

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

December 21, 2026

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

Announcements

Birthdays & Special Occasions

Lighting the Candle of – LOVE

Reader 1 God is always gathering what has been scattered,
mending what has been broken,
restoring what has grown weary.
Love is the work that brings us home.

We long for love that rebuilds and renews.

Reader 1. This candle calls us into that holy work—
to be repairers of the breach,
bearers of compassion,
and companions on the road to healing.

Fourth candle is lit

Reader 1. We light the candle of Love,
trusting that God's restoring love
can make all things new.

May love shape our lives and our world.

Prayer

**Holy presence, root us in your restoring love.
make us signs of healing,
carriers of compassion,
and people of courage.
Amen.**

Bible Presentation (During singing of the Introit)

***Introit** "Hope is a Star"

VU #7 v.4

***Call to Worship**

Come, come with what you have...
even the pieces that don't seem to fit.

Come, come with the questions that wake you at night...
even the ones we're afraid to ask.

Come, come with your plans, and the ways they've gone astray...
we come, ready to notice God at work anyway.

Come, come into this place, into this moment...
God is already here, shaping life among the fragments.

***Hymn** "Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness"

VU #28

Prayer of Approach

**O God of early arrivals,
of dawn that breaks without warning and paths that twist
unexpectedly,
we come to you without instructions,
without diagrams or maps,
only the courage of curiosity.
Meet us in our unfinished plans,
in our boxes of scattered pieces.
Show us how to begin assembling,
how to trust that you are already here,
patient, gentle, insistent.**

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 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

VU #794 Part 1

***Hymn** “The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy”

VU #73 vv. 1, 2

Time for All Ages

***Hymn** “The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy”

VU #73 v. 3

Call to Confession

We wait. We hesitate. We hold back.
We forget God is already here, among the mess, inviting us:
“Come on, let’s do this together.”
Come, let us confess our **brokenness** and our fears.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

God of Immanuel,
teach us to trust the unknown.
Teach us to see the beauty in fragments,
the sacred in the unfinished,
the grace in improvisation.
Make our hesitation into courage,
our fear into wonder,
our waiting into joy.

**Let our lives become places where your presence
is visible in small acts of care, patience, and love.
Amen.**

Assurance of God's Unending Love

Even in our confusion,
even when we do not know what to do next,
 God is with us.
Even when our instructions are missing,
 God is with us.
Receive this gift: we are not alone.
 God stays.
We are held.

***Hymn "Halle, Halle, Halle"**

VU #958

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

God's presence comes unbidden.
Let us, in gratitude, give of ourselves:
our time, our attention, our gifts.
Let them become small acts of hope,
pieces of light in the world.

Offertory

***Presentation of Offering**

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

***Offertory Prayer**

**Bless these gifts, O God,
and bless the hearts that offer them.
May they become part of your quiet work,
assembling hope where it seems impossible,
bringing light where shadows linger,
making room for joy,
for peace, for life.
Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

O Spirit,
open our eyes to the unseen,
our ears to the gentle interruptions,
our hearts to the presence
that has been here all along.
Let your Word fall softly among the pieces of our lives
and teach us how to trust,
how to begin,
how to wait with wonder.
Amen.

Sacred Word

Isaiah 7:10–16

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz

said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Matthew 1:18–25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said:

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their wrongs.”

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel” —
which means, “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord
commanded him;
he took Mary as his wife,
but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son.
And he named him Jesus.

Anthem

Responding to the Word

Prayer

Let the words of my mouth,
and the listening of all our hearts,
be held in your grace, O God.
May your peace rest upon us
and guide us into what is true and life-giving.
Amen.

Sermon *Instructions Not Included*

Reflective Music

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of unexpected arrivals,
you show up in the middle of our living rooms, on the ferry, on
midnight roads, and in places we did not plan.
We bring to you our hearts, our fears, and our hopes, trusting that
you are already here with us.

For those who are navigating uncertainty,
who are holding pieces of a life they don't fully understand,
we pray for your presence to guide them gently,
and for the courage to begin again without instructions.

God with us, help us trust your accompaniment.

For families, especially those welcoming new life,
or preparing for change,
we pray for patience, for moments of laughter,
and for the grace to accept that life may arrive before we are
ready.

God with us, help us trust your accompaniment.

For those who are struggling,
with illness, grief, anxiety, or broken relationships,
we pray that your love may enter quietly into their chaos,
not to fix, but to stay, to sit with them, and to give them strength.

God with us, help us trust your accompaniment.

For our world, impatient and hurried,
we pray for signs of hope in unexpected places,
for courage to pay attention to small acts of love,
and for awareness of your presence among us now.

God with us, help us trust your accompaniment.

We lift all these prayers with the one who shows us the way,
who entered our messy world, and who remains with us still:
God with us, Immanuel, in all things, always.

Amen.

***Hymn** “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

VU #36

***Blessing**

Go now,
carrying the quiet, gentle presence of God.
Go, knowing that even when you feel unprepared,
even when the pieces seem impossible to fit,
even when the night feels long and uncertain,
God is with you.
Immanuel.
Presence guaranteed.
Begin again.
Amen.

***Choral Benediction** “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

VU #1 v. 1

***Please rise as you are able.**