



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

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

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

Minister of Community Development: **Rev. Carmen Llanos**

Music Director: **Randy Vancourt**

Scripture Reader: **Janet Bawcutt**

**May 15, 2022**

**Christian Family Sunday**

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

Creator, parent of the human family,

**we gather to worship you.**

In baptism, we are called beloved children of God, as such,

**we gather to worship you.**

Friends, neighbours, siblings in faith,

**we gather to worship in song, in prayer, in readings from your story/our story,  
in thoughts and reflections.**

**Let us worship God.**

**Opening Hymn**

**Draw The Circle Wide**

**MV 145**

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

God the still-point of the circle,  
‘round whom all creation turns;  
nothing lost, but held forever,  
in God’s gracious arms.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let our hearts touch far horizons,  
so encompass great and small;  
let our loving know no borders,  
faithful to God’s call.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let the dreams we dream be larger,  
than we've ever dreamed before;  
let the dream of Christ be in us,  
open every door.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

This land on which we gather is the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of the Credit. We live, work, play and worship the Creator on this land and acknowledge with respect the thousands of years of ceremony and relationship that are etched in footprints, fire, and faithfulness on the soil and rock that surrounds us.

### **Candle Lighting**

As we light this candle, may we be reminded that we are not alone, we live in God's world. Call and God will come.

- Light candle here-

**Christ is here in the presence of this candle, our light in the world.**

### **Opening Prayer**

God, creator of us all, we gather to worship you.

We come as individuals, we come in family units, we come as neighbours and friends.

**We come here where we are known by name, welcomed with all our fragilities and strengths.**

**We gather with kindred spirits who long to live faithful to your calling.**

**Guide us, inspire us, challenge us, comfort us, and nurture us in this time of worship so that we might be enabled to return to our daily lives ready to engage fully with all of your creation. We pray. Amen.**

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
the thrush sings high in the tree.  
It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
The gray whale sings in the sea,

And by the Spirit, you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a call of life to the Giver  
when waves and waterfalls roar.  
It's a call of life to the Giver  
when high tides break on the shore,

And by the Spirit, you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
the bumblebees hum along.  
It's a hymn of love to the Lover,  
the summer breeze joins the song,

And by the Spirit, you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's the chorus of all creation;  
it's sung by all living things.  
It's the chorus of all creation;  
a song the universe sings,

And by the Spirit, you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

**Prayer of Illumination**

O God of story, in the beginning you created humankind.

**The Bible contains your story of love and encouragement and challenge,  
to your creation, to your children, and to us.**

**Today, may our hearts and minds be open to hear what your Spirit is saying to us.  
We pray. Amen.**

**Scripture Psalm 148**

Praise for God's Universal Glory

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
    praise him in the heights!  
<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels;  
    praise him, all his host!  
<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon;  
    praise him, all you shining stars!  
<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens,  
    and you waters above the heavens!  
<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
    for he commanded and they were created.  
<sup>6</sup> He established them forever and ever;  
    he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
    you sea monsters and all deeps,  
<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost,  
    stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills,  
    fruit trees and all cedars!  
<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle,  
    creeping things and flying birds!  
<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
    princes and all rulers of the earth!  
<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike,  
    old and young together!  
<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
    for his name alone is exalted;  
    his glory is above earth and heaven.  
<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people,  
    praise for all his faithful,  
    for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the LORD!

**Gospel**

**John 13:31-35**

The New Commandment

<sup>31</sup> When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

<sup>32</sup> If God has been glorified in him,<sup>[a]</sup> God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

<sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

<sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The word of God for the people of God.

*Thanks be to God*

**Sermon**                      Who Sits On Your Throne?

**Hymn**                                      **I See a New Heaven**                                      **VU 713**

I see a new heaven, I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there on the banks of a river bright and free,  
yielding her fruit, firm in her root,  
the Tree of Life will be.

I see a new heaven, I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where death dies and our lives are born again,  
body and soul, struggling but whole  
like flowers after the rain.

I see a new heaven, I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where the darkness brings visions from above.  
There where the night, bearing new light,  
reveals the promise of love.

