



**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

**January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**New Year's Day**

**Call to Worship**

(French, Ukrainian) Happy New Year from our house to yours!

May each of you feel the Spirit filling you up with the hope needed for the coming year. May you feel the welcome of God's love. The Lord be with you! Thanks be to God!

**Opening Prayer**

God of stars and sages, open our senses to know your presence in the ordinary moments of our days. Lead us into the gift of a new year full of hope and promise, knowing your grace will guide us. Amen.

**Carol**

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

**VU 55**

1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2 Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

The old year dies and we face the new year as though it were an entity, new as a new born babe.

A new calendar with twelve leaves, one for each month.

Something in us, some need for the specific, the orderly, the mathematical exactitude, calls for such a demarcation. Yet, any year, regardless of arbitrary time, is like a circle;

you can start at any point upon it and, following the circle,

happens to be the cycle of the seasons, planting, growing, reaping, resting;

and thus it is a part of the earth, the soil and the flowing waters as well as of the stars by which it is gauged.

### **A Carol**

### **What Child is This**

**VU 74**

1 What child is this, who laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.

This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, one and all, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

No year stands by itself, any more than any day stands alone.

There is the continuity of all the years in the trees, the grass, even the stones on the hilltops. Even in humans.

For time flows like water, eroding and building shaping and ever flowing:

and time is a part of us, not only our years, as we speak of them, but our lives, our thoughts.

All our yesterdays are summarized in our now, and all the tomorrows are ours to shape.

No year is complete.

Even the seasons into which we divide the years overlap the arbitrary markers.

Winter ends one year and begins the next, and the growth of each spring is from the root and seed of the past. It is the continuity that matters,

the inevitability of tomorrow, which gives meaning to the numbers themselves.

Ten or a hundred has no meaning without the continuity of numbers behind it, other numbers beyond.

Tomorrow implies a now and a yesterday.

**Carol**

**When Heaven's Bright with Mystery**

**VU 93**

1 When heaven's bright with mystery  
and science searches nature's art,  
when all creation yearns for peace  
and hope sinks deep in human hearts,  
appear to us, O Holy Light;  
lift from our eyes the shades of night.

2 When Herod barter's power and lives  
and Rachel's weeping fills the night,  
when suffering's mask marks every face,  
and Love's a refugee in flight,  
reveal to us your word of grace  
and make us witness to your peace.

3 When fragile faith, like desert wind,  
blows dry and empty, hope erased,  
proclaim again our day's brief space,  
breathe on the clay of our despair  
and work a new creation there.

4 When heaven's bright with mystery  
and stars still lead an unknown way,  
when love still lights a gentle path  
where courts of power can hold no sway,  
there with the Magi, let us kneel,  
our gifts to share, God's world to heal.

The year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on,  
with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.

A thought as we begin a new year:

I thank God for another day.

I shall live this day without fear, jealousy or regret, or being ashamed for deed or thought, now  
or in the past.

I shall enjoy this day.

I shall do no harm to anyone, but shall do those acts of goodness and kindness that I may have  
the opportunity to do.

I shall discharge my duties calmly, with clear thinking and in a friendly manner.

I shall not bemoan my weaknesses but be happy in my strengths.

I shall behave myself and leave the rest to **God!**

**Carol**

**Come Children, Join to Sing**

**VU 345**

1 Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!  
Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!  
Let all with heart and voice,  
saved by God's gracious choice,  
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

2 Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!  
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!  
Christ calls his people friends,  
the helpless he defends,  
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

3 Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!  
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!  
The whole creation o'er  
let all God's love adore,  
Singing forever more: Hallelujah!