



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: Betty McCulloch

February 7, 2021 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

All You Who Seek a Comfort Sure

St. Bernard (Tochter Zion)

Call to Worship

Look back! Look back with courage!

Face the truth God reveals to you!

Look forward! Look forward with hope!

Look to the future! See possibilities growing from the seeds of lessons learned!

There is no shame in learning history!

There is no shame in relearning history!

Let us learn and unlearn history together.

Wisdom is vindicated by all her humble children.

And God’s children proclaim: “So be it!”

Let us worship God together

Response

I Am a Child of God

MV 157

Words & Music: © 2002 Cheryl and Bruce Harding

*I am a child of God,
I am a glimpse of God’s new creation.*

*I am a child of God,
I am a child of God.*

*I am an endless prayer,
I am a yearning for contemplation,
I am an endless prayer,
I am an endless prayer.*

*I am a cry for peace,
I am commitment and dedication,*

*I am a cry for peace,
I am a cry for peace.*

*I am a song of joy,
I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy,
I am a song of 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.

Candle Lighting

Opening Hymn

We Are Pilgrims

Words & Music: Richard Gillard
© 1977 Scripture in Song

VU 595

*We are pilgrims on a journey,
fellow travellers on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.*

*Sister, let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.*

*Brother, let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*

Prayer for Grace

God, it is hard for us to be open to others who are not like us. We do not do well with change, and “those people” might change us. We want to do what’s right, but the truth is, we are scared; scared of the unknown, scared that others may look at us funny; scared, too, of the vulnerability of reaching out. We know that we need to trust you more, but this is hard work. So we go into our comfort zone and do nothing. Forgive us God. Remind us of the choices Jesus made to show love for you and for the world. Help us to muster some faith, even as small as a mustard seed. Quell our fear, so we can be bold for you; speaking up in order to break barriers of injustice. Help us to be a channel of your peace and a good citizen of your kin-dom. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD

And Now For Something Completely Different



As we consider the voices that are not heard in our church, what questions do we need to ask? How do we model what we believe about equity and belonging when we come together?
How do we bring our whole selves to our gatherings?
How are our practices reproducing inequity?
In what ways do we “default to White?”
What are the assumptions we make about what and who matters?

Prayer of Illumination

*The scriptures proclaim to us the message of your light.
Loving and ever-present God, shine your light upon us
so that we may discover and live a path that follows you. Amen*



Isaiah 40: 21-31

New Revised Standard Version

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
²² It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;

who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
²³ who brings royalty to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

²⁴ Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when God blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵ To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
The One who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because God is great in strength,
mighty in power, not one is missing.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from God,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
God is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
God does not faint or grow weary;
God’s understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ God gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

³¹ but those who wait for God shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Hymn

On Eagle’s Wings

Words & Music: Michael Joncas
© 1979, 1991 New Dawn Music

VU 808

You who dwell in the shelter of our God,
who abide in this shadow for life,
say to the Lord: 'My refuge,
my Rock in whom I trust.'
*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

The snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear:
under God's wings your refuge,
God's faithfulness your shield.
*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

You need not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
though thousands fall about you,
near you it shall not come.
*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

For to God's angels is given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
*'And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.'*

Mark 1: 29-39

New Revised Standard Version

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹ He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴ And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

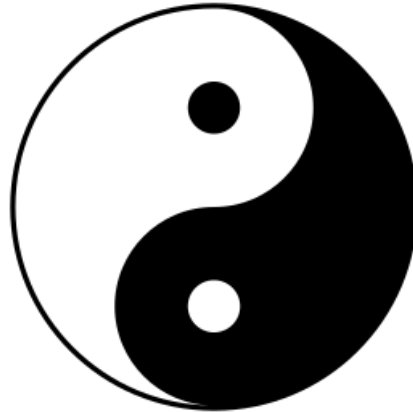
³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

These are Jesus' words for us to consider today.

Thanks be to God

Sermon

White as Sin



Hymn

Hymn To Freedom

Music by Oscar Peterson
Words by Harriette Hamilton

Performed by the Virtual Choir of Leaside United Church

When every heart joins every heart
and together yearns for liberty,
That's when we'll be free.

When every hand joins every hand
and together moulds our destiny,
That's when we'll be free.

Any hour, any day,
the time soon will come
when all will live in dignity,
That's when we'll be free.

When everyone joins in our song
and together singing harmony,
That's when we'll be free.

When every heart joins every heart
and together yearns for liberty,
That's when we'll be free.

When every hand joins every hand
and together moulds our destiny,
That's when we'll be free.

Any hour, any day,
the time soon will come
when all will live in dignity,
That's when we'll be free.

When everyone joins in our song
and together singing harmony,
That's when we'll be free
We'll be free.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD



Communion

We are not alone...

...together we are so much stronger than apart and so we raise our voices in song:

Kingsfold Communion Set

Words: © 2005 William S. Kervin and Paul Stott

Music: traditional English/Irish melody

*O holy, holy, holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name always!*

We trust in God...

...And in the Spirit of the risen Christ, we sing together

*Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!*

We remember...

... We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

*Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!
Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!*

Prayer for Transformation

Pour out your Spirit...

...the cup nourishes us to live in peace with one another. Amen.

Communion is served...

Prayer after Communion

*As we are made new by these simple gifts,
send us out by way of the broken,
that we might be vessels of healing;
for the oppressed, that we might enable freedom;
for the hungry, that we might eat together;
for the lonely, that we might be companions. Amen.*

Stewardship Moment



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

Closing Hymn

When Hands Reach Out and Fingers Trace

MV 136

Words & Music: Marty Haugen
© 1987 G.I.A. Publications, Inc.

*When hands reach out and fingers trace
the beauty of a loved one's face,*

*we thank you, God, that love relies
on gifts of grace not seen with eyes.*

*When fingers spell and signs express
our prayer and praise and thankfulness,
we thank you, God, that hands can sing;
you bless the silent songs we bring.*

*And when the ways we learn and grow
are not the ways that others know,
we thank you, God, that we have learned
your love's a gift, and never earned.*

*Your Spirit gives us differing ways
to serve you well and offer praise.
When all are joined as one, we'll be
your able, strong community.*

Benediction & Commissioning

Postlude



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Other Resources for Today

United Church of Canada – Statement on Anti-Black Racism
[gce_03_gce_statement_that_black_lives_matter.pdf \(united-church.ca\)](#)

Broadview Magazine: What I Need from White People
[What I need from white people right now | Broadview Magazine](#)

Shining Waters Region Equity Committee Action Plan
[Equity-Committee-Report.docx.pdf \(shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca\)](#)

Other Lectionary Readings

Psalm 147

¹ Praise God!
How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for God is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

² God builds up Jerusalem;
and gathers the outcasts of Israel.

³ God heals the broken hearted,
and binds up their wounds.

⁴ God determines the number of the stars;
and gives to all of them their names.

⁵ Great is our God, and abundant in power;
with understanding beyond measure.

⁶ God lifts up the downtrodden;
and casts the wicked to the ground.

⁷ Sing to God with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.

⁸ God covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹ God gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry.

¹⁰ God's delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor is God's pleasure in the speed of a runner;

¹¹ but God takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in God's steadfast love.

²⁰ God has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know God's ordinances.

Praise God!

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

New Revised Standard Version

¹⁶ If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸ What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

¹⁹ For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.