**Strawberry Festival Ecumenical Online Worship Service
offered by the Stouffville Ministerial
June 28, 2020**

**The following service was scribed to print form from the YouTube recording for those unable to view online. Please forgive grammatical structure of sentences, as not strictly edited. Nikki Devereux – Stouffville United Church**

1. **Graham Clinton- in2one Community Church**

 Well hey there and welcome to churches wherever you are. My name is Graham, I’m the pastor at in2one Community Church and right now I am the president or the chair of the Stouffville Christian Ministry Association. That is a mouthful, isn’t it? I wanted to welcome you, to officially greet you. To welcome you into this highly modified Strawberry Festival like experience. We couldn’t be under the tent this year but we wanted to still take some of the essence: te gathering together part, the sharing together part. We are going to offer you a little bit of our gluten free all-natural, fully organic, multi church experience and I hope that in it, you will be able to delight in it and display this joy that we have in being united in Christ. Not working towards but we’ve already been united by the holy spirit of Jesus. That we are united and that may we recognize our unity. May we live it out well. You are the people of God wherever it is you are gathered today, in your building, in your home, or wherever it is that you are viewing this. That you are the holy people of God and so our prayers for you, it that you would be able to remember that. We have one church in Stouffville, the Church of Jesus Christ. May you be blessed as you participate and engage together today with the rest of the churches in this area. May we stand together well in Jesus name. Blessing on you.

1. **Music Ministry Worship: “May They Will” – in2one Community Church**
2. **Greeting from the Stouffville Ministerial**
	1. Hello from Bloomington Gospel Church. I am Pastor Peter and I’m here to share all of our love from Bloomington. We’re in this together, we are prayer for you, as I am sure you’re praying for us. God bless you.
	2. I’m Graham from in2one Community Church and we are in this together. We are cheering for you. We are praying for you. Don’t give up!
	3. Hi everybody. I’m Dale from Heise Hill Church. Sending our love from Heise Hill.
	4. Hi everyone. I’m Rick Simpson from Springvale Church. Many of you are going through difficult times, so remember, this too will end. So hang in there, seek the help that you need. Don’t do this alone.
	5. I am Diane Ward from Lemonville United Church. We send our love to everyone out there and pray for everybody’s wellbeing and sense of peace.
	6. Hi neighbour. My name is Joan Masterton and I bring greetings from St. James Presbyterian Church. Someone told me recently it takes 21 days to change a habit. I’m sure we have 21 more days. What habit do you want to change, making it your Covid 19 resolution?
	7. Hi, I’m Naomi Suggs from Restore Method of Care Canada. I just wanted to say we are here for you if you need help. Don’t hesitate to reach out. God bless.
	8. Hi everyone. I’m Nancy Umphrey from Lemonville United Church. Sending blessings and remember that God’s love is bigger than anything that you are going through right now. Our prayers are will you.
	9. Hi, I’m Bob Benson from Christ Church Anglican. May the Lord bless you and keep you and be with you in peace during this time of trial. Amen
	10. Pastor Ada Chung of Grace Chinese Baptist Church. Stay connected and stay blessed.
	11. Hi, I’m Pastor Paul Wang of Stouffville Mandarin Alliance Church. My church is the new plan church. (inaudible section)
3. **Scripture Reading -Ephesians 4:2–6**
4. **Bible Teaching: Serve One Another – Pastor Dale Tollefson, Heise Hill Church**Good morning friends, my name is Dale Tollefson and my wife Cathy have been leading our community of faith at Heise Hill for a little over a year and a half. I have got to say, that we love our Heisehillers. So it’s my joy to be team teaching with Ray (Eastridge) and Peter (Bloomington Gospel) on a few of the ‘one another’ passages and how to treat each other. 8 times in New Testament, we are taught how to treat ‘one another.

Submit to one another” (Eph 5:21)

Encourage one another (1Th 5:11)

Accept one another (Ray)

Carry Each Other’s Burdens (Peter)

Serve One Another (Dale)

In Galatians 5, Paul is encouraging the readers to stay away from religious rituals because Jesus set us free. Then he said:

Galatians 5:13-14 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.

Recently I was reading in Mark 6 of when Jesus fed the 5000 men, plus the women and children.

This principle pop up again in a rather unexpected and surprising way for the disciples. The principle of serving each other.

Mark tells a well known story with an interesting twist

Jesus out in the country side all day with people teaching and healing

Late in the day and they have a problem. The people are hungry but they are a long way from the grocery store, without food.

