

Stouffville United Church
Order of Service
May 25, 2025

Worship Leader: Fraser Elsdon
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Music Prelude

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to worship. We are delighted that you are joining us. No matter who you are or where you come from, whether you are online or here in person, you are welcome in the name of Jesus Christ. Leading worship today is Fraser Elsdon. Fraser is a recent graduate of Emmanuel College in Toronto and a candidate for ministry in the United Church.

We begin each service by acknowledging the land on which we worship.

Acknowledgement of the Land

Today 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

(Introduction to Worship)

(Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a great pleasure to be here in worship with you this morning. Today we're going to hear a reading from the Acts of the Apostles, where Paul shares the good news of Christ with a woman named Lydia, who then offers Paul and his travelling companions hospitality. We will reflect on the vital leadership of women in the early Church, and the wonderful things that can happen when we hear and share the good news of Jesus Christ.)

Chorus

Lighting the Christ Candle

Jesus tells his disciples that where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there among them. We light this candle as a reminder of Christ's presence here today.

Call to Worship

We have gathered to worship God.

**We have come seeking comfort,
inspiration, community, and insight.**

We have come bearing our burdens,
in the hope that God will carry them.
**We have come to be transformed
by the good news of Jesus Christ.**
Come, let us worship the God of life.

Hymn: Spirit, Open my Heart. MV#79

Prayer of Approach

Fit us, O God, for this new day.
Through your Spirit, grant us courage,
so that today's uncertainties may not overwhelm us.
Through your Christ, fill us with love,
so that differences may not divide us.
Through your creativity, make us new,
so that the past may not confine us.
Spirit, Christ, Creator, lead us into newness of life. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you
with all our whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may delight in your will and
walk in your ways;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Congregational Sung Response: #603 VU

**In loving partnership we come,
seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive;
we freely offer them to you.**

Words of Assurance

Take comfort in the assurance
that even those things that are hidden from memory,
or are too deep for our words,
are not beyond God's forgiving love.
God, who knows us completely,
bestows pardon and peace.

Music Ministry:

Mission and Service Stories

Invitation to the Offering

Our God offers us so many gifts and opportunities to share and be generous.
Now is just such a time.
Let us say yes to the opportunity.
Let us say that now is the time to share in gratitude and joy.
Let us give freely of our time, ability,
and treasure, as we offer what we have to God.

Offertory

Offertory Prayer

**Eternal God,
with this offering, we present also ourselves:
all that we have been,
all that we are,
all that we shall become,
and our resolve to walk in your way.
Accept us and our offering we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen.**

Chorus

Prayer for Illumination

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

Scripture: Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We therefore set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Hymn: Child of Blessing, Child of Promise. VU#444

Reflection: 'She Prevailed:' A Sermon on Acts 16:9-15

Prayers of the People

Holy God,

We come before you in gratitude for the gift of life.

We are grateful to gather here in worship today,
grateful to the generations of the faithful who paved the way for us,
saints like Lydia, Mary Magdalene, and Phoebe,
who loved Jesus and his followers,
providing strength and resilience to the fledgling
community of the Word.

We also come before you in pain, struggling with the challenges of life.

Our bodies ache, our minds are restless, our relationships are strained.

We are troubled by things we that have done, and things that we have left undone.

Baptized into the community of Christ, we sometimes forget who it is that we belong to,
feeling disconnected from God and from God's creation.

We pray today for all those people who long for connection and community,
but who feel lonely, isolated, and stuck in routines and rhythms that serve neither them, nor
God. We pray that you will forge bonds of love among your children, connecting us to one
another and to the life-giving vine that is Jesus Christ. We pray that we may see, hear, and
support one another as you have called us to do.

As we approach the 100th Anniversary of the United Church,

we pray for congregations, clergy, and administrators across the country.

We pray that the United Church may continue to be a place of welcome, love, and fellowship
for years to come. Help us to grow in faith and closeness to Christ with each day that passes,
and help us to share the Good News with those who need to hear it. Help us to remember
that we are both blessed, and a blessing.

We also pray today for those in our community who need your love and support, including...
May you bring them peace.

All of this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to speak a powerful 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: *Draw the Circle Wide*, MV#145

Blessing:

Go now into the world with a daring and a tender heart.

Go in peace, the world is waiting.

And whatever you do, do it for love,
remembering that you follow Jesus.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,

and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit
be with you all,

now and forever.

Amen.

Closing Response

Music Postlude