



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

Readers: Tricia Reid, Mary Cannings

September 25th, 2022

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Call to Worship

The Spirit's arms wrap around us,

So that we can rest and breathe.

This is a sacred space,

Made sacred by generations tears, laughter, silence, and song,

This is a thin space,

A holy space.

Introit

Each Blade of Grass

MV 37

Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.

Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.

Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

Land Acknowledgement

We take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which we gather. 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 the Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog. The lands where Birchcliff Bluffs United Church sits are 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 and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Truth and Reconciliation

Next Friday, September 30 is National Truth and Reconciliation Day. Let us offer prayers and reflection at this time to consider as we go forward this week and onwards.

Great Comforter, we know that we are surrounded by a legacy of pain.

We acknowledge the pain, grief, and sorrow caused by not living respectfully with all people, and we are sorry for the ways that we have dishonoured the depths of this pain.

Open us, Creator, to the power of interconnectedness:

Help us to receive the painful stories and the inspiring dreams of our siblings;

Grant us the courage to own any feelings of vulnerability, shame, fear, and guilt that may come from our interactions with each other; And with your healing grace, lead us through our aching toward your dream of wholeness.

Transform us and our community so that we may continually work toward reconciliation and new life. Amen.

Reconciliation is

- a journey (not a goal or final destination)
- complex (you cannot authentically begin a reconciliation process without examining all the factors involved)
- personal (and often painful)
- a part of living faithfully

Reconciliation requires

- trust
- truth-telling
- relationships
- a life-long commitment
- time

**We are, all of us, Treaty People:
original inhabitants
and those who came later—
inheritors of a diverse history,
dwellers in a common land,
travellers toward a better day.**

**We have known
friendship and animosity,
cooperation and oppression,
blessing and pain.**

**And now we embrace
the sacred covenant
that heralds a new beginning:
that softens the heart
and dismantles the prisons of
the present and the past.**

**We joyfully claim
our rights and responsibilities
as Treaty People.**

Amen.

—Treaty People's Creed (2011), The All My Relations Network of Saskatchewan Conference

Candle Lighting

We light this candle inviting the Spirit of God to be with us.

Light candle here

We feel its presence and know we are not alone.

Opening Prayer

We come humbly before you, O God, to receive the wisdom of your teachings,
**to marvel at the beauty around us, and be thankful of all our blessings. But there is
still so much for you to say and do, so, open our eyes and our ears to your teaching
this day that we might leave this place a better person in your name. Amen**

Opening Hymn

Like a Healing Stream

MV 144

Like a healing stream in a barren desert,
Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,
God is trickling through our lives as in a dream unfolding,
promising revival and rebirth
like a healing stream

Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,
Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,
God is bubbling through the soil
to coax a new creation

yearning for an end to want and need
like a gentle rain.

Like a river strong with a restless current,
Spirit water rushing on to distant shore,
God is carving out a channel in a new direction,
calling for an end to hate and war
like a river strong.

Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,
God is working in our hearts to shape a new tomorrow:
God will always challenge and provide!
Like a mighty sea, like a river strong,
like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Reading Psalm 91 Assurance of God's Protection

- ¹ You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,^[a]
² will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."
³ For he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter
and from the deadly pestilence;
⁴ he will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and defense.
⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night
or the arrow that flies by day
⁶ or the pestilence that stalks in darkness
or the destruction that wastes at noonday.
¹⁴ Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.
¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble;
I will rescue them and honor them.
¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy them
and show them my salvation.

Gospel Luke 16:19-31

- ¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.
²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,

²¹ who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham.^[a] The rich man also died and was buried.

²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.^[b]

²⁴ He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.'

²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony.'

²⁶ Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'

²⁷ He said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—'

²⁸ for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.'

²⁹ Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

³⁰ He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

Sermon **Mending Fences**

Hymn

Your Love, O God

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow
wide as the wind, and our eternal home.
You leave us free to seek you or reject you,
You give us room to answer "yes" or "no."

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow,
Wide as the wind, and our eternal home.

We long for freedom where our truest being
is given hope and courage to unfold.
We seek in freedom space and scope for dreaming,
and look for ground where trees and plants can grow.

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow,
Wide as the wind, and our eternal home.

But there are walls that keep us all divided;
we fence each other in with hate and war.
Fear is the bricks and mortar of our prison,
our pride of self, the prison coat we wear.

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow,
Wide as the wind, and our eternal home.

O judge us, God, and in your judgment free us,
and set our feet in freedom's open space;
take us as far as your compassion wanders
among the children of the human race.

Your love, O God, is broad like beach and meadow,
Wide as the wind, and our eternal home.

Offering

We come to you, our God, with praise and thanksgiving,
May our offerings help us to fulfil your promise of there is enough for all. Amen.

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Gracious and loving God,

We ask that you be with us and guide us as the world we live in goes through so much suffering ... climate change ... pollution of air and oceans ... help us take responsibility and lead the way to healing for all. Especially we ask your help in making amends with our brothers and sisters whom we may have hurt by our actions or words. Forgive us our faults and may true healing begin within and without us ...

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers.

Hear this our prayer and the prayers of each of our hearts for we offer them in Jesus' name ...

**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 them that 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,
Forever and ever, Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn**Touch the Earth Lightly****VU 307**

Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
 nourish the life of the world in our care:
 gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
 trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger, who create hunger,
 agents of death for all creatures that live,
 we who would foster clouds of disaster,
 God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
 water that blesses and air that is sweet,
 health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
 regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living, God of all loving,
 God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
 teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
 using us gently and making us one.

Benediction & Commissioning

We leave this place knowing God goes with us, showing us the way,
 Ready to catch us when we fall, loving us as we walk together in God's light. Go now in peace.
 Amen.

Postlude

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**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Additional Lectionary**

Jeremiah 32:1-3 New Revised Standard Version

Jeremiah Buys a Field During the Siege

32 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, ³ where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Zedekiah had said, “Why do you prophesy and say: Thus says the LORD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Jeremiah 32:6-15 New Revised Standard Version

⁶ Jeremiah said, “The word of the LORD came to me: ⁷ Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.’” ⁸ Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, “Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.” Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

⁹ And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out the silver to him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the silver on scales. ¹¹ Then I took the sealed deed of purchase containing the terms and conditions and the open copy, ¹² and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin ^[a] Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. ¹³ In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, ¹⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. ¹⁵ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.”

Psalms 91:1-6 New Revised Standard Version

Assurance of God's Protection

- ¹ You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
 who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,^[a]
² will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
 my God, in whom I trust."
³ For he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter
 and from the deadly pestilence;
⁴ he will cover you with his pinions,
 and under his wings you will find refuge;
 his faithfulness is a shield and defense.
⁵ You will not fear the terror of the night
 or the arrow that flies by day
⁶ or the pestilence that stalks in darkness
 or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

Psalms 91:14-16

New Revised Standard Version

- ¹⁴ Those who love me, I will deliver;
 I will protect those who know my name.
¹⁵ When they call to me, I will answer them;
 I will be with them in trouble;
 I will rescue them and honor them.
¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy them
 and show them my salvation.

1 Timothy 6:6-19

New Revised Standard Version

⁶ Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment,⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that^[a] we can take nothing out of it,⁸ but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

The Good Fight of Faith

¹¹ But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.¹² Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and for which you made^[b] the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.¹³ In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you¹⁴ to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.¹⁶ It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.