



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Readers: Janet Bawcutt, Mary Cannings

Vocalist: Kayin Paul

May 21, 2023 - Seventh Sunday of Easter

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

If You Will Trust In God To Guide You

Music by Georg Neumark

Call to Worship

God's people have gathered for worship.

and God is with us.

Strangers and friends, familiar and new,

yet one in God's love.

Feeling lost and hopeless, feeling found and thankful,

we come in gratitude and hope.

Come, let us worship our God!

Opening Hymn

Come and Seek The Ways of Wisdom

MV 10

Words: © 1993 Ruth Duck

Music: © 1995 Donna Kasbohm

Come and seek the ways of Wisdom,
she who danced when earth was new.

Follow closely what she teaches,
for her words are right and true.

Wisdom clears the path to justice,
Showing us what love must do.

Listen to the voice of Wisdom,
crying in the market-place.
Hear the Word made flesh among us,
full of glory, truth, and grace.
When the word takes root and ripens,
peace and righteousness embrace.

Sister Wisdom, come, assist us;
 nurture all who seek rebirth.
 Spirit guide and close companion,
 bring to light our sacred worth.
 Free us to become your people,
 holy friends of God and earth.

Life & Work of the Church



Welcome to online worship. We are very happy that you have decided to worship with us here today at Birchcliff Bluffs United Church.

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 and we honour the stewardship of the Mississauga of the New Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Iroquois, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work and meet on this territory. We seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Candle Lighting

We light this small candle.

Even one candle can be a beacon of hope.

We pray that hope and love may fill our hearts.

May we carry this light with us, always.

Opening Prayer

*Hear us O God of past, present, and future,
 who calls us forth to worship. We, your people, members of your body, have gathered
 in this special place, in answer to your call to worship. Be with us as we open ourselves
 to the gift of your presence, we pray. Amen*

Hymn

All The Way My Saviour Leads Me

VU 635

Words by Fanny Crosby
 Music by Robert S. Lowry

All the way my Saviour leads me;
 what have I to ask beside?

Can I doubt the tender mercy
 who through life has been my guide?
 Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
 here by faith in God to dwell,
 for I know, whate'er befall me,
 Jesus doeth all things well.

All the way my Saviour leads me,
 cheers each winding path I tread,
 gives me grace for every trial,
 feeds me with the living bread.
 Though my weary steps may falter,
 and my soul athirst may be,
 gushing from the rock before me,
 lo, a spring of joy I see!

All the way my Saviour leads me;
 O the fullness of God's love!
 Perfect rest to me is promised
 in my Saviour's house above.
 When my spirit, clothed, immortal,
 wings its flight to realms of day,
 this my song through endless ages,
 'Jesus led me all the way!'

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Prayer of Illumination

Open our hearts to the mystery of your word. Open our spirits to its meaning for our lives. be with us as we listen for and receive your word today. Amen

Jeremiah 17:5-10 New International Version

⁵This is what the LORD says:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
 who draws strength from mere flesh
 and whose heart turns away from the LORD.

⁶That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
 they will not see prosperity when it comes.

They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
 in a salt land where no one lives.

⁷“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
 whose confidence is in him.

⁸They will be like a tree planted by the water

that sends out its roots by the stream.
 It does not fear when heat comes;
 its leaves are always green.
 It has no worries in a year of drought
 and never fails to bear fruit.”
⁹The heart is deceitful above all things
 and beyond cure.
 Who can understand it?
¹⁰“I the LORD search the heart
 and examine the mind,
 to reward each person according to their conduct,
 according to what their deeds deserve.”

Luke 6:17-26 Blessings and Woes

¹⁷ He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, ¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

²⁰ Looking at his disciples, he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
 for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now,
 for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now,
 for you will laugh.

²² Blessed are you when people hate you,
 when they exclude you and insult you
 and reject your name as evil,
 because of the Son of Man.

²³ “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich,
 for you have already received your comfort.

²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now,
 for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,
 for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
 for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Sermon**Hymn****Amazing Grace****VU 266**

Words: John Henry Newton, 1779
 Music: from Virginia Harmony, 1831

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
 that saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found,
 was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 and grace my fears relieved;
 how precious did that grace appear
 the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
 I have already come;
 'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
 and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
 bright shining as the sun,
 we've no less days to sing God's praise
 than when we'd first begun.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**Offering**

The work of our hands, our time, our talents; each piece works to change the world around us. There is much to give thanks for and part of what we do when we take stock of this is to consider how we can give back in gratitude. There are many ways for you to give, please visit our website www.bbuc.ca/donate to learn how you can support the work of this place in this community.

Prayers of the People

Loving God, with joyful shouts, our souls cry out of your greatness and wonder. With patience we await, trusting in the good things you have promised. You have fixed us in your sight, despite our weakness, offering us strength and protection. Through you, the poor and hungry will be fed. Through our faith, we are bound to your promise and are blessed to be part of your transforming power.

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers...

God, grant that, as we proclaim your name,
all people will know the power of love at work in the world.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...



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

Take Up The Song

MV 213

Words & Music: © 2005 Laura A. Herman

Take up the song of peace
and go into the world,
Take up the song of peace
in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives,
lay them down, in peace,
lay them down, and take up the song.

Take up the song of hope
and go into the world,
Take up the song of hope
in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives,
lay them down, in hope,
lay them down, and take up the song.

Take up the song of faith
and go into the world,
Take up the song of faith
in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives,
lay them down, in faith,
lay them down, and take up the song.

Take up the song of love
and go into the world,
Take up the song of love
in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives,
lay them down, in love,
lay them down, and take up the song.

Benediction & Commissioning

May the God of creation, power, strength and glory,
*Bless us all as we go bravely to face the uncertainties of life,
Knowing full well that we do not go alone.*

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Birchcliff Bluffs United Church Additional Lectionary

Acts 16:6-14 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

⁶They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; ⁸so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

The Conversion of Lydia

¹¹We therefore^[a] set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. ¹³On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed^[b] there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of

God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul.

Psalm 68:1-10 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

Praise and Thanksgiving

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm. A Song.

- ¹ Let God rise up; let his enemies be scattered;
let those who hate him flee before him.
- ² As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;
as wax melts before the fire,
let the wicked perish before God.
- ³ But let the righteous be joyful;
let them exult before God;
let them be jubilant with joy.
- ⁴ Sing to God; sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds^[a]—
his name is the LORD—
be exultant before him.
- ⁵ Father of orphans and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
- ⁶ God gives the desolate a home to live in;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,
but the rebellious live in a parched land.
- ⁷ O God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness, *Selah*
- ⁸ the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
- ⁹ Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad;
you restored your heritage when it languished;
- ¹⁰ your flock found a dwelling in it;
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

Psalm 68:32-35 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

- ³² Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord, *Selah*
- ³³ O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens;
listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.
- ³⁴ Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel

and whose power is in the skies.
³⁵ Awesome is God in his^[a] sanctuary,
 the God of Israel;
 he gives power and strength to his people.

1 Peter 4:12-14 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition** **Suffering as a Christian**

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory,^[a] which is the Spirit of God,^[b] is resting on you.^[c]

1 Peter 5:6-11 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,^[a] will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the power^[b] forever and ever. Amen.

John 17:1-11 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition** **Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

¹⁷ After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people,^[a] to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶ "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.