



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Rev. Gregory Daly: Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Carmen Llanos: Minister of Community Development

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Vicky Kennedy

Advent Three – December 13, 2020

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

Music: Thomas Clarke

Call to Worship

Do you Remember Me?

Yes, we remember You.

How do you Remember Me?

We remember You with Joy.

How do you Remember Me with Joy?

We remember the Joy that comes with a newborn baby.

We sing with joy, we light candles to bring joy, we share your joyous news with all the world.

We share what we have so that more people can feel Your joy.

Remember me with Joy, as I remember you.

Let us worship together

Response

Listen, God is Calling

MV 97

Words and Music: traditional Tanzanian song

Translation: Howard S. Olson

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Listen, God is calling,
through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

Listen, God is calling,
through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

Life & Work of the Church

Welcome to online worship



Land Acknowledgement

As we prepare for worship, we 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 Mississauga's of the Credit and Scugog, part of the Williams Treaty. Today, the meeting place around Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory. We seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Advent Three Candle Lighting



Candle Lighting Hymn

Hope is a Star v. 3

Words: Brain Wren

Music: Joan Collier Fogg

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VU 7

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the saviour is born.
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.

Opening Hymn

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

VU 8

Words: German 15th century.

English translation: Theodore Baker

Music: German traditional melody

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
as seers of old have sung.
It came a blossom bright,

amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright
she bore for us a Saviour
when half spent was the night.

Prayer for Grace

*We have wilderness and dry land in the heart of country God.
We may not venture into it often but we know it is there,
it has its place on our maps.*

*More familiar to us, however, is the wilderness in our own hearts,
the empty spaces in our own lives, the desert of longings
that engulf us at Christmas.*

*Wilderness is a hard place, but can also be a place of beauty and grace,
revealed by its sunsets and sunrises, the glow of ancient rocks,
the moon shining on the sand and the shores.*

*Do not be afraid of the desert places in your life,
for it is here that the Good News
may be heard most profoundly.
May it be so. Amen*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

New Revised Standard Version

The spirit of GOD is upon me,
because GOD has anointed me;
and sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of GOD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our GOD;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of GOD, to display GOD'S glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;
⁶but you shall be called priests of GOD,
you shall be named ministers of our GOD;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory.
⁷Because their shame was double,
and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore they shall possess a double portion;
everlasting joy shall be theirs.
⁸For I love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom GOD has blessed.
¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in GOD,
my whole being shall exult in my GOD;
for GOD has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
GOD has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,

John 1: 6-8, 19-28

New Revised Standard Version

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
¹⁰This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ¹¹He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ¹²And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ¹³Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ¹⁴He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The word of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

Hymn

Gaudete

Words and Music: 16th Century Latin carol
English text: Randy Vancourt

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

The time of grace is drawing near
For which we have waited
Let us worship faithfully
Life is celebrated

God becomes as one of us
Nature is astounded
All the world has been renewed
Sin has been confounded

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

The closed gate of Ezekiel
Passed through like a river
Now the Light is rising up
We will be delivered

Praise the glory that arrives
Sing in celebration
God will bless the coming child
Who will bring salvation

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

Rejoice, rejoice
For Christ is come among us
Of the Virgin Mary born
So rejoice

Sermon

Who are You?



Hymn

On Jordan's Bank

Words: Latin, Charles Coffin
Translated by John Chandler
Music: Musikalisches Handbuch

VU 20

- 1 On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lamb is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of Kings.
- 2 Then cleansed be every life from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
and let each heart prepare a home
where such a mighty guest may come.

- 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
and help us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine,
and fill the world with love divine.
- 5 All praise to you, eternal one,
whose advent has our freedom won;
and praise to God whom we adore,
with Holy Spirit evermore.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering



Prayers of the People



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, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Hymn

Oh, How Joyfully

VU 57

Words: Brian Wren

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Music: 18th Century Sicilian melody

- 1 Oh, how joyfully, oh, how hopefully,
waits the world on Christmas Eve!
Love comes healing, God revealing.
Friends, be joyful and believe!
- 2 Oh, how joyfully, oh, how peacefully,
sleeps the world on Christmas Night!
Sins are covered, grace discovered.
In our darkness shines the light!
- 3 Oh, how joyfully, oh, how thankfully,
wakes the world on Christmas Morn!
God has spoken, death is broken.
Hallelujah! Christ is born!

Benediction & Commissioning



Postlude

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

(Hyfrydol)

Music: Rowland H. Prichard

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Other Resources for Today

Greta Thunberg Foundation:
[Who We Are - Solar Sister](#)

United Church of Canada Climate Resources:
[Climate Change | The United Church of Canada \(united-church.ca\)](#)

Other Lectionary Readings

Psalm 126

New Revised Standard Version

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹When God restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
²Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“God has done great things for them.”
³God has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
⁴Restore our fortunes, O God,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
⁵May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
⁶Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

New Revised Standard Version

- ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.
²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.