



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word & Sacrament: Rev. Dr. Ellen Redcliffe

Minister of Community Development: Rev. Carmen Llanos

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

Reader: Norma Grech

February 12th, 2023

Sixth after Epiphany

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle remembering the star that led the wise men...

May God's light shine through us as a beacon of hope in our world.

Call to Worship

What does our God require of you?

What does our God require of you?

My heart.

My hands.

My love.

My life.

What does our God require of us?

**That we use all our gifts to do justice, love kindness, inspired
by God's presence in our lives.**

Let us worship God!

Introit

Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

MV 10

1. Come and seek the ways of Wisdom,
she who danced when earth was new.
Follow closely what she teaches,
for her words are right and true.
Wisdom clears the path to justice,
Showing us what love must do.
2. Listen to the voice of Wisdom,
crying in the market-place.
Hear the Word made flesh among us,

full of glory, truth, and grace.
When the word takes root and ripens,
peace and righteousness embrace.

3. Sister Wisdom, come, assist us;
nurture all who seek rebirth.
Spirit guide and close companion,
bring to light our sacred worth.
Free us to become your people,
holy friends of God and earth.

Land Acknowledgement

We now 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 Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog, all part of the Williams Treaty. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

Opening Prayer

God of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, we come into this time of worship seeking to share your light with all whom we meet.

We do our best to hold on to your light in the midst of chaos, despair, and tragedy. May our soul always be filled with your light and love as we carry it into the greater community. Amen

Hymn

Joyful, Joyful We Adore You

VU 232

1. Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.
2. All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,

flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

3. You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 119:1-8

The Glories of God's Law

- ¹ Happy are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.
- ² Happy are those who keep his decrees,
who seek him with their whole heart,
- ³ who also do no wrong
but walk in his ways.
- ⁴ You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.
- ⁵ O that my ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!
- ⁶ Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.
- ⁷ I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous ordinances.
- ⁸ I will observe your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me.

Gospel Matthew 5:33-37

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’

³⁴But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

³⁷Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.^[1]

Hymn

Take My Life and Let It Be

VU 506

1. Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, all for thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
2. Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet, and let them be
swift and purposeful for thee.
3. Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.
4. Take my will, and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.
5. Take my love: and I will pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Sermon

A Wish for a Star

He touched me, oh, He touched me
And oh, the joy that floods my soul
Something happened, and now I know
He touched me, and made me whole

Hymn

How Beautiful Heaven Must Be

1 We read of a place that's called heaven,
It's made for the pure and the free;
These truths in God's Word He hath given,
How beautiful heaven must be.

How beautiful heaven must be,
Sweet home of the happy and free;
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be.

2 In heaven no drooping nor pining,
No wishing for elsewhere to be;
God's light is forever there shining,
How beautiful heaven must be.

How beautiful heaven must be,
Sweet home of the happy and free;
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be.

3 Pure waters of life there are flowing,
And all who will drink may be free;
Rare jewels of splendor are glowing,
How beautiful heaven must be.

How beautiful heaven must be,
Sweet home of the happy and free;
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be.

4 The angels so sweetly are singing,
Up there by the beautiful sea;
Sweet chords from their gold harps are ringing,
How beautiful heaven must be.

How beautiful heaven must be,
Sweet home of the happy and free;
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be.

Offering

God of light, accept these gifts of our labors and our hearts.

**Use them to shine your light of love on this our world, in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Holy One, as we receive your word today, reach into our hearts and plant your love in us.

Reach into our experiences and find the unexplored places that need healing and understanding. Reach into our faith with your gospel and shape us with your word of life. Prepare us to serve with confidence, as we live as your people, your prayer, and your presence ...

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers.

**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 and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever, Amen.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Open My Eyes, That I May See

VU 371

1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Benediction & Commissioning

May we...

continually follow the light of Christ wherever it takes us.
Go with God's blessing, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Postlude

* Permission to podcast/stream and reproduce the music and lyrics obtained from
ONE LICENSE with license A-737645.
All rights reserved.



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Sixth After Epiphany
Sunday February 12, 2023
Additional Lectionary

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁵“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God^ᵃ that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length

of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Sirach 15:15-20 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

¹⁵ If you choose, you can keep the commandments,
and to act faithfully is a matter of your choice.

¹⁶ He has placed before you fire and water;
stretch out your hand for whichever you choose.

¹⁷ Before each person are life and death,
and whichever one chooses will be given.

¹⁸ For great is the wisdom of the Lord;
he is mighty in power and sees everything;

¹⁹ his eyes are on those who fear him,
and he knows every human action.

²⁰ He has not commanded anyone to be ungodly,
and he has not given anyone permission to sin.

1 Corinthians 3:1-9 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

³ And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people but rather as fleshly, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, ³for you are still fleshly. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling[Ⓜ] among you, are you not fleshly and behaving according to human inclinations? ⁴For when one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not all too human?

⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and each will receive wages according to their own labor. ⁹For we are God’s coworkers, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,^[a] you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult^[b] a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell^[c] of fire. ²³ So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court^[d] with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin,^[e] tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.^[f] ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin,^[e] cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.^[f]

³¹ “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ ³⁴ But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.^[g]