

VU #544

### **\*Offertory Prayer**

**O Giver of every good gift,  
from your hand flows the richness of earth and the blessing  
of life itself.**

**Take these offerings – the work of our hands, the love of  
our hearts – and weave them into the great tapestry of  
your grace.**

**Bless what we have brought,  
that it may become bread for the hungry,  
comfort for the weary,  
and light for those who walk in shadow.**

**Use not only these gifts,  
but our very lives –  
to sow kindness where hearts are aching,  
to carry hope where despair lingers,  
and to spread your love in places  
where it is most needed,  
until all creation is gathered into your great song of peace.**

**In Christ's name, we offer ourselves.  
Amen.**

### **Listening for the Word**

#### **Prayer for Understanding**

O God of ancient wisdom and ever-new truth,  
as the scriptures are shared among us,  
open the ears of our hearts to hear your voice.

Send the breath of your Spirit to stir within us –  
kindling light in shadowed places,  
awakening understanding where mystery lingers.

May your living Word take root in our souls,  
nourishing our faith,  
guiding our steps,  
and drawing us ever closer  
to the heart of Christ, your beloved. Amen.

## Sacred Scripture

### Deuteronomy 26:1–11

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, “Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.”

When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power and with signs and wonders, and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.” You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.



## **Luke 4:1–13**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Then the devil took him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

**Anthem**

**Sermon**

**Reflective Music**

**Responding to the Word**

## Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

### God of Grace

- You are our Judge and our Hope.
- Transform us with your love.
- Harness our energy for your purposes in the world.

### For Creation

- Struggling under human demands and expectations.
- May all cultures hold the earth in reverence.
- Where resources are used carelessly,  
where habitats are endangered,  
where short-term gain overshadows future needs –  
Send your wisdom to guide citizens and decision-makers.

- For the Church

- Facing the challenge of rebuilding ministry and mission.
- Where traditions are guarded too tightly,  
where differences divide rather than unite,  
where energy for leadership is waning –  
Send your healing and transforming grace.

- For Relationships

- Tested by conflict and misunderstanding.
- Where families hold grudges,  
where friendships are wounded,  
where workplaces are marked by tension –  
Send your reconciling and restoring mercy..

### For the World

- Torn by conflict, unrest, and oppression.
- Where prejudice and discrimination diminish lives,  
where power is misused,  
where voices of the powerless are silenced –  
Empower those who seek justice and advocate for peace.

### For Those in Need

- Facing illness, loss, hardship, or death.
- Those who are anxious about the future, struggling with economic uncertainty, or grieving the loss of someone dear.
- In silence, we name those on our hearts...

(Silence for 30 seconds)

#### Thanksgiving

- For moments of joy, laughter, and shared conversation.
- For your steadfast love and the comfort of your presence.
- In all things, you are with us – now and always.

#### **\*Hymn “Be Thou My Vision”**

VU #642

#### **\*Benediction**

Friends, the One who shaped the earth knows the hunger deep within your soul.

As you have been nourished,  
go now into the world –  
to share kindness like freshly baked bread,  
to pour out love like cool water on a thirsty day,  
to offer compassion where hearts are aching.

May the blessing of the Maker,  
the tenderness of Christ,  
and the wild breath of the Spirit  
go with you,  
behind, to guard you,  
before, to guide you,  
and within, to sustain you,  
this day and always.

Amen.

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

## **Postlude**

\*Please stand as you are able.