

Stouffville United Church
34 Church Street N., Stouffville, Ontario L4A 1E3
Sunday, December 14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent – Joy
Christmas Cantata
Lead by Worship Team

Welcome

Acknowledgement of the Land

The land on which we meet today is sacred land, and has been the site of human activity for thousands of years.

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 working continuously towards greater respect and understanding.

Announcements

Call to Worship

Advent is a season of waiting.

But we do not wait alone.

God is with us.

**We gather with those who have seen the signs,
heard the whispers, felt the tugs in their hearts.**

God is birthing Joy into this waiting world.

Let us worship with hearts open to Joy.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

We light our candles remembering that Jesus said: "Whoever believes in me, believes not just in me but in the One who sent me. Whoever looks at me is looking, in fact, at the One who sent me. I am Light that has come into the world so that all who believe in me won't have to stay any longer in the dark.

Reader 1: Today is the third Sunday in Advent. Last week, we lit the first two candles in our Advent wreath, the candles that represent hope and peace.

(The first two candles are lit)

Reader 2: Today we light the third candle, the candle that represents joy. We live in a world longing for joy: a joy that releases silence that erupts into laughter and singing, a joy that opens a spirit blocked by disappointment, a joy that dreams beyond all constraints.

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

(The third candle is lit)

Congregation Sings: We Light this Candle TLUS #55

We light this candle for joy.

Await the new life within.

May our hearts now live each day,
so joy can find a way, so joy can find a way.

Reader 2: Be present with us in this hour of worship, we pray, and be present with us wherever we may journey with your joy held high. Amen

FOR GOD SO LOVED: Part 1 – Man’s View of Christmas

Invitation to the Offering:

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.

Offertory: VU #55

**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.**

Offering Prayer (unison)

**Loving and gracious God,
we offer these gifts in anticipation
of the gift of Christ to our lives and our life together.
May they be used that others might hear the story
and feel the joy that we know in the coming of Christ. Amen.**

FOR GOD SO LOVED: Part 2 – God’s View of Christmas

Prayers of the People

How hard we make things, O God,
how heavy the yoke we place on ourselves
through our insecurity and pride,
through our fear and unbelief,
through our denial and stagnation;
How threatening our world becomes
when we make life and joy depend on our own ability.
But you have invited us to a different life, a deeper joy,
you have offered us a lighter yoke
if we will just stop for a moment
and follow you.

Thank you for your gently urgent whisper,
your softly persistent touch,
calling us to come, to rest,
and to lay down our self-imposed burdens;
With relief and hope we respond to your invitation,
gladly taking up your yoke,
joyfully lifting your burden,
and freely giving ourselves to you
in love, in praise and in service.

This morning, O God, we take a moment to lift up to you those who are on our prayer list.....
Amen

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

FOR GOD SO LOVED: Part 3 – Our Response: HALLELUJAH

Blessing:

Soon, very soon, a joyful new Christmas will dawn.
Our songs and scriptures lead us toward it,
toward something that happened long ago that we welcome again.
May God lead you to a Christmas that is all you need it to be.
God bless you. God bless through you. Amen.

Closing Response: #215MV: "Peace Be with You"

Joy be with you, Joy for ever,
joy be with you, my friends.
Till we meet again may God be with you.
Joy, joy, joy.

Music Postlude