

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

March 19, 2023

10:30 a.m.

Third Sunday in Lent

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 & 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** "God in the Darkness"

MV #17 v. 1

God in the darkness, God of holy dreaming,
giver of hope, and pledge of our redeeming,
Spirit of truth, our memory and meaning,
come and renew us.

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Call to Worship

Children of God, a new vision of leadership is called forth and God calls upon the least likely, the unheard of, and the humble of heart to assemble to receive anointing.

In peace, we anoint the forgotten, the youngest, smallest and unlikeliest of siblings whom God has raised up to serve.

Though the call may involve risk and danger, we are called to listen, obey and live a love unwavering.

In peace, we anoint the disinherited and dismissed.

God's call does not depend on our outward appearance or our earthly achievements.

In peace, we anoint neighbour and kin alike, knowing God looks upon the heart.

Let us open our hearts to God this day.

***Hymn** "Though I May Speak"

VU #372

Prayer of Approach

Anointed One, your love comes peaceably into our lives if we will let it. We are so fixated on the gold standard, the familiar and the safe choice that we often lose sight of what you are raising up right in our very midst. Enliven us with your Spirit this day so that we might get a glimpse of your peace. Take what we might imagine as too small for your kingdom and use it to open the world to your overflowing abundance and provision for all that you have created. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray.

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.**

Psalm 23

VU # 747–749

***Hymn** "I Am the Light of the World"

VU #87 vv. 1-2

All God's Children

***Hymn** "I Am the Light of the World"

VU #87 vv. 3-4

Call to Transformation and New Life

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

God of surprises, we know that we do not often perceive the world as you do. We look to the flashy fame, the grand gestures, optimal achievements and unreachable standards. Yet, in spite of our misguided reach towards perfection, you give us glimpses of your grandeur and grace. Surprise us yet again this day, O God, that in our complacency which allows us to drift towards the same old ways of faith that we may be transformed anew. Provide us with a new cup of oil that we may be anointed by your love so that we may set out into your world to bless and anoint others. In the name of the One whose love and peace make all things new we pray. Amen.

Sung Assurance of God's unending Love "Don't Be Afraid" MV # 90

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised, promised to be always near.**

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised, promised to be always near.**

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

It is not the outward appearance or size of the gifts we have to share that matters to God. It is the loving generosity of our hearts that is closest to the heart of God. We are invited to give this day out of the abundance of our lives, from our heart, knowing that no matter the size of the gift God knows our hearts.

We give this day from our hearts and may it be pleasing to God.

Offertory

***Presentation of Offering**

*** Offertory** "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" VU #149 v.4

***_Offertory Prayer**

Generous God, you remind us that you "anoint our heads with oil" and that our "cup overflows" with your abundance. We do not take for granted all that you provide. Take these gifts and use them for the healing and tender care of your hurting world. May your cup of love overflow and abide with the hurting and

heartbroken, forgotten and despised, so that we may all be made whole. Amen.

Listening for the Word

1 Samuel 16:1–13

The LORD said to Samuel, ‘How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.’ Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.’ And the LORD said, ‘Take a heifer with you, and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.” Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.’ Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, ‘Do you come peaceably?’ He said, ‘Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.’ And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed is now before the LORD.’ But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.’ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither

has the LORD chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

John 9:1–41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others

were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you

would not have sin. But now that you say, “We see”, your sin remains.

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intersession

God, Shepherd of our Lives,
we give you thanks for all the things you provide that make life
good and full:
for the rhythms of nature which water thirsty lands,
producing food for all creatures;
for energy to work
and for community to share in the produce of work.
Yet we are still thirsty in this land of plenty:
thirsty for hope when work fails;
thirsty for love when friends fail;
thirsty for justice when sharing fails.
Shepherd God, fill us with your love,
lead us on your paths.

God, Shepherd of our Lives
thank you for the light you shine in a world filled with complexity
to bring hope and increase understanding:
understanding to address human need and improve daily life;
understanding to deepen relationships and mutual respect;
understanding to tackle problems and seek solutions.
And so we seek your light to lead us:
the light of wisdom to bring people of different perspectives
together;
the light of courage to work for change in desperate situations;

the light of hope to persevere when change is difficult.
Shepherd God, fill us with your love,
lead us on your paths.

God, Shepherd of our Lives,
thank you for the purpose and potential you create for us in
Christ:
for creating friendships and neighbourhoods that support us,
for creating cooperation to accomplish goals that seemed
impossible,
for creating gratitude for the gifts we discover in each other.
And so we seek the gifts of the Spirit we need in these challenging
days:
the gift of confidence to renew our ministries in humility and
hope,
the gift of generosity to renew lives in need around us,
the gift of faith to trust you for a future we cannot yet see
ourselves.
Shepherd God,
lead us on your paths.

God, Good Shepherd of our Lives, we give you thanks that Jesus
walks beside us and leads us on the paths you set before us into
the future. We walk in faith and love. Amen.

Responding to the Word

***Hymn** “You, God, Are My Firmament” VU #279

***Blessing**

Kindred, set out from this place not to anoint power, prestige, and
the outer appearances of grandiosity. Rather, set out from this

place to anoint healing, renewal, and raise up those unexpected places and people that God has set apart for the transformation of the world. Open yourselves to the surprising and unexpected movements of the Holy Spirit, for around the corner of every assumption we carry and every community we live in, is a small shepherd among us waiting to lead with God's help. Go forth in peace to lead, to love, and be renewed by God.

Amen and Amen!

***Choral Benediction**

Go to The World

VU #420 v.2

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able.