

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

December 19, 2020

10:30 a.m.

Fourth Sunday in Advent -- Love

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**

God who spoke to Mary and Elizabeth,
speaK your Word to us now.

God who blessed them with new life,
bleSS us with great expectation.

God who gave them songs of praise to sing,
receive our joyful praise.

God who loves beyond all measure,
we are here to worship you with hearts full of love.

Advent Candle Lighting -- Love

Music Video

Today we are lighting the fourth candle on our Advent wreath. We have almost finished our waiting. Jesus is going to be born soon! We talked about the wreath being a circle to remind us of God's unending love. We note, too, that it is covered in greenery to symbolize God's love for us that is always growing. The four candles are blue. We use blue to signify expectancy. Mary's robe is often coloured blue, and we think of Mary waiting to bear a child that she knew was special. The candle we light today is the candle of love. It is hard for us to imagine that God loves us no matter what. It is even harder to imagine that God is love.

(Candle is lit)

Today, let us turn inside to remember that love. Close your eyes, or focus on the candle.... Think of love; go to the place inside your body where you find love. Find love, enjoy it, rest in it, offer thanks for it. Take this time to be with the love that God offers.

(Moments of silence)

Jesus, help your light to shine in us as love.

Hymn: *(unannounced)*

“Hope is a Star”

VU #7 vv. 1, 2,3, 4

Prayer of Approach

We become a community where love and acceptance is lived.

Let us now gather in God’s community, for God has done great things with us.

God has looked with favour on us.

May we strive to be as generous as God. May our house be welcoming and open to all.

God has lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry with good things.

May we give our good things, our best things, back to God.

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

Luke 1:47–55

VU # 898

***Hymn** “Once in Royal David's City”

VU # 62 vv. 1 & 2

All God's Children

***Hymn** “Once in Royal David's City”

VU # 62 vv. 3 & 4

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

O God, restore us.

Show us your true face and save us.

We make enemies of the weak and poor
and leave them to fend for themselves.

You were poor.

Show us your true face and save us.

As a country we have not kept up.

We are rightly mocked for our outlandish inequalities.

You knew how it was to be treated Less Than.

Show us your true face and save us.

We are caught in a cycle, not understanding mercy.

Even our prayers are sometimes vengeful.

You taught us to pray.

Show us your true face and save us.

written by Stephanie Dorsey

Silence

Assurance of God's Love

Here is our hope and our challenge:

Christ is among us. Christ is imprisoned. Christ is hospitalized.

Christ is malnourished and inadequately clothed.

Christ is on Social Assistance. Christ is disabled. Christ is abused.

Christ is a young, black man with a taillight out.
Christ is transgender. Gay.
Christ is playing with a toy gun.
Christ cannot afford medicine.
If we have courage to seek, we may yet find him.
written by Stephanie Dorsey

Presentation of Our Gifts

Offertory Invitation

We make our offering this day with hearts full of love, filled with the hope and joy this season brings. Give knowing God's love will spread far and wide through what we offer in Jesus' name.

Offertory "In the Bleak Midwinter" VU #55 v. 4

***Presentation of Offering**

***Offertory Prayer**

Emmanuel: God with us...
God, take these gifts and
with us create a new world:
Where we allow the "them" to become the "us",
the "those" to become the "us",
the "really?" to become the "really us!"
We are one body and always must be. Amen.
written by Stephanie Dorsey

Listening for the Word

Sacred Readings

Micah 5:2–5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.

Luke 1:39–45, (46–55)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town
in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and
greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the
child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy

Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of Zechariah and Elizabeth and John,
God of Mary and Joseph and Jesus,
throughout all generations you have been faithful to us.
You have given new life to the world through daughters and sons,
through grandchildren and great grandchildren,
who took up the promises you made to their fathers and mothers
and followed your way in the world.
In this time and in the time to come,
raise up a new generation who will live out the new life you
promise in Christ Jesus,
with us and with your church in every neighbourhood and nation.

God of Our Hearts and Our Hopes,
May your new possibilities be born in us this day.

Thank you, O God, for all the faithful saints we have known in our
lives.
Their trust in you gives us hope whenever our own faith wavers.
May we be faithful in this generation as others have been before
us,
so that our ministry and mission in Jesus' name will be renewed,
engaging the world in refreshing, respectful ways.

God of Our Hearts and Our Hopes,
May your new possibilities be born in us this day.

We pray today for those struggling with loss and discouragement
this season:

for those who have lost someone dear;
for those who cannot find meaningful work;
and all for whom challenge and change make the future
uncertain.

Time of silence

Embrace them with your compassion and strength to persevere.

God of Our Hearts and Our Hopes,
May your new possibilities be born in us this day.

We pray for those for whom sickness and death
obscure your promise of health;
and for those who have given up on themselves and on the
goodness of others.

We remember those who face conflict in their homes or their
homelands,

who wonder or fear what tomorrow may bring.

We pray for the creation that has suffered from fire, storm, floods
and earthquake this year,
and for the lives disrupted by drought and despair.

(Time of silence)

Embrace all who suffer with your comfort and courage.

God of our hearts and our hopes,
May your new possibilities be born in us this day.

God of All Life and Each Life,
As a challenging year comes to a close, and a new year beckons,
come to us and be with us once more as we celebrate Christ's
birth.

With the tenderness of your Spirit, lighten our burdens,
and show us new possibilities for our own lives

and for the ministries we take up in Jesus' name. Amen

Responding to the Word

***Hymn**

“People, Look East”

VU #9

***Franciscan Benediction**

May God bless you with Discomfort ...
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with Anger ...
at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with Tears ...
to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and
war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough Foolishness ...
to believe that you can make a difference in this world,
so that you can do
what others claim cannot be done. *Amen.*

Postlude

“A Light is Gleaming”

VU #82

*Please stand as you are able.