

**Stouffville United Church**  
34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3  
Sunday, November 24, 2024

**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**

**Chorus**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

We light this candle as our sign of the Holy Spirit at work in the world. We light it as a sign of the kingdom which is yet to come. May its light brighten our spirits, may the light of God shining through us brighten the world.

**Enlighten us, we pray. Amen.**

**Call to Worship**

There is a place which calls us apart, summons us beyond, asks us for more -  
**a place where God is sovereign.**

There is a place which fractures the norms, splits the standards, shatters the culture -  
**a place where God rules.**

There is a place which fosters real questions, engenders honest conversation,  
summons our souls' connection -  
**a place where God holds sway.**

This is that place - a place which reminds us of heaven, when we let it; a place where  
we come together as one.

**Let us worship God.**

**Hymn: God, Whose Love is Reigning O'er Us VU399**

**Prayer of Approach and Confession**

Loving God, long ago, out of the chaos of darkness you created everything above our heads, everything below our feet, everything around us. We thank you for this creation. In your great love and goodness, you created humankind to be co-creators, co-sustainers of the world. You created, and called it all good.

So we come this morning to give thanks for the wonderful diversity you have created. We thank you for the talents and gifts entrusted to each of us – gifts of artistry and design, of construction

and manufacture, gifts of compassion and understanding, of insight and logic. We thank you that in your wisdom you have given freely to each of us without prejudice or bias.

**Yet we have not responded with the same kindness or generosity. We have been swift to judge which gifts should be given to some and not to others. We have been hasty to assess another's worthiness based on the world's standards rather than your wisdom. We have made snap judgments from ease, rather than doing the harder work of informing and then transforming our stance.**

**For the times when we have judged another's worthiness based on gender or age or race, we ask for forgiveness. For the times when, in the muddle of our minds we have instantly written someone off, based only on what we see from the outside, we ask for forgiveness.**

**Gracious God, bother us and inconvenience us so that we are no longer satisfied with a society which acts out of habit, especially when those habits continually disadvantage those expressions of your glorious creation which are different from ours.**

**In these few moments of stillness we bring before you those times in this week when we have been swift to judge, hasty to assess another's worth, and neglected to heed your wisdom.**

**(Silence is observed.)**

#### **Words of Assurance**

God of forgiveness, we give thanks that we can come to you in humility and ask for your mercy. In your unlimited and unconditional love you forgive us, but you also challenge and dare us to be more like you every day; to live a life which echoes the equality revealed in the wonders of creation. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen

#### **Music Ministry**

#### **Mission & Service Stories**

#### **Offertory & Doxology**

**Offertory Prayer** (Unison)

**Generous God, we have nothing which did not come from you. Nothing we have is just ours, everything is your gift to all. So as we offer these gifts, things which you have only lent us, may we offer them humbly, to be used to serve you in the wider world. Amen.**

#### **Chorus**

#### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of light, and of dark, your word shows us the way, if we care to think on it and discern a path. Enlighten us now, as we hear your word. Help us to look beyond the immediate meaning of the words we read, to see what teaching you may have for us.

**Scripture**  
**Psalm 93**  
**Revelation 1:4b-8**

**Hymn**                    **Come, Children, Join to Sing**    VU345

**Gospel**                    **John 18:33-37**

**Hymn**                    **All Hail the Power**    VU334

**Sermon**                    **What Makes a King?**

**Prayers of the People\*\***

*We shall respect and protect every part of this planet, hand it to every heart on this earth, until no one's worth is rendered by the race, gender, class, or identity that they were born. This morn let it be sworn that we are one human kin, grounded not just by the griefs we bear, but by the good we begin.*

Sovereign God, your realm is unlike the world we see around us. Your realm bends towards those the world would rather forget. Your realm outshines the world in grace and forgiveness, justice and generosity. Your realm renders worth by the simple truth of your unlimited love for all of creation.

Yet when we gaze around our communities, when we open our newspapers or apps, scroll our social media or TV channels, we are too often hounded by images and stories of destruction, revenge, imbalance and discrimination - where those who need the most help are afforded the least. And in these moments something kindles our souls and tells us that this is not the way you wish your realm to be. So today we bring prayers for our world, our prayers for our community and our prayers for those who burden our hearts at this time.

***This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin,  
grounded not just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin.***

We pray for those women who have been victims of gender-based violence. We pray for those who have been supported by rape crisis centres, and those still on waiting lists. We pray for our governments, both federal and provincial, to provide adequate emergency and long-term funding to assist those women. As the Apostle Paul said - when one of us hurts, we all are hurt.

We pray for all areas of the world where widespread violence claims lives indiscriminately, and escalations of violence signal war - Ukraine, Russia, Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Ethiopia, China.

***This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin,  
grounded not just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin.***

We pray for those who work to aid in our communities - those who work for police, fire service, health centres, social workers, charities which support those who are struggling. Sustain them

when they cannot see an end to their work, or when work is overwhelming in any way. Help those in need to be open to supports offered, give them courage to accept help without fear or embarrassment.

***This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin,  
grounded not just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin.***

We pray for ourselves. We pray for those times when we have felt the sting of judgment and criticism. Help us to put these moments into your hands and help us, through the compassion of the Holy Spirit, to respond in honesty, with gentleness and surprising kindness. And may we be aware of our own prejudice - moments when we judge without thinking.

***This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin,  
grounded not just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin.***

We pray for those we know and love. We pray for those with life-limiting, life-altering, and life-ending conditions. We pray for those with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and those who care for them. We pray for those with complex issues around food, and those who don't have enough to live on. In these moments of stillness we pray and name those who weigh heavy on our hearts. *(Silence is observed.)*

***This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin,  
grounded not just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin.***

Ever-loving God, ruler of all creation and sovereign of our hearts, beginning and end, first and last, Alpha and Omega, help us in this coming week to bear your image in the world, and may those we meet see your face in us, and may we see your face in them.

***We shall respect and protect every part of this planet, hand it to every heart on this earth, until no one's worth is rendered by the race, gender, class or identity that they were born. This morn, let it be sworn that we are one human kin, grounded no just by the griefs we bear but by the good we begin. ....and so we pray together....***

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn**

**Jesus Shall Reign VU330**

### **Blessing**

Go now from here into the world, into the ministry of disciples, where the realm of God is to be created by us, as the hands and feet of the Servant King. And may the blessing of God go with you all. Amen,

### **Closing Response**

### **Music Postlude**

\*\*Quotes in italics from "An Ode We Owe" by Amanda Gorman, read during the opening of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York.