

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

**April 21, 2024**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Third Sunday of Easter**

**Earth Sunday**

**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**

Welcome in the name of the Christ.

**Welcome to this place of worship, situated on the  
unceded traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people.**

Welcome to this place of retreat and refuge, worship and wonder.

**It is good to be here.**

It is indeed good to be together.

**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** Rise Up, Rise Up

MV 130

### Call to Worship

Whether we live near mountains or in the prairies—  
**we are one in Christ.**

Whether our winters are balmy or our summers are cool—  
**we are one in Christ.**

Whether we live near the Atlantic, Pacific or Arctic Ocean or  
somewhere in between —  
**we are one in Christ.**

Whether we live in urban dwellings, nestled in the suburbs or  
surrounded by a rural landscape—  
**we are one in Christ.**

In a spirit of unity, caring for each other and the whole of  
creation—  
**we are one in Christ.**

\***Hymn** For the Beauty of the Earth

VU # 226

## **Prayer of Approach**

**As we gather, we are thankful for your Creation:**

**for light and darkness;**

**for air, wind and sky;**

**for earth and sea;**

**for seeds, harvests and plant life;**

**for sunlight, moonlight and starlight;**

**for every living creature, swarming, flying, creeping and grazing;**

**for our lives.**

**In our actions, meditations, and prayers,**

**may we honour and celebrate your very good Creation,**

**as we seek wisdom on how to share our gratitude and love in**

**good and healing ways.**

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.**

**Responsive Reading** Psalm 23

VU #749

**Hymn** Jesus Friend of Little Children

VU #340 vv. 1, 2

**All God's Children**

**Hymn** Jesus Friend of Little Children

VU #340 v. 3

**Call to Transformation and New Life**

**Prayer of Transformation and New Life**

God of change, we want to be transformed:

Where there is forgetfulness about the earth,

**may I be a remembrance of your love for the earth.**

Where there is unawareness of relationship with the earth,

**let me remind people, we are the earth.**

Where there is only talk about private property,

**may I remind folks that the earth belongs to you.**

Where there is a sense of ownership, when we think we own the earth,

**let me say out loud that we belong to the earth.**

When we only talk and preach and pray about humans,

**let me pray with animals and plants, trees and rivers and mountains.**

Where there is only talk about heaven,

**let me speak about the earth hurting right now.**

Where there is a spirituality of words only,

**may I touch the ground, lean on a tree, hold a plant, touch the water, breathe a long breath and listen to the birds.**

**Amen.**

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Invitation to Generosity**

You are invited at this time to consider the multiple ways that you can give to the life, work and ministry of this church and the wider church for the sake and love of creation.

We often think of our treasures as our monetary contributions.

Your generous giving to Mission and Service helps Kenyan farmers to give the knowledge and support they need to replenish infertile soil and get higher and more sustainable crop yields through partners like the Canadian Food grains Bank.

### **\*Presentation of Offering**

**\* Offertory** Grant Us God, the Grace

VU #540

## \* Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

### *Reader 1*

God of Creation,  
we are thankful for your awesome work in creation,  
you have weaved all of life together,  
and it is very good.

We are grateful for all that protects and cares for your good works:  
the sunlight and water that sustains life,  
the earth that grounds and nourishes life,  
and the earth-beings that care for and protect life.

We ask your blessings on the actions we offer here and on the  
actions of those across the church and beyond during this Earth  
Week.

God of Creation,  
**together we are stronger.**

### *Reader 2*

As we care for your creation,  
provide us with the humility and curiosity needed  
to continually learn about the marvels of your works,  
and to deepen our understanding of how our actions,  
good and bad, affect all of creation.

We ask your blessing on the intentions we offer here today and on  
the intentions of those across the church and beyond during this  
Earth Week.

God of Creation  
**together, we are stronger.**

### *Reader 3*

Although the journey is hard,  
and our hearts might be afraid and filled with doubts,  
may we continue to act and learn towards climate justice,  
with the confidence and strength of your presence guiding us.  
We ask, in your love, to answer the prayers we offer today and the  
prayers of those across the church and beyond acting together  
during this Earth Week.

God of Creation:

**together, we are stronger.**

May we continue to follow in the way that you are leading with  
hopeful and daring hearts, until we have reached your  
commonwealth of justice and peace for all.

**Amen.**

### **Affirmation for the Earth**

**God of Love,**

**I bless the Earth with affirming words of life in fullness,**

**I affirm the rights of animals to live in honor.**

**I affirm the rights of rivers to be clean.**

**I affirm alternative forms of energy.**

**I affirm full life to the oceans.**

**I affirm the life of Jesus to the world as I remember Jesus' denial.**

**In Jesus' name, who was affirmed even when denied.**

**Amen.**

## Listening for the Word

### Sacred Scripture

#### 1 John 3:16–24

<sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup> How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup> And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before God <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup> and we receive from God whatever we ask, because we obey the commandments and do what is pleasing.

<sup>23</sup> And this is the commandment, that we should believe in the name of Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.



## **John 10:11–18**

<sup>11</sup> ‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as God knows me and I know the God. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason God loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from the one who sent me.’

### **Anthem**

### **Sermon**

### **Reflective Music**

## **Responding to the Word**

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

**\*Hymn**      We Have This Ministry

VU # 510

## Extinguishing of the Christ Candle

See the **light is now changed**. It has taken on a different form.  
**But it is still here!** It's absorbed in you. It clings to you.  
Go cradle and share the **Light. Share** it to others as we go about  
your daily living. **Go and live in the light**, Carriers of the light.

### \*Benediction

Go and act, for the care of creation.  
Go and learn, for the sake of creation.  
Go and pray, for the love of creation.  
And may  
the care of God enfold you,  
the passion of the Risen Christ embolden you,  
and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit empower you,  
now and forever,  
Amen.

\***Choral Benediction** Go Now in Peace

VU #964

### Postlude

\*Please stand as you are able.