



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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September 7th, 2025

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ & Rainbow Candle

We light these candles as a symbol of our intention to be open to God’s presence and action during this time of worship. As we welcome this flickering flame, we wait to be transformed by the divine Spirit! *The candle is lit.*

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

Let Us Build a House (v. 1, 3, 4, 5)

MV 1

- 1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.
- 3 Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;
a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

4 Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Call to Worship

Come, not because it is easy,

But because we are called.

Come, not to escape the world,

But to be transformed within it.

Christ calls us to love boldly, to speak truth, to follow even when the way is hard.

We come with open hearts and trembling hands.

This is the place to bring our doubts and our devotion, our longing and our losses.

We are here—ready to risk love, ready to walk together, ready to worship.

Passing the Peace

Jesus didn't promise us an easy road—he promised us *each other*. He called us to community, even when it's messy. He called us to peace—not the peace of silence or avoidance, but the peace that comes from honest connection and shared purpose.

Let us share that peace now—peace grounded in love, peace that costs something, and peace that carries us forward.

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Holy One,

you do not call us to comfort but to courage.

You do not promise ease, but you do promise to walk beside us.

**In this time of worship, unsettle what needs unsettling.
 Challenge what needs to change.
 And awaken in us a deeper yes to your call.
 May we hear your voice in word and silence,
 in music and prayer,
 in each other and in our own hearts.
 Shape us by your Spirit
 into disciples not of convenience,
 but of compassion and conviction.
 Amen.**

RECEIVING GOD’S WORD

Scripture Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

³¹ “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love

VU 574

1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
 tender and true, tender and true,
 out of the heart of the Father above,
 streaming to me and to you:
 wonderful love, wonderful love
 dwells in the heart of our dear God above.

2 Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell
 joyfully came, joyfully came,
 came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,

sharing their sorrow and shame,
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam? Why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of our dear God above.

4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
Come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Sermon The Cost of Love

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

When Love Is Found (v. 1, 2, 3, 5)

VU 489

- 1 When Love is found and hope comes home,
sing and be glad that we are one.
When love explodes and fills the sky,
praise God and share our Maker's joy.
- 2 When love has flowered in trust and care
build both each day, that love may dare
To reach beyond homes warmth and light
to serve and strive for truth and right.
- 3 When love is tried as loved ones change,
hold still to hope though all seems strange,
Till ease returns and love grows wise
through listening ears and opened eyes.
- 5 Praise God for love, praise God for life
in age or youth, in calm or strife
Lift up your hearts, let love be fed
through death and life in broken bread.

Offering

Jesus invites us to consider the cost of discipleship—not as a warning, but as a calling. A calling to love more deeply, to live more justly, and to invest in communities that reflect God’s heart. Giving—whether of money, time, energy, or care—is part of that calling. It’s not just a transaction; it’s a practice of trust. It’s a declaration that we believe in something bigger than ourselves. That we are part of something holy.

As we bless the offerings given to the church, let us sing:

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.

COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

May God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Living God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right and good to give our thanks and praise,
for you, O God, are the source of life and love.
You called everything into being—
sun and soil, river and root, creature and kin.
You made us for community and courage,
to seek justice, to love boldly, to walk humbly in your ways.

When we turned from love, you did not turn from us.
You sent prophets to speak truth,
and teachers to stir our hearts.
You sent Jesus—Love made flesh—
who called unlikely people to follow him:
fishers and tax collectors, the curious and the skeptical,
the broken-hearted and the brave.

He taught us not only with words,
but with his life—
welcoming outcasts, touching wounds,
crossing lines others would never cross.
He turned over tables of oppression
and set a feast where all were fed.

On the night before he gave everything for love,
Jesus gathered with his friends.

And while they were at table,
he took bread—blessed it—and broke it, saying:
“This is my body, broken for you. Take and eat.”

And after supper, he took the cup—gave thanks—and said:
“This is the cup of the new covenant,
poured out in love. Whenever you drink it, remember me.”

So we remember:
Not just the meal, but the life behind it.
Not just the table, but the movement it feeds.

Let us pray:
Come, Holy Spirit—
Bless this bread and this cup, that they may be for us the presence of Christ:
nourishment for our journey, strength for our courage, hope for the days to come.

