

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

January 25, 2026

10:30 a.m.

3rd Sunday 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** "Come, O Holy Spirit"

MV #23 v.1

Call to Worship

We come carrying what binds us,
the nets we have learned to live with.

We come, longing for freedom and breath.

The light of God has come near,
breaking into ordinary days.

We turn toward that light with open hearts.

Hear the invitation that still echoes along the shore.

We are ready to follow.

***Hymn** "I Am the Light of the World"

VU #87

Prayer of Approach

**Holy and generous God,
you meet us not in grand gestures
but in the midst of ordinary lives.**

You walk into

our working days,

our worn routines,

our careful habits of survival.

**We come as we are,
tired and hopeful,
curious and cautious,
holding tightly to what has kept us afloat.**

**Loosen our grip, gently.
Make room in us for your wider life.
Draw us into your reign of
justice,
kindness,
and truth,
that we may live more freely,
and love more fully.**

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 27:1,4-9

VU #753-755

***Hymn** "Fairest Lord Jesus"

VU #341 vv. 1, 2, 3

All God's Children

Hymn "Fairest Lord Jesus"

VU #341 v.4

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

The first disciples were invited not to give more,
but to let go of what bound them.
Generosity begins there:
with trust that God's abundance is not fragile,
and that life does not depend on holding everything tightly.

As we prepare to offer our gifts,
we do so not out of fear or obligation,
but as an act of freedom,
participating in God's Jubilee of shared life and hope.

*Presentation of Offering

* **Offertory** "In the Bleak Mid-Winter"

VU #55 v. 4

*Offertory Prayer

**God of abundance,
receive these gifts
and receive also the spirit in which they are offered.
Use them to loosen what binds,
to heal what diminishes life,
and to help build communities
where dignity, justice, and compassion may flourish.**

**Bless what we give
and what we are still learning to release. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

Spirit of wisdom and breath of life,
as the scriptures are read and heard among us,
open our ears beyond words
and our hearts beyond habit.

Free us from familiar readings
that no longer give life.
Give us courage to hear what unsettles us
and grace to receive what invites us forward.

May the light that once broke upon the Galilean shore
break upon us again today. Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Isaiah 9:1-4

9 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were
in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the
land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the
nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan —

² The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³ You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

Matthew 4:12-23

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he
withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in
Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali,
¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might
be fulfilled:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the
gentiles —
¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned."

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the
kingdom of heaven has come near."

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon,
who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the
sea — for they were fishers. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me,
and I will make you fishers of people." ²⁰ Immediately they left
their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two
other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the
boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called

them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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 *The Day the Nets Became Chains*

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of the widening way,
we pray for a world caught in nets of fear, violence, and injustice.

Loosen what binds. Bring freedom near.

For those burdened by systems that exploit and exclude,
for workers, migrants, and those living with uncertainty —

loosen what binds. Bring freedom near.

For those carrying quiet struggles of shame, grief, or exhaustion,
and for all whose inner lives feel constricted —

loosen what binds. Bring freedom near.

For leaders and communities tempted by power without
compassion, and for ourselves when comfort matters more than
justice —

loosen what binds. Bring freedom near.

For this community,
that we may have the courage to follow,
the humility to listen,
and the patience to walk together —

loosen what binds. Bring freedom near.

Time of community prayer

We offer these prayers, spoken and unspoken,
trusting that the reign of heaven is already drawing close.

Amen.

***Hymn** “Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”

VU #563

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**

May the God who called light out of darkness
bless you and keep you.

May the Holy Presence walk beside you
and widen your way.

May the Spirit loosen what binds you
and grant you courage to follow.

Go in peace. Amen.

*Choral Benediction “Draw the Circle Wide’ MV #145 Chorus & v. 3

Postlude *Please stand as you are able.