



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word & Sacrament: Katie Vardy

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

May 17th , 2026

7th Sunday after Pentecost

Victoria Day Weekend – Online Service

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

As we begin our worship, we light our Christ candle as a sign of God’s presence among us. This light shines in all creation, in every living being, and in the love that binds us together. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light our rainbow candle as a sign of welcome and promise. It serves as a reminder that all are beloved, and that diversity is a gift to be cherished. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather in homes and across distances today, we pause to remember that wherever we are, we are gathered on lands with deep histories, living cultures, and sacred relationships. At Birchcliff Bluffs United Church, we acknowledge that we gather on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We honour their enduring presence, wisdom, and stewardship of this land.

May this acknowledgement be more than words. May it call us into right relationship—with one another, with creation, and with the ongoing work of truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Opening Hymn

The Love of God

1 The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star

And reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.

2 When years of time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;
When those who hear refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call;
God's love, so sure, shall still endure,
All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race
The saints' and angels' song.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.

3 Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And everyone a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.

Call to Worship

In a world that feels uncertain and hurried, we come seeking God's presence.

We gather with hope, with questions, and with open hearts.

The Spirit meets us in waiting and wondering.

The Spirit gathers us into community and courage.

Though we worship from different places, we are held together in love.

We are one in Christ, connected across distance and time.

Come, let us worship the God who calls us forward.

Let us worship together in faith, hope, and love.

Passing the Peace

Even online, Christ's peace continues to move among us—crossing barriers, closing distances, and reminding us that we belong to one another. Wherever you are worshipping today, we invite you to share words of peace with a friend, send a text, wave at the screen, or simply hold someone in prayer.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you!**

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Holy One,

you gather us across screens and sanctuaries,

across living rooms and kitchen tables,

across joy, exhaustion, grief, and hope.

In the midst of it all, remind us that we are not alone.

As the early disciples gathered together after Jesus' ascension,

teach us how to wait with courage,

to pray with honesty, and to trust that your Spirit is still moving among us.

Open our hearts this day. Quiet the noise within us.

Draw us deeper into your love and deeper into one another.

We pray in the way of Jesus,

who calls us into community, compassion, and hope.

Amen.

Hymn

Let Us With a Gladsome Mind

VU234

1 Let us with a gladsome mind
praise our God, forever kind;
whose great mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

2 God, with all-commanding might,
filled the newmade world with light;
for God's mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

3 God has with a gracious eye
looked upon our misery;
for God's mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

4 All things living God does feed,
with full measure meets their need;
for God's mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

5 Let us then with gladsome mind,
praise our God, forever kind;
whose great mercies still endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture **Acts 1:6-11** (*inclusive trans.*)

⁶ While meeting together, they asked, “Has the time come, Rabbi? Are you going to restore sovereignty to Israel?” ⁷ Jesus replied, “It’s not for you to know the times or dates that Abba God has decided. ⁸ You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ Having said this, Jesus was lifted up in a cloud before their eyes and taken from their sight. ¹⁰ They were still gazing up into the heavens when two messengers dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “You Galileans, why are you standing here looking up at the skies?” they asked. “Jesus, who has been taken from you, this same Jesus will return, in the same way you watched him go into heaven.”

John 17:1-11 (*inclusive trans.*)

¹ After Jesus said this, he looked up to heaven and said, “Abba, the hour has come! Glorify your Only Begotten that I may glorify you, ² through the authority you’ve given me over all humankind, by bestowing eternal life on all those you gave me. ³ And this is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent, Jesus, the Messiah. ⁴ I have given you glory on earth by finishing the work you have me to do. ⁵ Now, Abba, glorify me with your own glory, the glory I had with you before the world began. ⁶ I have manifested your Name to those you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me; and now they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you’ve entrusted to me does indeed come from you, ⁸ I entrusted to them the message you entrusted to me, and they received it. They know I really came from you; they believe you sent me. ⁹ And it’s for them that I pray – not for the world, but for these you’ve given me – for they are really yours, ¹⁰ just as all that belongs to me is yours, and all that belongs to you is mine. It is in them that I have been glorified. ¹¹ I am in the world no more, but while I am coming to you, they are still in the world. Abba, holy God, protect

those whom you have given me with your Name – the Name that you gave me – that they may be one, even as we are one.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

The Lone, Wild Bird

VU 384

1 The lone, wild bird in lofty flight
is still with you, nor leaves your sight.

And I am yours! I rest in you,
Great Spirit, come, rest in me too.

