



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Rev. Gregory Daly: Minister of Word & Sacrament

Rev. Carmen Llanos: Minister of Community Development

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Vicky Kennedy

May 16, 2021 – Ascension Sunday



WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart's Desire

Music: Henry W. Greatorex's Collection, 1851

Call to Worship

Jesus said to his followers: "Wait."

What are we waiting for?

We are waiting for the Spirit, the power of the most high.

Where shall we wait?

We'll wait right here. Right in the place where we are.

How will we know when our waiting is done?

Oh, you'll know

How will we know?

The Spirit of God is a Spirit of change.

The Spirit of God is a Spirit of hope.

The Spirit of God is a Spirit of abundant life.

You'll know.

As we wait for the Spirit, what should we do?

Let us do what we do at all times, in all places...

Let us worship God together.

Response

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

Text: The Venerable Bede / English: Benjamin Webb
Music: Lasst Uns Erfeuen

*A hymn of glory let us sing!
New hymns throughout the world shall ring:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ, by a road before untrod.
Ascends unto the realm of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*To whom the shining angels cry,
"Why stand and gaze upon the sky?"
Alleluia! Alleluia!
"This is the Savior!" Thus they say,
"This is his glorious triumph day!"
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Life & Work of the Church



Welcome to online worship

Whoever you are, however you identify, wherever you come from, you are welcome here.

Land Acknowledgement

As we prepare for worship, we take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land 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 the Mississauga's of the Credit and Scugog. What we now know as Scarborough is part of the Williams Treaty lands. Today, the meeting place around Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory. It is now our time to share in the care and maintenance of the land. Part of that discussion is the work of reconciliation and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Candle Lighting



Opening Hymn

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

VU 231

Words: Isaac Watts

Music: attributed to Franz Joseph Haydn

*I sing the mighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad,
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at God's command
and all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the One
who filled the earth with food;
who formed the creatures with a word,
and then pronounced them good.
O God, your wonders are displayed
where'er I turn my eye;
if I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky!*

*There's not a plant or flower below
but makes your glories known;
and clouds arise, and tempests blow,
by your command alone;
while all that borrows life from you
is ever in your care,
and everywhere that I may be,
you, God, are present there.*

Prayer for Grace

Gracious God, we gather before you in prayer. We confess that all too often we look up to heaven for glimpses of grace, while not seeing your grace that is revealed all around us. Loving God, as we struggle with our brokenness, open our hearts to the presence of your grace in the people around us. As they reach out to us, let us reach out to them so together we may be healed. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise

VU 189

Words: Charles Wesley

Music: William Henry Monk

*Hail the day that sees him rise, hallelujah!
taken from our wondering eyes, hallelujah!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, hallelujah!*

re-ascends his native heaven. Hallelujah!

*There the glorious triumph waits; hallelujah!
lift your heads, eternal gates; hallelujah!
Christ has conquered death and sin; hallelujah!
Now the Glory shall begin. Hallelujah!*

*See, he lifts his hands above, hallelujah!
see, he shows the prints of love, hallelujah!
hark, his gracious lips bestow, hallelujah!
blessing on his church below. Hallelujah!*

*Still for us he intercedes, hallelujah!
his prevailing death he pleads, hallelujah!
near himself prepares our place, hallelujah!
first-fruits of our human race. Hallelujah!*

Prayer of Illumination



*Loving God, your word comes to us through the ages and reminds us that, though the details may change, your will is timeless.
You call us to be a people whose love knows no bounds and whose service to others overcomes all barriers.
Form us by your word, this day. Amen.*

Luke 24: 44-53

New Revised Standard Version

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what God promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Acts 1: 1-11

New Revised Standard Version

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³ After his suffering he presented himself alive

to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Teacher, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that God has set by God’s own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two people in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, “People of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God

Sermon

Things are Looking Up



Hymn

Faith Begins By Letting Go

Words: Carl P. Daw, Jr. © 1996 Hope Publishing Co.

Music: William Henry Monk

*Faith begins by letting go,
giving up what had seemed sure,
taking risks and pressing on,
though the way feels less secure:
pilgrimage both right and odd,
trusting all our life to God.*

*Faith endures by holding on,
keeping memory’s roots alive
so that hope may bear its fruit;
promise-fed, our souls will thrive,
not through merit we possess
but by God’s great faithfulness.*

*Faith matures by reaching out,
stretching minds, engaging hearts,
sharing struggles, living prayer,
binding up the broken parts;
till we find the commonplace
ripe with witness to God's grace.*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering



Prayers of the People



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

Wonderful Love

Words: Robert Walmsley
Music: Adam Watson

VU 574

*Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true, tender and true,
out of the heart of the Saviour above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Saviour above.*

*Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell
joyfully came, joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame,
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.*

*Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
Come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above*

*envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.*

Benediction & Commissioning

Postlude



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Other Resources for Today

ANFSCD and Sermon

[\(6\) Luba - Let It Go - YouTube](#)

Let It Go - Luba

*Hey hey
Too many doubts Too much fear
Too much danger When society constructs
Our human nature oh
Live by the rules Live by the laws Live by commandments
Notions preconceived Can lead to utter madness
Let it go Let it go
Let it free your body
Let it move your soul
Let it go, Oh no
We are made We are not born
Let it go
Let it free your body Let it move your soul
Let it go, No no
We are made We are not born
Learn to convert Learn to assert Learn to abandon
Ideologies and Disciplines at random
Lay down the laws Lay down the rules
Lay down commandments Lift the sanctions
That restricts this woman's madness
Uniformity Conventionality
Is the fate of our existence?
Keep it safely at a distance
Nonconformity Unconventionality
Is the fate to be?
Let your hair down Can't you see?
Let it go Let it go
Let it free your body
Let it move your soul*

Lectionary Readings

Psalm 47

New Revised Standard Version

Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.
²For God, the Most High, is awesome,
a great sovereign over all the earth.
³God subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
⁴God chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom God loves. *Selah*

⁵ God has gone up with a shout,
with the sound of a trumpet.
⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our sovereign, sing praises.
⁷ For God is the sovereign of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.
⁸ God is sovereign over the nations;
and sits on a holy throne.
⁹ The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
God is highly exalted.

Ephesians 1: 15-23

New Revised Standard Version

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I pray that the God of our saviour Jesus Christ, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰ God put this power to work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²² And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.