



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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April 19th, 2026

3rd Sunday of Easter

Holy Humour Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Today, we light the Christ candle—a flame of love that no darkness can overcome, a light that reminds us that hope still lives, even when the world feels heavy. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We also light the rainbow candle—a sign of promise, of diversity, of sacred belonging. A reminder that every identity, every story, every body is held in the wide embrace of God’s love. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather in this season of new life and rising hope, we acknowledge that we are on sacred land. We give thanks for the stewardship of this place by the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit—whose care for this land stretches back through generations and continues to this day. We recognize that the work of truth, justice, and right relationship remains before us.

May this acknowledgement be more than words—may it call us into deeper listening, faithful action, and a commitment to reconciliation that lives in how we love, serve, and walk together.

Opening Hymn

Take Time to Be Funny

VU 672 (tune)

Take time to be funny, rejoice in our God
Let laughter explode and have fun with the Word

For laughter is healing, gives strength to the weak
God loves to see smiles, for they lift up the meek.

Take time to be silly, it's good for the soul
Too many are somber, keep grabbing control.
Let go and let God's love wash over your soul
Heavenly transcendence can be your life's goal.

For humor is holy, it sanctifies life,
Replenishes hope and helps soften advice
It undercuts sorrow, deflates haughty pride
So smile and hang on, and rejoice in life's ride.

Call to Worship

Friends, we gather in the name of the risen Christ—who meets us on the road, even when we do not recognize him.

We come with our questions, our stories, and our weary hearts.

Sometimes we arrive full of joy—and sometimes we arrive wondering where hope has gone.

Still, Christ walks beside us.

The story is not over. Death does not get the last word.

Love rises. Hope lives. Joy finds us again.

So come—bring your laughter and your longing, your doubt and your delight.

We come to be surprised by grace.

Let us worship the God who meets us on the journey—

—and is made known in the breaking of bread.

Passing the Peace

On the road to Emmaus, peace was not something announced from a distance.

It was something discovered in a relationship, in presence, in a shared journey. Today, we share signs of Christ's peace with one another—a reminder that even when we cannot yet see clearly, we do not walk alone. Let us share a sign of peace with one another.

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

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

God of surprising joy,

**You meet us in our laughter and in our longing, in the moments that feel clear
and in the ones that feel uncertain.**

You walk beside us, even when we do not recognize you.

You speak into our lives, even when we do not yet understand.

So open us now, O God.

Open our hearts to the quiet burning of your presence.

**Open our eyes to recognize you in the ordinary—
in conversation, in community, in the breaking of bread.
So meet us in this time of worship,
with grace that surprises us and love that refuses to let us go.
In the name of the risen Christ, we pray,
Amen.**

Hymn

Give To Us Laughter

VU 624

1 Give to us laughter, O Source of our life.
Laughter can banish so much of our strife.
Laughter and love give us wholeness and health.
Laughter and love are the coin of true wealth.

2 Give to us laughter as sign of deep joy;
let us in laughing find Christian employ,
joining with stars and with bright northern lights,
laughing and praising and sharing delights.

3 Why do we worry that we will lose face
Why act like king for the whole human race?
Often in family, and often with friend,
Laughing at pride causes anguish to end.

4 Even in sorrow and hours of grief,
laughter with tears brings us healing relief!
God, give us laughter, and God, give us peace,
joy of your promise among us increase.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Luke 24:13-35

¹³ Now on that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus approached and began to walk along with them, ¹⁶ though they were kept from recognizing Jesus. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "About Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet powerful in word and deed in the eyes of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ We were hoping that he was the One who would set Israel free. Besides all this, today, the third day since these things happened, ²² some women of our group have just brought us some astonishing news. They were at the tomb before dawn, ²³ and didn't find the body; they returned and informed us that they had seen a

vision of angels, who declared that Jesus was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it to be just as the women said, but they didn't find Jesus."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "What little sense you have! How slow you are to believe all that the prophets have announced! ²⁶ Didn't the Messiah have to undergo all this to enter into glory?"

²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted for them every passage of scripture which referred to the Messiah. ²⁸ By now, they were near the village they were going to, and Jesus appeared to be going further. ²⁹ But they said eagerly, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, the day is practically over." So, the saviour went in and stayed with them.

³⁰ After sitting down with them to eat, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, then broke the bread and began to distribute it to them. ³¹ With that, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus, who immediately vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, "Weren't our hearts burning inside us as this one talked to us on the road and explained the scripture to us?" ³³ They got up immediately and returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven and the rest of the company assembled. ³⁴ They were greeted with, "Christ has risen! It's true! Jesus has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then the travellers recounted what had happened on the road, and how they had come to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

I'm Gonna Shout, Shout

MV 183

I'm gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for Jesus, for Jesus!

I'm gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for God's most holy child!

For whatever I might do today,
at home, at school, at work, at play,
I've got Jesus' love deep down inside of me!

I'm gonna raise, raise, raise up my hands
for Jesus, for Jesus!

I'm gonna raise, raise, raise up my hands
for God's most holy child!

