



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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October 19th, 2025

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ & Rainbow Candle

We light these candles as a symbol of our intention to be open to God’s presence and action during this time of worship. As we welcome this flickering flame, we wait to be transformed by the divine Spirit! *The candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

Many thousands of years ago, Indigenous people lived, worked, and worshipped on this land. Over time, settlers from other lands came, sometimes sharing, often destroying, the relationship Indigenous peoples had with the water, land, and skies, with their Elders, families, culture, and faith. We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, Chippewa, and Mississaugas of the Credit, and that this land is home to many diverse Indigenous nations.

As we light our candles, we pray for God's guidance in our journey towards reconciliation, and we give thanks for the caretakers of this land and the opportunity to pray here together.

Opening Hymn

Give Thanks, My Soul, for Harvest

VU 522

- 1 Give thanks, my soul, for harvest,
for store of fruit and grain;
but know the owner gives so
that we may share again.
Where people suffer hunger,
or little children cry,

with gifts from God's rich bounty
may thankfulness reply.

2 Give thanks, my soul, for riches
of woodland, mine, and hill;
but know that gold and timber
are the Creator's still.
God lends to us, as stewards,
abundance we might share,
and thus provide earth's children
the blessing of God's care.

3 Give thanks, my soul, for labours,
that strength and days employ;
but know the Maker's purpose
brings toil as well as joy.
Show forth, O God, your purpose;
direct our will and hand
to share your love and bounty
with all in every land.

Call to Worship

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?

Our help comes from the Holy One, Maker of heaven and earth.

When the world feels weary and justice seems delayed—

We lift our eyes again. We keep praying, keep hoping, keep rising.

God neither sleeps nor forgets. God holds our stories close.

From sunrise to sunset, from heartbreak to healing,

God is our keeper and our companion.

So come, beloved community—lift your eyes and open your hearts.

We come to worship the God who hears our cries and will not let us go.

Passing the Peace

Jesus told a story of a woman who refused to give up—who kept returning, again and again, trusting that her persistence would bring justice. The psalmist reminds us that God never sleeps, never grows weary of hearing our prayers. So, when we share the peace today, we do so as people who refuse to give up on love. We pass the peace as a form of holy persistence—a promise that we will keep showing up for one another, in prayer, in justice, and in peace.

The peace of Christ—steadfast and unshakable—be with you.

And also with you.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

**Ever-watchful God,
You are the keeper of our going out and our coming in,
the one who bends close to hear our whispered prayers.
When justice feels far away and hope flickers dim,
teach us to pray still—to persist with courage and tenderness.
Lift our eyes when we grow weary;
steady our hearts when we are discouraged;
and remind us that your help is not distant or delayed,
but already unfolding in love,
through Christ, who calls us to pray always and not lose heart.
Amen.**

Hymn

How Firm a Foundation (v. 1, 2, 3, 5)

VU 660

1 How firm a foundation, you servants of God,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!
What more can be said than to you has been said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 'Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen and help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.

3 'When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

5 'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not - I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never - no, never - no, never forsake!"

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come? ² My help comes from the One, who made heaven and earth. ³ God will not let your foot be moved; God who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴ The One who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵ God is your keeper; God is

your shade at your right hand. ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. ⁷ God will keep you from all evil; God will keep your life. ⁸ God will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Luke 18:1-8

¹ Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my accuser.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" ⁶ And Jesus said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to God's chosen ones who cry to God day and night? Will God delay long in helping them? ⁸ I tell you, God will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will God find faith on earth?"

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

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.

Sermon

Keep Showing Up

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Count Your Blessings

1 When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what our God has done.

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

2 Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

3 When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

4 So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Offering

God of mountain paths and city streets, you are our help in every season. You hear the cries of the hungry and the hopes of the weary. As we bring these gifts, may they be used for the work of compassion and change. May they nourish bodies as well as spirits. May they strengthen the hands that till the soil, the hearts that advocate for justice, and the communities that feed one another in love. Bless these offerings, that they may become food for the journey—for us, for our neighbours, for your world.

As we bless the offerings given to the church, let us sing:

Offering Hymn

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

VU 541

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Prayers of the People

God of persistence and promise,
we come to You with hearts full of both hope and heaviness.

We pray for those who lift their eyes and see only despair—
for the hungry, the displaced, the forgotten,
for those caught in systems that value profit over people.
On this World Food Sunday,
we remember every empty table,
every mother searching for enough,
every child waiting for tomorrow's meal.

Stir us, O God,
to be Your hands and voices in the world:
to challenge what must be changed,
to tend what must be nourished,
to believe that a better way is possible.

We pray for this community of faith—
that we might not lose heart in our prayers or our witness,
that our worship would move us toward action,
and our action draw us closer to You.

We pray for those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit,
for those who grieve,
for those who feel unseen or unheard.
Wrap them in Your mercy that neither sleeps nor slumbers.

And we pray for ourselves—
that when the night feels long
and the work seems endless,
we may remember: You are still at work,
mending, feeding, healing, hoping.

We lift all this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come,
your 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 yours is the kin-dom,
the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Go Now With God

1. Filled with the Holy Spirit
Go now with God, go now with God
Into the world as a servant
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

2. Offering a hand to a stranger
Go now with God, go now with God

Trusting in the risen saviour
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

3. Waters of mercy have found us
Go now with God, go now with God
Grace on the journey surrounds us
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

4. Crossing every boundary, every nation
Go now with God, go now with God
Dancing in the gift of liberation
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Bread for the Journey:

Where is God inviting you to “keep showing up”—to persist in hope, love, or justice—even when the results are slow to appear?

Commissioning

We have lifted our eyes to the hills, and found our help in God.

We will go now, trusting the One who watches our steps.

We have heard the story of the persistent widow, and learned again to pray without losing heart.

We will go now, committed to justice, anchored in hope.

Go, beloved of God—steadfast in prayer, persistent in love, and radiant with peace.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Benediction

Go now with eyes lifted and hearts steady.

When justice seems far, may your faith be near.

When the mountain feels steep, may you remember—God is your keeper, your companion, your shade.

May you be steadfast in prayer, resilient in love, and generous in hope.

And as you go, may the One who never slumbers watch over your coming and going, this day and always. Amen.

Choral Response

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God our Creator
Family all are we
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me

Postlude

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