And bless us—each one gathered here—that we may be transformed by this meal
into the body of Christ: disciples who love without condition, who risk boldly, and who follow
wherever love leads. Amen.

Come, for the feast is now ready.

SHARING THE MEAL

(Please come forward through the middle aisle to receive the elements. Once you receive the elements, do not eat them yet! Please return to your seat through the outer aisles of the sanctuary. Once everyone has been served, we will share the feast together. During the singing of our closing hymn, we will collect the cups.)

The body of Christ,
the bread of life.
(eat the bread)

The blood of Christ,

the cup of blessing.
(drink the juice)

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray:
**God of abundance and grace,
you have fed us at this table with the taste of holy courage.
May it strengthen our resolve to live as your people—
to follow Jesus in the hard and hopeful work of love.
Send us out now with full hearts and open hands,
ready to be bread for a hungry world. Amen.**

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.

Prayers of the People

Gracious and loving God,
You call us to follow you with our whole hearts—
not in word alone, but in action and intention.
So we lift before you the deep needs of our world and our communities.

We pray for those who have been displaced by disaster—
by floods and wildfires, by war and rising waters.
We hold in our hearts those without shelter,
those who have lost everything, and those on the move with nowhere to land.

We pray for those living under occupation or threat—
for the people of Gaza and Ukraine,
for those caught in cycles of violence and retribution,
and for leaders across the globe who carry the power to choose peace or destruction.

We pray for the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people—

for justice long delayed and dignity denied.

We pray for healing across generations and for the courage to confront the truth.

We pray for trans and queer communities,
especially those facing increasing hostility and hate.

We give thanks for spaces of sanctuary,
and ask for boldness in building churches that do not just welcome, but protect and celebrate.

We pray for those struggling silently—
with illness, with addiction, with despair, with loneliness.

May they know they are not alone.

May they find companions on the journey,
and may we be among them.

God of all that is just and all that is tender,
strengthen our resolve when we grow weary.

Root our discipleship in holy courage.

And let our love, like yours, cost us something real.

In the name of the one who walks with us still—

Jesus, our friend and teacher—we pray using the ancient words you taught to us:

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be you name

Your Kindom come, your 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 yours is the Kindom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Just a Little Talk With Jesus

1 I once was lost in sin but Jesus took me in
And then a little light from heaven filled my soul
It bathed my heart in love and wrote my name above
And just a little talk with Jesus made me whole

Now let us have a little talk with Jesus
Let us tell Him all about our troubles
He will hear our faintest cry
He will answer by and by
Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning
And you know a little fire is burning

You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right

- 2 Sometimes my path seems drear, without a ray of cheer
And then the cloud about me hides the light of day
The mists in me arise and hide the stormy skies
But just a little talk with Jesus clears the way

Now let us have a little talk with Jesus
Let us tell Him all about our troubles
He will hear our faintest cry
He will answer by and by
Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning
And you know a little fire is burning
You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right

- 3 I may have doubts and fears, my eyes be filled with tears
But Jesus is a friend who watches day and night
I go to Him in prayer, He knows my every care
And just a little talk with Jesus makes it right

Now let us have a little talk with Jesus
Let us tell Him all about our troubles
He will hear our faintest cry
And He will answer by and by
Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning
And you know a little fire is burning
You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right

Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning
And you know a little fire is burning
You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right

Bread for the Journey:

What is Jesus inviting you to let go of, so you can more fully live in love?

Commissioning

Go now, not to seek safety—

But to live with holy courage.

Go now, not with easy answers—

But with a heart open to truth.

Go now, not as spectators of love—

But as disciples, builders, and bearers of it.

Christ has called us.

And we will follow—with our whole hearts.

Benediction

Go now with courage that comes from love,
with strength that comes from surrender,
and with peace that passes understanding.
May the Spirit walk with you in the cost,
Christ carry you through the challenge,
and God rejoice in every brave yes you offer.
You are not alone. You are blessed. Go in peace. Amen.

Choral Response

May Sunshine Light Your Way

May sunshine light your way
as you move on toward tomorrow
May laughter fill your days
with joy instead of sorrow,
May you have the strength to soar
as on eagles' wing,
And may your heart be filled
with joyous songs to sing.

May you have the strength to soar
as on eagles' wing,
And may your heart be filled
with joyous songs to sing.
Go in peace, go in love,
Go in song.

Postlude

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