



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

August 13, 2023

Eleven after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Jesus, Lover Of My Soul

Music: John Bacchus Dykes

Lighting the Christ Candle

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Land Acknowledgement

We take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which we gather. 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 Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog. The lands where Birchcliff Bluffs United Church sits are part of the Williams Treaty. 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 and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Opening Hymn

God of Grace and God of Glory

VU 686

1 God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power;
now fulfil your church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour.

2 Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn your Christ, assail your ways;
fears and doubts too long have bound us;
free our hearts to work and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days.

3 Cure your children's warring madness,
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton selfish gladness,
rich in goods and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

4 Set our feet on lofty places,
gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christlike graces,
pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee.

Call to Worship

From many places God calls us. From busyness and relaxation, from laughter and from tears,
God calls us. To share and learn, to sing and pray, to be family. Alleluia.

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, be present with us as we cherish the bounty of summer. We are grateful for
all of creation, we ask that you open our hearts so that we may plant seeds of your joyful world
in the here and now. Be with us now we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn

There's a Spirit in the Air

VU 582

Words: Brian Wren / Music: John Wilson
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There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.'

Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

Still the Spirit gives us light,
seeing wrong and setting right:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!

When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,

praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

Receiving God's Word

Scripture Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Walks on the Water

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." **Thanks be to God!**

Hymn

Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

VU 563

1 Jesus, you have come to the lakeshore
looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones;
you only asked me to follow humbly.

O Jesus, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling, have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

2 You know so well my possessions;
my boat carries no gold and no weapons;
- you will find there my nets and labour.

O Jesus, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling, have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

3 You need my hands, full of caring
through my labours to give others rest,
and constant love that keeps on loving.

O Jesus, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling, have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

4 You, who have fished other oceans,
ever longed for by souls who are waiting,
my loving friend, as thus you call me.

O Jesus, with your eyes you have searched me,
and while smiling, have spoken my name;
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;
by your side I will seek other seas.

Reflection

Responding to God's Word

Hymn

Will Your Anchor Hold

VU 675

1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

2 It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

3 It will surely hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;
on the rising tide it can never fail
while our hopes abide within the veil.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

4 When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

Offering

We offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

A sign of our commitment to serve God in all ways. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Encouraging God, open our hearts to hard words and deep truths.

Nudge us with your spirit to recognize the message you have for us this day. Inspire us, with your love, to take your message into our hearts and into our lives ...

Moment of silent prayer

**Laughing Jesus, 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 and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Take Up The Song

MV 213

Words and 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 Jesus' laughter bubble within us and among us so we can laugh and live joyfully. Daily strive to love God, share the love meant for all, and follow your heart always. **Amen.**

Postlude

It Fell Upon a Summer Day

Music: Henry W. Davies

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