



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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May 10th, 2026

6th Sunday of Easter

Blessing of the Animals

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

As we begin our worship, we light our Christ candle as a sign of God’s presence among us. This light shines in all creation, in every living being, and in the love that binds us together. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light our rainbow candle as a sign of welcome and promise. It serves as a reminder that all are beloved, and that diversity is a gift to be cherished. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather in this season of new life and rising hope, we acknowledge that we are on sacred land. We give thanks for the stewardship of this place by the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. As we bless the animals among us, we remember that they, too, belong to this land, part of the sacred web of life we share.

Today, we give thanks for the wisdom of Indigenous peoples who remind us that we are not separate from creation, but part of it—woven together with fur and feather, with soil and sky, with breath and spirit.

Opening Hymn

All Creatures of Our God (v. 1, 2, 4, 5)

VU 217

1 All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing:
hallelujah, hallelujah!
Bright burning sun with golden beam,

soft shining moon with silver gleam,
sing praises, sing praises,
hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

2 O rushing winds and breezes soft,
O clouds that ride the winds aloft,
sing praises, hallelujah!
O rising morn, in praise rejoice;
O lights of evening, find a voice:
sing praises, sing praises,
hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

4 And everyone of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part:
sing praises, hallelujah!
All who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God and yield up all your care:
sing praises, hallelujah!
hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

5 Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship God in humbleness:
sing praises, hallelujah!
Praise God eternal, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, three in one:
sing praises, hallelujah!
hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Call to Worship

Come, all who love the creatures of this earth—

We gather with grateful hearts.

Come with paws and claws, with wings and whiskers,

We come as one community of creation.

Come with stories of companionship and care,

We bring our joy, our love, and our wonder.

For God delights in every living thing—in the playful, the gentle, the wild, and the wise.

We come to celebrate the goodness of creation.

Let us worship the One who made us all—

And called us good.

Passing the Peace

As we prepare to pass the peace, we remember that peace is not only something we share with one another, but something we are called to extend to all creation. Today, surrounded by

companions great and small, we are reminded that peace can be offered in many ways: in a kind word, a gentle touch, a patient presence. So let us share signs of Christ's peace with one another—and, where it feels right, with the animals among us.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you!**

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

**Loving Creator,
we gather with grateful hearts
for the gift of all living creatures.
For the animals who share our lives,
and for those who roam wild and free,
we give you thanks.
Open our hearts today—
to wonder, to compassion, and to care—
that we may honour all you have made.
As we bless the animals, bless us, too,
that we may walk gently in your world.
Amen.**

Hymn

All Things Bright and Beautiful

VU 291

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
in love, God made them all.

1 Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colours,
God made their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
in love, God made them all.

2 The purple headed mountains,
the river running by,
the sunset and the morning
that brightens up the sky;

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
in love, God made them all.

3 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden:
God made them every one.

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
in love, God made them all.

5 God gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God our maker,
who has made all things well.

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
in love, God made them all.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture **Genesis 1:20-28**

²⁰ God then said, “Waters: swarm with an abundance of living beings! Birds: fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky!” And so it was: ²¹ God created great sea monsters and all sorts of swimming creatures with which the waters are filled, and all kinds of birds. God saw that this was good ²² and blessed them, saying, “Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the waters of the seas! Birds, abound on the earth!” ²³ Evening came, and morning followed – the fifth day. ²⁴ Then God said, “Earth: bring forth all kinds of living souls – cattle, things that crawl, and wild animals of all kinds!” So it was: ²⁵ God made all kinds of wild animals, and cattle, and everything that crawls on the ground, and God saw that this was good. ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground. ²⁷ Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them; female and male, God made them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said, “Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the earth, and be responsible for it! Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all living things on the earth!”

Matthew 6:25-34 (First Nations Vers.)

²⁵ “This is why I am telling you not to be troubled about getting enough to eat or drink, or what to wear. Is eating, drinking, and clothing yourself all there is? Does your life not have more meaning than this? ²⁶ Look to the winged ones who soar on the wind. Do they plant seeds and gather the harvest into a storehouse? No! But Creator from above gives them plenty to eat. Do you not know Creator cares even more for you? ²⁷ Can worry add even one more step to the length of your life’s journey? ²⁸ Why do you trouble yourself with what to wear? Have you seen how the wildflowers grow in the plains and meadows? Do you think they work hard and long to clothe themselves? ²⁹ No! I tell you, not even the great chieftain Stands in Peace (Solomon), wearing his finest regalia, was dressed as well as one of these. ³⁰ If Creator covers the wild grass in the plains with such beauty, which is here today and gathered for tomorrow’s fire, will Creator not take even better care of you? Why is your faith so small? ³¹ There is no need to say, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² This is what the Nations *who have lost their way* have given their hearts to, but Creator from above knows you need these things. ³³ If you will make Creator’s good road your first aim, representing Creator’s right ways, Creator will make sure you have all you need for each day. ³⁴ So do not worry about tomorrow’s troubles. It is enough to trust Creator to give you the strength you need to face today.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

O God, Your Creatures Fill The Earth

O God, your creatures fill the earth
with wonder and delight,
And every living thing has worth
and beauty in your sight.
So playful dolphins dance and swim;
Your sheep bow down and graze.
Your songbirds share a morning hymn
To offer you their praise.

