

Stouffville United Church

34 Church Street, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3

January 5, 2025

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 of the Christ Candle

We light our candle to shine a light of hope for all to see. We trust that the light of Christ is present with us in this place and shines brightly in our lives and in our community of faith.

Call to Worship: (based on Isaiah 9)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep shadows
a light has dawned.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

God is truly with us. We are not alone.

Thanks be to God!

Opening Hymn: "A Light is Gleaming," #82 VU

Opening Prayer

God of wonder and mystery,
today we remember how you surprise us in every age.
Into the gloom of fear and want, you bring light;
into emptiness, you bring abundance;
into the cold, you bring warmth.

Into the hardness of the world,
you bring the greatest power we have known,
in the seemingly powerless form of an infant.
Enter now, Child of Mary, among us and within us,
and move us to joyful adoration of your Mystery and wonder.

Anthem:

A Time Of Silence:

Invitation to the Offering

Like the Magi so long ago, we bring gifts from our hearts to honour the Christ child. Your offering will be received with gratitude.

Offertory Hymn: #55 VU verse 4

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,
Yet what I can, I give him, give my heart.

Offertory Prayer: (unison)

Holy One, we give our gifts and talents, just as the wise ones brought you frankincense, myrrh and gold when you were a babe. We bring you our earthly treasures to help illuminate your presence on this earth. Amen.

Sarah Brownlee, Castlegar U. C.

Chorus

Words Before the Scripture is Read

O God, open our hearts and minds, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that as we share this time together, we may hear what you are saying to us today. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12 from The Message

¹⁻² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

³⁻⁴ When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵⁻⁶ They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,
no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

⁷⁻⁸ Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

⁹⁻¹⁰ Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

¹² In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

***Hymn: "Born in the Night, Mary's Child" #95 VU**

An Epiphany Story: "The Magi - Star Trek"

By Rev. Richard J. Fairchild from "Sermons & Sermon - Lectionary Resources"
as found on Spirit-net.ca

Hymn: "Will You Come and See the Light" #96 VU

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

***Closing Hymn: "I Am the Light of the World" #87 VU**

Commissioning and Blessing

Choral Benediction:

Postlude