



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

**Ministers:** All the People – wherever and however they gather

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

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Reader:** Adriana Colavecchia

**August 27, 2023**

**Thirteenth after Pentecost**

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

**Prelude**

**What Shall I Do My God To Love**

Music by John B. Dykes

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.



**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.

**Opening Hymn**

**Oh, A Song Must Rise**

**MV 142**

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend  
Oh a song must rise once again  
Singing out God’s praises and glory,  
the faithful voices blend,  
Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

From the mountains to the valleys,  
from the desert to the sea,

a song must rise once again.  
From the voices of our leaders,  
the voice of you and me,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend  
Oh a song must rise once again  
Singing out God's praises and glory,  
the faithful voices blend,  
Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

From poverty and riches,  
from the voice of young and old,  
a song must rise once again.  
From the free and the imprisoned,  
the timid and the bold,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend  
Oh a song must rise once again  
Singing out God's praises and glory,  
the faithful voices blend,  
Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

From ev'ry house of worship,  
in ev'ry faith and tongue,  
a song must rise once again.  
From the villages and cities  
a new song must be sung,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend  
Oh a song must rise once again  
Singing out God's praises and glory,  
the faithful voices blend,  
Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

### **Call to Worship**

In a challenged and changing world, we need a burning bush. In times of fear and uncertainty, of conflicting opinions, we seek the light of Christ.

### **Opening Prayer**

Gracious One, the journey of life is filled with detours and yield signs. Unchartered waters lead us into the unknown. May we know and notice your blessings on all parts of our journey. **Amen.**

## Receiving God's Word

**Scripture Matthew 16:13-20**

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

<sup>14</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

<sup>15</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. **Thanks be to God!**

**Hymn**

**I Am a Child of God**

**MV 157**

I am a child of God,  
I am a glimpse of God's new creation.  
I am a child of God,  
I am a child of God.

I am an endless prayer,  
I am a yearning for contemplation,  
I am an endless prayer,  
I am an endless prayer.

I am a cry for peace,  
I am commitment and dedication,  
I am a cry for peace,  
I am a cry for peace.

I am a song of joy,  
I am the moment of jubilation,  
I am a song of joy,  
I am a song of joy.

**Reflection**

## Responding to God's Word

Hymn

Like a Healing Stream

MV 144

Like a healing stream in a barren desert,  
Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,  
God is trickling through our lives  
as in a dream unfolding,  
promising revival and rebirth  
like a healing stream.

Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,  
Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,  
God is bubbling through the soil  
to coax a new creation  
yearning for an end to want and need  
like a gentle rain.

Like a river strong with a restless current,  
Spirit water rushing on to distant shore,  
God is carving out a channel  
in a new direction,  
calling for an end to hate and war  
like a river strong.

Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,  
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,  
God is working in our hearts  
to shape a new tomorrow:  
God will always challenge and provide!  
Like a mighty sea, like a river strong,  
like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.

### Offering

We offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

**A sign of our commitment to serve God in all ways. Amen.**

### Prayers of the People

Open to your Spirit, receive the deepest desires of our hearts. Life calls us to give all that we are able to give. May we learn to give more than we ever imagined we could that your work be done ...

Moment of silent prayer

**Loving God, 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.**

## **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

**Closing Hymn**

**Go Make a Difference**

**MV 209**

Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world  
Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world.

We are the salt of the earth,  
called to let the people see  
the love of God for you and me.  
We are the light of the world,  
not to be hidden but be seen.  
Go make a difference in the world.

Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world  
Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world.

We are the hands of Christ  
reaching out to those in need,  
the face of God for all to see.  
We are the spirit of hope;  
we are the voice of peace  
Go make a difference in the world.

Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world  
Go make a difference. We can make a difference.  
Go make a difference in the world.

So let your love shine on,  
let it shine for all to see.  
Go make a difference in the world.  
And the spirit of Christ  
will be with us as we go.

Go make a difference in the world.

Go make a difference. We can make a difference.

Go make a difference in the world

Go make a difference. We can make a difference.

Go make a difference in the world.

### **Benediction & Commissioning**

God has called us and sends us forth granting us grace and mercy sufficient to the task. **Amen.**

### **Postlude**

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