For whatever I might do today,
at home, at school, at work, at play,
I've got Jesus' love deep down inside of me!

I'm gonna dance, dance, dance all around
for Jesus, for Jesus!

I'm gonna dance, dance, dance all around
for God's most holy child!

For whatever I might do today,

at home, at school, at work, at play,
I've got Jesus' love deep down inside of me!

Sermon The Joke Is On Us (In the Best Possible Way)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

**Hymn God Bless You Merry Sinner
(tune: God Bless Ye Merry, Gentlemen)**

God bless you merry sinner, you're forgiven it is true;
Remember Christ your Saviour has lived and died for you,
and lives again as King of Kings, of saint and sinner, too.
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy, peace and joy.
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy.

In Jerusalem at Calvary that dismal Friday morn,
amid the pain and suffering eternal life was born.
It came with arms outstretched to us,
right through the curtain torn.
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy, peace and joy.
Oh, tidings of Easter peace and joy.

So sing an alleluia, for our Saviour's victory,
and shout a loud "Hosanna!" that we all have been set free
from sin and death and devil's grip, throughout eternity.
We'll have tidings of Easter peace and joy, peace and joy.
Glad tidings of Easter peace and joy.

Offering

The Emmaus story reminds us that transformation often happens in the ordinary—in shared meals, in small acts of care, in showing up for one another. As we offer our gifts today—whether financial, or the gifts of time, compassion, and presence—we participate in that same sacred work: creating spaces where Christ can be encountered along the road.

As we bless the offerings, let us sing:

Offering Hymn

What Can I Do?

MV 191

What can I do? What can I bring?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

Prayers of the People

God of the road and the table,
we come like those travellers on the road to Emmaus,
carrying stories of what has been and what might have been,
trying to make sense of a world that does not always make sense.

We confess that there are times when we are so focused on what has gone wrong
that we do not notice what is quietly going right.
Times when hope is walking beside us, and we mistake it for a stranger.
Times when you are speaking—through scripture, through one another,
through the small nudges of our hearts—
and we nod along politely, not yet realizing that it is you.

And so we thank you, God, for your patience with us.
For walking at our pace, listening to our stories,
and staying with us—even when we do not yet see clearly.

We pray today for all those who are walking heavy roads.
For those weighed down by grief, whose steps feel slower with each passing day.
For those carrying anxiety or uncertainty, wondering what comes next
and whether they have the strength to face it.
For those who feel like they are walking away from something—a dream, a relationship, a sense
of stability—unsure of what lies ahead.

God, meet them on the road.

We pray for our world, where so many are walking through valleys of injustice and fear.
For communities facing violence and displacement.
For those whose dignity is denied because of who they are.
For queer and trans siblings who are still fighting for safety and belonging.
For all who are told, in ways big and small, that there is no place for them.

God, interrupt the stories that say “this is the end.”
Surprise us with resurrection in places we have given up on.
Show up where we least expect—in acts of courage, in movements for justice,
in communities that choose love over fear.

Because this is what we trust, O God:
That the story is not over. That love is still alive.
That even when we miss it, misunderstand it, or walk the other way—
you are already drawing near.

So, walk with us. Stay with us.
Meet us again and again—on the road,
at the table, and in every ordinary moment made holy by your presence.

We pray all of this in the name of the risen Christ,
who surprises us still.

And together, we pray the words he taught us:

**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

**Go, Tell It on the Mountain
(Easter version)**

VU 43 (tune)

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus is alive.

While soldiers watched the gravesite
that quiet Sunday dawn
there came a big commotion
and then the storm was gone.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus is alive.

The women found no body
their spices to anoint;
instead they found an angel,
God's message to appoint.

Go tell it on the mountain,

over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus is alive.

Go from where he isn't
to where he said he'd be.
An Easter-time reunion:
the hills of Galilee.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus is alive.
(repeat)

Bread for the Journey

Where might resurrection be quietly walking beside you—even if you don't recognize it yet?

Commissioning

Go now, as people who have met the risen Christ on the road—
even if we did not recognize him at first.

Go as people whose hearts have been stirred—
with hope that refuses to fade.

When the road feels long and uncertain—
we will trust that Christ walks beside us.

When we gather at tables, in homes, in community—
we will watch for Christ in the breaking of bread.

And when joy surprises us—unexpected, unplanned, undeniable—
we will receive it as a sign of resurrection.

Go in laughter and in love, in wonder and in courage—
for the story is not over, and hope is alive.

Benediction

May the One who meets you on the road walk beside you in every uncertain step.
May your heart burn—not with anxiety, but with a deep and steady hope.
May your eyes be opened—not all at once, but in moments of grace.

And may you go with a spirit of holy joy—
trusting that even when the road feels uncertain, even when the story seems unclear,
God is still at work—turning endings into beginnings,
sorrow into laughter, and despair into hope.
Go in peace! Amen.

Choral Response

I've Got The Joy

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart,
Down in my heart;
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.

I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart, Down in my heart,
Down in my heart;
I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.

And I'm so happy, so very happy,
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart,
And I'm so happy, so very happy,
I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

Postlude

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