Mark 6:35-37 Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat.” But Jesus said, “You feed them.” “With what?” they asked. “We’d have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!”

When the disciples approached Jesus they expected Jesus to solve the problem (like He always did). Jesus was the one who served, Jesus was the one who healed, he was the one who taught. They were supporting a structure for Jesus as they were learning. Jesus was the one who always solved the problems. What I see here, is that Jesus was pushing his disciples to the front, for them to be do the serving. Earlier in Mark, we see that Jesus sent the disciples out into local communities to preach and to heal. To help people in local communities, by pushing them out. He does the same thing here.

In verse 35 and 36, the disciples said “Jesus, you feed them.” And Jesus said, “No, you feed them”

Why did Jesus do this? I think there are a few different reasons, but what I want to focus on today is it that Jesus was pushing the disciples in to a new level in their spiritual journey. Up until this point they were supporting Jesus and there to learn. Jesus was pushing them from being consumers to contributors. From consumers to contributors and he was encouraging them to be part of the solution.

Friends, I don’t know what this may speak to you, but I think that Jesus today is encouraging us in the church to move from consumers to contributors. When we think about how the significance of life or the purpose of life. If I was to ask you this question “Why do you exist? What is your purpose in life?” If you are a spiritual purpose you would probably say that your purpose in life is to serve God and to worship God. If you family oriented, you may say your purpose in life may be to raise children or provide for your family. If you are socially aware you may say that your purpose in like if to make a difference in the world. To leave the world a better place. However, you may answer that. Here is the thing, that if you answer the question, what is my purpose of life outside of yourself. To serve somebody else, God, family, nation, the world…. If you answer the question, to serve somebody else, then you are on the track to find true joy and true enjoyment. I often think of the quote from Aristotle. “consumers to contributors. Finding happiness and fulfillment is achieved by loving rather than being loved. By loving rather than being loved. In a similar way happiness is found and achieved when we serve rather than being served. Can I challenge you with this today? Would you find somebody to serve? Would you be generous with your resources and share of yourself? Would you find somebody to share your friendship with or maybe somebody to share your skills with? Whatever that might mean. Or maybe find somebody to share your stuff with. Find somebody to serve and I truly believe that you will find true joy and fulfillment in life. God bless you my friends. Have a great day.

1. **Music Ministry Worship: “Great is Thy Faithfulness” Jenn and Jared from Eastridge Evangelical Missionary Church**
2. **Prayer – Kesha Wint -** **Whitchurch Stouffville Prayer Breakfast**

Let’s pray.
Heavenly Father, you are the Almighty God, and we acknowledge you reign and sovereignty over our town, Whitchurch-Stouffville. During this pandemic, we have experienced many challenges that we would have never imagined. People have lost family members due to Covid19 and some have lost loved ones, due to other issues. We are not able to attend funerals or hug each other for comfort. We pray for your love to be the comfort and peace they need as they continue to mourn. Some have experienced loss of jobs, their businesses closing and our financial hardship. We seek wisdom as to how to navigate our lives during these uncertain time and for your provision to supply all of our needs. We pray that the church would be a beacon of light and be a great example of taking care of one another and loving each other. No matter your ethnicity, race or religion. May the body of Christ stand strong, united on Jesus Christ, our cornerstone, as we be the church you called us to be. We pray for continued blessings upon our church fellowships as we figure out new ways to have services and invest in our people in the months ahead. We know that you already knew what 2020 would look like and we also know that you hold our future. All your promises are true and your word says. If God is for us, who can be against us. We commit every church and all the dear people of Whitchurch-Stouffville into your ever loving hands. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

