

Stouffville United Church
34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3
December 22, 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

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Today is the fourth Sunday in Advent. Last week, we lit the first three candles in our Advent wreath, the candles that represent our hope, our desire for peace, and the joy of our hearts.

(The first three candles are lit)

Today we light the fourth candle, the candle that represents love. We live in a world longing for love: a love that recognizes each one of us as a child of God, a love that welcomes us as we are, a love that celebrates all that we are.

**Knowing the need for love in our own lives
and in this dejected world,
we light this candle as a symbol of love
promised in the coming of Jesus.**

(The fourth candle is lit)

Congregation sings: #34 VU

**Come now, O God of love, we are your people;
pour out your spirit that we be one body.**

God of hope, peace, joy and love, we eagerly await the birth of Jesus, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Call to Worship

As one week of Advent finishes and another arrives,
we come closer and closer to the 'big event'.

Come believers,

come seekers,

come and place yourselves and all of your cares

in the hands of God,

God the Creator,

God the one who is coming

and God the Spirit

who came in the door with you and leaves with you,
never leaving you alone or lonely.

Hymn: Away in a Manger

Opening Prayer

O come, O key of David, come

O come you source of Love unto us all

And open wide our heavenly home;

Enlighten us and help us hear your call

Make safe the way that leads on high,

To bear your Love out into the wild

And close the path to misery.

And celebrate God's wondrous holy Child!

Rejoice, rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to us

And all things shall be well.

Choir Cantata : The Ballad of Bethlehem

A timeless Story of God's Love by Pepper Choplin

Narrators : Carroll Blair and Gary MacPhie

Offering Invitation

Think of all the wonderful, loving things God has done for us – even some of those wonderful things we might not have appreciated at the time. In response to all of this and in response to the gift that is coming we offer our money, ourselves, our time and our energy.

Offering Prayer (unison)

It is the season of gifts and giving.

With love in our hearts,

we share this with you in the hope

that you will help us use it to further your work in the world.

Amen

Prayers of the People

God of the Bible, God of our present, God of our future,
we are blessed to know that you are our constant,
that you are with us always,

in the stories of the Old Testament,

in Jesus' birth, life and resurrection

and in the companioning of the Holy Spirit,

We are blessed by the change of seasons,

reminding us of you, Our Creator,

We are blessed by family and friends

that we remember most strongly at Christmas time,

We are blessed by the challenges in life that we experience also –

the pandemic that encourages our kindness and care for one another.

We remember especially those who are ill or dying,

those who are mourning, those who are faced with addictions,
those who are not listening to your call and those who have listened and
said 'yes'

We ask you to bring blessings to our enemies
whether they be people or actions
or failings on our part.

We are blessed, God.

Listen to our silent prayers ...

SILENCE

And now we share the words of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples
when they asked what and how to pray:

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: Good King Wenceslas

Blessing

Go now, into the world.
Listen to your dreams.
And watch for angels.
This is the season for them to be walking with us.
Amen

Closing Response

Music Postlude

We acknowledge today's gift of worship liturgy by George and Joy Bott, St. John's United Church © 2021 St. John's United Church, Marathon, ON. Used with permission, and for the generous financial support of the United Church of Canada Foundation Grants.