



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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Reader:

August 17th, 2025

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Welcome

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

Now Thank We All Our God

VU 236

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart,
and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever-joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ill in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
for all that has been given,
the Son, and Spirit blest
who dwell in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Call to Worship

As we gather for worship, we seek God's direction for our lives.

May God lead and guide us.

As we lift our voices in song and praise, we seek Christ's truth for our lives.

May Christ encourage and inspire us.

As we seek to serve through our mission and ministry, we need the Spirit's wise presences in our lives.

May the Spirit empower us and transform us.

Passing the Peace

Even though we are separated by screens and space, the peace of Christ knows no boundaries. It reaches across city blocks and rural roads, through cables and airwaves, into every heart tuned in today. So, take a moment to wave, to type in the chat, to smile at the screen—however you can—let us pass the peace to one another.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you come among us in abundant joy, unsettling truth, deep consolation, and power transformation. Yours are winds of change, hastening us toward a kin-dom of inclusion and justice not yet known in this world. Through your many witnesses, show us your way, so that we may be a community that embodies your love, here and now. Amen.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Will You Come and Follow Me

VU 567

1 Will you come and follow me
 if I but call your name?
 Will you go where you don't know
 and never be the same?
 Will you let my love be shown,
 will you let my name be known,
 will you let my life be grown
 in you and you in me?

2 Will you leave yourself behind
 if I but call your name?
 Will you care for cruel and kind
 and never be the same?
 Will you risk the hostile stare
 should your life attract or scare?
 Will you let me answer prayer
 in you and you in me?

4 Will you love the 'you' you hide
 if I but call your name?
 Will you quell the fear inside
 and never be the same?
 Will you use the faith you've found
 to reshape the world around,
 through my sight and touch and sound
 in you and you in me?

5 Christ, your summons echoes true
 when you but call my name.
 Let me turn and follow you
 and never be the same.
 In your company I'll go
 where your love and footsteps show.
 Thus I'll move and live and grow
 in you and you in me.

Scripture Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured

on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?” ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Step By Step

1. It's so sweet to walk with Jesus,
Step by step and day by day;
Stepping in the very footprints,
Walking with You all the way.

Step by step, step by step,
I would walk with Jesus,
All the way, all the day,
Keeping step with Jesus.

2. Step by step, I'll walk with Jesus
Just a moment at a time,
Heights I have not wings to soar to,
Step by step, my feet can climb.

Step by step, step by step,
I would walk with Jesus,
All the day, all the way,
Keeping step with Jesus.

3. Here awhile we walk with Jesus
But the time will not be long
'Til the night shall change to morning
And the sorrow into song.

Step by step, step by step,
I would walk with Jesus,
All the day, all the way,
Keeping step with Jesus.

4. Jesus keep me closer - closer,
Step by step and day by day;
Stepping in Your very footprints
Walking with You all the way.

Step by step, step by step,
I would walk with Jesus,
All the day, all the way,
Keeping step with Jesus.

Sermon

She Stood Up Straight

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Dance with the Spirit

MV156

Dance with the Spirit early in the mornin',
walk with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

Dance with the Spirit early in the mornin',
move with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

Dance with the Spirit early in the mornin',
sing with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

Offering

Holy and wondrous God, we honor you with gifts of time, resources, and abilities. Use all that we offer to bring hope and strength to our needy world.

May gifts both large and small become new life within this community and around the worlds. Amen.

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.

Prayers of the People

God of healing and wholeness,
You see us when the world overlooks us.
You speak to us when others silence our voices.
You call us by name, draw us near, and set us free.

We lift our prayers today for those who are bound and bent low—
by illness, by injustice, by sorrow too deep for words.
Stretch out your healing hand, O God,
and bring restoration where there is brokenness.

We pray for those who have been told to wait,
those whose healing is considered inconvenient,
those whose freedom is too often delayed.
Let your Spirit move among us as it did that Sabbath day—
breaking rules that harm,
upending systems that oppress,
and raising the lowly to stand tall in dignity and grace.

We hold before you all who lead and teach in our communities,
all who serve in quiet ways,
and all who dare to speak your truth when it's not welcomed.
Give us courage to be people of compassion before convention,
of mercy before manners,
of justice before comfort.

And we pray for ourselves, O God.
Unbind us.
Unbend us.
Make us instruments of your liberating love.
This we ask in the name of Christ,
using the ancient words taught to us:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy Kindom 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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kindom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Go To the World

VU 420

1 Go to the world! Go into all the earth.

Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
baptising as the sign of our rebirth.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

2 Go to the world! Go into every place.
Go live the Word of Christ's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

3 Go to the world! Go struggle, bless and pray;
the nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

4 Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,
when all the hosts of glory cry 'Amen!'
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Commissioning

Go now, as people who have been seen, named, and set free.
Go to see others with the eyes of compassion.
Go to speak words that lift the lowly.
Go to disrupt injustice with healing and grace.
And go in courage, trusting that Sabbath is not just rest—
but restoration.

Benediction

May the God who calls us to stand tall
give you strength to rise each day.
May Christ, the healer of the broken,
mend what weighs on your heart.
And may the Spirit, wild and holy,
lead you into paths of bold love,
where mercy is louder than rules
and grace is stronger than fear.
Go in peace. Amen.

Choral Response

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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