1. **Restore Stouffville Update – Naomi Suggs (Care Coordinator)**

Restore Canada in Stouffville is a local charity that is currently partnering with the churches that belong to the Stouffville Ministerial. I just wanted to take a few minutes to introduce myself and to tell you a little bit about what Restore does. I’ve been working with Restore for about five years now and we are here to help those in our community that are in distress. We have a hotline set up so that people can reach out to us when they are in some sort of distress. Whether it be financial, emotional, they need housing or they need a job. If they find themselves in a situation that they can’t figure out how to get themselves out of. That is why we are here. They will call us and we will reach out back to them. We’ll pair them up with a care planner volunteer from one of the local churches. The care planner will meet with them, discuss their situation and help them find a way forward through the distress they are experiencing. I wanted to share a quick story with you. We recently had someone give us a call right at the beginning as Covid was starting. She was experiencing financial distress because of Covid. Government benefits had not been available at that point and we did not know what was coming at that point. She, as a self-employed person wasn’t able to find work that she previous did, because of all of the closures. She was experiencing a financial distress. She reached out to us, she was paired with a care planner. The care planner met with her virtually and was able to figure out a way forward. Immediate financial assistance was offered in the form of gift cards for groceries and helped walk her through a few steps until government assistance was available. We are still in touch with her, to walk through the whole process with her. To the point where she is no longer in financial distress. This is an example of the kind of situation that we deal with at Restore Canada with the help of the Stouffville Ministerial. I just want to say thank you so much to all the churches in Stouffville that partner with us. You are doing great work and we are so thankful for your partnership. If anybody has any question or you would like more information, you can look up Restore on our website at [www.restorecanada.org](http://www.restorecanada.org) or info@restorecanada.org to ask any questions. If you are interested in donated and helping financially you can do that at restorecanada.org/donate. Thank you so much and God bless you.

1. **Bible Teaching: Accept One Another – Pastor Ray Liu -** **Eastridge Evangelical Missionary Church**

Good morning friends, I’m Pastor Ray, lead pastor at Eastridge Church. It is an honour to be with you today for our online Strawberry Festival service. Last year this time I had the opportunity to share the word with all of you. Something happened in our city this time last year. Remember what it was? I hope you do. The Raptors were the 2019 NBA Champs and all of Toronto was going nuts. You want to know something for 2020. The Raptors are still the reigning champs. Alright! But that being said, there was a phrase going around during that time and everyone was saying “We the North!” I remember the stage I told you, we have to change that. We need to say “We the Church” folks. That still rings true today. We are the church and we stand stronger and better together than apart. What a joy it is for the churches to come together for this service today at the Strawberry Festival service. Even though it is happening online, it is okay. We may not be together, but the joys of technology can still connect us. Standing strong together. We are going to go through a couple of verses today, talking about the one another verses in the Bible. I have the honour of going through Romans 15, verse 7. “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”
When you think about accepting one another, this verse really showed to ring true, especially with every thing that has been going on around the world. We have been seeing the world respond to racism and injustice. When you hear this verse, accept one another, that can be hard at times. It can be hard to accept someone as we’ve been seeing how the world is accepting someone based on their colour, their gender, their lifestyle choices, things they say, things they have done. It can be hard to accept others, but yet the Bible tells us that we ought to accept one another. I love how the Bible puts it. It doesn’t say accept one another on your own strength out of your own will power. No, it says accept one another just as Christ accepted you. God’s word gives you the grace, then strength to go and do what it’s asking you to do. Let’s spend a quick moment there. Just as Christ accepted you. Wow! When you think about what Christ has done earlier in the book of Romans. Verses five to eight. Paul writes this. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Hear that for a moment. Even when we are at our ugliest, our filthiest, at our lowest point. Christ still died for you and I. If Christ could do that even at our dirtiest moments, having nothing to do with what we have done, no matter how good we were or what the things we’ve said. There is no way for us to earn or to be perfect in his sight, but he still loved us enough to go on the cross. He died for us because of his love for you and I. I associate acceptance with love. When we go back to this verse. Love, accept one another as Christ has accepted you. When you see that he accepted you, that’s what gives you the strength to accept others. Here is one more thing. The people that you find hard to accept, Christ also accepted them. Christ also died for them. Christ also loves them. Yes, we may not approve of everyone’s choices and things that they have said or done, but our job is not to judge. That’s His job. Our job is to love. That’s what we are called to do as believers, as the church. We are called to go forth and love people. We can love people into wholeness. Let’s accept people for who they are, as they are because that is what the churches ought to be known for. Similar to what Jesus said to himself during the Last Supper. He said I’ll give you a new commandment, Love one another, as I have loved you. It is no longer just love your neighbour anymore, the people in close proximity. It’s love one another. I believe He thought of us in the future. Love everyone the way they I have loved you. How did He do it? By laying down his life, by sacrificing. That’s real love, the God kind of love. Let’s show that through our words and out actions to those around us, in our church, in our town and beyond. Let’s be the church. Let’s stand together. Amen. The Lord bless you and keep you and protect you this week. May he shower his favour on you and give you his shalom peace. God bless you.

