

**Stouffville United Church**  
34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3  
[www.stouffvilleuc.ca](http://www.stouffvilleuc.ca)  
Sunday December 24, 2023  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Baptism

## **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**

### **Music Ministry (small group)**

### **Lighting the Advent Candle**

L: Once God's plan was a mystery, hidden from our sight. Now God has disclosed what was kept secret for so very long; he has brought it out in the light. In the brighter light on this fourth Sunday in Advent, may we see more clearly the glory of God in Christ and sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever. (The four Advent Candles are lit)

P: "With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens" (Psalm 89:1b-2).

### **Call to Worship**

L: Turn on the Lights and light the Candles, prepare the room, God in Christ is coming to us!

**P: Make our hearts and spirits ready to receive God's most gracious gift, God's Son, Jesus Christ.**

L: The light banishes the darkness!

**P: May God's light shine on us, in us and through us that God's glory may be seen. AMEN.**

**Hymn:** Hark the Herald Angel Sing (VU# 48)

### **Prayer of Approach and Confession**

Lord God, it's getting harder and harder to focus on the true meaning of Christmas, the incarnation of God's love in the birth of Jesus Christ. We are caught in the web of festivities, travel, gifts, and glitter. And we have to admit that we really do enjoy all the holiday opportunities. But as we get closer to the big family celebrations and the actual celebration of Christmas, we begin to wonder how we are going to "survive" it all. We

say to ourselves, "We won't let all this stress happen to us next year." But we know better. We allow ourselves to be continually drawn in to the demands of others, leaving little or no time for ourselves, our families, and especially for You, gracious God. Forgive us. You are all too familiar with our reasons and excuses for what is happening. Help us to make some changes in our lives and our focus, so that this time of celebration may have the deepest sense of joy and purpose, not just be the rush and clamor of yet another holiday season that disappears all too quickly. Keep us focused on the eternal "yes" response to your call to us, to live our lives as those who would joyfully serve You. Heal and comfort us, Lord, this day and always. For we ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior. 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.

**Sacrament of Baptism: Caius Calian Bendell**

**Music Ministry:** Prepare The Way of the Lord

**A Time Of Silence:**

**Offertory:**

**Offertory Doxology**

**Offertory Prayer** (Unison)

There are no limits to the gifts you have given us, gracious Lord. Now we return thanks to you for these gifts and we bring these tokens to you, asking for your blessing on givers and gifts. Help these gifts and givers to be your witnesses throughout the world. AMEN.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Scripture: Matthew 2:1-9**

**Hymn:** Away in a Manger (VU# 69)

Video Clip

**Sermon: "Don't be a Grinch"**

**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: Joy to the World** (VU# 59)

**Blessing**

**Closing Response**

**Music Postlude**