



Birchliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Pride Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Today, we light our Christ candle, reminding us that the light of Christ continues to shine in places of hope, courage, compassion, and justice. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light our rainbow candle. This light is a sign of promise, of diversity, of sacred belonging. A reminder that every identity, every story, everybody is held in the wide embrace of God’s love. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather for worship today, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We give thanks for their stewardship of this land across generations, and we recognize that reconciliation is not a metaphor or a statement—it is ongoing work.

As followers of Jesus, who continually widened the circle of belonging, may we commit ourselves to justice, truth, healing, and right relationship with Indigenous peoples, with one another, and with creation itself.

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.

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

Call to Worship

Come, all who are weary from hiding.

God welcomes us with love.

Come, all who have been told they are "too much" or "not enough."

God delights in who we are.

Come, all who are searching for community, healing, and hope.

Christ sets a place for us at the table.

Come, let us worship the One whose love knows no boundaries.

Let us worship God together.

Passing the Peace

In today's gospel, Jesus gathers people others tried to keep at a distance. Around Christ's table, barriers begin to fall, and strangers become neighbours. So today, let us share signs of Christ's peace with one another—not as a polite ritual, but as a reminder that each person here belongs.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you!**

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

**Holy One, you call people by name. You gather strangers into community.
You sit at tables others would avoid, and you draw near to those the world
overlooks.**

**On this Pride Sunday,
remind us that your love is not cautious or conditional.**

It is expansive, liberating, and joyful!

Open our hearts today. Stir our spirits.

And teach us again what love looks like.

**In the name of Jesus,
who widened the circle again and again,
Amen.**

Hymn

My Love Colours Outside The Lines

MV 138

1 My love colours outside the lines,
exploring paths that few could ever find;
and takes me into places
where I've never been before,
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

2 My God colours outside the lines,
turns wounds to blessings, water into wine;
and takes me into places
where I've never been before
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

We'll never walk on water
if we're not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking
from time to time.
And we'll never move the grave-stones
if we're not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.

3 My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine
I want to walk beyond the boundaries
where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

We'll never walk on water
if we're not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking
from time to time.
And we'll never move the grave-stones
if we're not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.

4 My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine
I want to walk beyond the boundaries
where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture **Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26**

⁹ As Jesus walked on, he saw Matthew, a tax collector, at his post. Jesus approached and said, "Follow me," and Matthew got up and followed. ¹⁰ Now it happened that, while Jesus was at table in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and notorious 'sinners' came to join Jesus and the disciples at dinner. ¹¹ The Pharisees saw this and complained to the disciples, saying, "What reason can the Teacher have for eating with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹² Overhearing the remark, Jesus said, "People who are in good health don't need a doctor; sick people do. ¹³ Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire compassion, not sacrifices.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

¹⁸ As Jesus was speaking, a synagogue official came up, knelt down and said, "My daughter has just died. But if you come and lay hands on her, she will live." ¹⁹ And Jesus got up and followed him, and so did the disciples. ²⁰ As they were going along, a woman who had suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the hem of his cloak; ²¹ she was saying to herself, "If only I can touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²² Jesus turned around, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And that very moment, the woman was healed.

²³ When Jesus arrived at the house of the synagogue official, a noisy crowd had gathered, and the flute players who served as mourners had already arrived. ²⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Get out! The child is not dead – only asleep." They all laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put out, he entered and took the girl by her hand, and she got up. ²⁶ And the news spread throughout the countryside.

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

A Place at the Table

1 For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star over head.

And God will delight
when we are creators of justice and joy,
Yes, God will delight
when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy.

2 For everyone born, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding to share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for everyone here, a system that's fair.

And God will delight
when we are creators of justice and joy,
Yes, God will delight
when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy.

3 For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong.

And God will delight
when we are creators of justice and joy,
Yes, God will delight
when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy.

5 For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free.

And God will delight
when we are creators of justice and joy,

Yes, God will delight
when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy,
Justice and joy.

Sermon **Belonging at the Table**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

We Are a Rainbow

TLUS 30

1 We're the light of all the world, we are a city on a hill,
We're a candle on a stand proclaiming light,
We will not hide our lamp beneath a bushel any more,
We will shine a ray of hope that's burning bright.