1. **Music Ministry Worship: “Come Thou Fount” -** **Heise Hill Church**
2. **Bible Teaching: Bear One Another’s Burden’s – Pastor Peter Pallant** , **Bloomington Gospel Church**

Hello from Bloomington. I’m Pater Peter, one the things I love about living in Stouffville is the large Christian family that we enjoy here together. As part of the Ministerial, I’ve got tot know many of my fellow ministers in town. One of the joys we have is being able to sit down together to share our lives, share our ministries, to care for one another and to pray for each other. Loving one another is one of God’s greatest commandments for us, his children. And this family God says we care for each other. In Galatians 6: 2 we find one of the “one another” commandments. “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Bear one another’s burdens. Sometimes our struggles, our cares, our needs feel like this great burden, this great pack, this baggage, this luggage that we are struggling to carry on our own. We feel overwhelmed, we feel we don’t have enough strength but we don’t have to do it alone. We have a loving Heavenly Father who cared very much about us and is able to help us. We are also part of his family. God has instructed us to care for one another and to bear one another’s burdens. What does that look like? What are we talking about here? What are these burdens? I have in mind, three types of burdens and ways in which we can respond to those burdens. The first is burdens of practical need. Circumstantial burdens. Matthew 25, Jesus is telling a parable. A story, an illustration of what it would be like one day when we stand before him. He says there will be two kinds of people. There are people who are righteous, people who are like Me and people who follow after Me. People who are unrighteous. The hallmark of the righteous person is in this story Jesus is telling. They care for others. Jesus tells us tells us that they are caring for him. Mathew 35, Jesus says “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Practical needs need meeting. Sometimes the burdens that we carry are the kinds of burdens that someone else can come and lift for us, put on their shoulder for a while or take it off our shoulders altogether. Sometimes the burdens that we carry, we don’t have to carry. If someone else can carry them, someone who is more able to carry them. That is one kind of burden. Circumstance, need of practical things that we can do for each other to meet the burden, to lift the burden, to relieve someone of the burden.

There’s another type of burden. An example of this burned would be relationship. Sometimes people are hurting, the burden that they have is a hurt over a loss. Sometimes grief is a burden, sometimes heartache or heartbreak over a fractured relationship. Worrying about a loved one or a child or a parent. Those are burdens that we can’t relieve we can’t just answer or solve. Those are burdens that we can come alongside and care for the person who is carrying the burden. In Romans 12:15, we read. “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” Coming alongside and sharing in their burden. We are not removing it or lifting is, sometimes we are helping to carry the person who is shouldering that burden themselves. We are coming alongside to be the caring presence the loving friend, to offer support for the person who’s shouldering the burden themselves.

The third type of burden that comes to mind is one where we can’t be there, we can’t care for the person in person, perhaps we don’t even know the person. We know the burden; we know the struggle. We can’t answer it personally, we can’t remove the burden, and we can’t help the person who’s carrying it, but we have a Heavenly Father who can. The third way that we can carry one another’s burdens or help each other with our burdens is to pray. I think we undervalue prayer. We underestimate its importance. We don’t pray enough. Paul understood prayer. He said in one of his letters. “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. “Join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. I know you can’t be here, I know you can’t take the struggle away, but you can pray. Please pray. Three ways that we can bear one another’s burdens. We can lift the burdens sometimes ourselves. We can care for the person that must shoulder the burden. And we can pray. All of those are ways in which we show the love of Christ to fulfill the law of Christ. What is the law of Christ that this verse talks about? Bear one another’s burden’s and fulfill the law of Christ. A few versed earlier in Galatians 5:14, “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” When we bear each other’s burdens by lending a hand, by being a caring friend or by praying for God’s help, we are demonstrating the love of Christ and we are demonstrating love for our neighbour. We are following in Christ’s footsteps. We are being like our Heavenly Father, who is love. We are being like our Savior Jesus Christ, who bore our burdens. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might dies to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” 1 Peter 2:24

We bore the burden of sin, the guilt of sin and would have bore the consequences of sin but God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to bear our burden upon Himself, to bear sin upon Himself. The consequence of sin so that we can walk free of that burden. Be like our Heavenly Father, be like our Saviour, care about one another, bear another’s burdens and fulfill the law of Christ. What a privilege it is to be part of God’s family. God who loves us. What a privilege to learn from him and to become like him. To experience his love in our lives as we care for each other.

1. **Music Ministry Worship: “This is Amazing” -** **Rev. Jeff Laird and Stouffville Pentecostal Church**

God bless you.  Have a great week!