



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word & Sacrament: Rev. Dr. Ellen Redcliffe

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Reader: Shari Baker

February 5th, 2023

Fifth after Epiphany

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light this Christ candle that ties us to your love.

May your light shine through us as a beacon of hope in our world.

Opening Prayer

We come into this sanctuary of worship,

We come to lift our tired spirits in thanks, O God, for the strength, the will, and the bounty of our labour.

We come to greet each other, sing praises of welcome and witness, and to open our hearts to you.

Come and meet us here in this time and place we pray. Amen

Introit

Let There Be Light

VU 679

1 Let there be light,
let there be understanding,
let all the nations gather,
let them be face to face;

2 open our lips,
open our minds to ponder,
open the door of concord
opening into grace;

3 perish the sword,
perish the angry judgement,
perish the bombs and hunger,
perish the fight for gain;

6 let there be light;
open our hearts to wonder,
perish the way of terror,
hallow the world God made.

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.

Hymn

A Light is Gleaming

VU 82

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

1 When light comes pouring into the darkest place,
it hurts our eyes to see the glow.
Sometimes a word of hope reminds us of our fears,
our memories and tears.

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

2 When night is round us and every shadow grows,
a star is there to light our way.
It tells a story of Jesus who came near to say:
'God's light will ever stay.'

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

3 And Jesus showed us a brighter path to walk.
He showed us things we hadn't seen.
Now we, like Jesus, can help creation shine,
and this will be a sign:

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

4 So let us live in the brightness God has giv'n,
and let us rise to see the dawn.
We trust that God is here asparkle and ablaze,
warming all our days.

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 112:1-9 Blessings of the Righteous

¹ Praise the LORD!

Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.

² Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

⁵ It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;

⁹ They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.

Gospel Matthew 5:13-20 Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to

all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^[a] not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks^[b] one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Hymn

This Little Light of Mine

1 This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

2 Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

3 Gonna take this light around the world
I'm gonna let it shine.
Gonna take this light around the world
I'm gonna let it shine.
Gonna take this light around the world
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

4 I won't let anyone blow it out
I'm gonna let it shine.
I won't let anyone blow it out
I'm gonna let it shine.
I won't let anyone blow it out
I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

Sermon **Where Would I Be Without You?**

Hymn **Here In This Place**

1 Here in this place, new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away.
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in - the lost and forsaken,
gather us in - the blind and the lame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

2 We are the young - our lives are a mystery,
we are the old - who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in - the rich and the haughty,
gather us in - the proud and the strong.
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

3 Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you.
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this place, the new light is shining;
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in - and hold us forever,
gather us in - and make us your own.
Gather us in - all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Offering

God of light, these gifts are not gold, frankincense, myrrh. These gifts are the labour of our hearts –to the world

Use them to shine the light of your love on the world that your presence may be known to all. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, like the Magi of long ago, we come seeking your light – a beacon of hope, peace, joy and love.

May the gift of light we find in Jesus help us in the midst of chaos, despair and tragedy. O God, fill us with the light and love of Christ, so that we may carry it into our greater community around us ...

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers.

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

Communion

May God be with us.

God is here among us.

Let us open our hearts to God.

We open them to God and to one another.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

We thank you, God, Creator of us all;

From the beginning you made the world and all that therein is.

You made people to live for you and for one another.

We praise you, our God.

We gather at this table to remember that on the night before he died, Jesus ate with his friends, taking bread, he broke it and passed it to his friends saying, take, eat, my body broken for you.

Eat and be filled!

The same night, Jesus also took a cup, gave thanks, then passed it to his friends saying, drink. This cup, poured out for you is the promise of God.

Drink and be renewed.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we are one now and forever more. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

**We Are Marching
(Siyahamba)**

VU 646

1 We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oo-oo,
we are marching in the light of God
We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oo-oo,
we are marching in the light of God.

2 Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',

Siyahamba, hamba
siyahamba, oo-oo,
siyahamb', ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'
Siyahamba, hamba
siyahamba, oo-oo,
siyahamb', ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'

3 We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oo-oo,
we are marching in the light of God

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oo-oo,
we are marching in the light of God.

Benediction & Commissioning

The star has led us across blooming deserts, up to the heights of Zion, through Bethlehem, and on to Nazareth in Galilee.

May we, like the magi, continue to follow the light of Jesus wherever it takes us.

We go with God's blessing: Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Postlude

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**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Fifth After Epiphany
Sunday February 5, 2023
Additional Lectionary**

Isaiah 58:1-9 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

False and True Worship

58 Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.^[a]

³“Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.
⁴You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator^[b] shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.”

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Proclaiming Christ Crucified

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony^[a] of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom^[b] but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

The True Wisdom of God

⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. ⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory ⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.