



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

Advent Candle/Reader: Shirley Scott

December 11th, 2022

Third Sunday of Advent

Joy Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Call to Worship

Candles of hope and peace are lit.

Today is the Advent of joy. We light this candle for the joy of the earth, the oceans, the skies, and all that lives.

We live in a fractured world that takes more from the earth than it gives.

We light this candle as our commitment to the joy of living in respect with creation.

We are the caretakers of this earth, our home, and we celebrate Jesus, the Light of the World.

3rd candle lit here.

Hope is a Star (v. 3)

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.

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

We come to this place with open hearts, weary from the world around us. Yet we seek possibilities in this place that might help us find joy.

**When we are easily tempted to stray, heal us from our temptations.
Guide us, so that we may be a people of new life, filled with your grace.
Amen.**

Hymn

Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding

6th Century Latin Hymn

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"
- 2 Startled at the solemn warning,
let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all ill dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all, to be forgiv'n;
- 4 So, when next he comes in glory
and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy
and with words of love draw near.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 146:5-10

- ⁵ Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;
⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

James 5:7-10 NRSV Patience in Suffering

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.^[a]

⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Hymn

Gaudete

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

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

2 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

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

4 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 The Wishing Trees

Hymn

My Soul Cries Out

MV 120

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,

and the world is about to turn!

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shames,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears,
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!

Offering

Hopeful God, we offer not only financial gifts, but our commitment to serve in your name.

We long to use our skills and abilities in ways that glorify you. We seek to tell words that tell the Good News. We dedicate to you the fullness of who we are, as we share a portion of what we have, in joy-full love. Amen

Prayers of the People

Loving and giving God, we experience your Holy Spirit working in and through us daily and this brings us great joy.

It has been a challenging year for many yet as we entered the season of Advent our spirits rise and we are able to offer love and support to those we meet. We are blessed as we acknowledge our freedom to choose how we will worship you and celebrate the joy in knowing your presence will bring...

We know 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

Herald! Sound the Note of Gladness

VU 28

1 Herald! Sound the note of gladness!
Tell the news that Christ is here;
make a pathway through the desert
for the one who brings God near.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

2 Herald! Sound the note of judgement,
warning us of right and wrong,
turning us from sin and sadness,
till once more we sing the song.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

3 Herald! Sound the note of pardon!
Those repenting are forgiven;
God receives these wayward children,
and to all new life is given.
Sound the trumpet!
Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

4 Herald! Sound the note of triumph!
Christ has come to share our life,
bringing God's own love and power,
granting victory in our strife.
Sound the trumpet! Tell the message!
Christ the Saving One has come!

Benediction & Commissioning

Go into the world. It is Christ who sends you with a message of joy to each house.

Eat and be merry with others, pray with them and share the joy of the season.

And may the Spirit of the living God be your guide, your rock, your peace. Amen.

Postlude

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**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Year C Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday Dec 11, 2022**

Isaiah 35

New Revised Standard Version

The Return of the Redeemed to Zion

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.]]^[a]

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness

and streams in the desert;
7 the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;^[b]
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

8 A highway shall be there,^[c]
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,^[d]
but it shall be for God's people;^[e]
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

9 No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Luke 1:46-55

New Revised Standard Version

Mary's Song of Praise

46 And Mary^[a] said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name;

50 indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

51 He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones

and lifted up the lowly;

53 he has filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty.

54 He has come to the aid of his child Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Matthew 11:2-11

New Revised Standard Version

Messengers from John the Baptist

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah^[a] was doing, he sent word by his^[b] disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone^[c] dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet?^[d] Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.