



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: Amanda Hynes-Bower

February 14, 2021 – Transfiguration Sunday

Black History Month



WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Call to Worship

From the farthest reaches of the sunrise and sunset,

God speaks, calling out to the earth.

The bright light of God shines forth for justice.

God is there for those who call out in times of trouble.

Those who offer praise and thanksgiving will find hope.

For the skies proclaim the goodness of our God.

Let us proclaim that goodness as we worship today.

Response

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

VU 333

Words: Charles Wesley

Music: Rowland Huw Prichard

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.*

*Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

Life & Work of the Church



Welcome to online worship

Land Acknowledgement

As we prepare for worship, we 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 Mississauga's of the Credit and Scugog, 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. We seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



Candle Lighting

Opening Hymn

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

VU 559

Words: Robert Robinson alt. © 1993 The Pilgrim Press.
Music: John Wyeth

*Come, O Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing
call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unfailing love.*

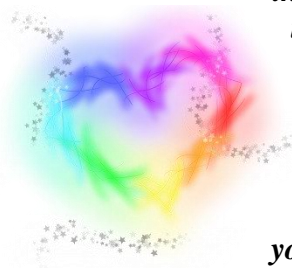
*Here I pause in my sojourning,
giving thanks for having come,
come to trust, at every turning,
God will guide me safely home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God,
came to rescue me from danger,
precious presence, precious blood.*

*O, to grace how great a debt
or daily I am drawn anew!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it,
wander from the love I've known:
here's my heart, O, take and seal it,
seal it for your very own.*

Prayer for Grace

*God, we give you thanks for
from the beam of your wisdom
prayer to the rare and elusive
we can bask in your glory.*

*In the sparkle of care we see in
smile of greeting from a
us. Set us aglow for others with*



*the ways that you illuminate our lives:
that shines forth from scripture and
mountain top experiences where*

*the eyes of our loved ones to the
stranger, your love radiates out to
your wisdom, love, and glory. Amen.*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

And Now For Something Completely Different



Hymn

Though I May Speak

VU 372

Words: Hal H. Hopson © 1972 Hope Publishing Co.
Music: Traditional English melody

*Though I may speak with bravest fire,
and have the gift to all inspire,
and have not love, my words are vain,
as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.*

*Though I may give all I possess,
and striving so my love profess,
but not be given by love within,
the profit soon turns strangely thin.*

*Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
by this we worship, and are freed.*

Prayer of Illumination

*Help us O God, to come to you with open lives to receive your words.
May we give them new life as we listen to what you have to say.
Open our hearts as we embark on this journey with each other and with
you. Amen*



2 Kings 2: 1-12

The Message

¹⁻² Just before GOD took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on a walk out of Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. GOD has sent me on an errand to Bethel.”

Elisha said, “Not on your life! I’m not letting you out of my sight!” So they both went to Bethel.

³ The guild of prophets at Bethel met Elisha and said, “Did you know that GOD is going to take your mentor away from you today?”

“Yes,” he said, “I know it. But keep it quiet.”

⁴ Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. GOD has sent me on an errand to Jericho.”

Elisha said, “Not on your life! I’m not letting you out of my sight!” So they both went to Jericho.

⁵ The guild of prophets at Jericho came to Elisha and said, “Did you know that GOD is going to take your mentor away from you today?”

“Yes,” he said, “I know it. But keep it quiet.”

⁶ Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. GOD has sent me on an errand to the Jordan.”

Elisha said, “Not on your life! I’m not letting you out of my sight!” And so the two of them went their way together.

⁷ Meanwhile, fifty people from the guild of prophets gathered some distance away while the two of them stood at the Jordan.

⁸ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and hit the water with it. The river divided and the two of them walked through on dry land.

⁹ When they reached the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, “What can I do for you before I’m taken from you? Ask anything.”

Elisha said, “Your life repeated in my life. I want to be a holy person just like you.”

¹⁰ “That’s a hard one!” said Elijah. “But if you’re watching when I’m taken from you, you’ll get what you’ve asked for. But only if you’re watching.”

