

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

**December 15, 2024**

**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 communion, 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**

**\*Introit**

**tune: MV #79**

**Will you come, gather in?  
Come in Joy and with rejoicing,  
with the poor and the lowly.  
Song of life -- we'll be voicing.  
Will you come, gather in?**

## **Bible Presentation**

### **Lighting the Candle of Joy**

**Hymn**

“Hope is a Star”

VU #7 v. 3

**Reader**

On this third Sunday of Advent, we come with joy as a community of faith.

**We watch, we wait, we wonder.**

May we bask in the joyful moments that are ours when we take time to notice -- in the beauty of nature, in the beauty of a simple snowflake with its intricate, always-unique pattern, or in the many snowflakes that comprise the softly falling snow, or in the play and laughter of children.

**We embrace joy as we anticipate the birth of Jesus, Mary's new boy.**

As we light the third candle in our wreath, we take a moment to breathe in the spirit of joy.

*(Take a deep breath, then light the candle)*

## Prayer

Let us pray

**God of joy, on this third Sunday Advent,  
we bask in the joy of the season, the joy we find  
in relationships, the joy of gathering in our  
community of faith and being with those we  
love, and the joy that awaits us in the coming of  
Jesus. Amen.**

Hymn "A Candle is Burning"

VU #6 v.3

## \*Call to Worship

Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!

**We seek time to embrace the joy.**

Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!

**We Create opportunities to embody joy.**

Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!

**Singing songs that announce joy.**

Rejoice in this joyful time of worship.

\*Hymn "O come, O come, Emmanuel"

VU #1

## Prayer of Approach

**Gracious God,**

**as we remember moments of happiness, our hearts fill with joy  
in this Advent season. This joy guides us through the long nights,  
drawing us closer to your radiant light that is soon to come.**

**Together, like those who've gone before us, we celebrate with**



## **Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

**Loving God, Creator of joy and wonder, sometimes we get caught up in worries—what’s been said, what might come—and we lose sight of the joy right here in the present. Help us shake off those heavy thoughts and so that we can open a path straight to our hearts. Show us how to find laughter and light again, leading us from the shadows of concern into the bright hope of a new day. Amen.**

## **Assurance of God’s Unending Love**

My the blessedness of God’s grace fill our hearts with a peace-filled joy as we move about this season and follow the light ahead.

## **Presentation of Our Gifts**

### **Offertory Invitation**

When we embrace deep joy, it stirs something new in our hearts, filling us with a gentle energy and clarity. Renewed in spirit, we can hear God’s call more vividly. With open hearts, we’re inspired to share our gifts—our time, talents, and treasures—spreading peace and comfort to those around us. We give as we are able, we give as we are called.

### **Offertory**

**\*Presentation of Offering**    “You Nourish Us”                      VU #545

## **\*Offertory Prayer**

**God of Holy darkness and returning light,  
we give of our full hearts, knowing that you will bless this world  
with love.**

**We give of our full minds, knowing that you will bless this world  
with peace.**

**We give of our full souls, knowing that you will bless this world  
with hope.**

**May the joy of your gifts encourage us to share the best we  
have, creating your Realm here on earth. Amen.**

## **Listening for the Word**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

God of truth and wisdom,  
send us your Holy Spirit to teach us  
through the scriptures, read and interpreted this day.  
Lead us to understand your truth more fully,  
and our hearts to live out your wisdom  
in the example of Jesus, your Living Word. Amen.

## **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 judgements against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king 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;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,

he will renew you in his love;

he 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 axe 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 to you with joy and thanksgiving  
as the beauty of this season unfolds.  
With the kindness of your Spirit,  
awaken opportunities for understanding to  
emerge among us,  
and refresh our faith community 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 neighbourhoods  
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 facing illness in spirit, mind, or body,  
and those waiting for diagnosis or treatment, as anxiety grows.

*(Silence)*

We pray for those who are lonely or in mourning,  
and all who have been touched by tragedy and violence.

*(Silence)*

We pray for those searching for work, struggling with rising costs,  
worried deeply about their security.

*(Silence)*

