



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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September 21st, 2025

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ & Rainbow Candle

As we move into our worship, 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

As we take a moment and feel the ground beneath our feet, we give thanks for the caretakers of this land and for the opportunity to pray here together. 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. We give thanks for this living land that holds us this day; may we live into our own calling to respect and care for all life that makes home here together.

Opening Hymn

God Is Here

VU 389

1 God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
into open minds and hearts.

2 Here are symbols to remind us
of our lifelong need of grace;
here are table, font, and pulpit;
here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
here in silence, as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each.

3 Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us, as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living
to believe and to adore.

4 God of all, of church and kingdom,
in an age of change and doubt
keep us faithful to the gospel;
help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
all we have to give, receive;
we, who cannot live without you,
we adore you! We believe!

Call to Worship

O God, you have searched us and known us—you know our rising and our resting, our wondering and our wandering.

We are known, named, and loved by the Holy One.

Even in the places we try to hide, even when we feel lost in the noise of the world—

God's presence is not far. God's Spirit is within and among us.

In a world that says "Buy more, be more," Christ says, "Be faithful in little, and you will be faithful in much."

We come to worship, not to serve wealth, but to serve love.

Not to protect power, but to pursue justice.

Let us worship the One who sees our hearts and calls us to live with holy courage.

Let us worship God—who treasures truth and transforms our lives.

Passing the Peace

There is a kind of peace that goes deeper than politeness—a peace that meets us when we feel exposed or uncertain, when we wonder if we are truly seen, and hope we are still truly loved.

There is a peace that whispers, “You belong. You are not alone. You are held.” A peace that invites us to live with integrity, to release what no longer serves love, and to hold one another with care. This is the peace we pass. Not perfection, but presence. Not performance, but grace. Let us share that peace with one another, with open hearts and open hands.

Friends, the Peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Holy One, You see us more clearly than we see ourselves. You know the maps of our hearts—the roads we take, the detours we regret, the quiet corners where we hope no one will look. Still, You seek us out—not to shame us, but to shape us.

Today, reorient our hearts. Call us to be faithful not only in the grand gestures, but in the small decisions that shape our lives.

As we gather in worship, may we remember that no act of love is ever wasted, and that even in uncertainty, You are near. Amen.

Hymn

Holy Spirit, Hear Us

VU 377

1 Holy Spirit, hear us,
help us while we sing;
breathe into the music
of the praise we bring.

2 Holy Spirit, shine now
on the book we read;
light its holy pages
with the truth we need.

3 Holy Spirit, prompt us
when we bow to pray;
speak within and teach us
what we ought to say.

4 Holy Spirit, help us
daily by your might,
what is wrong to conquer,
and to choose the right.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 139: 1-8, 13-15, & 23-24

¹ O God, you have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, O God, you know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. ⁷ Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Luke 16:1- 8, 10-13

¹ Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.' ³ Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' ⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' ⁷ Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' ⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

¹⁰ "Whoever is faithful in very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Give to me, God, a Thankful Heart

VU 513

1 Give to me, God, a thankful heart
and a discerning mind;
give, as I play the Christian's part,
the strength to finish what I start
and act on what I find.

2 When, in the rush of days, my will
is habit-bound and slow,
help me to keep in vision still
what love and power and peace can fill
a life that trusts in you.

3 By your divine and urgent claim,
and by your human face,
kindle our sinking hearts to flame,
and as you teach the world your name
let it become your place.

4 Jesus, with all your church I long
to see your kingdom come;
show me your way of righting wrong
and turning sorrow into song
until you bring me home.

Sermon

Being Known, Being Accountable

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

I See a New Heaven (v. 1, 3, 4)

VU 713

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

1 There, there on the banks of a
river bright and free,
yielding her fruit, firm in her root,
the Tree of Life will be.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

3 There, there where the darkness brings
visions from above.
There where the night, bearing new light,
reveals the promise of love.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

4 There, there where we work with the
love of healing hands.
Labour we must, true to our trust
to build a promised new land.

I see a new heaven.
I see a new earth
as the old one will pass away,
where the fountain of life flows
and without price goes
to all people who abide in the land.

Offering

Holy One,

You see what no one else sees—the quiet generosity, the behind-the-scenes faithfulness, the decisions made with trembling trust. What we offer today is not everything—but it is something. A portion of what we have, a reflection of what we hope for, a small act of resistance against a world that says we never have enough.

Bless these gifts, and bless the ones who give. Multiply them, not in numbers alone, but in impact, in tenderness, in courage. May our giving be faithful—not flashy. May our hearts be aligned—not divided. And may this offering be part of your healing work in the world. 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

Loving God, You search us and know us.
There is not a word on our tongue that You do not know;
not a thought we can hide;
not a tear You ignore.

So we bring to You the fullness of our hearts—
our joy and our grief,
our dreams and our dread.

We pray for a world overwhelmed by wealth and wounded by want.
We pray for communities where greed has carved deep divides,
and for all who live at the mercy of unjust systems.

We remember those who have more than enough,
but feel spiritually empty—
and those who are rich in faith, but materially poor.

We lift up those who make hard choices each day:
single parents balancing bills,
migrants seeking safety,
youth carrying burdens too heavy for their years.

God of justice,
Give us courage to choose love over ease,
truth over comfort,
integrity over profit.

Guide our hearts and habits—
that we might be faithful in little and trustworthy in much.

We pray for those in our community who are sick, grieving, lonely,
or simply tired.
May they be met with tenderness and held in care.

And we pray for ourselves—
for the parts of us that need transformation,
for the places where fear still has a grip,
for the callings we've been too cautious to follow.

Search us, O God.
And lead us in the way everlasting.
Together, we pray, using the ancient words you taught to us,
(using whichever version feels most comfortable for you):

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

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

When We All Get To Heaven

1 Sing the wondrous love of Jesus,
Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed
He'll prepare for us a place.

When we all get to heaven,
what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
we'll sing and shout the victory!

2 While we walk the pilgrim pathway
Clouds will overspread the sky;
But when trav'ling days are over
Not a shadow, not a sigh.

When we all get to heaven,
what a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
we'll sing and shout the victory!

3 Let us then be true and faithful,
Trusting, serving ev'ry day;
Just one glimpse of Him in glory
Will the toils of life repay.

When we all get to heaven,
what a day of rejoicing that will be!

When we all see Jesus,
we'll sing and shout the victory!
(repeat)

Bread for the Journey

Where in your daily life — in your spending, your relationships, or your use of time — is God inviting you to practice greater faithfulness?

Commissioning and Benediction

Go now—into a world full of choices,
where values compete and voices shout for attention.

**We go, not to serve fear or fame,
but to follow Christ with courage and care.**

Be faithful in small things—
in how you speak, how you share, how you spend.

For in small things, love grows strong.

Go, remembering:

You are known. You are called. You are not alone.

We go with God—our source, our strength, our song.

Friends, as you go from this place,
may you go with the peace of the One who knit you together—fearfully and wonderfully made.
May the Spirit disturb what needs unsettling and comfort what aches to be held.
May Christ meet you in unexpected places— not just in the holy, but in the hard.
Be brave. Be generous. And be faithful in the little things.
Go in peace, 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 that 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.

Postlude

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