¹¹⁻¹⁴ And so it happened. They were walking along and talking. Suddenly a chariot and horses of fire came between them and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it all and shouted, “My father, my father! You—the chariot and cavalry of Israel!” When he could no longer see anything, he grabbed his robe and ripped it to pieces. Then he picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him, returned to the shore of the Jordan, and stood there. He took Elijah’s cloak—all that was left of Elijah!—and hit the river with it, saying, “Now where is the GOD of Elijah? Where is he?”

When he struck the water, the river divided and Elisha walked through.

Mark 9:2-9

New Revised Standard Version

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Child, the Beloved; listen!” ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is the Gospel message for us to consider today.

Thanks be to God

Sermon**Not on Your Life****Hymn****How Good, God, To Be Here****VU 103**

Words: Joseph Armitage Robinson
Music: Charles Lockhart

*How good, Lord, to be here!
Your glory fills the night;
your face and garments, like the sun,
shine with unborrowed light.*

*How good, Lord, to be here,
your beauty to behold,
where Moses and Elijah stand,
your messengers of old.*

*Fulfiller of the past
and hope of things to be,
we hail your body glorified,
and our redemption see!*

*How good, Lord, to be here!
Yet we may not remain;
but, since you bid us leave the mount,
come with us to the plain.*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering



God has lovingly bestowed upon us the gift of life.
Our best response is to share that love by offering our whole lives
as agents for God's mission in the world.
Give as you are able to build the community of God
in our homes, our congregation and around the world.

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

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



Postlude

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Other Resources for Today

Sermon Images

“Bears savaging the youths at Elisha’s command,” unknown artist, French Manuscript 1453

“Medieval Plowing with Oxen” unknown artist, English woodcut, 14th Century

“Elisha dividing the waters of the Jordan with Elijah’s Mantle,” Jean-Baptists Despax, Carmelite Chapel, France c.1750

“Transfiguration of Christ,” Gerard Davis, Netherlands 1520 (the painting is said to a coronal section of the brain: *“We find the concept of the ventricles as the abode of the soul. God is represented in the third ventricle, with Elijah and Moses in the temporal horns of the lateral ventricles. Jesus, conduit between the Word of God and the human race, resembles the brain stem/spinal cord, conveying the message from the brain to limbs and organs.”*)

Elisha’s back story found at **1 Kings 19: 15-21** (The Message)

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ GOD said, “Go back the way you came through the desert to Damascus. When you get there anoint Hazael; make him king over Aram. Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi; make him king over Israel. Finally, anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Anyone who escapes death by Hazael will be killed by Jehu; and anyone who escapes death by Jehu will be killed by Elisha. Meanwhile, I’m preserving for myself seven thousand souls: the knees that haven’t bowed to the god Baal, the mouths that haven’t kissed his image.”

¹⁹ Elijah went straight out and found Elisha son of Shaphat in a field where there were twelve pairs of yoked oxen at work plowing; Elisha was in charge of the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak over him.

²⁰ Elisha deserted the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, “Please! Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye—then I’ll follow you.”

“Go ahead,” said Elijah, “but, mind you, don’t forget what I’ve just done to you.”

²¹ So Elisha left; he took his yoke of oxen and butchered them. He made a fire with the plow and tackle and then boiled the meat—a true farewell meal for the family. Then he left and followed Elijah, becoming his right-hand man.

Other Lectionary Readings

Psalm 50:1-6 New Revised Standard Version

¹ The mighty one, God,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

³ Our God comes and does not keep silence,
before God is a devouring fire,
and a mighty tempest all around.

⁴ God calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that God may judge the people:
⁵ “Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
⁶ The heavens declare God’s righteousness,
for God is judge. *Selah*

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

The Message

³⁻⁴ If our Message is obscure to anyone, it’s not because we’re holding back in any way. No, it’s because these other people are looking or going the wrong way and refuse to give it serious attention. All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness. They think this god can give them what they want, and that they won’t have to bother believing a Truth they can’t see. They’re stone-blind to the dayspring brightness of the Message that shines with Christ, who gives us the best picture of God we’ll ever get.⁵⁻⁶ Remember, our Message is not about ourselves; we’re proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Teacher. All we are is messengers, errand runners from Jesus for you. It started when God said, “Light up the darkness!” and our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful.