



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: Beth Moore

January 7, 2024

Baptism of Jesus

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

When Heaven’s Bright with Mystery

Lighting the Christ Candle

In the beginning, God gave light to the world. In time, God sent Christ to live among us.

We light this candle today to remind us of the light of God shines bright and true within each of us, for we too, are the light of Christ in the world.

The candle is lit.

Let us worship our God!

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 River. 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

Arise, Your Light is Come

VU 79

1 Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God,
which shines on you today.

2 Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor.

3 Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the broken-hearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.

4 Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong.

Call to Worship

Water is the stuff of life.

Water surrounded us before we were born.

There was water in the font at our baptism.

May we help one another to center on the journey of true life, the journey to the deep well of God's generous love.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Come on in and enjoy the water of baptism.

We have already been baptized, is that not enough?

True enough but our baptism is not a one-of—kind commitment.

So, our baptism is our beginning that extends for a lifetime of growth and becoming.

That is so exhilarating – so let us gather as one in prayer to seek God's guidance.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 29

1 Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due the divine name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

4 The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendour.

5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon,

6 and makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

7 The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire;

8 the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. And in the temple of the Lord all are crying, "Glory!"

10 The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as sovereign for evermore.

11 The Lord shall give strength to his people; the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Mark 1:4-11

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^[a] water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

When Jesus Came to Be Baptized

VU 100

- 1 When Jesus comes to be baptized,
 he leaves the hidden years behind,
 the years of safety and of peace,
 to bear the sins of humankind.

- 2 The Spirit of the Lord comes down,
 anoints the Christ to suffering,
to preach the word, to free the bound,
 and to the mourner, comfort bring.

- 3 He will not quench the dying flame,
 and what is bruised he will not break,
 but heal the wound injustice dealt,
 and out of death his triumph make.

- 4 O Spirit help us be like Christ:

to live in love and charity,
to walk in truth and justice now,
and grow in Christian dignity.

- 5 We praise you, God, source of all life,
we praise you, Christ, eternal Word,
we praise you, Spirit, gracious gift;
your triune presence fills our world.

Sermon A Powerful Sacrament

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Like a Healing Stream

MV 144

1. 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
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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

Prayers of the People

Moment of silence

**Eternal Spirit, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive 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 kingdom and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise (v. 1, 2, 4)

VU 101

- 1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus Christ, to you we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in your birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to you addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.
- 2 Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding guest,
in your Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to you addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.
- 4 Grant us grace to see you, Lord,
mirrored in your holy Word;
with your grace our lives endow,
grace to imitate you now,
that we like to you may be
at your great epiphany,

anthems be to you addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

Commissioning and Benediction

As you go from this place remember whose you are.

Remember to be the disciples you are called to be.

Remember to love as you have been loved. 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 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

* Permission to podcast/stream and reproduce the music and lyrics obtained
from ONE LICENSE with license A-737645.
All rights reserved.