

Stouffville United Church
34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3
www.stouffvilleuc.ca
December 18, 2022
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Music Prelude

Welcome

Acknowledgement of the Land

We are gathered on the treaty territory of the Huron Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people and their ancestors. May we honour their history, spirituality, culture and teachings and uphold our responsibilities as treaty partners.

Announcements

The Lighting of the Advent Candle: The Candle of Joy: REJOICE!

Reader 1:

The prophet Isaiah tells us that a young woman shall bear a son and shall call Him Emmanuel--God with us.

God is no longer a distant God, but is in the here and now.

Reader 2:

As Joseph trusted in the message of God's angel, so we can trust in God's message of redemption and love.

Rejoice! God is lavishing us with God's love and peace.

Today we light four candles. The first is the candle of Patience, reminding us to watch and wait for what God is about to do. [*Light the first candle*]

The second candle is the candle of Readiness, enabling us to look at our lives, to get rid of all those things that keep us from God, to change our ways and live as God would have us live. [*The second candle is lighted*]

The third candle is the candle of Faith, through which we behold the love and mercy of God and believe in God's presence with us. [*The third candle is lighted*]

The fourth candle is the candle of Joy, in which we feel the powerful presence of God's love through the promise of One who will save us. [*The fourth candle is lighted*]

Call to Worship

L: This is the fourth Sunday of Advent, a time to rejoice in the wondrous things that God is doing.

P: Our hearts are filled with the hope that is coming into the world.

L: The time is fast approaching, not for parties or presence, but for the awareness of God's loving gift to us--the gift of the Christ child.

P: Help slow us down, Lord, that we may realize that your gift of love is at the center of our lives and our celebrations.

L: Thanks be to God who again reminds us of God's eternal love.

P: Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive your blessed gift. AMEN.

Hymn: 44 VU It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Prayer of Approach and Confession: (unison)

Lord, we confess that we are rushing headlong into Christmas. It's only a few days away and we still have so much to do. Our preparations are far from complete, and we are exhausted. Sometimes we wish this whole thing were over so that we could rest. Forgive our shortcomings and our short-sightedness. You have poured upon us blessing after blessing, daily reminding us of your love and presence; yet we have chosen to jump onto this "greased slide" into Christmas. Give us patience. Slow us down. Remind us of the ways in which you are present with us--not in the wrapped packages, the abundance of food, but in the love and compassion that is brought to all. Forgive us, we pray. Make us truly ready to receive your love and the gift of the Christ Child. AMEN.

Words of Assurance:

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting our trespasses against us. Therefore, be assured and believe you are loved and you are forgiven.

Music Ministry:**A time of silence****Offertory**

Offertory Prayer (unison) Loving God, as we present our tithes and offerings to you this morning for your blessing, we remember the greatest blessing the world has ever received: your precious Son, sent to redeem us, to pay the price for our sins. Thank you for showing us how to give from the heart. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination**Scripture: Matthew 2:1-11****Hymn: 134 MV There Was a Child in Galilee****Sermon "The Worship of the Wise"****Prayers of the People****The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who 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

Hymn: 36 VU Angels, from the Realms of Glory**Blessing****Closing Response****Music Postlude**