



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

**Ministers:** All the People – wherever and however they gather

**Minister of Word & Sacrament:** Katie Vardy

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Reader:** Shirley Scott

**March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Second Sunday of Lent**

**WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Land Acknowledgement**

We begin by acknowledging that we gather on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, Chippewa, and Mississaugas of the Credit, and that this land is home to many diverse Indigenous nations.

As we gather here at Birchcliff Bluffs United Church, we reflect on the responsibility we share in caring for this land, learning from its history, and working toward reconciliation. May we act with respect, humility, and a commitment to justice, as we strive to build a future where all peoples—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—can live together in harmony and respect.

**We offer our thanks for this land, its history, and the teachings it offers, and we commit ourselves to listening, learning, and walking in solidarity with Indigenous peoples in the pursuit of healing and justice.**

**Opening Hymn**

**God of Grace and God of Glory**

**VU 686**

1 God of grace and God of glory,  
on your people pour your power;  
now fulfil your church's story;  
bring its bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour.

2 Lo, the hosts of evil round us  
scorn your Christ, assail your ways;  
fears and doubts too long have bound us;  
free our hearts to work and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the living of these days.

3 Cure your children's warring madness,  
bend our pride to your control;  
shame our wanton selfish gladness,  
rich in goods and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

4 Set our feet on lofty places,  
gird our lives that they may be  
armoured with all Christlike graces,  
pledged to set all captives free.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
that we fail not them nor thee.

### **Call to Worship**

Wait for the Lord; be strong!  
**The promises of God will never be broken.**  
With God as our light, what is there to fear?  
**The promises of God will never be broken.**  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name  
of the Lord!  
**The promises of God will never be broken.**

### **Passing the Peace**

We pass the peace (*with a bow, or a wave, or a nod to our neighbours*) to remind us of the light of Christ that is in each of us, and that we are called to reconciliation and community.

Let us greet those around you with the Peace of Christ, saying:  
The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

### **Life and Work**

#### **Opening Prayer**

**God of promises fulfilled,**  
**we gather as descendants of Abraham;**  
**we stand before you as faithful testimony to your covenant;**  
**we assemble as living proof that your love for humanity knows no limits.**  
**When we feel overwhelmed by the stresses of daily life,**  
**we need only look at the stars in the sky to remember your abiding faithfulness.**  
**When we are overcome with despair**

**by the pain of war and poverty in our world,  
we need only see the light of a single candle to remember the one you sent  
as our light, our strength, and our salvation.  
We pray now in the name of that light, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Lenten Candles: The Candle of Peace**

*Five candles plus the Christ candle are lit.*

On the second Sunday of Advent, we lit a candle to remind us that we are called to be a people of peace. We rest in the glow of that candle now. *A moment of silence*

As we reflect upon the wars and conflicts that are raging in many parts of our world today, we acknowledge how we have fallen short of our commitment to seek non-violent solutions to our problems with one another as neighbours in community. We grieve our inability to get along with each other in lasting ways, as we seek refuge in tools and ways that will only cause more harm to those who are already hurting.

As we gaze upon this candle representing peace, we feel as if we are still so far away from the harmony and right relationship we know we are capable of, it is hard to believe that peace is still possible.

As the shadows of Lent come closer, we extinguish our candle of peace, just for today, as we seek to fully and faithfully make the dream of peace a reality for all and for all time.

**Hymn**

**Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights**

**VU 108**

Throughout these Lenten days and nights,  
we turn to walk the inward way,  
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,  
we live in hope till Easter day.

**RECEIVING GOD'S WORD**

**Scripture     Luke 13:31-35**

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." <sup>32</sup> He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. <sup>33</sup> Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' <sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn****Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah****VU 651**

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more,  
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.

**Sermon****Our Prophetic Voice****RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD****Hymn****Will Your Anchor Hold****VU 675**

1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,  
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,  
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

2 It will surely hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;  
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,  
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

3 It will surely hold in the floods of death,  
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;  
on the rising tide it can never fail  
while our hopes abide within the veil.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

4 When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,  
the city of gold, our harbour bright,  
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,  
with the storms all past for evermore.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

### **Offering**

Creator God,  
as we bless the gifts that we receive,  
we ask that you bless the work of our lives and the love of our hearts this day,  
offered in so many ways.

**We share your desire to create better lives and a better community.**

**Let the soul of the world be restored in an ocean of your love. Amen.**

### **Offering Hymn**

### **Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**

**VU 541**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures high and low;  
give thanks to God in love made known:

Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

### **Prayers of the People**

Trusting that God receives all our prayers and responds to each of them in love,  
let us pray together saying: Loving God, **be with us.**

And now, as a community of faith,

we pray all this, using the ancient words you taught us, saying:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name**

**Thy Kindom 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.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the Kindom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

### **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

#### **Closing Hymn**

#### **One More Step Along The World**

**VU 639**

1 One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go,  
from the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

2 Round the corner of the world I turn,  
more and more about the world I learn;  
all the new things that I see  
you'll be looking at along with me:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

3 As I travel through the bad and good,  
keep me travelling the way I should;  
where I see no way to go  
you'll be telling me the way, I know:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

4 Give me courage when the world is rough,  
keep me loving though the world is tough,  
leap and sing in all I do,  
keep me travelling along with you:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

5 You are older than the world can be,  
you are younger than the life in me,  
ever old and ever new,  
keep me travelling along with you:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

### **Bread for the Journey**

In what ways might God be calling you to be a prophet in your own life?

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

Go in the love of God,  
whose promises are never broken.

**We go in the light of Christ,  
whose love transforms us.**

Go in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
whose fire sustains and encourages us.

**We go now into the world as witnesses  
of God's love, light, and power.**

May the love of God surround you,  
the grace of Christ sustain you,  
and the power of the Spirit guide you,  
as you go forth to be light in the world.  
Go in peace, to love and serve. 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!

## **Postlude**

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