



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word & Sacrament: Katie Vardy

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Norma Grech

June 21st, 2026

4th Sunday after Pentecost

Service of Celebration

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Today, we light this candle as a reminder that Christ is among us. May this light guide us to recognize God’s presence in unexpected places. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light the rainbow candle to celebrate the beautiful diversity of God’s creation. May this flame remind us that we are all beloved children of God! *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather for worship, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Peoples, including the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. We give thanks for the generations who have cared for this land, its waters, plants, animals, and communities long before us. We acknowledge that the work of truth, justice, and reconciliation is ongoing.

May our worship today inspire us not only to offer words of gratitude, but to live as good neighbours, learners, and partners in the work of healing and right relationship.

1 There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.'

2 Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

3 When believers break the bread,
when a hungry child is fed,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.

5 When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world

6 May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways.
God in Christ has come to stay,
live tomorrow's life today.

7 There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

Call to Worship

Come, all who seek God's presence.

We come with open hearts and open spirits.

Come, all who long for welcome and belonging.

We come to receive and to offer hospitality.

Come, all who are learning to recognize Christ in friend and stranger alike.

We come to worship the God whose love embraces all.

Let us worship together.

Celebration of Katie Vardy's Ordination

Today we congratulate Katie Vardy on her ordination on June 13 as a Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care and a member of the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada.

Congregation, please stand if able:

Katie, we welcome you to our congregation as our Ordained Minister. We celebrate the faithful and inspiring ministry you have offered us over the past two years and thank you for your willingness to continue your ministry with us for another year. We commit to supporting you in your new ministry with us, recognizing that there will be both times of challenge and times of fun and laughter. We ask for God's blessing on you and on our congregation and your ministry with us.

Thank you to our Community of Faith Connection Team – Linda McKay, Jessie Gordon, Doug Bellamy

Presentation of Stole – Tricia Reid and Betty McCulloch (Ministry & Personnel Committee)

Congregation, please stand if able:

Katie, we offer you this Stole with thanks and appreciation for all the wonderful gifts of faith, hope and joy you have shared with us, and will continue to share with us, through your ministry. Wherever your ministry takes you in the future, we hope that this Stole will be a reminder of your ministry at Birchcliff Bluffs United Church.

Hymn

What does the Lord require of you?

VU 701

What does the Lord require of you?

What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness,
Walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice, and love kindness,
And walk humbly with your God.

Passing the Peace

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that when we welcome one another, we welcome Christ himself. The peace of Christ is more than a greeting. It is an invitation to recognize God's image in every person we meet. Let us share signs of Christ's peace with one another.

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

Life and Work

Moderator's Pride Message

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Loving God,

You meet us in familiar faces and unexpected encounters.

You speak through prophets, neighbours, friends, and strangers.

You remind us that every act of welcome can become a holy moment.

Open our hearts this day.

Help us listen deeply, love generously, and receive one another as gifts from you.

May our worship draw us closer to your vision of justice, compassion, and belonging.

In the spirit of Christ, we pray.

Amen.

Hymn

We Praise You, O God

VU 218

1 We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

2 We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,
through trial and tempest, companion and guide.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.

3 With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture **Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17** (*inclusive trans.*)

¹ Open your ears, YHWH, and answer me, for I am weak and helpless. ² Save me from death, for I am loyal to you; protect your faithful one, for you are my God and I trust in you. ³ Have mercy on me, YHWH, for I pray to you all day long. ⁴ Make your faithful one glad, for I lift my soul to you, YHWH. ⁵ You are good and forgiving, YHWH, full of constant love for all who call on you. ⁶ Listen to my prayer, YHWH, hear my cries for help. ⁷ I call to you in times of trouble because you answer my prayer. ⁸ There is no other god like you, YHWH, not one who can do

what you do. ⁹ When you act, all the nations will come and bow down before you, YHWH, and will pay honour to your Name. ¹⁰ How great you are, Worker of Marvels; you alone are God!

¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant me strength, for I am faithful to you just as my parents were. ¹⁷ Give me a sign of your favour, then those who hate me will be frustrated when they see that you, YHWH, have given me comfort and help.

