

Stouffville United Church
34 Church Street N, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3
Sunday, September 7, 2025

Worship Leader: Fraser Elsdon
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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. Joining me in worship leadership today is Daniel Mehdizadeh... Today we're going to hear about how Jesus once calmed a terrifying storm on the sea of Galilee, and the ways that hearing and retelling these stories can impact our lives today. Before we begin that exploration, however, it is important to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered.

Acknowledgement of the Land

The land on which the building stands is sacred land, and has been the site of human activity for thousands of years. 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 Way.

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 ministry,
that it may teach us how to live.

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 gift to us!

Hymn: Be Still, My Soul, VU#652

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 and Assurance

(From Gathering Worship, written by Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.)

God whispers to us in the rain and the wind,
but we feel only storm and fury, notice only gloom and shadows around us.

God speaks to us from the pages of the newspaper,
yet we read only words of despair and of tragedy, finding only pictures of destruction and of conflict.

God tugs within our hearts with words of invitation,
while we seem only to feel the weariness in our bones.

God commands,
and we turn away.

Yet you keep insisting, prodding, beckoning, O God.

We turn within to find our fear of the unknown and worry that we're not made of the right stuff.

Still God, in Jesus, says, "Follow me."

We offer, then, our inner failings and the ways we have ignored your calling, O God, trusting that your invitation still stands. (a time of silent prayer)

God whispers to us in the rain and the wind,
so that now, forgiven and transformed, we discover the promise of life and of growth.

God speaks to us from the pages of the newspaper,
so that disturbed and motivated by what we notice, we reach out in self-giving to change the world.

God tugs within our hearts with words of invitation,
so that in joy we respond with discipleship, finding a divine companion in the Spirit.

God commands,
so that in Jesus we find our road map, following the resurrection promise into new life. 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.**

Chorus: *Rainbow* by Kacey Musgraves

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 *Daniel's choice*

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.

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

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41 (Storytelling)

Reflection: "Storms, Inside And Out"

Chorus: *What a Wonderful, Wonderful Friend*

Prayers of the People - Fraser Elsdon

In the heat of summer, a breeze comes, refreshing, restorative, relaxing. It feels like your breath, O God, a blessing: redolent with fragrant flowers, painted in rainbow colours vibrant and alive, tasting of sweet strawberries and of tart rhubarb, whispering the gentle movement of green-laded branches..

For that breath,

for that blessing,

for that restoration,

we give silent thanks. (*a time of silent prayer*)

As we pray, we remember, however, times when the breeze strengthens in force. In the shelter of our homes, a gale, a storm is still frightening, furious, forceful. It feels like a threat, a challenge not only to life but to faith: the chaos and tragedy of the scenes we encounter in the news, situations playing out around the world that bring heartache and pain.

The stormy threat comes in our own country: drought and wildfires, storms and flooding. It comes to our neighbours, as it came so tragically to Texas two weeks ago. As we worry and wonder, there are times we feel abandoned. There are times we feel helpless and out of control. Each concern feels like another crushing wave in the storms of life.

We yearn for your presence. (*a time of silent prayer*)

In our prayer, in our communion with you, O God, we find those storms calmed, those waves subside, those worries wash away. We hear Jesus speak through the stories of

scripture; his words do their powerful work. The still point comes as you equip us with what we need to reach out to others.

The breeze whispers again, but it whispers a challenge and it whispers of opportunity. That is why we are gathered, to be gifted in Christ's name with what we need to bring hope and possibility even within the storms, which will always arise.

It is, indeed, our blessing and our hope.

And to strengthen us in our journey, we pray a bold 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: How Firm a Foundation (v. 1,3,5), VU#660

Blessing:

As you go out from this place, know that whatever storms may arise, you do not travel alone. God is with you. May God's peace surround you, may the words of Christ dwell deep in your heart, and may the Holy Spirit fill you with the courage to shelter those who are still in the storm. In Christ's name, Amen.

Closing Response *Daniel's choice*

Music Postlude