



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

**Ministers:** All the People – wherever and however they gather

**Minister of Word & Sacrament:** Katie Vardy

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Reader:** Beth Moore

**March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**First Sunday of Lent**

**WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Welcome**

**Land Acknowledgement**

We begin by acknowledging 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 gather here at Birchcliff Bluffs United Church, we reflect on the responsibility we share in caring for this land, learning from its history, and working toward reconciliation. May we act with respect, humility, and a commitment to justice, as we strive to build a future where all peoples—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—can live together in harmony and respect.

**We offer our thanks for this land, its history, and the teachings it offers, and we commit ourselves to listening, learning, and walking in solidarity with Indigenous peoples in the pursuit of healing and justice.**

**Opening Hymn**

**Come O Fount of Every Blessing**

**VU 559**

1 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.

2 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.

3 O, to grace how great a debtor  
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.

### **Call to Worship**

After he was baptized by John,  
Jesus went by himself to the wilderness  
where he was tempted.

**Forty days in the desert, Jesus was tempted  
to become relevant, spectacular, and powerful.**

Today, we begin to journey with Jesus through the season of Lent,  
which brings us to face some of our own weaknesses and temptations.

**Let us worship God and walk the journey together,  
seeking the spirit as our guide and companion along the way.**

### **Passing the Peace**

We pass the peace (*with a bow, or a wave, or a nod to our neighbours*) to remind us of the light  
of Christ that is in each of us, and that we are called to reconciliation and community.

Let us greet those around you with the Peace of Christ, saying:  
The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

### **Life and Work**

### **Opening Prayer**

Let us pray:

**In this sacred space,  
in these moments of stillness,  
our thoughts and silence are like incense.  
Holy God,**

whose glory touches and transfigures the mind,  
 whose intimate, gentle Spirit embraces our vulnerability  
 and fills our empty spaces with hope,  
 may we know the deep calm that only you can give.  
 Through the mystery of absence and presence,  
 come, fill us with your eternal silence. Amen.

**Lenten Candles:** The Candle of Hope

<b>Hymn</b>	<b>Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights</b>	<b>VU 108</b>
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Throughout these Lenten days and nights,  
 we turn to walk the inward way,  
 where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,  
 we live in hope till Easter day.

### RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

**Scripture     Luke 4:1-13**

<sup>4</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" <sup>9</sup> Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' <sup>11</sup> and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" <sup>12</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The Word of God for the People of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

<b>Hymn</b>	<b>Jesus, Tempted in the Desert (v. 1, 3, 4)</b>	<b>VU 115</b>
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1 Jesus, tempted in the desert,  
 lonely, hungry, filled with dread:  
 'Use your pow'r,' the tempter tells him;  
 'turn these barren rocks to bread!'

'Not alone by bread,' he answers,  
'can the human heart be filled.  
Only by the Word that calls us  
is our deepest hunger stilled!'

3 Jesus, tempted on the mountain  
by the lure of vast domain:  
'Fall before me! Be my servant!  
Glory, fame, you're sure to gain!'  
Jesus sees the dazzling vision,  
turns his eyes another way:  
'God alone deserves our homage!  
God alone will I obey!'

4 When we face temptation's power,  
lonely, struggling, filled with dread,  
Christ, who knew the tempter's hour,  
come and be our living bread.  
By your grace, protect, preserve us  
lest we fall, your trust betray.  
Yours, above all other voices,  
be the Word we hear, obey.

**Sermon**

**Overcoming Temptation: Jesus in the Wilderness**

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

**Hymn**

**I Heard the Voice of Jesus**

**VU 626**

1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
and he has made me glad.

2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down, and drink, and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank

of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till travelling days are done.

### **Offering**

Creator God,  
as we bless the gifts that we receive,  
we ask that you bless the work of our lives and the love of our hearts this day,  
offered in so many ways.

**We share your desire to create better lives and a better community.  
Let the soul of the world be restored in an ocean of your love. Amen.**

### **Offering Hymn**

### **Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**

**VU 541**

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**

And now, as a community of faith,  
we pray all this, using the ancient words you taught us, saying:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name  
Thy Kindom 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.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kindom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.  
Amen.**

### **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

- 1 This day God gives me strength of high heaven,  
sun and moon shining, flame in my hearth,  
flashing of lightning, wind in its swiftness,  
depths of the ocean, firmness of earth.
- 2 This day God sends me strength to sustain me,  
might to uphold me, wisdom as guide.  
Your eyes are watchful, your ears are listening,  
your lips are speaking, Friend at my side.
- 3 God's way is my way, God's shield is round me,  
God's host defends me, saving from ill.  
Angels of heaven, drive from me always  
all that would harm me, stand by me still.
- 4 Rising, I thank you, mighty and strong One,  
God of creation, giver of rest,  
firmly confessing Threeness of Persons,  
Oneness of Godhead, Trinity blest.

**Bread for the Journey**

How might the temptations of self-interest, control, or success show up in your life today,  
and how can you lean into God's love and justice to resist them?

**Commissioning and Benediction**

Let us go forward into the uncertainties of life.

**Let us be open to the guidance of the Spirit.**

Let us go forward certain that God will calm our spirits as we confront our fears.

**Let us go forward knowing that we are not alone.**

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

The journey has begun. God is with you.

Go forth to learn, to teach, to serve.

Go, bringing peace and hope to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

**Choral Response**

**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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