

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

December 22, 2024

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 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?
There is love - all around us.
For the for the proud have been shattered
and the mystery has found us.
Will you come, gather in?**

Bible Presentation

Lighting the Candle of Love

Hymn

“Hope is a Star”

VU #7 v. 4

Reader On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we come with love as a community of faith.

We watch, we wait, we wonder.

When we feel God's unfailing love, we are able to give love to -- and receive it from -- our families, our friends, our community of faith, and, yes, even those we find hard to love. There is enough love for all.

We experience God's love in the greatest gift for all of us, in the birth of Jesus, who is bringing love into the world.

As we light the fourth candle in our wreath, we breathe in the spirit of love.

(Take a deep breath, then light the candle)

Let us pray

God of love, we give thanks for your unfailing

love and for the gift of love in the human
relationships that give our lives meaning.
May we come to the Manger filled with your infinite love.
Amen.

Hymn "A Candle is Burning"

VU #6 v.4

***Call to Worship**

Love deeply, creating the wells of kinship,
For in the Body of Christ we belong.
Love boldly, like the spirited colours of a rainbow,
For in the Body of Christ we find peace.
Love joyfully, like the blissful songs in the wind,
For in the Body of Christ we claim our connections.
In love, we gather to worship our God.

***Hymn** "The First Nowell"

VU #91

Prayer of Approach

Sacred Weaver of Life,
you stitch together the fragments of our memories,
binding our stories into a holy tapestry.
Each patch, a unique piece of our journey, is lovingly placed,
creating beauty in diversity.
We honour these sacred threads that tie us to one another and
to you, O Loving Creator.
May this quilt of connection wrap us in warmth, bringing
comfort and peace in this season of reflection.

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,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Responsive Reading Luke 1:47–55 Mary's Song VU #898

***Hymn** "Light One Candle" AGCS #13 vv. 1, 2

Time for All Ages

***Hymn** "Light One Candle" AGCS #13 v.3

Call to Transformation and New Life

Come, step into the light of God's grace. Leave behind what weighs you down and embrace the promise of new life. Together, let us be transformed by love, hope, and renewal.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Divine Light and Love,

The weight of this season, the sorrows of our past, and the burdens of present and future expectations press heavily upon us.

We hide in the shadows, turning away from your light.

We choose isolation over the joy of shared love and community.

Open our hearts to a new way, one filled with grace and lightness.

Draw us back to the Body of Christ, away from the lonely comfort of spiritual solitude.

Amen.

Assurance of God's Unending Love

God's grace flows endlessly into our lives, drawing us out of the shadows and into the light, reconnecting us with our neighbours, friends, families, and all those who share this journey with us. May the mercy of our Creator help us rediscover the Spirit of Joy among us once more.

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

In this moment, we come together to seek God's call for our lives and communities. As part of our faith, we share our time, talents, and treasures to bring God's light into the world. We give not out of shame or to impress but to celebrate the Body of Christ.

Offertory

***Presentation of Offering** “You Nourish Us”

VU #545

***Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

**God of all Joy, Holy Hope,
we delight in living in your ways as we create your Realm here
on earth. These offerings of talents, treasures, and time are not
to appease you but to collaborate with you. As co-creators, we
seek your intentions and celebrate your love for us and our
neighbours. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

Open us, O God, to the Good News written in the scriptures.
Open our hearts to recognize your presence with us.
Open our minds so that we may know your direction for us.
And may we say with Mary, “Let it be with me according to your Word.”
Amen.

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 rulers.

Luke 1:39–45

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."

Anthem

Sermon

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of Zechariah and Elizabeth and John,
God of Mary and Joseph and Our Lord Jesus Christ,
through all generations you have been faithful to us.

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.

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.

(silence)

Embrace them with your compassion and strength to persevere.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those for who are facing sickness and death
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 and earthquake this year,
and for the lives disrupted by drought and despair.
(silence)

Embrace all who suffer with your comfort and courage.
Hear our prayer.

God of all life and each life,
as we move towards a new year,
let us have a strong sense of your presence 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** "Angels We have Heard on High" VU #38

***Blessing**

As we walk in the ways of God and seek the Creator's purpose for our lives,
may the Spirit of the Living God breathe life into us, that we may love with boldness.

May the Spirit of the Living God empower us, that we may forge paths of peace.

May the Spirit of the Living God awaken us, that we may love with generous and boundless hearts.

The time of new birth draws near, for God's love dwells

among us, guiding us into the renewal of life. Go now in
peace and love. Amen.

***Choral Benediction** “Joy to the World”

VU #59 v. 1

*Please rise as you are able.