



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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

Minister of Community Development: Rev. Carmen Llanos

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Daniel Giverin

December 4th, 2022

Advent 2 - Peace Sunday

White Gift Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Wexford Carol

Call to Worship - Candle of Peace is lit.

Today is the Advent of peace. As we light this candle, we remember all who live in the midst of conflict, in their own homes, in their communities, in their countries, anywhere in the world.

We live in a fractured world of racial tensions and economic disparity.

We light this candle as our commitment to embracing diversity.

We are the peacemakers in this world so we light this candle to herald the coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

2nd candle lit here

Hope Is a Star (v. 2)

VU 7

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth
 Giving a promise of safety and worth
 When God is a child there's joy in our song
 The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong
 And none shall be afraid.

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 Prayer

The earth has turned once more, Creator God. The season of hope, peace, joy, love returns as a reminder of how we should live the whole year through.

You have called us to be your people, asking us to take light out into the world. Help us in our times of worship throughout this season of Advent to find the words to share the message of hope, peace, joy, and love. Show us how to be fully aware of your presence, so that we might share your presence with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn

There's a Voice In The Wilderness

VU 18

- 1 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway,
a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted,
the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places
where God, our God, may go!

- 2 O Zion, that bringest good tidings,
get thee up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people
the coming of their King.
Like the flowers of the field they perish,
like grass our works decay;
the power and pomp of nations
shall pass, like a dream, away.

- 3 But the word of our God endureth,
whose arm is ever strong;
God stands in the midst of nations,
and soon will right the wrong.
God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
the lambs so gently hold;
to pastures of peace will lead them,
and bring them safe to fold.

- 4 There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway,
a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted,
the lofty hills brought low;

make straight all the crooked places
where God, our God, may go!

Life and Work of the Church

Gospel

Matthew 3:1-12 The Proclamation of John the Baptist NRSV

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’ ” Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. “I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

VU 1

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lowly exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 3 O come, O come, great God of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us the Prince of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Shower Curtain Productions presents:

Follow the Star

A dramatic telling of the Nativity Story from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.

Performers: Michele Threndyle, Linda McKay, Beth Moore, Norma Grech, Frank Bawcutt, Janet Bawcutt, Mary Cannings, Tricia Reid, Betty McCulloch, Jessie Gordon, Mark Devlin, Amanda Hynes-Bower

O Come O Come Emmanuel Oboe Introduction: Beth Moore

Music: Randy Vancourt

Please enjoy the presentation.

In Conclusion

Each year we hear the story of Jesus' birth, as told in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. The last three years have shown us how quickly our lives can change and the importance of caring for each other and our community. We give new life to this story when:

- like the innkeeper, we make room for others in need,
- like the shepherds we open ourselves to the wonder and mystery of God's love,
- like the wise ones, we observe changes in the world and follow where they lead us, sharing our gifts, and,
- like Mary and Joseph, we listen to the angels' messages that guide us to follow God's will for us, even when it is difficult, and we feel fear and uncertainty.

The retelling of the Christmas story reminds us that no matter what challenges we are facing, God's spirit is present and at work in our world.

Hymn**Joy To The World****VU 59**

- 1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
 let earth receive her King!
 Let every heart prepare him room,
 and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
 and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
 let all their songs employ,
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
 nor thorns infest the ground:
 he comes to make his blessings flow
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
 far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the earth with truth and grace,
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of his righteousness
 and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
 and wonders, wonders of his love.

Offering

Just as the green shoot sprouts from the roots of Jesse, so too may these gifts allow for new growth to spring forth in the work of the church.

Help us to also grow, in faithfulness and in love for our neighbours. We give to make Jesus' promise of peace real, when the wolf shall live in harmony with the lamb. Amen.

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

People, Look East

VU 9

- 1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the guest is on the way.

- 2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the rose is on the way.

- 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the star is on the way.

- 5 Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

Benediction & Commissioning

Go into the world for it is Christ who sends you with a message of peace to each house. And may the peace of Christ surround you and those whom you meet, the love of Christ fill your hearts, and the power of the Holy Spirit remain with you always. **Amen.**

Postlude

O Come, Divine Messiah

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**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Year C Second Sunday of Advent
Sunday Dec 4, 2022**

Isaiah 11:1-10

New Revised Standard Version

The Peaceful Kingdom

11 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow^[a] out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed^[b] together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

Return of the Remnant of Israel and Judah

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Psalm 72:1-7 **New Revised Standard Version**

Prayer for Guidance and Support for the King

Of Solomon.

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
- ² May he judge your people with righteousness
and your poor with justice.
- ³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
- ⁵ May he live^[a] while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
- ⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

Psalm 72:18-19 **New Revised Standard Version**

- ¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
- ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

Romans 15:4-13 **New Revised Standard Version**

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel for Jews and Gentiles Alike

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in