

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

March 8, 2026

10:30 a.m.

Lent III

**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 wilderness and in well-watered places,  
God calls us to gather.

**We come seeking living water.**

When the path feels uncertain  
and our hearts are dry,

**God remains among us.**

Come, let us worship the Holy One  
who stands with us in every season.

**Let us worship God.**

**\*Hymn** “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

VU #288

### **Prayer of Approach**

**O God of rock and river,  
we come to you in the wilderness of our days.**

**We come with hearts that are restless,  
with hands that are empty,  
with lives that long for refreshment.**

**Still the rushing of our thoughts,  
quiet the thirst that presses within us.  
Breathe your presence into our confusion,**

**your hope into our uncertainty,  
your strength into our weakness.**

**Meet us here, O God.**

**Open our eyes to the water that flows  
even where the land is dry.**

**Open our ears to the whispers of your Spirit  
even when the world is loud.**

**Open our hearts to the promise of your nearness,  
even when our paths feel uncertain.**

**Sustain us, O God,  
as we worship you in this hour.  
Shape us, guide us, and call us into the life you give.**

**For you are our rock, our refuge, our companion,  
in every wilderness and every well.**

**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 95

VU #814

**\*Hymn** “When I Needed a Neighbour”

VU #600 vv.1-3

**All God’s Children**

**Hymn** “When I Needed a Neighbour”

VU #600 v.4-5

**Prayer of Transformation and New Life**

**God of living water,  
we confess the dryness of our hearts.**

**We quarrel in our fear,  
we doubt when the path is uncertain,  
we grumble when the wells run low.**

**We confess that we have sometimes believed  
that thirst means abandonment,  
that hardship is punishment,  
that your presence is absent.**

**Forgive us for forgetting your nearness  
in our confusion and our fear.  
Forgive us for seeking  
certainty over trust,  
control over surrender,  
our own way over your faithful path.**

**Still us, O God.**

**Remind us that even in the wilderness**

**your steadfast love flows like water  
and your mercy rises to meet us. Amen**

*(silent prayer)*

## **Words of God's steadfast love**

Hear the good news:  
The God who stands upon the rock  
meets us in our thirst.

Our sins, our doubts, our fears -  
they do not separate us from love.

Even in the wilderness,  
grace flows where we are,  
and presence refuses to abandon us.

Believe this: we are forgiven,  
we are held, we are renewed.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

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

VU #958

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Invitation to Generosity**

Come, not because giving will earn God's favour,  
but because God's love, like a river, flows through us.

Bring your gifts - your hands, your hearts, your resources -  
and let them be water in the wilderness,  
a blessing to those who thirst.

## **\*Presentation of Offering**

**\* Offertory** “Christ Has No Body Now But Yours”

MV #171 (Chorus)

## **\*Offertory Prayer**

**Holy One,  
bless these gifts and the lives that offer them.  
May they become streams of mercy,  
flowing into the places of need and hope.**

**Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

O God of rock and river,  
we come to your Word with thirsty hearts.

Speak to us in the wilderness of our days,  
where fear rises and hope feels fragile.

Answer our questions:

“Are you here, God? Do you stand with us?”

May your Word fall like rain upon the rock,  
refreshing our trust, restoring our courage,  
and shaping us to notice your presence  
even in the driest places.

Amen.

## **Sacred Scripture**

### **Exodus 17:1-7**

17 From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" 3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." 5 The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. 6 I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

### **John 4:5–42**

5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep.

Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." 26 Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you." 27 Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" 28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" 30 They left the city and were on their way to him. 31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. 35 Do you

not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. 36 The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour."

39 Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word.

42 They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."

## **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** Obedient and Thirsty

## **Reflective Music**

### **Responding to the Word**

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Gracious God, we give you thanks for life and breath,

for the land beneath our feet and the water that sustains us,  
for communities that hold us,  
and for neighbours who show care and compassion.

We thank you for health-care workers on the front lines,  
for doctors, nurses, and support staff  
who labour tirelessly in hospitals and clinics,  
often beyond exhaustion,  
and for the small acts of kindness that keep hope alive.

We give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy in this country,  
and for the many who work for justice, equity, and peace.  
We give thanks for teachers, caregivers, and volunteers,  
for those who speak for the vulnerable,  
and for those who quietly serve in ways we may never see.

We pray for those who are in the wilderness of uncertainty today:  
    families waiting for care,  
        people facing illness,  
            communities struggling under the weight of  
            scarcity or conflict.

We pray for the leaders of our province, our nation, and our  
world: give them wisdom, courage, and compassion,  
that they may make decisions that protect life,  
strengthen systems of care,  
and honour the dignity of every person.

We pray for those suffering from war, displacement, and natural  
disaster:  
    may your presence flow like water into parched lands,

may hope rise where despair has settled,  
may peace take root in hearts and communities.

We pray for our own hearts, O God:  
when we feel uncertain, anxious, or alone,  
teach us to notice the water that flows,  
to see the grace that sustains,  
and to act with love where there is need.

**God of rock and river,  
hear our prayers,  
receive our thanks,  
and make us channels of your living water. Amen.**

**\*Hymn** “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say”

VU #626

### **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 walks with you in the wilderness  
stand beside you in every dry place.  
May the rocks you strike yield living water,  
and streams of mercy flow where you least expect.

May courage rise in the spaces of your fear,  
and hope take root where uncertainty lingers.  
May your eyes be open to the hidden gifts of each day,  
and your heart wide enough to receive the kindness of strangers.

Go in peace,  
and know that presence, love, and grace  
flow with you and through you, 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.