



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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October 1, 2023

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

With thankful hearts, we gather here where the doors are open to all.

We come with open hearts and open minds, thankful that we are children of the light of Christ.

The candle is lit.

Land Acknowledgement

We now take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which Birchcliff Bluffs United Church stands. It has been a site of human activity for many thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog, all part of the Williams Treaty. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

Introit

Let Us With a Gladsome Mind

VU 234

1 Let us with a gladsome mind
praise our God, forever kind;
whose great 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.

Call to Worship

Laskavo Prosymo! Welcome!

Willkommen! Bienvenue!

Whatever your language, wherever you were born, welcome. There's a place for you here!

We join together in worship. We join together at the table. We are one family in Christ!

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Take a deep breath. Feel the air fill your lungs. Feel the breath move through your body. Feel the life within you and give thanks to God.

Thank you, God!

Notice the people around you. Feel their presence beside you and give thanks to God!

Thank you, God!

For inviting us to be family, for giving us new life, for loving us as we are...

Thank you, God!

Hymn

Let All Things Now Living

VU 242

1 Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise;
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us, pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night;
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into Light.

2 By law God enforces, the stars in their courses
and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise:

till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 78 1-4, 12-16

My people, hear my teaching;

listen to the words of my mouth.

² I will open my mouth with a parable;

I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

³ things we have heard and known,

things our ancestors have told us.

⁴ We will not hide them from their descendants;

we will tell the next generation

the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,

his power, and the wonders he has done.

He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors

in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.

¹³ He divided the sea and led them through;

he made the water stand up like a wall.

¹⁴ He guided them with the cloud by day

and with light from the fire all night.

¹⁵ He split the rocks in the wilderness

and gave them water as abundant as the seas;

¹⁶ he brought streams out of a rocky crag

and made water flow down like rivers.

Gospel Matthew 21:23-32

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³ Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

²⁹ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Open My Eyes, That I May See

VU 371

1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Sermon

Hymn

As We Gather at Your Table

VU 457

1 As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's victory known.

2 Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.

3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

Communion

God is with us!

We are not alone!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love,
you are beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
Source of Life, Living Word, and Bond of Love,
you are creative and self-giving,
generously moving.

In all the near and distant corners of the universe.
nothing exists that does not find its source in you.

Even when we turn away from you, you are with us;
your presence never fails us,
your gifts of hope and new life transform us.

We praise you for Jesus Christ,
eternal as your love, our bond to one another.
We rejoice with all your people of every time and place,
and with angels and archangels,
to proclaim the glory of your name:

It is Jesus, God incarnate, the Risen Christ,
who joins us together as a community of broken but hopeful believers:
loving what he loved
living what he taught, and
striving to be his faithful servants
in our time and place.
in this meal we remember Jesus, his promises,
and the price he paid for who he was, what he said, and what he did.

On the night before Jesus died,
he took a loaf of bread,
gave thanks, broke it, and said,
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”

We do remember

After supper, Jesus took the cup, and poured, saying,
“This is the new covenant, remember me.”

We do remember.

We remember his life of love, his friendship, his teaching, his dying, and his rising to life again.
In sharing this meal, we live out the mystery of our faith:

Bless this bread and this cup,
the wheat and the grape,
the farmer and the harvest,
the seed and the sower.

**So that in the sharing of these simple elements in community,
we may taste and see your goodness,
so that we might catch a glimpse of what it is to be in communion with you and with
one another.**

The body of Christ,
the bread of life.
The lifeblood of Christ,
the cup of blessing.
The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Prayers of the People

#400

**Lord, listen to your children praying
Lord, send your Spirit to this place
Lord, listen to your children praying
Send up power, send us love, send us grace.**

Music plays during prayer

Life-giving God, we have taken our place at your table.

**We have participated in this remembrance with Christians the world over. We
accept that we will now live to serve others, protect the earth, and make right relations with
others...**

Moment of silence

Be with us always as you are our hope and salvation. We offer you our prayers in the name of
Jesus whose words we sing together...

**Creator, 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 and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.**

Closing Hymn

God Be With You till We Meet Again

VU 422

1 God be with you till we meet again;
loving counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

2 God be with you till we meet again;
unseen wings protecting hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

3 God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

4 God be with you till we meet again;
keep love's banner floating o'er you,
smite death's threatening wave before you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;

till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

Commissioning and Benediction

We have feasted and our spirits are well nourished.

**May the grace of God sustain us,
May the Holy Spirit guide us.
May God's love be with us always.
Amen.**

Choral Benediction

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 that 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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