

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

March 6, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday

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.

Welcome

Enter this room, all those who prepare with a heavy heart.
Approach the table, you who make rooms ready,
who serve with what you have at hand.

Sit elbow to elbow, those with secrets burdening your hearts.
Eat and drink deeply, you who wear grief and betrayal plainly
upon your face.

We are welcome here. Christ Jesus made room for all, and there is
space at the table still. None of us are strangers at the table. Sit.
Come as you are, weary, sheltered and beloved.

Community Introit "I Love to Tell the Story" VU# 343 v. 1

I love to tell the story of unseen things above
Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true,
It satisfies my longing as nothing else can do.
I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Opening Prayer

**Jesus, you walked among us and lived so radically that in the end, even your friends betrayed you
– give us Courage.**

Gift us with breath that fills our bellies and soothes the panicked fluttering of our hearts.

**Jesus, you wept as we weep, ate and drank, prayed loudly and alone, you spent a lifetime filled with doubt, but didn't allow that to stop you from speaking up and acting out
– grant us strength.**

Move not only our mouths to prayers of justice, but our bodies to action.

**Jesus, you brought sight and life, calmed storms and fed the masses, welcomed all who were excluded
– gift us rest.**

Guide us to those who will share the load so that when the pain becomes too much to bear, we may lay down knowing the good work will go on. Amen.

Passing the peace

May Christ's passion for what is right fill your heart
and flow out through your hands.
May we serve others with a joyful spirit

and accept their gifts wholeheartedly in return.
Let us remember we are never alone.
God's grace will bind us.

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

(Please greet one another)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Spirit of Christ, we come to you with our hands outstretched, hearts heavy with dread. We hold up to you the grief in our hearts – the personal failings, the widespread injustices, the catastrophic disasters – and the weight of it all, brings us to our knees.

We need to be reminded that you see us through a lens of love and compassion.

We stumble, you catch us.

We yearn, you listen.

We hunger, you fill us up. Amen.

Hymn "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love"

VU# 593

Reading John 13: 1-17

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come

from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

A Symbolic Washing of Feet

(Pitcher of water is poured into a bowl. A Towel is dipped it into the water, then hold it up.)

Jesus knelt and washed the feet of his disciples as a reminder to them and to us that no one is above another.

(Dip the towel in the water)

We must spend time being tended, washed clean and shown unwavering love in these precious, assailable bodies.

(Dip the towel in the water)

We are also called to care for one another – to be humble, to listen enthusiastically, to show up for the most vulnerable people in our lives and communities.

(Dip the towel in the water)

Every day, we must be ready to give and receive. We must stay alert, for Jesus moves among us, and we will find him where we least want to look.

(Dip the towel in the water)

We cannot stop speaking the words Jesus taught us – we must be bringers of justice and mercy.

(Dip the towel in the water)

We must embrace discomfort if it brings us in line with Christ's message of radical love and acceptance.

(Dip the towel in the water)

Jesus did all of this and more. He wept and despaired. He felt the agony of a human body, and the pain of betrayal by those he loved. He was beaten and rejected and left to die, questions on his lips even at the very end.

And yet, he washed feet. He continued to show up. His heart must have been breaking, and yet he stayed to teach and to be in community with his disciples.

(Dip the towel in the water)

Silence.

Prayer

Spirit of Christ, we pause to extend to you what feels most vulnerable in each of us. We ask you to pour out compassion over us as you did water over the feet of your disciples. We may be prideful, uncomfortable, anxious, depressed. We may be grieving or overwhelmed, but we ask for your help attuning ourselves with your guidance, strength and hope. Amen.

Hymn

“We Are Pilgrims”

VU# 595

Gathering to Remember the Last Supper

Reading Matthew 26: 17-30

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’ He said, ‘Go into the city to a certain person, and say to him, “The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ He answered, ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.’ Judas, who betrayed him, said, ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’ He replied, ‘You have said so.’

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Invitation

We gather to remember the Passover meal. This night was a tradition, a predictable holiness for the Jewish people, and a yearly rededication for and of liberation.

Prayer of Consecration

Place a pebble in our shoe, God, that we may recall the pain of betrayal on a holy night. Let us walk with Christ and his disciples, taste this precious meal, and reflect on our place in the story.

We are, each of us, Judas, who should be scorned, who should be turned away from the table, and yet, he was welcomed.

We cannot bring peace without liberation, nor forgiveness without grace. We cannot taste this bread or cup without remembering the bitterness of many choices we've made. We cannot share it together without being reminded that we have a place here, and it is as a cherished member of this faith, and this family. We are loved, no matter what.

This bread and cup bind us together. May it fill us with the spirit of Christ and empower us so to break the chains that keep us all from being free. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, **“Take, eat; this is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”**

After supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, **“Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this, as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of me.”**

Distribution Communion is shared.

Response after Communion Tune RHUDDLAN 878787

**God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow’r;
crown your ancient Church’s story,
bring its bud to glorious flow’r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.**

Benediction

We leave this time together surrounded by the figures in this story. Christ and his disciples walk with us as shadows of what we have done and what we can yet choose to do. The story is not finished -- it seldom is!