



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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October 12th, 2025

Thanksgiving Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Lighting the Christ & Rainbow Candle

We light these candles as a symbol of our intention to be open to God’s presence and action during this time of worship. As we welcome this flickering flame, we wait to be transformed by the divine Spirit! *The candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

Many thousands of years ago, Indigenous people lived, worked, and worshipped on this land. Over time, settlers from other lands came, sometimes sharing, often destroying, the relationship Indigenous peoples had with the water, land, and skies, with their Elders, families, culture, and faith. We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, Chippewa, and Mississaugas of the Credit, and that this land is home to many diverse Indigenous nations.

As we light our candles, we pray for God's guidance in our journey towards reconciliation, and we give thanks for the caretakers of this land and the opportunity to pray here together.

Opening Hymn

Come, You Thankful People, Come

VU 516

- 1 Come, you thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in,
safe before the storms begin;
God, our maker, does provide
for our needs to be supplied:
come to God's own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
- 2 All the world is God's own field,
harvests for God's praise to yield;

wheat and weeds together sown,
here for joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade, and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear:
Harvest-giver, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

4 Even so, God, quickly come
to your final harvest home!
Gather all your people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin;
there for ever purified,
in your presence to abide:
come, with all your angels, come,
raise the glorious harvest home.

Call to Worship

Come, people of God, let us gather with grateful hearts.
We come, for God's mercies are new every morning.
Ten cried out, and Jesus heard their voices.
God hears us still, in our joy and in our need.
One returned, falling at Christ's feet in thanksgiving.
We too return, to give thanks and praise.
So lift your voices, lift your hearts, and lift your lives to God.
We worship the One who heals, restores, and makes us whole.

Passing the Peace

In Luke's gospel today, ten lepers called out from a distance—separated, isolated, cut off from their communities. And yet Jesus heard them. Jesus crossed the distance with mercy and healing. Today, though we too are gathered across screens and miles, the Spirit of Christ bridges every gap. No matter where we are, no matter how far apart, we are one body in Christ. I invite you now to share Christ's peace—with those gathered beside you, or by carrying it with you into the week ahead.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:
Healing God,
on this Thanksgiving Sunday,
we gather in gratitude for the abundance of your creation,
the gift of community, and the hope of new beginnings.

Like the lepers who called out from a distance,
 we bring our cries, our longings, our prayers to you.
 Like the one who returned,
 we come with thanksgiving that turns us back toward your presence.
 Gather us in, O Christ,
 heal us where we are broken,
 restore us where we are weary,
 and send us out as people of thanksgiving,
 alive with your Spirit and overflowing with your love. Amen.

Hymn

We Praise You, O God

VU 218

- 1 We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
 in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
 We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
 we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.
- 2 We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,
 through trial and tempest, companion and guide.
 When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
 but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.
- 3 With voices united our praises we offer
 and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
 Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
 to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture **Philippians 4:4-9**

⁴ Rejoice in the Spirit always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Spirit is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten men with a skin disease approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus's feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? So where are the other nine?" ¹⁸ Did

none of them return to give glory to God except this foreigner?”¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

We Plough the Fields and Scatter

VU 520

1 We plough the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by your almighty hand;
you send the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.

2 You only are the maker
of all things near and far;
you paint the wayside flower,
you light the evening star;
the winds and waves obey you,
by you the birds are fed;
much more to us, your children,
you give us daily bread.

All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.

3 We thank you then, O Maker,
for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food;
accept the gifts we offer
for all your love imparts,
and, what from us you long for,

our humble, thankful hearts.

All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.

Sermon A 50-Yard Dash to Thanksgiving

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Hymn Now Thank We All Our God VU 236

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart,
and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ill in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
for all that has been given,
the Son, and Spirit blest
who dwell in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore

Offering

In the story of the ten healed, only one returned—running back to fall at Jesus’ feet in gratitude. That return is what transforms thanksgiving from politeness into worship. As we bring our gifts today—whether given online, through the mail, or in spirit—we too return to Christ with gratitude. We lay before God not only our money, but our hearts, our lives, our thanksgiving.

As we bless the offerings given to the church, let us sing:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures high and low;
give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Prayers of the People

God of mercy and compassion,
we lift our prayers to you this Thanksgiving Sunday.

We give thanks for the harvest of the earth,
for fields and gardens, orchards and oceans,
and for all who labour to bring food to our tables.
Help us to share your abundance so that none go hungry.

We give thanks for the gift of community—
for family, friends, neighbours, and congregations,
and for the ways you knit us together in love.
Teach us to welcome the stranger,
and to make space for those who feel pushed to the margins.

We pray for those who call out from a distance today:
for those who are sick, grieving, or lonely,
for those excluded because of race, gender identity, sexuality, or poverty,
for those displaced by war, fire, or flood.
May your healing presence be near,
and may we be your hands and feet in acts of compassion.

We remember this land we call Canada,
and the Indigenous Peoples whose territories we live on.
On this Thanksgiving, teach us to give thanks truthfully—
with eyes open to injustice,
and hearts committed to reconciliation.

God of abundance,
as you heard the lepers' cries and responded with mercy,
hear our prayers and make us whole.
Through Jesus Christ, the one who makes us well, we pray together:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come, your 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 yours is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

For the Fruit of All Creation

VU 227

1 For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

Bread for the Journey:

Where in your life do you feel called to “turn back” in gratitude, and how might that thanksgiving shape the way you live and give this week?

Commissioning

We have gathered in gratitude.

We go forth to live lives of thanksgiving.

We have heard cries for mercy.

We go forth to answer with compassion.

We have turned back to Christ in praise.

We go forth to walk the way of healing and hope.

Go now, beloved of God—with hearts lifted high and lives made whole.

Thanks be to God!

Benediction

Go out into this Thanksgiving week with hearts of gratitude.
May the God who creates in abundance bless you,
may the Christ who heals and restores meet you on the way,

and may the Spirit who sustains life fill you with joy.
Go in peace, to love and serve,
and may your whole life be a 50-yard dash to thanksgiving.
Amen.

Choral Benediction

Go Now In Peace

Go now in peace, never be afraid
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love and show you believe
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.
Amen, amen, amen!

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