



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: Janet Bawcutt

September 17, 2023

Sixteenth after Pentecost

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.

Opening Hymn

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

VU 651

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

Call to Worship

God said, let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature.

And God saw that it was good.

God entrusted us with the care of all that is in it, not to take but to respect and nurture.

Let us give thanks and praise to God as we accept the responsibility given us.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

God of all goodness, we are in awe of your works. The glow of the moon at night and the warmth of the sun by day.

We honour you on this day of quiet reflection. This is the day that you have made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 114

1 When Israel broke away from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of outlandish speech,

2 Judah became God's temple and Israel God's domain.

3 The sea took one look and fled; Jordan back-pedalled.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

5 What is it, O sea, that makes you take to your heels? What's with you, Jordan, to be recoiling upon yourself?

6 Mountains, why skip like rams? hills, why frisk like lambs?

7 Tremble, O Holy Land, at the approach of Yahweh, at the presence of the God of Leah, Rachel, and Jacob,

8 who turns the rock into a pool of water, and stony flint into a welling spring.

Gospel Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Love Knocks and Waits

MV 94

- 1 Love knocks and waits for us to hear,
to open and invite;
Love longs to quiet every fear,
and seeks to set things right.

- 2 Love offers life, in spite of foes
who threaten and condemn;
embracing enemies,
Love goes the second mile with them.

Music continues softly

Holy God of all creation, you have made an incredible and beautiful universe.

We are thankful for the cycles: of nature, of life, of harmonious living. We accept the divine law of constant renewal, continuous growth, and eternal life. Enfold us in your love. Fill us with energy to do your work and guide us in your ways...

Moment of silence

Be with us always as you are our hope and salvation. We offer you our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to 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.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

God's Choir In The Sky

I heard the angels sing, Glory, Hallelujah!
A mighty chorus way up high
I heard the angels sing, Praise the name of Jesus,
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory,
Telling the story how He came to earth to die,
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus,
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I heard the glorious song coming out of heaven,
The sweetest music ever heard,
I heard a mighty song, sung by all the angels,
My soul thrilled at every loving word.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory,
Telling the story how He came to earth to die,
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus,
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I fell down on my knees when that chorus ended,
They shouted out a glad amen,
I fell down on my knees, prayed that when in heaven,
I would hear that choir once again.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory,
Telling the story how He came to earth to die,
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus,
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory,
Telling the story how He came to earth to die,
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus,
Shouting hallelujahs in the sky.

Commissioning and Benediction

Go from here as caretakers of all that is sharing it with all creation.

We go to live with caring and respectful relationship as we celebrate life's goodness.

May God's love continue to surround and protect us till we meet again.

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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