

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

March 1, 2026

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**

**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**

How do we love? Let us count the ways.

**Depth and breadth and height.**

Yet God does not count love.

**God shows it.**

God loved the world ‘like’ this -

**by giving.**

Not standing far off.

**But drawing near.**

Not with thunder and threat.

**But with open hands.**

Come, then let us worship the Love  
that does not keep score.

**We gather to behold love’s shape  
and to be shaped by it.**

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

VU#567

### **Prayer of Approach**

**God of depth and height,  
of night conversations and wilderness roads,**

**you are not distant light  
but near presence.**

**You do not love in theory  
but in flesh and breath.**

**You step into our tangled world,  
into fear and violence,  
into systems that wound.**

**You love like this:**

**by showing up.**

**By staying.**

**By giving.**

**Open our hearts this day  
to the shape of your love.**

**Turn our eyes toward the lifted cross -  
not as ornament,  
but as revelation.**

**Meet us in our questions.  
Sit with us in the dark.  
And let your love take form in 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 121

VU #842

**\*Hymn** "Jesus Loves Me"

VU #365 vv. 1, 2

**All God's Children**

**Hymn** "Jesus Loves Me"

VU #365 v. 3

**Prayer of Transformation and New Life**

**Love that does not run away,  
we confess, we prefer love that is safe.**

**We measure.**

**We calculate.**

**We give when it costs little.**

**We step back from pain.**

**We avoid the complicated parts of the world.**

**We turn from the wounds we do not know how to heal.**

**Forgive us**

**for loving in theory**

**more than in practice.**

**Forgive us  
for speaking of grace  
yet withholding mercy.**

**Teach us again  
the shape of your love.**

*(silent prayer)*

## **Words of Forgiveness**

Hear this good news:

God did not wait for us to be tidy.

God loved the world 'like' this:

stepping in,

staying near,

bleeding mercy into violence.

You are not loved because you measure up.

You are loved because God shows up.

In Christ, you are forgiven.

In love, you are held.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Response:** "Halle, Halle, Halle"

VU #958

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

**Invitation to Generosity**

Love gives.

Not from abundance alone,  
but from trust.

God loved the world 'like' this:  
by giving.

So we offer what we have:  
our resources,  
our time,  
our presence.

Not to impress,  
but to participate in a love that refuses to run away.

**\*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 desire  
to love like you.**

**Shape them into shelter and hope.  
Shape them into justice and mercy.  
Shape us, too -  
that we may become  
living sign of your steadfast love.**

**Amen.**

## Listening for the Word

### Prayer for Understanding

Spirit of the Living One  
as the Word is read,  
lift our eyes.

Where we see only story,  
show us pattern.

Where we see only history,  
show us invitation.

Let the cross become not symbol alone,  
but window -

that we may glimpse  
what love looks like  
when it refuses to run away.

Open our minds.

Open our hearts.

Open our lives.

Amen.

### Sacred Scripture

#### Genesis 12:1-4a

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

### **John 3:1-17**

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” 3 Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” 4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9 Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

11 “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through 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** Not How Much – But How

### **Reflective Music**

## Responding to the Word

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God who loved the world like this,  
we pray for a world  
still poisoned by fear and resentment.

Lift before us signs of healing.  
Help us to look -  
and live.

For places torn by violence,  
for lands scarred by war -  
may love refuse to retreat.

**Show us love's shape.**

For communities divided by suspicion and pride -  
may forgiveness loosen hardened hearts.

**Show us love's shape.**

For those who suffer quietly -  
the anxious, the grieving, the overlooked -  
send companions who show up and stay.

**Show us love's shape.**

For the church -  
that we may be more than a sign held high,  
but a people who embody what we proclaim.

**Show us love's shape.**

And for the silent prayers we carry...

*(pause)*

God of open arms,  
teach us to practice  
what we praise. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn** “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

VU #658

### **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 into the world  
not counting the ways you are loved,  
but living the way you are loved.

Go with open hands.  
Go with open heart.  
Go with courage to stay  
where love is needed.

And may the Love  
that was lifted up,  
that refuses to let violence have the last word,  
walk beside you,  
within you,  
and ahead of you -  
today 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.

**Postlude** \*Please stand as you are able.