



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

Scripture Reader: Shirley Scott

March 5, 2023

Lent 2

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle remembering the star that led the wise men...

May God's light shine through us as a beacon of hope in our world.

Call to Worship

Our Lenten season has begun.

We know the journey will be difficult, but we are committed to journey through to the end.

It is a path well worn by the people who have come before us,

We join them on this Lenten journey now begun.

Response

Like a Mighty River Flowing

VU 267

1 Like a mighty river flowing,
like a flower in beauty growing,
far beyond all human knowing
is the perfect peace of God.

2 Like the hills serene and even,
like the coursing clouds of heaven,
like the heart that's been forgiven
is the perfect peace of God.

4 Like the morning sun ascended,
like the scents of evening blended,
like a friendship never ended
is the perfect peace of God.

5 Like the azure ocean swelling,
like the jewel all-excelling,
far beyond our human telling
is the perfect peace of God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, as we walk this Lenten path help us to focus on how to live our lives.

Help us to move forward with a strong vision, to reach out. Remind us that this is a season about love, daring to notice the needs of people around us. May this be a time of reaching out more than cutting back. Let it be a season of love as it was for Jesus. 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 territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog, all part of the Williams Treaty. 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

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

VU 264

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise;
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

4 Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee!

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 121

Assurance of God's Protection

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
2 My help comes from the LORD,

- who made heaven and earth.
- 3** He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- 4** He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5** The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.
- 6** The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- 7** The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- 8** The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

Gospel John 3:1-17

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ ³Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ ⁴Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ ⁵Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ ⁹Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ ¹⁰Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

11 ‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 ‘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.

17 ‘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.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Blessed Assurance

VU 337

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

Sermon

Hymn

New Every Morning

VU 405

1 New every morning is the love
our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life, and power, and thought.

2 New mercies each returning day
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

3 If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still of countless price
God will provide for sacrifice.

5 Only, O God, in your dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

Offering

As you bless and inspire in us generous spirits, may you reconnect us with others who are touched by what we donate.

In those connections, may your mission thrive, your call to action be alive within us. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Loving God, our hearts are as light as a feather in your presence.

We need the reassurance of your presence in our lives, when we offer your name we know you are with us. Our sun is the warmth of your hand in ours. The wind is the words your whisper in our hearts. We experience the path of faith when you journey with us. The water your offer is eternal life. Your love for us is complete, and we are blessed...

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

**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 those who 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,
For ever and ever, Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Lift High the Cross

VU 151

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

1 Come, Christians, follow where our Saviour trod,
the Lamb victorious, Christ the Son of God.

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

2 Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in unity combine.

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

3 Each newborn servant of the Crucified
bears on the brow the seal of him who died.

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

5 So shall our song of triumph ever be
praise to the Crucified for victory.

Benediction & Commissioning

Let us go from here to proclaim the Good News.

**We will seek to show one another where to find life-giving water and abundant love.
Amen.**

Postlude

* Permission to podcast/stream and reproduce the music and lyrics obtained from
ONE LICENSE with license A-737645.
All rights reserved.



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Second Sunday in Lent
Sunday March 5, 2023
Additional Lectionary**

Genesis 12:1-4

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you

and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^[a]

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Romans 4:1-5
New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Example of Abraham

⁴ What then are we to say was gained by^[a] Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed^[b] God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Romans 4:13-17
New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

God’s Promise Realized through Faith

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”), in the presence of the God in whom he believed,^[a] who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Matthew 17:1-9
New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Transfiguration

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I^[a] will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, the Beloved;^[b] with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” ⁸ And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”