We are a rainbow, sign of covenant and peace,
For the flood of tears will finally cease to be,
Come shine your rainbow, splash your hues across the sky,
Paint the world in colours proud and bold and free.

2 We're a coat of many colours, sewn from many different threads,
Covering all in warmth, in welcome and in grace,
God said "Let there be light", created every varied shade,
In the rainbow each of us can find a place.

We are a rainbow, sign of covenant and peace,
For the flood of tears will finally cease to be,
Come shine your rainbow, splash your hues across the sky,
Paint the world in colours proud and bold and free.

3 We are hope to still believe in tomorrow's better day,
We are peace in a world that's torn apart,
We are joy that will last in all the struggles that we face,
We are love that blooms and grows in every heart.

We are a rainbow, sign of covenant and peace,
For the flood of tears will finally cease to be,
Come shine your rainbow, splash your hues across the sky,
Paint the world in colours proud and bold and free
Paint the world in colours proud and bold and free.

Offering

Jesus' ministry was grounded in compassion made tangible: meals shared, people welcomed, lives restored. As we continue the work of building communities of justice, dignity, and

belonging, we are invited to give generously and joyfully. Your gifts support the ministry and mission of this community, including the ongoing work of creating spaces where people are safe, celebrated, and cared for. Let us give as an act of hope and love.

As we bless the offerings, let us sing:

Offering Hymn

What Can I Do?

MV 191

What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

Prayers of the People

God of love and liberation, on this Pride Sunday, we come before you carrying many things. Joy and grief. Celebration and exhaustion. Hope and fear.

We give thanks for the beauty and diversity of your creation.
For every identity and story that reflects your image in unique and holy ways.
For the courage of those who have lived truthfully
in a world that has not always been safe or kind.
For activists, elders, advocates, artists, caregivers, teachers, pastors,
drag performers, community organizers, and quiet everyday people
whose lives have helped widen the circle for others.

We remember today those whose stories have too often been erased.
Those harmed by families, churches, governments,
or communities that should have protected them.
Those rejected for who they are or whom they love.
Those carrying wounds from bullying, discrimination, violence, or silence.
Those who are still searching for safety, home, or belonging.

God, draw near to all who feel alone.
Surround those navigating depression, anxiety, fear, or isolation.
Be with those who must hide parts of themselves to stay safe.
And strengthen those working tirelessly for justice when the work feels heavy.

We pray for this wider world.
For places where hatred grows loud.
For leaders who use fear to divide.
For communities impacted by violence, poverty, war, and oppression.
For all whose dignity is denied.

God of mercy, when the world feels fractured, remind us that love still moves among us.
When despair threatens to overwhelm us, remind us that resurrection
still happens quietly and stubbornly.

When fear tells us to shrink ourselves, remind us
that your Spirit continues to call people into fullness of life.

We pray all these things in the spirit of Jesus,
who shared tables freely, who widened the circle of belonging,
and who taught us to pray together, saying:

**Loving Creator in whom is heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come, your 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 yours is the kin-dom,
the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

My Soul Cries Out (v. 1, 2, 3)

MV120

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shames,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears,
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!

Bread for the Journey

Where in your life might God be inviting you to widen the circle of belonging?

Commissioning

Go into the world knowing you are beloved.

We will carry love boldly.

Go into the world ready to widen the circle.

We will make room at the table.

Go into the world with courage and compassion.

For Christ walks with us still.

Benediction

May the God who created you in love,
the Christ who welcomed the outcast,
and the Spirit who dances through every colour of creation
go with you now and always.

May you leave this place knowing deeply: you are beloved, you are worthy, and you belong.
Go in peace, and go in pride. Amen.

We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oh
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oh
we are marching in the light of God.

2 Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',
siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',

Siyahamba, hamba
siyahamba, oh
siyahamb', ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.
Siyahamba, hamba
siyahamba, oh
siyahamb', ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.

We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oh
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, marching,
we are marching, oh
we are marching in the light of God.

Postlude

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