



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word & Sacrament: Rev. Katie Vardy

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

August 9th, 2026

11th Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Today, we light the Christ candle—a flame of love that no darkness can overcome, a light that reminds us that hope still lives, even when the world feels heavy. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light the rainbow candle—a sign of promise, of diversity, of sacred belonging. A reminder that every identity, every story, every body is held in the wide embrace of God’s love. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather today, we acknowledge that the land on which many of us worship is the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples, including the Wendat, the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, it remains home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

May acknowledging this truth move us beyond words toward relationships rooted in justice, respect, and reconciliation.

Opening Hymn

When Hands Reach Out and Fingers Trace

MV136

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

4 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.

5 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.

Call to Worship

Come, all who are hungry.

We come seeking nourishment for body and soul.

Come, all who are weary.

We come longing for rest and renewal.

Come, all who wonder if there is enough.

We come trusting that God's abundance is greater than our fear.

Come.

The table of God's love is wide.

Let us worship together.

Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ is more than a greeting. It is a gift that nourishes hearts, builds community, and reminds us that no one walks alone. So, wherever you are today, may you receive Christ's peace, and if you are worshipping with others, I invite you to share that peace with one another.

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

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Loving God,

Open our eyes to your abundance.

Quiet the voices of scarcity within us.

**Help us to recognize the gifts already placed in our hands,
and give us courage to share them generously.**

**May this time of worship renew our spirits
and prepare us to become bread for a hungry world.
Amen.**

Love us into fullness, touch us with your grace;
Jesus, in your mercy, draw us to your face.

Love us into fullness, hold us in your care,
Cheer us with your presence, here and everywhere.

Love us into fullness, and we will be strong;
Jesus, walk beside us, fill our hearts with song!

Love us into fullness, touch us with your grace;
Jesus, in your mercy, draw us to your face.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sickness. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing to eat but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

1 I can feel you near me God, I can feel you near
Yes I know you're with me God, I feel you here
I can feel you near me God, I can feel you near
Yes I know you're with me God, Heaven is here.

And I'll jump for joy
I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you
I will jump for joy

I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you.

2 I can feel you loving me, yes I know you care
God I know you're loving me, always everywhere
I can feel you loving me, yes I know you care
God I know you're loving me, I know you're there.

And I'll jump for joy
I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you
I will jump for joy
I'm singing Alleluia
Jump for joy for you.

Sermon When Five Loaves Become Enough

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Grateful

MV 182

Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.
Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.

1 You are more than we imagine,
Ancient, Holy, Living God.
Even when we doubt your presence
you are faithful to your Word.

Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.
Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,

joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.

2 May our lives proclaim your justice,
may our voices sing your praise.
May our hands work in your service
to the glory of your name.

Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.
Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.

Offering

Everything we have is a gift. When we share what we have—our time, our abilities, our compassion, and our financial gifts—we become participants in God's ongoing work of feeding the world.

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

Generous and compassionate God,
You see us in our joy and in our weariness, in our confidence and in our uncertainty.
You know the burdens we carry, the hopes we hold quietly in our hearts, and the prayers we have not yet found the words to speak.

Today, we remember the crowd that gathered around Jesus. They came with empty hands, tired bodies, aching hearts, and great expectations. Before anything else happened, Jesus looked upon them with compassion. Help us to trust that you look upon us with that same compassionate gaze.

We pray for all who hunger today.
For those who lack enough food to eat.
For those who are struggling to afford housing or basic necessities.

For those who hunger for meaningful work, for safety, or for dignity.
For those whose spirits are weary from loneliness, grief, anxiety, or uncertainty.
May they find nourishment, hope, and compassionate companions along the way.

We pray for those whose voices are too often overlooked.
For Indigenous communities, continuing the work of truth and reconciliation.
For refugees and newcomers seeking safety and belonging.
For those who experience discrimination because of their race, gender, sexuality, disability, or economic circumstances.
For all who long for a world where every person is welcomed as your beloved child.
Give us the courage to be people who build tables that are longer, not fences that are higher;
communities that make room rather than draw lines.

We pray for your Church.
For congregations discovering new ways to share your love.
For ministers, lay leaders, volunteers, musicians, and caregivers.
For those worshipping in sanctuaries this morning, those gathered outdoors, and those joining online from home.
Remind us that the Church is never defined by the size of its buildings or the number of people in its pews, but by the depth of its compassion and the generosity of its love.

We remember those who need your healing presence.
We pray for those living with illness, for those awaiting test results, for those recovering from surgery, and for those whose bodies or minds are weary.
We pray for those who grieve, especially those for whom the quiet days of summer can deepen the ache of loss.
Surround them with your comfort, your strength, and your peace.

And now, in a moment of silence, we offer to you the names, places, and concerns that rest most heavily upon our hearts. *Silence*

Loving God,
We pray these things in the spirit of Jesus Christ, who taught us to live with compassion, generosity, and love.
And we join our voices in the prayer that Jesus taught to us; Divine Creator, our Holy Parent, our Mother and...

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

VU 575

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, now, anytime!

Bread for the Journey

Where is Christ asking you to stop focusing on what you lack and instead ask, "What do I already have that I can offer in love?"

Benediction

Go now into the world trusting that God's abundance is greater than your fear.

Go knowing that what you have is enough to begin.

Share generously. Love boldly. Welcome freely.

And may the blessing of God—

Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—

be with you today and remain with you always. Amen,

Choral Response

Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace, never be afraid
God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love and show you believe
Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there, watching from above

Go now in peace, in faith and in love.
Amen, amen, amen!

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