You made the pets we welcome in,
They're wondrous blessings, too.
With paws and whiskers, wings and fins,
They offer praise to you.
O God, you call us to embrace
These creatures in our care.
May we show kindness, love and grace
To all pets everywhere.

You made the creatures on each farm;
You know the things they need.
May they grow healthy, safe from harm,

And safe from human greed.
Just as a shepherd loves the sheep,
You know their joy, their pain.
God bless the animals we keep;
and love them in Your name.

Your creatures live in every land;
They fill the sky and sea.
O God, you give us your command
To love them tenderly.
We're called to have dominion here,
To care for them always.
By loving creatures you hold dear,
We offer you our praise.

Sermon Consider the Creatures

Act of Blessing

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Song

A Place in the Choir

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now

Listen to the top where the little bird sings
And the melodies and the high notes ringing
And the hoot owl cries over everything
And the blackbird disagrees

Singing in the nighttime, singing in the day
When little duck quacks and he's on his way
And the otter hasn't got much to say
And the porcupine talks to himself

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now

Dogs and the cats, they take up the middle
While the honeybee hums and the cricket fiddles
The donkey brays and the pony neighs
The old grey badger sighs

Listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big t'do
And the old cow just goes moo

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now

It's a simple song, a little song everywhere
By the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear
The dopey alligator and the the hawk above
The sly old weasel and the turtle dove

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now

All God's creatures got a place in the choir
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
Some just clap their hands or paws,
or anything they've got now
All God's creatures got a place in the choir

Offering

As we turn to our offering, we remember that generosity is one way we care for the world God loves. The gifts we share today help sustain this community—a place where love is practiced, where creation is honoured, and where all are welcomed. Giving is one small but meaningful way we take part in that work—tending what has been entrusted to us with care and gratitude.

As we bless the offerings, let us sing:

Offering Hymn

What Can I Do?

MV 191

What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

Prayers of the People

Loving Creator,
today we give you thanks
for the creatures who fill this world with beauty, wonder, and life.

For wagging tails and fluttering wings,
for quiet companionship and joyful energy,
for the animals who comfort us, challenge us, and share our homes and hearts,
we are grateful.

We give thanks for the ways animals teach us:
how to rest, how to trust, how to live in the present moment,
how to love without keeping score.
And today, we pray for all creatures.

For animals who are neglected, abandoned, or harmed.
For those impacted by habitat loss, pollution, and climate crisis.
For endangered species and fragile ecosystems.
For veterinarians, rescue workers, wildlife rehabilitators, farmers, and caregivers,
all who work to protect and tend the lives entrusted to them.

Help us to be gentle stewards of this earth.
Teach us to live not as conquerors of creation,
but as caretakers, companions, and neighbours within it.

We pray, too, for the human creatures among us.
For those carrying grief, anxiety, loneliness, or uncertainty.
For those whose animals have become beloved companions in difficult seasons.
For those mourning pets they have loved and lost.
For those longing for comfort, connection, or peace.
Surround them with tenderness.

We pray for this world you love,
for places torn by war, violence, and injustice.
For communities facing hunger, displacement, and fear.
For the earth itself, groaning under the weight of exploitation and carelessness.

Renew in us a sense of wonder. Restore in us a commitment to compassion.
Remind us that all living things are bound together in the sacred web of your creation.

And so we place ourselves, and all creation, into your care,
trusting that your love extends to every creature,
every life, every beating heart.

And together, we pray the words Jesus taught us:

**Loving Creator in whom is 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

Creative God, You Spread the Earth

1 Creative God, you spread the earth
with life in many forms:
the deer and elk and gentle fawn,
the bee in humming swarms.
Forgive us for each flower and bird
now vanished by our hand.
Teach us to treat with loving care
the creatures of the land.

2 The planet teemed with living things
before all human birth,
and even fire and beasts of prey
renewed the life of earth.

Forgive us, that, the last to come,
we threaten sea and air.
Teach us to tend life's fragile web
with wise and tender care.

3 O playful God, you fill the field
with lavender and blue.
You paint the bird with indigo,
with red or tawny hue.
Forgive us that we grieve your heart,
destroying what you do,
and teach us simpler, gentler ways
to live on earth with you.

Bread for the Journey

Where might the creatures around you be inviting you to slow down, pay attention, and live more gently?

Commissioning

Go into the world as people who cherish all living things!

We will walk gently upon the earth.

Go as companions to the creatures who share our lives, and as protectors of those without a voice

We will show kindness, compassion, and care.

Go remembering that all creation is woven together in God's love.

We will honour all our relations.

Go in peace, to love and serve the world!

In gratitude and joy, we will go.

Benediction

May the God who delights in all creation bless you and keep you.

May you see the sacred in fur and feather, in scale and skin,
and remember that you, too, are part of this beautiful, fragile web of life.

And may you walk softly upon the earth,
held in the love of the One who calls all creation good.

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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