



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

February 4, 2024

Fifth after Epiphany

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

In a cold world,

The light of Christ can warm hearts.

In a shadowed world,

The light of Christ can challenge us to the ways of peace.

In a world in despair,

The light of Christ can give real hope.

May we be the light of Christ and bring hope, warmth and peace.

The candle is lit.

Land Acknowledgement

We now take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which Birchcliff Bluffs United Church stands. 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

Sing to God With Joy and Gladness

Sing to God with joy and gladness
Hymns and psalms of gratitude
With the voice of praise discover
That to worship God is good

1 God unites the scatter'd people
Gathers those who wander'd far

Heals the hurt and broken spirits
Tending ev'ry wound and scar

Sing to God with joy and gladness
Hymns and psalms of gratitude
With the voice of praise discover
That to worship God is good

2 Such is God's great pow'r and wisdom
None can calculate or tell
Keen is God to ground the wicked
And with humble folk to dwell

Sing to God with joy and gladness
Hymns and psalms of gratitude
With the voice of praise discover
That to worship God is good

3 God with clouds the sky has curtain'd
Thus ensuring rain shall fall
Earth responding grows to order
Food for creatures great and small

Sing to God with joy and gladness
Hymns and psalms of gratitude
With the voice of praise discover
That to worship God is good

Call to Worship

Let us sing songs of praise to God.

Let us rejoice in God our Creator.

Let us lift up our hearts in prayer.

Let us reach out to the one who saves us.

Let us offer ourselves to the work of the kin-dom.

Thanks be to God.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Loving God, you've called us and we have come.

It is good to be together in this place. We come, bearing the marks and scars of our living, and offer them to your healing presence. Bless us as we gather - each one of

us - that we may know your Spirit moving among us as we share our calling of discipleship. Bless us and bless our time together, so that we might be a blessing in your world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Hymn

God of the Bible

MV 28

1 God of the Bible, God in the Gospel,
hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,
you are our centre, daylight or darkness,
freedom or prison, you are our home.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.

2 God in our struggles, God in our hunger,
suffering with us, taking our part,
still you empow'r us, mothering Spirit,
feeding, sustaining, from your own heart.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.

4 Not by your finger, not by your anger
will our world order change in a day,
but by your people, fearless and faithful,
small paper lanterns, lighting the way.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.

5 Hope we must carry, shining and certain
through all our turmoil, terror and loss,
bonding us gladly one to the other,
'til our world changes facing the Cross.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful, you do not change.

Scripture Psalm 147:1-11

¹ Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God,
how pleasant and fitting to praise God!

² **The LORD builds up Jerusalem; and gathers the exiles of Israel.**

³ God heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

⁴ **God determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.**

⁵ Great is our Lord and mighty in power; God's understanding has no limit.

⁶ **The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.**

⁷ Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.

⁸ **God covers the sky with clouds; and supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.**

⁹ God provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

¹⁰ **God's pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor delights in the legs of the warrior;**

¹¹ the LORD delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Mark 1:29-39 Jesus Heals Many

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

1 You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness.
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

2 In the pain and joy beholding,
how your grace is still unfolding.
Give us all your vision, God of love.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

3 Give us strength to love each other,
every sister, every brother.
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

4 You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing.
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

I Saw The Light

I wandered so aimless, life filled with sin
I wouldn't let my dear Savior in
Then Jesus came like a stranger in the night
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

Just like a blind man, I wandered alone
Worries and fears I claimed for my own
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

I was a fool to wander and stray
Straight is the gate and narrow's the way
Now I have traded the wrong for the right
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light
I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

Offering

Generous and loving Creator, we ask your blessing for the gifts you have given which we now return a portion to you.

May they be a blessing to others as they have been to us. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Gracious giver of life and love to all your people, our journey may be filled with detours and yield signs. The journey is often into the unknown and across chartered waters.

May we each know the power of your blessing and presence in our lives on all parts of our journey of life. Thank you for walking with us each step of our way ...

Moment of silence

**Our loving 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

There's a Spirit in the Air

VU 582

1 There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.'

2 Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

4 Still the Spirit gives us light,
seeing wrong and setting right:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

5 When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world

6 May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways.
God in Christ has come to stay,
live tomorrow's life today.

7 There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

Commissioning and Benediction

Let us go out to celebrate this day of rest, to find refreshment for body, mind and spirit.

May our minds and our hearts be open to your Spirit's guidance as we take time to re-energize and renew this day. Amen.

Choral Benediction

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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