

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

**November 29, 2020**

**10:30 a.m.**

**First Sunday in Advent -- Hope**

**Central Queens Mission Statement**

**Central Queens United Church is a loving and living community called to support the life stages of all people; celebrating 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 & Announcements**

**Birthdays & Special Occasions**

**Lighting the Candle of Hope**

Wake up! Don't fall asleep!  
Advent is here,  
it's soon time to meet,  
a saviour and friend,  
who makes hope come true.  
Prepare him a way.  
He's coming for you!

*Lighting of the Advent Candle: Hope.*

**Thank you, God, for sending Jesus,  
your gift of hope to the world.  
Help us to work with him to bring hope to places  
where people are lonely or afraid.  
Let this candle remind us that the light of Christ  
is shining in our hearts and can spread from us to  
others when we live in hope. Amen.**

**Quiet Preparation for Worship** (Bible is brought forward during the quiet time)

### **Bible Presentation**

**Introit**                                      “Come and Fill Our Hearts”                                      MV #16

### **Call to Worship**

After such suffering,  
we go searching for a sign, any sign.  
The sun seems to dim, the moon fails, the stars fall.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

We hope that the Christ is on the way,  
gathering the faithful from the four winds,  
into a place of peace –  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

Nature once offered signs to depend on:  
the fig tree put out tender leaves,  
and we knew summer was near—  
but climate today

is hurting, and unpredictable.  
We need a sign, any sign.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

So together we search for a sign of the One who is coming--

Clarity in confusion  
Green shoot in a barren landscape  
Song arising in a weary soul.

**Be aware, stay awake, change is coming.**

Come, let us worship!

Hymn

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

VU #2

### Prayer of Approach

**Come into our midst, O Holy One,  
rider of the Clouds of Heaven,  
surprising answer to heartfelt prayer.  
In whatever way you choose—  
come. Shake us up.  
Help us find you at work in our lives,  
showing the way to make all things new.  
In Jesus’ name we pray.**

With Jesus, we share in the ancient prayer...

### Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who 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,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**Responsive Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

VU #794 Part 1

**Hymn** "Never Ending Joy"

MV #40 vv. 1 & 2

**All God's Children**

**Hymn** "Never Ending Joy"

MV #40 v. 3

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

This has been a year to lament—  
grief and loss,  
crisis when social structures have failed the common good  
complicity when age-old prejudices found new and cruel  
expression:

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

This has been a year to wake up—  
To read the "signs of the times"

To wake up to painful truths, and give them voice  
To ponder the changes needed for a just world for all:

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

This has been a year to call God into our sorry midst—  
show us your face!  
Encourage us in the face of brutal realities,  
empower us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you  
on the way in which you make all things new.

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

*Silence*

**Assurance of God's Love** *1 Corinthians 1: 3-9*

God is faithful,  
and gives us grace in Christ Jesus.  
In this fellowship we can count on being enriched  
in speech, in knowledge, in every spiritual gift.  
Let us give thanks, in Christ, we are forgiven  
and sent forth to work for God's reign among us.

### **Presentation of Our Gifts**

#### **Offertory Invitation**

In struggle and in joy, God is faithful to us.  
We bring forth our offerings – our tithes,  
our treasures, our least coins –  
to demonstrate our faithfulness to God.

**Offertory**

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

VU #55 v. 4

## **Presentation of Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

**O Faithful One,  
accept these gifts of our hearts and hands.  
May they be multiplied and magnified  
as the living presence of Christ in the world. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Sacred Word**

#### **Isaiah 64:1-9**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed  
We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

### **Mark 13:24-37**

“But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

### **The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

## **The Necessity for Watchfulness**

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

### **Anthem**

### **Sermon**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Merciful God, the signs of our times are worrisome.  
We gather in your presence,  
aware that the earth groans in pain and many people are suspicious of each other. We thank you for your comforting presence in times of suffering and uncertainty, and for your promise of life beyond death, and hope beyond fear. As the longest night of this year draws nearer, comfort those who dread the darkness and direct those who have lost their way.  
Wherever people are overwhelmed by the demands of this season and the complications of COVID-19, let them hear your still small voice within all the clamour and confusion, and catch a glimpse of your light shining in the night.

God of all our days and nights, we remember that the days leading up to Christmas are difficult for many, especially this year.  
We pray for those who are hungry and cold.  
Alert us to the ways that we can set a feast  
for those in our community and beyond whose cupboards are bare.



Warm them with your love.  
We pray for those who are grieving.  
Make us patient and compassionate companions to those in mourning,  
even when we're not sure what to say.  
Fill emptiness with your comfort.

We remember those who are feeling very isolated this year.  
Inspire our hearts with ideas of how to reach out in friendship.  
Bring hope to the lonely with your friendship.

We pray for those who feel like the world is ending;  
whose lives have been uprooted by fire, flood, or storm,  
illness, job loss or death.  
Steady us amid the upheavals of this year of pandemic  
and remind us that you alone are constant.  
Your steadfast love will see us through.  
Heaven and earth may pass away,  
but you are the source of everlasting life and undiminished hope.  
Help us trust in you, no matter what is happening. Amen

### **Responding to the Word**

**Hymn**

“People, Look East”

VU #9

**Blessing**

Send us into the world refreshed in hope,  
awake, alert, attuned to your presence  
ready to join your work of blessing for all.  
**Amen.**

**Postlude**

“Go Now in Peace”

VU #964