



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Rev. Gregory Daly: Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Carmen Llanos: Minister of Community Development

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Betty McCulloch

October 31, 2021

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

My Song Is Love Unknown

Music: John Baptiste Calkin

Call to Worship

We are the church that lives into God’s future today.

A church united across space and time.

A church of diversity and inclusion that calls us each by name.

*A church that lives by the work of God in Christ
that was, is now, and is still to come.*

The one who is seated on the throne says to us:

“See, I am making all things new!”

*A new heaven and a new earth,
where the home of God is among God’s people.*

God’s future is epic, and it’s good news.

Remember God’s future, for this is our story!



Response

I See a New Heaven

VU 713

Words and Music: © 1979 Carolyn McDade

*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.
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.
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.*

Life & Work of the Church

Welcome to online worship



Land Acknowledgement

Candle Lighting



Opening Hymn

Sing With All The Saints In Glory

Words: William J. Irons, 1873

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824

*Sing with all the saints in glory,
Sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,
To the former days belong.
All around the clouds are breaking,
Soon the storms of time shall cease;
In God's likeness we awaken,
Knowing everlasting peace.*

*O what glory, far exceeding
All that eye has yet perceived!
Holiest hearts, for ages pleading,
Never that full joy conceived.
God has promised, Christ prepares it,
There on high our welcome waits.
Ev'ry humble spirit shares it;
Christ has passed the eternal gates.*

*Life eternal! O what wonders
Crowd on faith; what joy unknown,
When, amid earth's closing thunders,
Saints shall stand before the throne!
Oh, to enter that bright portal,
See that glowing firmament,
Know, with you, O God immortal,
Jesus Christ whom you have sent!*

Prayer for Grace

*You are our God and we are Your people.
We are grateful that You have claimed us as your own.
You have set us in the company of saints past and present,
among those who have made bold witness to Your goodness and Your truth.
Your Word opens up new futures when we see no way forward.*

*You know the places in our hearts where we are afraid
— afraid of a future we cannot control;
— afraid of losing health and independence
— afraid for the well-being of our children
— afraid that past mistakes will ruin our future*



*Write the stories of your people deep into our hearts so that we may learn to trust you beyond our fears. Give us hearts, minds and spirits ready to trust and follow where your Spirit leads, confident that we remain in your loving embrace. We ask in Jesus' name whose outstretched arms welcome us and hold us securely in your grace.
Amen*

Words of Assurance

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

And Now For Something Completely Different



Hymn

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

VU 382

Words: Edwin Hatch 1878

Music: Robert Jackson

*Breathe on me, breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you love,
and do what you would do.*

*Breathe on me, breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, breath of God,
my will to yours incline,
until this earthly part of me
glows with your fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.*

Prayer of Illumination



Help us O God, to come to you with open lives to receive your words.

May we give them new life as we listen to what you have to say.

Open our hearts as we embark on this journey with each other and with you. Amen

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Message

¹⁻² GOD grabbed me. GOD's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. GOD led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun.

³ GOD said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “GOD, only you know that.”

⁴ GOD said to me, “Prophecy over these bones: ‘Dry bones, listen to the Message of GOD!’”

⁵⁻⁶ GOD, the Master, told the dry bones, “Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life. I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am GOD!”

⁷⁻⁸ I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.

⁹ He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, son of man. Tell the breath, ‘GOD, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!’”

¹⁰ So I prophesied, just as GOD commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

¹¹ Then GOD said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Listen to what they’re saying: ‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone, there’s nothing left of us.’”

¹²⁻¹⁴ “Therefore, prophesy. Tell them, ‘GOD, the Sovereign, says: I’ll dig up your graves and bring you out alive—O my people! Then I’ll take you straight to the land of Israel. When I dig up graves and bring you out as my people, you’ll realize that I am GOD. I’ll breathe my life into you and you’ll live. Then I’ll lead you straight back to your land and you’ll realize that I am GOD. I’ve said it and I’ll do it. GOD’s Decree.’”

John 11:1-45 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed Jesus with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “the one whom you love is ill.”

⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, some of the people were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “If he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the people had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, I believe that you are the Messiah, the chosen of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.

³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The people who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the people who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the people said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “But already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Abba God, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the people, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

This is our Gospel message to focus on today.

Thanks be to God

Sermon

A Day Like Any Other Day?



Hymn

For The Faithful Who Have Answered

VU 707

Words: Sylvia Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications Inc.

Music: Joshua Leavitt, 1831

*For the faithful who have answered
when they heard your call to serve,
for the many ways you led them,
testing will and stretching nerve,
for their work and for their witness
as they strove against the odds,
for their courage and obedience
we give thanks and praise, O God.*

*Many eyes have glimpsed the promise
many hearts have yearned to see.
Many ears have heard you calling
us to greater liberty.
Some have fallen in the struggle,
others still are fighting on.
You are not ashamed to own us.
We give thanks and praise, O God.*

*For this cloud of faithful witness,
for the common life we share,
for the work of peace and justice,
for the gospel that we bear,
for the vision that our homeland
is your love-- deep, high, and broad--
for the different roads we travel
we give thanks and praise, O God.*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering our Gifts to God



Prayers of the People:



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 for ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Shall We Gather At The River

VU 710

Words & Music: Robert Lowry, 1864

*Shall we gather at the river,
where bright angel feet have trod;
with its crystal tide for ever
flowing by the throne of God?
Yes, we'll gather at the river,*

*the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.*

*Ere we reach the shining river,
lay we every burden down;
grace our spirits will deliver,
and provide a robe and crown.
Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.*

*Soon we'll reach the shining river,
soon our pilgrimage will cease,
soon our happy hearts will quiver
with the melody of peace.
Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.*

Benediction & Commissioning



Postlude

Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Music: William H. Bradbury

Permission to reproduce lyrics and podcast/stream the music
in this service obtained from One License.

Other Resources for Today

And Now For Something Completely Different

[Is the Origin of Halloween Rooted in a Pagan Holiday? \(christianity.com\)](http://christianity.com)

Artwork in the Sermon

Mary kneels weeping before Christ with Martha stain glass at Amiens Cathedral, Amiens, France.

Artist: J.E. LeBreton, Jean Gaudin Glass Studio, Paris, 1933.

Raising of Lazarus. Artist: Vincent Van Gogh, Amsterdam, 1890.

Taking Away the Stone. Artist: John August Swanson, Los Angeles, 2005.

Lectionary Readings

Psalm 24

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Of David. A Psalm.

¹The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;

²for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.

³Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.

⁵They will receive blessing from the LORD,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.

⁶Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. ^[a]*Selah*

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

⁸Who is the King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle.

⁹Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. *Selah*

Revelation 21:1-6

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for their groom. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. God will dwell with them; they will be God's people, and Godself will be with them; ⁴ God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ Then the one on the throne said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.