



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 8, 2023

Baptism of the Lord

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

When the light of your love grows dim ...

May the light of Christ rekindle your flame.

Together our light lights up the room!

Call to Worship

Come, people of God!

We come, called by God to be witnesses to the Light;

With John the Baptizer,

With all the disciples,

With our sisters and brothers throughout the ages,

We gather to sing, to pray, to worship our God!

Alleluia!

Alleluia and amen!

Introit

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

VU 101

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus Christ, to you we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in your birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to you addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

4 Grant us grace to see you, Lord,
mirrored in your holy Word;
with your grace our lives endow,
grace to imitate you now,

that we like to you may be
at your great epiphany,
anthems be to you addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

Land Acknowledgement

We now take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water 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 most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog, all part of the Williams Treaty. 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 Prayer

Holy God, on this day when we share the story of the baptism of Jesus, you once again call us to gather on the banks of the river Jordan.

May we, like John the Baptist, be willing to follow Jesus into the living waters. May we humbly answer your call to serve. May we, like Jesus, receive your declaration of love. May we delight in the renewing waters of baptism as we recall Jesus' baptism. Amen.

Hymn

Thine is the Glory

VU 173

1 Thine is the glory, risen, conquering One:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where the body lay.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering One:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

2 Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering One:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering One:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 29 A psalm of David.

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his^[a] holiness.
The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.
The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning.
The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
The voice of the LORD twists the oaks^[c]
and strips the forests bare.
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Gospel Matthew 3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Hymn

Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers

VU 385

1 Spirit divine, attend our prayers,
and make this house your home;
descend with all your gracious powers:
O come, great Spirit, come!

2 Come as the light: to us reveal
our emptiness and woe;
and lead us in those paths of life
where all the righteous go.

3 Come as the wind: sweep clean away
what dead within us lies,
and search and freshen all our souls
with living energies.

4 Come as the fire and purge our hearts
like sacrificial flame;
let our whole life an offering be
to our Redeemer's name.

5 Spirit divine, attend our prayers:
make a lost world your home;
descend with all your gracious powers:
O come, great Spirit, come!

Sermon Come to the Water

Hymn

Shall We Gather at the River

VU 710

1 Shall we gather at the river,
where bright angel feet have trod;
with its crystal tide for ever
flowing by the throne of God?

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.

2 Ere we reach the shining river,
lay we every burden down;
grace our spirits will deliver,
and provide a robe and crown.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.

3 Soon we'll reach the shining river,
soon our pilgrimage will cease,
soon our happy hearts will quiver
with the melody of peace.

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.

Offering

In baptism, O God, you claimed us as your own. We are a visible symbol of your ever-present love, a love that we remember and give thanks for this day.

Therefore, we now give you symbols to represent our love. May the money and time we offer show our devotion and thanks to you, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Friends, like raindrops running across stones, finding their way down towards the shore to the racing river and deep into the earth, our prayers run together, returning to their source,

God receives our prayers, like parched earth soaking up cool rains, desperate to taste on her tongue the trust and vulnerability of her children. God welcomes us like the tugging of love's tidal pull. In this knowledge, let us hold silence so that together in this silence, we can unburden ourselves, praying to the One who has claimed us. Let us hold silence together ...

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

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

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

River

MV 3

1 River, rushing down to the ocean blue,
River from a mountain high.
River, as you do what rivers do,
River, draw the Spirit nigh.

- 2 Spirit, coming down to the river-side,
Spirit, spark of wondrous thought.
Spirit, I am free for you to guide,
Spirit, pray that I be taught!
- 3 Water, let me drink of your healing pow'r,
Water, strength and life you give.
Water, as I travel with each hour,
Water, help my body live.
4. River, flowing down where you ran before,
River, source of clearer view.
River, as I walk your rocky shore,
River, see my journey through.
See my journey through.
See my journey through.

Benediction & Commissioning

As we leave worship this day, let us recall the baptism vows to which we have committed:

We believe in God Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We follow Christ's way as we love and serve others.

Go and find ways to live out your commitment.

Amen.

Postlude

* Permission to podcast/stream and reproduce the music and lyrics obtained from
ONE LICENSE with license A-737645.
All rights reserved.



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Baptism of Jesus, First After Epiphany
Sunday January 8, 2023**

Isaiah 63:7-9

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

God's Mercy Remembered

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done for us

and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.
⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior
⁹ in all their distress.
It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Psalm 148 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

Praise for God's Universal Glory

¹ Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.
⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.^[a]

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
¹² Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

Hebrews 2:10-18

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁰ It was fitting that God,^[a] for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.^[b] For this reason Jesus^[c] is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

¹³ And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Matthew 2:12-23

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴ Then Joseph^[a] got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to

fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi,^[b] he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.^[c] ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ Then Joseph^[d] got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”^[e]