

**Stouffville United Church**  
34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3  
First Week of Advent  
December 1, 2024

**Music Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Acknowledgement of the Land**

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

**Chorus "Introit"**

**Announcements**

**Chorus Mary Did You Know**

**Advent Candle Litany**

Reader 1: Our days grow shorter and our nights grow longer.

As people of faith we turn to symbols - candles, evergreens, wreaths -  
to proclaim our belief in unquenchable light.

In hopeful anticipation, we prepare for the coming of Light into the world.

Listen now, to the Word for this first Sunday of Advent.

Reader 2: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 64, verses 1 to 9.

**All: As we begin this journey of light, our longing for the One  
who tears open the heavens and comes down, kindles a fire in our soul.  
Even now, as we wait, we dare to hope.**

One: We who are pregnant with anticipation, feel hope rise up within us.  
We light this first candle and name it Hope.

**Choral Response "Kindle a Flame" VU19**

**Call to Worship**

Come to begin this journey to Bethlehem, a journey of discovery.

**We have come to spend time in reflection, pondering light and life.**

Come to be part of a pilgrimage of faith.

**We walk with each other on this road, supporting each other and learning together.**

Come in hope that the light is coming.

**We are here to look to the future, for hope for the world, in new birth.**

**Hymn**            **“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”**            **VU1**

**Prayer of Approach and Confession**

God of all wisdom, our hearts bring us here and our minds search for the light of the Word. Strengthen us to grow in love, beginning here today, with our expressions of hope. May we find joy in the search for truth.

**God of everlasting love, manifest in this season of hope and anticipation, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our promises. We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and convenience. We have served our own self-interest instead of serving others. We have not loved our neighbour, nor have we rightly loved ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another. Amen.**

**Music Ministry**

**Offertory**

**Offertory Doxology**

**Offertory Prayer (Unison)**

**Bless these gifts we offer on this Sunday of hope. May they be signs of hope wherever they are used. Bless all the gifts we offer - our time and talents, our commitment to community, our care for each other. Bless us as we offer ourselves. Amen.**

**Chorus: People, Look East!**

**Sacrament of the Word**

**Prayer for Illumination**

As we listen to these readings, may we think on them and find understanding. Help us to discern your wisdom as we reflect. Amen.

**Scripture**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Gospel Mark 13: 24-37

**Hymn**            **“Before the Marvel of This Night”**            **VU40**

**Sermon**            **“Tearing Open the Heavens”**

**Sacrament of the Table**

**Welcome and Call to the Table**

## Hymn “All Poor Ones and Humble” VU 68

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

The peace of God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, Breath of Hope, Giver of all Life, Source of Love which knows no boundaries. Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began. Throughout the ages your song of liberation has filled us with hope for a world where those considered last and least are first and foremost, violence of all kinds is overcome by the power of your ancient love, and all of the human family work together for peace. Therefore with all the great host of saints and with all the angels we praise you, singing:

*(Communion setting E in Voices United P.942)*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might.**

**Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory,**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

Gracious One, you bring our longings to birth and send prophets to awaken us and call us to you. We thank you for those like Mary, who have the strength and courage to give birth to your hope in the world; for those who, like the shepherds, dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem; for those who, like the Wise Ones, actively challenge violent and oppressive powers. We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to us in womb and tomb, in cradle and cross, in tenderness and compassion. In thanksgiving and hope we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Memorial Acclamation** (Sung P. 943VU)

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

We remember all with whom you share your feast and with whom we share the same feast of hope. We pray for all who are in sorrow and in pain, all who are ill or alone, all who are close to our hearts, all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger; all whose lives have been blighted by violence, bigotry, racism or poverty, all those who are counted by so many as last and least. We pray for the church and all ministries, for nations seeking

peace and justice rather than power over, for an end to violence everywhere. God of Hope, make the bread we share the means of our rebuilding, this wine the medium of our transformation, this table the foundation of our renewal, and this community the place of our rebirth.

We remember Jesus, who on the night before he died, took bread and offered the ritual blessings and thanks, saying, "Baruch ataw Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotzi lehem bin haaretz" (*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings us bread from the earth*). He broke the bread, shared it and said "Eat this bread. Whenever you do this remember me".

Then he took the cup, blessed you and gave thanks, saying "Baruch ataw Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, bo're pri hagafen." (*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who gives us the fruit of the vine.*) He shared the cup, saying "Drink this, all of you. Each time you do this, remember me."

**Gracious God, Breath of Peace, Source of Love, we pray for your Spirit. Make us, while many, one. Make us, though broken, whole. Make us, despite death, alive. We pray 'Come, Holy Spirit, come.'**

**Choral Amen (P.943VU)**

### **Communion**

The body of Christ, the bread of life.

The lifeblood of Christ, the cup of blessing.

Let us eat and drink together, for our strengthening in the faith and for the sake of the world.

### **Post-Communion Prayer (Unison)**

**We thank you, God, for breaking into our world and pouring into our lives and our experiences. We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving, and the stories of love, grace and hope that it tells. May we be strengthened for ministry. Amen.**

**Hymn                      Hope is a Star      VU 7**

### **Blessing**

Go now, from this table, this place, this celebration. Tell it on the mountain, tell it in the valleys, and in the forests, on the lakes and oceans - hope is alive, love is alive in the life and person of Jesus. May the blessings of God, and the strength of the Holy Spirit, go with you always. Amen.

**Closing Response**

**Music Postlude**