2 The ends of earth are in your hand,
the sea's dark deep and far off land.

And I am yours! I rest in you,
Great Spirit, come, rest in me too.

3 Each secret thought is known to you,
the path I walk my whole life through;
my days, my deeds, my hopes, my fears,
my deepest joys, my silent tears.

5 O search me, God, my heart reveal,
renew my life, my spirit heal;
for I am yours, I rest in you,
Great Spirit, come, rest in me too.

Sermon

Still Looking Up

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

I See a New Heaven (v. 1, 3, 4)

VU 713

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

1 There, there on the banks of a river bright and free,
yielding her fruit, firm in her root,
the Tree of Life will be.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

3 There, there where the darkness brings visions from above.
There where the night, bearing new light,
reveals the promise of love.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

4 There, there where we work with the
love of healing hands.
Labour we must, true to our trust
to build a promised new land.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

Offering

The early followers of Jesus gathered with open hearts, shared what they had, and cared for one another in community. Today, our offerings continue that sacred work. Through our gifts, ministries of compassion, justice, welcome, and connection continue to unfold—in this community and beyond. Thank you for helping love take shape in the world.

As we bless the offerings, let us sing:

Offering Hymn

What Can I Do?

MV 191

What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

Prayers of the People

Holy God,
we come before you carrying the fullness of our lives.
Some of us arrive this morning hopeful and energized.
Others come weary, anxious, grieving, or uncertain.
And still, you gather us all.

We pray for your church in this season of Eastertide—
for communities discerning what comes next,
for leaders navigating change,
for congregations learning new ways to live faithfully in a changing world.

Give us courage not to cling too tightly to what has been,
but to remain open to where your Spirit is leading.

We pray for all who are waiting,
waiting for healing, waiting for justice,
waiting for answers, waiting for hope to feel possible again.

In the silence and uncertainty, remind us that waiting is not abandonment.
Your Spirit is still moving, still breathing, still creating new life.

We pray for places in our world where fear and violence overshadow peace.
For communities devastated by war, displacement, hunger, and disaster.
For those whose dignity is denied because of who they are,
whom they love, or how they move through the world.
Strengthen all who work for justice, compassion, and reconciliation.

We pray for those who feel isolated or forgotten today,
for elders longing for connection,
for youth searching for belonging,
for those struggling with mental health, grief, or loneliness.
May they encounter communities of care that remind them they are deeply loved.

We give thanks for moments of beauty and grace:
for laughter shared with friends, for acts of kindness,
for signs of resurrection that still appear in unexpected places.

God of community and courage,
keep shaping us into people who embody your love in the world.
And when we feel uncertain about the future,
remind us that the disciples once stood in uncertainty too—
praying together, waiting together, hoping together.
Hold us in that same love now.

We pray all these things in the spirit of Jesus,

who taught us to pray together, saying:

**Loving Creator in whom is heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come,
your 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 yours is the kin-dom,
the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

I Can Feel You Near Me God

MV48

1 I can feel you near me God I can feel you near
Yes I know you're with me God I feel you here
I can feel you near me God I can feel you near
Yes I know you're with me God, Heaven is here.

And I'll jump for joy, I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you
I will jump for joy, I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you.

2 I can feel you loving me yes I know you care
God I know you're loving me always everywhere
I can feel you loving me yes I know you care
God I know you're loving me, I know you're there.

And I'll jump for joy, I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you
I will jump for joy, I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you.

Bread for the Journey

Where in your life might the Spirit be inviting you to take the next faithful step, without having the whole path mapped out?

Commissioning

Go now into the world as people of hope.

We will carry Christ's love into our communities.

When the future feels uncertain, trust that the Spirit is still at work.

We will move forward with courage and compassion.

When the world calls for justice and healing,

We will answer with mercy, solidarity, and hope.

Go knowing that you are never alone.

God goes with us, today and always. Amen.

Benediction

May the love of God hold you, the peace of Christ steady you, and the Spirit renew you.

May you find courage in times of uncertainty, companionship in times of loneliness,
and glimpses of resurrection in ordinary moments.

Go gently into this week,
to love boldly, to welcome generously,
and to trust that God is already ahead of you. Amen.

Choral Response

Go To The World

VU 420

Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,
when all the hosts of glory cry 'Amen!'
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

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