

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

March 22, 2026

10:30 a.m.

Lent V

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

In places that seem worn and weary, God is still at work.

The breath of life moves where hope feels thin.

When the world feels like a valley of dry bones -

God gathers what is scattered and stirs what is still.

When grief sits heavy and the future feels uncertain -

the Spirit whispers life again.

Come, let us open our hearts to the quiet work of God.

Let us worship the One who brings life from the dust.

***Hymn** “The's a Wideness in God's Mercy”

VU #271

Prayer of Approach

**Holy and life-giving Presence,
you meet us in every season of life.**

**When the world feels bright and full,
you walk beside us.**

**When the path grows dim
and hope feels fragile,
you remain near.**

**In the silent places of our lives
you breathe your Spirit again and again,
gathering what has been scattered
and renewing what has grown tired.**

**In this Lenten hour
quiet our restless thoughts.
Open our hearts to your gentle presence.**

**And remind us that even now
your Spirit is moving through the valleys of our lives
and through the valleys of this troubled world.**

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 130

VU #852-853

***Hymn** "Draw the Circle Wide"

MV #145 vv. 1, 2

All God's Children

Hymn "Draw the Circle Wide"

MV #145 v. 3

Prayer for transformation and New Life

Merciful God,

**there are days when the world feels heavy
and we lose heart.**

**We confess that we sometimes turn away
from the suffering around us.**

We grow tired.

We grow discouraged.

We begin to believe that nothing can change.

Forgive us when fear closes our hearts.

Forgive us when we forget the power of compassion.

Forgive us when we fail to trust

that your Spirit is still bringing life into the world.

Breathe into us again, O God,

that we may live with courage, kindness, and hope.

Amen.

(silent prayer)

Words of God's steadfast love

Hear this good news.

The Spirit of God has never stopped moving through the world.

Where hearts have grown weary,

God breathes renewal.

Where love has grown faint,
God kindles new light.

In mercy and grace, we are forgiven, renewed, and invited
again into the slow and sacred work of life.

Thanks be to God.

Response: “Halle, Halle, Halle”

VU #958

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

In every act of generosity
the breath of God moves quietly among us.

Our gifts- whether large or small -
become signs of hope in the world.

As we share what we have received,
we take part in the work of renewal
that God is unfolding among us.

Let us give with grateful hearts.

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory** “Christ Has No Body Now But Yours” VU #171 (Chorus)

***Offertory Prayer**

**Giver of all life,
receive these gifts we offer.
May they become seeds of compassion,
acts of justice,**

and signs of hope in a weary world.
Use them, and us,
in the quiet work of bringing life where it is needed most.
Amen.

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

Living God,
as we hear the ancient stories of faith,
open our hearts and our imaginations.

Help us hear not only words from long ago,
but your living voice
speaking hope into our lives today.

Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’

Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard

that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in 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 *The Slow Work of Resurrection*

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Gentle and compassionate God,
we pray for this world that you love.

In places where conflict and violence wound the earth,
breathe your Spirit of peace.

Where fear divides nations and communities,
plant seeds of understanding.

Where despair settles over people's lives,
stir hope again.

We pray for those who suffer today —
 for the sick,
 for those who grieve,
 for those who feel alone.

Surround them with care.

Strengthen those who bring healing and comfort.

We pray for this community gathered here.
For friendships that sustain us,
for memories that guide us,
and for the kindness that quietly holds us together.

Teach us to recognize the small signs of life
that appear even in difficult times.

And guide us to be people
who help lift the stones of fear
and loosen the bonds that hold others captive.

For in these simple acts of love
your resurrection life is already unfolding.

We offer these prayers in gratitude and trust.

Amen.

***Hymn** “In the Bulb There Is a Flower”

VU #703

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 Spirit who breathes life into dry bones
renew your courage.

May the compassion of Christ
soften your heart toward the world.

And may the quiet hope of God
walk beside you in the days ahead,
reminding you that even now
life is rising where we least expect it.

Go in peace,
and take part in the slow work of resurrection.

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.