

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

February 22, 2026

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

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

We come into a season of stripping back,
a season where the ground is bare
and the air tells the truth.

**We come into the wilderness,
not to escape our lives,
but to listen more carefully.**

Here, hunger is named.
Limits are honoured.
False certainties fall away.

**Here, God meets us
not in spectacle or force,
but in quiet faithfulness.**

Come, let us worship the Holy One
who leads us,
and stays with us,
in the wilderness.

Let us worship with honesty and humility.

Prayer of Approach

**Holy God,
you meet us not only in gardens of abundance,
but in dry places and open ground.**

**You lead us into spaces
where there is no excess to hide behind,
no noise to distract us,
no power to grasp.**

**In this season of Lent,
slow our steps.
Clear our hearing.
Teach us to stay with what is given,
to trust your presence
when answers do not come quickly.**

**We come to you as we are,
hungry, hopeful, uncertain,
and we ask to be made attentive again.
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 32

VU# 759-760

***Hymn** “Jesus Teacher Brave and Bold”

VU #605 v. 1

All God’s Children

Hymn “Jesus Teacher Brave and Bold”

VU #605 v. 1

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

**God of truth,
the wilderness exposes us,
and we confess that we do not always welcome that honesty.**

**We confess our impatience
when hunger lingers
and answers delay.**

**We confess our desire to turn stones into bread -
to force outcomes,
to rush healing,
to bypass vulnerability.**

**We confess our hunger for certainty,
our temptation to test rather than trust,
our longing to control what cannot be controlled.**

**Forgive us when we mistake power for faithfulness
and speed for wisdom.**

**Return us to the path.
Teach us again how to listen.**

Silence.

Words of Forgiveness

Hear this good news:

God does not abandon us in the wilderness.

God does not shame us for our hunger.

God does not withdraw love when we falter.

Grace meets us where we are.

Mercy tends to us gently.

In the name of the One
who walks with us through every dry place,
you are restored and held.

Thanks be to God.

Response: “Halle, Halle, Halle”

VU #958

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

In the wilderness,

we learn that life is sustained not by excess,
but by enough.

Our giving is not about proving generosity,
but about participating in trust —
trust that there is enough to share,
enough to sustain,
enough to tend what has been entrusted to us.

Let us offer our gifts
as an act of faithfulness,
not grasping,
but grateful.

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory** “Christ Has No Body Now but Yours” MV #171 (Chorus)

***Offertory Prayer**

**Generous God,
receive these gifts as signs of our trust.**

**Use them to nourish what is fragile,
to strengthen what is weary,
and to serve life beyond ourselves.**

**May our giving reflect a wisdom
that honours limits
and chooses care over control.
Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

God of the living Word,
as scripture is read,
quiet the noise within us.

Strip away distraction and defensiveness.
Let the wilderness speak.
Let truth emerge without force.

Give us ears to hear
and hearts willing to remain
with what is revealed.
Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.

5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Matthew 4:1-11

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Anthem

Prayer

Let the words of my mouth,
and the listening of all our hearts,
be held in your grace, O God.
May your peace rest upon us
and guide us into what is true and life-giving. Amen.

Sermon *What Cannot Be Taken*

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

For all who are walking through dry places -
those facing illness, grief, or exhaustion,
those living with uncertainty and fear -

that they may be tended with care and compassion.

God of the wilderness, hear our prayer.

For communities strained by division,
for leaders tempted by control rather than service,
for institutions forgetting their call to humility —
that restraint and wisdom may guide their choices.

God of the wilderness, hear our prayer.

For the earth itself,
worn thin by overuse and neglect,
for lands and waters crying out for rest -
that we may learn again how to tend and keep.

God of the wilderness, hear our prayer.

For ourselves,
when hunger clouds our judgment
and fear narrows our vision -
that we may trust the path beneath our feet.

God of the wilderness, hear our prayer.

Gather all these prayers, spoken and unspoken,
and hold them in your faithful care.

Amen.

***Hymn “Lead On, O Cloud of Presence”**

VU #421

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.

***Blessing**

Go now into the wilderness of your lives
with patience rather than haste,
with trust rather than spectacle.

May you learn the wisdom of restraint,
the grace of staying present,
and the quiet strength of faithfulness.

And may the God
who leads,
who stays,
and who tends
be with you now and always.
Amen.

***Choral Benediction** Tune: KINGSFOLD

Go now in peace through desert days,
God walks with you in hidden ways.
From ash and dust to hope made new,
The Lord of life goes forth with you.
Amen.

Postlude *Please stand as you are able.