

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

**December 12, 2020**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Third Sunday in Advent -- Joy**

**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**

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

**Bible Presentation**

**\*Introit** "Prepare the Way of the Lord" VU #10

**\*Call to Worship**

In this season of waiting,  
**may patience be our companion.**  
In the season of demands,  
**may gentleness be our companion.**  
In this season of expectations,  
**may simplicity be our companion.**

In this season of sharing,  
**make gratitude be our companion.**  
In this season of good news,  
**may prayer be our companion.**  
During our worship, may our companion be Joy.  
Come, let us worship.

## **Advent Candle Lighting -- Joy**

### **Music Video**

This is the third Sunday of Advent. Today we will light one more candle on our wreath to show that we are waiting for the birth of Jesus, for Christ's light to be born into the world. The Advent wreath is always clothed in green. The greenery is a symbol of life and growth. The green on the Advent wreath reminds us that God's love for us is very special—it is alive and is always growing. This Sunday we light the candle that symbolizes joy. The joy that we talk about when we think of Jesus is not merely the feeling of happiness, rather it is the experience—which includes many feelings—that comes from falling deeper and deeper in love with this world.

*(The candle has been lit.)*

Let us quiet our hearts. Take the time to go deeper. Close your eyes, or focus on the candles. Breathe gently. *(pause)* Let us look for the joy that lives in all of us, the joy that comes from knowing that Jesus loves and cares for us and offers us hope for better things to come in this world. Notice the joy. Let it grow in you; let it spread throughout your being. Relax in that joy right now.

*(Moment of silence)*

**Jesus, help your light to shine in us as joy.**

**Hymn:** *(unannounced)*

**“Hope is a Star”**

**VU #7 vv. 1, 2, and**

### **Prayer of Approach**

**Holy God, as we get closer and closer to Christmas, it becomes easier to get caught up in the excitement and the bustle around us. Today, we joyfully gathered together to worship you. Help us to set aside our planning and our fretting, our wish-lists and our to-do-lists, so that we may focus on you. We pray that your Holy Spirit would fill this place, that we might hear your voice speaking to us.**

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 Reading**

**Isaiah 12:2–6**

**VU # 880**

**\*Hymn** "God of All Places" VU #4

**All God's Children**

**\*Hymn** "God of All Places" VU #4

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

We are called  
to prepare a new way:  
a way of generosity;  
a way of justice;  
a way of compassion.  
When we ignore this call  
we choose to be selfish:  
**forgive us.**  
When we choose to be unfair:  
**forgive us.**  
When we choose to be indifferent:  
**forgive us.**  
Oh God, may our spirits be open to your call.

*Silence*

**Assurance of God's Love**

Hear the good news:  
God's love is without limitations.  
God's grace is given freely!  
Thanks be to God for this gift!

**Presentation of Our Gifts**

## **Offertory Invitation**

God calls us to create a community which welcomes all:  
to care for the infirm, to heal the shame of the outcast,  
to create a welcome for all.

Let these gifts we offer begin this process of reconciliation!

## **Offertory**

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

VU #55 v. 4

## **\*Presentation of Offering**

## **\*Offertory Prayer**

**Just and joyful God, we bring our gifts with hearts that rejoice in your goodness to us, in Christ and in creation. Send your Holy Spirit to bless them and us with the power to shine the light of Christ into lives where Jesus can turn despair into joy. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

## **Sacred Readings**

### **Zephaniah 3:14–20**

## **A Song of Joy**

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,  
God has turned away your enemies.

The Sovereign of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.  
The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
will rejoice over you with gladness,  
God will renew you with compassionate love;  
and will exult over you with loud singing  
as on a day of festival.  
I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.  
I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.  
And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.  
At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

### **Luke 3:7–18**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him,  
“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to  
come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to  
yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God  
is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even  
now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore

that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

## **Anthem**

## **Sermon**

## **Reflective Music**

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

O God, our Strength and Salvation,

we come before you with joy and thanksgiving  
as the beauty of this season unfolds with starry nights and  
sparkling snow,  
with faces that smile and generosity that grows  
even after a long, hard year of pandemic struggles.  
With the kindness of your Spirit,  
awaken opportunities for understanding to emerge among those  
who have differed,  
and refresh our community and congregation with joyful  
anticipation  
that your gift to us in Christ can change everything.  
Generous God,  
**Send joy to the world again.**

Tender God,  
we delight in the joy you bring into our lives and communities  
through our life together in Christ, and through the love of family  
and friends.  
These gifts have sustained us through stressful times  
and we thank you.  
We pray for those who are finding it hard to be joyful this year,  
remembering those facing illness in spirit, mind, or body,  
and those waiting for diagnosis or treatment, as anxiety grows.  
*(Keep a brief time of silence)*

We pray for those who are lonely or in mourning,  
and all who have been touched by tragedy and violence.  
*(Keep a brief time of silence)*

We pray for those searching for work, struggling with rising costs,  
worried deeply about their security.  
*(Keep a brief time of silence)*

And we pray for those working to bring justice to the discouraged and defeated, and those doing their best to care for the earth you love, despite the challenges.

*(Keep a brief time of silence)*

Use us to bring joy to others through our friendship, generosity and understanding. Generous God,  
**Send joy to the world again.**

### **Responding to the Word**

**\*Hymn**

“Hark the Glad Sound”

VU #29

**\*Blessing**

This day, rejoice in God.  
This day, make gentleness known.  
This day, place all worries in God's hands.  
For God's extraordinary peace  
is watching over you  
not only this day,  
but always. Amen.

### **Postlude**

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