



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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

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March 26th, 2023

Lent 5

MUSIC SUNDAY - WELCOME SPRING

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

On this 5th Sunday of Lent we reflect on our journey that leads to the warm embrace of the light of life. We light this candle remembering God's redeeming grace, and that new life comes out of death.

We remember the former covenant written on stone, and the new covenant, written on our hearts, that we are God's children, and God's promise is life forevermore.

Response

As Comes the Breath of Spring

VU 373

1 As comes the breath of spring
with light and mirth and song,
so does your Spirit bring new days
brave, free, and strong.
You come with thrill of life
to chase hence winter's breath,
to hush to peace the strife
of sin that ends in death.

2 You come like dawning day
with flaming truth and love,
to chase all glooms away,
to brace our wills to prove
how wise, how good to choose

the truth and its brave fight,
to prize it, win or lose,
and live on your delight.

4 You breathe and there is health;
you move and there is power;
you whisper, there is wealth
of love, your richest dower.

Your presence is to us
like summer in the soul;
your joy shines forth and then
life blossoms to its goal.

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 Prayer

We are thankful for Spring and the hope of warmer, longer, brighter days.

Thankful for the coming of growth and life and birth.

Thankful that things are coming awake in the world.

Now we ask that you bring into reality all that belongs in this season. Your word says that we will have provision, and hope, and joy, and health and loving relationships here and now in this life.

We ask that what belongs in this season would become actual in our practical lives.

We find hope in the gift of Spring.

Amen

Hymn

There Is Sunshine In My Soul Today

1 There is sunshine in my soul today,
More glorious and bright
Than glows in any earthly sky,
For Jesus is my light.

O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful happy moments roll:
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in the soul.

2 There is music in my soul today,
A carol that we bring,
And Jesus, listening, can hear
The songs I cannot sing.

O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful happy moments roll:
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in the soul.

3 There is springtime in my soul today,
For when our God is near,
The dove of peace sings in my heart,
The flowers of grace appear.

O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful happy moments roll:
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in the soul.

4 There is gladness in my soul today,
And hope and praise and love
For blessings which He gives me now,
For joys "laid up" above.

O there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful happy moments roll:
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in the soul.
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
There is sunshine in the soul.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture

Gospel John 11:1–45

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."
⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved

Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I

not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me."⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

Hymn

Lo, The Earth Is Risen Again

1 Lo, the earth is risen again
From the winter's bond and pain!
Bring we leaf and flower and spray
To adorn our holiday.

2 Once again the word comes true,
Lo, he maketh all things new.
Now the dark cold days are over,
Light and gladness are before.

3 How our hearts leap with the spring!
How our spirits soar and sing!
Light is victor over gloom,
Life triumphant o'er the tomb.

4 Change, then, mourning into praise,
And, for dirges, anthems raise!
All our fears and griefs shall be
Lost in immortality.

Musical Guests

Daniel Givern & Loralie Vancourt

Reflection

Solo

Offering

As we near the end of this Lenten season, may the gifts we offer today be used to continue the work of peace, justice, and service in the world. Amen

Prayers of the People

**It's hard to love the world sometimes
and to love it the way Jesus did seems impossible.
Help us to be inspired by his love and
guided by his example.
Most of all, help us to accept that we can't do it alone.
We need support in this journey.
Show us how to unlock our hearts
so that we are less selfish.
Let us be less fearful of the pain and darkness
that will soon be transformed into Easter joy.**

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

I Danced In The Morning

VU 352

1 I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came from heaven and I danced on the earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

2 I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
they came with me and the dance went on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

3 I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame;
they whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
and left me there on a cross to die.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

4 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
they buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

5 They cut me down and I leap up high;
I am the life that will never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

Benediction & Commissioning

**As we leave this harbour of safety
We are thankful for community and family.
Let our time together strengthen us, restore us and inspire us with love.
Let our time here fill us with peace,
So that as we journey onwards
we might pour out love and grace to all we meet. Amen.**

Postlude

Morning Has Broken

VU 409

1 Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3 Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

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**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Additional Lectionary**

Genesis 2:15-17 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Ezekiel 37:1–14 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Valley of Dry Bones

³⁷ The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath^[a] to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath^[b] in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath:^[c] Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath,^[d] and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

Psalm 130 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Waiting for Divine Redemption A Song of Ascents.

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

² Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

⁵ I wait for the LORD; my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶ my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.

⁸ It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Romans 8:6–11 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.