



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

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

**Minister of Word & Sacrament:** Rev. Dr. Ellen Redcliffe

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Reader:** Mary Cannings

**March 10, 2024**

**Lent 4**

**WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Prelude**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

As we light this candle, we ask for the gift of understanding your Word,

*The candle is lit.*

**May it become in us a trust that overwhelms all our doubts and fears. Amen.**

**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 traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

**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 Hymn**

**Now Thank We All Our God**

**VU 236**

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart,  
and hands, and voices,  
who wondrous things has done,  
in whom this world rejoices;  
who from our mother’s arms  
has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,

with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
and keep us strong in grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ill  
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God  
for all that has been given,  
the Son, and Spirit blest  
who dwell in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God,  
whom heaven and earth adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore

### **Call to Worship**

Let us go up into the mountains to meet with our God.

**Let us worship and praise God's name. Thanks be to God.**

### **Life and Work**

“eh, Jesus ... yes, Peter ...”

### **Opening Prayer**

Creator God, whose love is higher than the heavens, whose love extends from the mountains and seas to every living thing,

**Take us under your wing where we find refuge. Give us hope and possibility for the journey and transform our lives with your compassion. May your love flow in us and through us, for now and all eternity. Amen.**

## **RECEIVING GOD'S WORD**

### **Scripture Psalm 107**

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

**<sup>2</sup> Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
those he redeemed from trouble**

**<sup>3</sup> and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south**

Some were sick through their sinful ways  
and because of their iniquities endured affliction;  
<sup>18</sup> they loathed any kind of food,  
and they drew near to the gates of death.

<sup>19</sup> **Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he saved them from their distress;**

<sup>20</sup> he sent out his word and healed them  
and delivered them from destruction.

<sup>21</sup> **Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.**

<sup>22</sup> And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices  
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

### **John 3:14-21**

<sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**

**O God, How We Have Wandered**

**VU 112**

1 O God, how we have wandered  
and hidden from your face;  
in foolishness have squandered  
your legacy of grace.  
But how, in exile dwelling,  
we turn with fear and shame,  
as distant but compelling,  
you call us each by name.

2 And now at length discerning  
the evil that we do,  
by faith we are returning  
with hope and trust in you.

In haste you come to meet us,  
and home rejoicing bring,  
in gladness there to greet us  
with calf and robe and ring.

3 O God of all the living,  
both banished and restored,  
compassionate, forgiving,  
our peace and hope assured.  
Grant now that our transgressing,  
our faithlessness may cease.  
Stretch out your hand in blessing,  
in pardon, and in peace.

**Sermon      The Simplex Faith**

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

**Hymn**

**I Sing the Mighty Power**

**VU 231**

1 I sing the mighty power of God  
that made the mountains rise,  
that spread the flowing seas abroad,  
and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained  
the sun to rule the day;  
the moon shines full at God's command  
and all the stars obey.

2 I sing the goodness of the One  
who filled the earth with food;  
who formed the creatures with a word,  
and then pronounced them good.

O God, your wonders are displayed  
where'er I turn my eye;  
if I survey the ground I tread,  
or gaze upon the sky!

3 There's not a plant or flower below  
but makes your glories known;  
and clouds arise, and tempests blow,  
by order from your throne;  
while all that borrows life from you

is ever in your care,  
and everywhere that I may be,  
you, God, are present there.

### **Offering**

Gracious God, may what we have offered – of ourselves, of our resources, of our time – become a rainbow of blessing of light in an aching world.

**Among those of us gathered here today, for our local community, for our world, bless the power of your abundant grace. Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

We come now, loving God, ready to be transformed and transfigured.

**We are ready to experience how your love can change us. We are open to the power of your love infuse us with its fullness fill us with potential. Draw us deeper into your love and bring us to wholeness and new life...**

*Moment of silence*

**Gracious God, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,  
For yours is the kingdom and the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever, Amen.**

## **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

**Closing Hymn**

**I Heard the Voice of Jesus**

**VU 626**

- 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
    'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
    your head upon my breast.'  
    I came to Jesus as I was,  
    weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
    and he has made me glad.
  
- 2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
    'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,

stoop down, and drink, and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till travelling days are done.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

Go from here renewed , restored and revitalized in your faith.

**Let us meet the days ahead with transformed vigour and determination and the love of God planted deep in our hearts where it continues to grow.**

Go with God's grace and make a difference, confident knowing you are not alone.

**Amen.**

### **Choral Benediction**

### **May the God of Hope Go with Us**

**VU424**

May the God of hope go with us every day  
Filling all our lives with hope and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way  
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.  
Praying, let us work for peace,  
Singing, share our joy with all,  
Working, for a world that's new,  
Faithful, when we hear Christ's call.

### **Postlude**

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