Matthew 10:40-42 (*inclusive trans.*)

⁴⁰ “Those who welcome you also welcome me, and those who welcome me welcome the One who sent me. ⁴¹ Those who welcome prophets just because they are prophets will receive the reward reserved for the prophets themselves; those who welcome holy people just because they are holy will receive the reward of the holy ones. ⁴² The truth is, whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these lowly ones, just for being a disciple, will not lack a reward.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

VU 509

1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them;
they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them;
my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Sermon The Reward of Welcome

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn Together We Serve

1 Together we serve,
united by love,
inviting God's world to the glorious feast.
We work and we pray
through sorrow and joy,
extending God's love to the last and the least.

2 We seek to become
a beacon of hope,
a lamp for the heart and a light for the feet.
We learn, year by year,
to let love shine through
until we see Christ in each person we meet.

3 We welcome the scarred,
the wealthy, the poor,
the busy, the lonely, and all who need care.
We offer a home

to those who will come,
our hands quick to help, our hearts ready to dare.

4 Together, by grace,
we witness and work,
remembering Jesus, in whom we grow strong.
Together we serve
in Spirit and truth,
remembering love is the strength of our song.

Offering

Jesus speaks of simple acts of generosity—a welcome offered, a kindness shared, a cup of cold water given to someone in need. Our offering is one way we participate in that spirit of generosity. Through our gifts, ministries of compassion, justice, hospitality, and hope continue in this community and beyond. Let us offer our gifts with grateful hearts.

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

Loving and compassionate God,
Like the psalmist, we come before you seeking your mercy and your care.

We pray for your world.

Where there is war, bring peace.

Where there is hatred, bring understanding.

Where there is injustice, bring courage and transformation.

Where people are excluded because of who they are, whom they love, or where they come from,
may your Spirit raise up communities of welcome and belonging.

We pray for leaders in every nation and community.

Grant them wisdom, humility, and compassion.

Help them seek the common good and protect the dignity of all people.

We pray for your church.

Teach us to recognize Christ in unexpected places.

Challenge us when our assumptions limit our vision.

Help us become people who welcome prophets, truth-tellers, peacemakers, and those whose experiences differ from our own.

We pray for those who are struggling today.

For those living with illness.

For those facing anxiety, grief, loneliness, or uncertainty.

For those who are unemployed or under financial strain.

For those who feel unseen or forgotten.

May they know your presence surrounding them with comfort and strength.

We pray for those who work to build communities of care:

health-care workers, teachers, caregivers,

social workers, advocates, volunteers,

and all who offer a cup of cold water in a thirsty world.

We pray for ourselves.

Where our hearts have become closed, open them.

Where fear has taken root, plant courage.

Where we have failed to listen, teach us humility.

Where we have forgotten hope, renew us with your Spirit.

God of abundant grace,

receive these prayers and those we hold silently in our hearts.

We offer them in the way of Jesus, who taught us to live with compassion, courage, and love.

And together, we pray the words he taught us:

**Our Creator, who art in 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

1 I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came from heaven and I danced on the earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

2 I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
they came with me and the dance went on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

4 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
they buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

5 They cut me down and I leap up high;
I am the life that will never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

Bread for the Journey

Who in your community might be longing for a "cup of cold water" (a gesture of welcome, encouragement, or belonging) and how is God inviting you to respond?

Commissioning

Go now, ready to welcome Christ in friend and stranger.

We will seek God's presence in every person we meet.

Go now, ready to listen for voices of wisdom, truth, and hope.

We will open our hearts to learn and grow.

Go now, ready to offer kindness in a world that thirsts for compassion.

We will share God's love through word and action.

Go in peace, and serve with courage.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Benediction

As you leave this place, may you discover Christ in unexpected faces and unfamiliar voices.

May you have the courage to welcome those who challenge you,
the humility to learn from those whose experiences differ from your own,
and the compassion to offer simple acts of kindness wherever you go.

May the God who hears our prayers, the Christ who welcomes all,
and the Spirit who leads us into deeper love go with you today and always.

Amen.

Choral Response

Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace, never be afraid
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love and show you believe
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.
Amen, amen, amen!

Postlude

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