

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

January 11, 2026

10:30 a.m.

Baptism of Jesus

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** Come, O Holy Spirit MV #23 v.1

Call to Worship

The heavens open.

The waters move.

God speaks.

We are listening.

Before anything is asked of us,
love is spoken.

We come to receive.

***Hymn** I Was There to Hear Your Burning Cry VU #644

Prayer of Approach

**God of quiet beginnings,
we come into this moment
not to prove ourselves,**

**not to explain ourselves,
not to be more than we are.**

**We arrive carrying the habits of a world
that tells us to strive,
to earn,
to justify our place.**

**But here, at the water's edge,
you meet us without conditions.**

**You call us by name.
You look upon us with kindness.
You speak delight where we expect demand.**

**Still the noise within us.
Loosen the grip of fear and comparison.
Make space in us for the deep knowing
that we are already held.**

**Receive us, O God,
and shape this time
as a place of truth,
gentleness,
and renewal.**

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 29

VU #756

***Hymn** I've Got Peace like a River

VU #577 vv.1, 2

All God's Children

Hymn I've Got Peace like a River

VU #577 v.3

Presentation of Our Gifts

Invitation to Generosity

In the story of Jesus' baptism,
nothing is taken —
only given.

The offering we bring today
is not a transaction
but a gesture of trust.

We give because life has been given to us.
We share because we are not alone.

We offer what we can,
believing it will become part of something larger
than ourselves.

Let us give, freely and honestly.

***Presentation of Offering**

* Offertory In the Bleak Mid-Winter

VU #55 v. 4

*Offertory Prayer

**Generous God,
receive these gifts
and the lives from which they come.**

Take what is ordinary and use it for healing.

**Take what is small
and make it enough.**

**May these offerings
serve your purposes in the world -
strengthening community,
easing suffering,
and opening doors where hope is needed.**

**Bless what is given,
and bless all who receive. Amen.**

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Understanding

Loving God,
as these words are read,
quiet our striving
and let us listen
from the place
where we are already loved. Amen.

Sacred Scripture

Isaiah 42:1-9

42 Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
2 He will not cry out or lift up his voice
or make it heard in the street;
3 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
4 He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
5 Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it

and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,

a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,

to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,

from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name;

my glory I give to no other,

nor my praise to idols.

⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,

and new things I now declare;

before they spring forth,

I tell you of them.

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Anthem

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 *Loved Before You Do Anything*

Reflective Music

Responding to the Word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God, who stands in the water with us,
we bring before you the needs of the world
as they truly are ---
 unfinished,
 aching,
 hopeful.

We pray for those who are tired of striving,
those who feel measured and weighed,
those who believe they are only as valuable
as their last success.

Speak a quieter truth into their lives—
one of dignity,

belonging,

and rest.

We pray for those living with illness,
especially those facing uncertainty, pain, or fear.

Be near to them in hospital rooms,
waiting rooms,

and long nights.

Let your presence be felt
not as explanation,
but as companionship.

We pray for those who grieve--
recent losses and long-held sorrow.

Hold them gently.

Honour their love.

Give them moments of light
that do not erase grief
but help them carry it.

We pray for a world fractured by division,
where fear hardens hearts
and power forgets compassion.

Turn us toward one another again.

Teach us ways of humility,
patience,
and courage.

We pray for this community—
for those who feel strong
and those who feel fragile,
for those who lead
and those who quietly serve,
for those who wonder
if they still belong.

Remind us that we stand together
in the same water,
under the same blessing.

Gather all these prayers,
spoken and unspoken,
into your wide mercy,
and hold them in love. Amen.

***Hymn** I Have Called You by Name

MV #161

Changing the Light

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.

*Blessing

Go now into the days ahead
not driven by what you must prove,
but grounded in what has already been spoken.

May you walk knowing
that you are seen,
named,
and cherished.

May you live gently with yourself
and generously with others.

And may the blessing of God—
present before all beginnings
and faithful beyond all endings—
rest upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

***Choral Benediction** Hope Shines as the Solitary Star

MV #220

Postlude *Please stand as you are able.