I see a new heaven, I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where we work with the love of healing hands.  
Labour we must, true to our trust

to build a promised new land.

I see a new heaven, I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

### Life & Work of the Church

#### Offering

God has blessed our lives with relationships—joy inspiring and challenging.  
In response to God's blessings in our lives, we share our offerings.

**We offer these gifts so that we might continue to build relationships  
with one another and with your whole creation.**

**Bless these gifts that they may bring wholeness and life abundance to all your  
people.**

**We pray. Amen.**

#### Prayers of the People

Our faith blesses us with stories of others who have sought to live in life-giving relationships.  
As we remember these siblings in faith, remind us of your guidance and presence with us. Let us  
pray.

**God of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; God of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; God of  
siblings who cared for one another, offered support and challenge, celebrated  
together, worked together, argued together, and grieved together. We are thankful  
for their witness. As they have done may we also seek to live in life-giving  
relationships with those we would name as siblings.**

God of Eli, Hannah, and Samuel, cross-generational colleagues, mentors, and trusted leaders in  
faith, remind us of the opportunities we have to nurture and care, mentor and discern with one  
another in this faith community. May we embrace the trust that is offered and shared with  
respect, care, and humility.

**God of Ruth and Naomi, who embraced each other despite differences of race and  
cultural traditions and chose to be family for one another. For all who choose to be  
family, may your love and hope be sustained day by day.**

God of Simon and Andrew and James and John, who left the familiar to build new community with Jesus and his followers. Though faithful, they had moments of doubt, of fear, of denial. In our moments of doubt, fear, and denial, may we remember to trust and to take one step at a time.

**God of Hagar, Abraham, and Ishmael; God of Sarah, Abraham, and Isaac; God of the complicated, and the jealous, and the broken, remind us that this too is real and that you walk with us through these troubling times.**

God of Mary and John, called to relationships that stretch beyond blood, to care for one another. You invite us too to reach out in welcome, support, and care for one another.

**God of the past, God of the present, God of tomorrow, help us to live in relationships that seek justice, love kindness, and ground ourselves in your love for us.**

And we continue in prayer together, sharing in a paraphrase of the prayer Jesus taught the disciples ....

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers.  
(pause)  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**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, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

### BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

#### **Closing Hymn**

#### **Shall We Gather at the River**

**VU 710**

Shall we gather at the river,  
where bright angel feet have trod;  
with its crystal tide for ever  
flowing by the throne of God?

Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river

that flows by the throne of God.

On the margin of the river,  
Washing up its silver spray,  
We will walk and worship ever,  
All the happy golden day.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.

Ere we reach the shining river,  
lay we every burden down;  
grace our spirits will deliver,  
and provide a robe and crown.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.

Soon we'll reach the shining river,  
soon our pilgrimage will cease,  
soon our happy hearts will quiver  
with the melody of peace.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.

### **Benediction & Commissioning**

In baptism you name us your beloved children, kin to one another.  
As we go from this place,  
May we know your love that found expression in the most vulnerable of human form:  
guide us, sustain us, and empower us to love.  
In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Postlude**

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**Additional Lectionary Readings  
Year C –5th Sunday of Easter  
Sunday, May 15, 2022**

**Acts 11:1-18**

**New Revised Standard Version**

11 Now the apostles and the believers<sup>[a]</sup> who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. <sup>2</sup> So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers<sup>[b]</sup> criticized him, <sup>3</sup> saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” <sup>4</sup> Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, <sup>5</sup> “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. <sup>6</sup> As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup> I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ <sup>8</sup> But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ <sup>9</sup> But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ <sup>10</sup> This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. <sup>11</sup> At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. <sup>12</sup> The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.<sup>[c]</sup> These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. <sup>13</sup> He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup> he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ <sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>17</sup> If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” <sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

**Revelation 21:1-6**

**New Revised Standard Version**

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home<sup>[a]</sup> of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell<sup>[b]</sup> with them;  
they will be his peoples,<sup>[c]</sup>  
and God himself will be with them;<sup>[d]</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.