



**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:** Tricia Reid

**May 14, 2023**

**Mother's Day / Christian Family Sunday**

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

**Prelude**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

Jesus said: I am the light of the world.

**May his light burn warmly within us and shine brightly out from us for all the world to see.**

**Call to Worship**

Come, mothers and those who mother! Come all who have mothers,

**Through birth, adoption, fostering, or simply by being taken under the wing of someone with a kindly mothering soul.**

Come, those for whom today is hard, those for whom today brings grief for many reasons, those who need to be enfolded in the care of this community.

**Today we worship in music and prayer the God who loves us with a maternal love, a love beyond anything we could ask or imagine, or hope for!**

Come, let us worship God!

**Introit**

**Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth**

**VU 320**

Mothering God, you gave me birth  
in the bright morning of this world.

Creator, source of every breath,  
you are my rain, my wind, my sun.

Mothering Christ, you took my form,  
offering me your food of light,  
grain of my life, and grape of love,  
your very body for my peace.

Mothering Spirit, nurturing one,  
in arms of patience hold me close,  
so that in faith I root and grow  
until I flower, until I know.

## Opening Prayer

God of peace and healing, you meet us each time we call out your name.

**Ease our distress at our upside-down world. Understand our sorrow in the midst of daily blessings we have taken for granted. Reassure us that you bring new life; you plant within us a new creation of endurance and hope. Comfort us in knowing your love will triumph. Speak to us this day. Amen.**

## 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

### Who Is My Mother

MV 178

Who is my mother, who is my brother?  
All those who gather round Jesus Christ:  
Spirit blown people born from the Gospel  
sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.

Differently abled, differently labeled,  
widen the circle round Jesus Christ:  
crutches and stigmas, culture's enigmas,  
all come together round Jesus Christ.

Love will relate us colour or status  
can't segregate us round Jesus Christ:  
family failings, human derailings  
all are accepted round Jesus Christ.

Bound by one vision, met for one mission  
we claim each other, round Jesus Christ:  
here is my mother, here is my brother,  
kindred in Spirit, through Jesus Christ.

## Life and Work of the Church

## Scripture Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, O peoples;  
let the sound of God's praise be heard,  
**who has kept us among the living  
and has not let our feet slip**

For you, O God, have tested us;  
you have tried us as silver is tried.

**You brought us into the net;  
you laid burdens on our backs;**

you let people ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.<sup>[a]</sup>

**I will come into your house with burnt offerings;**

**I will pay you my vows,**  
those that my lips uttered  
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

**I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatted calves,  
with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;**

**I will make an offering of bulls and goats.**

Come and hear, all you who fear God,  
and I will tell what God has done for me.

**I cried aloud to God,  
and God was extolled with my tongue.**

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,  
God would not have listened.

**But truly God has listened;  
God has heard the words of my prayer.**

Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer or removed love from me.

## Gospel John 14:15-21 The Promise of the Holy Spirit

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask God, to give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in God, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by God, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Hymn**

**I Love to Tell the Story**

**VU 343**

1 I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true;  
it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,  
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

2 I love to tell the story; more wonderful it seems  
than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams.  
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard  
the message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,  
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

3 I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,  
'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,  
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

**Sermon**

**Trust and Obey**

**Hymn**

**Would You Bless Our Homes and Families**

**VU 556**

Would you bless our homes and families,  
Source of life who calls us here;  
in our world of stress and tension  
teach us love that conquers fear.  
Help us learn to love each other  
with a love that constant stays;  
teach us when we face our troubles,  
love's expressed in many ways.

From the homes in which we're nurtured,  
with the love that shapes us there,  
teach us, God, to claim as family  
every one whose life we share.  
And through all that life may offer,  
may we in your love remain;  
may the love we share in families  
be alive to praise your name.

Let us reach beyond the boundaries  
of our daily thought and care  
till the family you have chosen  
spills its love out everywhere.  
Help us learn to love each other  
with a love that constant stays;  
teach us when we face our troubles  
love's expressed in many ways.

### **Offering**

Our faith has brought us to church and sustains us in the testing times.

**Our faith gives us purpose and a vision and enlivens our faith community.**

May these gifts reflect the ways of Jesus. **Amen.**

### **Communion**

#### **Invitation**

Sharing bread and juice in communion reminds us of the forgiveness, love, and hope we experience through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Everyone here - young, old, first-time worshipper or long-time member of the United Church - is welcome to share in the breaking of bread together.

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.

### **Prayers of the People**

Gracious God, we thank you for the joy that comes in the morning after the long deep night of sorrow.

**We are thankful for the mothers in our lives that guide us to be who we are. We are thankful; for their leadership, their strength, their faith, and for the hope that is born in our hearts because of them. Let this peace continue to be within us as we seek to deepen our faith as we carry your good news into our world ...**

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.**

### **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

**Closing Hymn**

**Deep In Our Hearts**

**MV 154**

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;  
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;  
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,  
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;  
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;  
deep in our hearts there is a common current,  
flowing to freedom like a stream.

## **Benediction & Commissioning**

May God's love extend through our lives and into the world around us.

**God's peace comforts us, inspire us, encourages us, steadies us for the day ahead.  
Amen.**

## **Postlude**

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## **Birchcliff Bluffs United Church Sixth Sunday of Easter Additional Lectionary**

### **Acts 17:22-31      New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

<sup>22</sup> Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. <sup>23</sup> For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup> From one ancestor<sup>[a]</sup> he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup> so that they would search for God<sup>[b]</sup> and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

<sup>29</sup> “Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

### **1 Peter 3:13-22      New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

<sup>13</sup> Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for doing what is right,<sup>[a]</sup> you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear,<sup>[b]</sup> and do not be

intimidated, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, <sup>16</sup> yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned,<sup>[e]</sup> those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered<sup>[d]</sup> for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you<sup>[e]</sup> to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for<sup>[f]</sup> a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.