

Stouffville United Church  
Order of Service  
Sept 14 2025

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## **Music Prelude**

### **Welcome**

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ and welcome to worship at Stouffville United Church. Wherever you are in your faith journey, we are delighted that you are with us. My name is Fraser Elsdon, I'm a candidate for ministry in the United Church.

For many centuries, Sept. 14th has been marked as the Feast of the Holy Cross, a day when Christians celebrate the cross as a sign of salvation. In that tradition, today we are going to read from the apostle Paul about how the apparent foolishness of the cross as a means of salvation is actually God's wisdom. We're going to reflect on what the symbol of the cross means for our faith. Before we begin that exploration, however, it is important to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered.

### **Acknowledgement of the Land**

Long before our saviour was crucified, this land was already the site of human activity. We are gathered today 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, working continuously towards greater respect and understanding.

## **Announcements**

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

#### **Call to Worship**

Greetings, siblings in the faith.

We gather here as followers of the Cross.

**We come to celebrate God's presence,**  
and God's love expressed through Jesus Christ.

**We come to tell the story of Christ's life and death,**  
that it may teach us how to be alive.

**We come as a pilgrim people**  
**searching for ways to deepen our faith.**

We come seeking the strength to carry on our journey.

**Let us rejoice in God's gifts to us!**

**Opening Hymn:** VU #333, *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

### **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God,  
who creates, sustains, and redeems all life,  
we come to seek your mysterious presence  
and comforting peace.

We praise you for the joy of being your people.

May your Spirit be with us

and move within us, in this time of worship.

Give us hearts that hear your Word,  
and minds that are open  
to the transforming power of your love.

### **Prayer of Confession**

Almighty God, Maker of all things, Judge of all people:  
we confess the sins which we have committed,  
by thought, word, and deed, against your Divine majesty.  
We repent of our misdoings;  
the remembrance of them is a grief to us;  
the burden of them is great.  
Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful One;  
for Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past;  
and grant that we may serve and please you in newness of life,  
to the honour and glory of your holy name;  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. 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**

The proof of God's amazing love is this:  
while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.  
So, with confidence, I say to you:  
in God's great mercy, receive forgiveness for your sin.  
Thanks be to God!

### **Hymn: *Be Still and Know*, MV#77**

### **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**

May the work of our hands, the commitment of our hearts and the contributions from our blessings of financial resources build God's dream of a resurrected creation in us, through us, and around us. Amen.

### **Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:18-24**

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**Reflection: “The Scandal of Salvation”**

**Chorus: Goodness of God** by Bethel Music

**Prayers of the People**

Holy and loving God,  
We come before you today in awe of creation,  
crafted with such love and care,  
each element playing its role in  
in the great drama of existence,  
from the trees to the clouds,  
the birds and the bugs,  
the sun and the rain.  
We are grateful for the food that grows from the earth,  
and that water that flows in the rivers.

Yet we have thrown creation off balance.  
Our pursuit of overabundance has wrought destruction on earth,  
and imbalance in the climate.  
We pray that you will soften the heart of every human being  
so that collectively we can begin to live  
in greater harmony with your creation,  
taking only what we need,  
and sharing your resources equitably.  
We need your guidance, O God.

We are grateful for your image,  
bestowed upon us at the time of our creation.  
Yet we deface that image by refusing to care for those on the margins,  
and by engaging in violence and war.  
We pray that you will soften our hearts that we may see your image  
in the faces of those whom we encounter.  
We pray for an end to violence,  
thinking today of the suffering in Ukraine and Gaza,  
and the injustice being perpetrated in those places.  
We pray for an end to political violence in the United States,  
where division has sowed hate, and in turn violence.

We pray for your mercy and guidance, Holy One.

Finally, we offer our deep gratitude and prayers of joy and hallelujah that you sent us your son, Jesus Christ, to live among us, as one of us, whose life and death and resurrection created for us new path through the wilderness of sin and death. a path of new life, a path of liberation towards a redeemed creation. For that we say 'hallelujah,' emboldened to pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

### **The Lord's Prayer (KJV)**

**Our Father who art 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 and the power and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** VU #642, ***Be Thou My Vision***

### **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 always. Amen.

### **Closing Response**

### **Music Postlude**