



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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November 23, 2025

Reign of Christ Sunday

Anticipating Advent Music Service

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Wexford Carol

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the candle today to mark this, the final Sunday in our liturgical calendar. Next Sunday we once again begin the Advent journey that leads us to Christmas. This candle lights our way as we travel, anticipating the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love.

As we light this candle we are called to remember that it is in mercy we find our peace, and it is in the world we find our calling.

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 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 Hymn

Come, Children, Join to Sing

VU 345

1 Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!
Let all with heart and voice,
saved by God's gracious choice,
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

2 Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
Christ calls his people friends,
the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

3 Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
The whole creation o'er
let all God's love adore,
Singing for ever more: Hallelujah!

Call to Worship

We come to this place searching...for truth, honesty and hope.
We come to this place caring...for family, friends, neighbours and strangers.
We come to this place with a desire...for justice, peace, unity and harmony.
We come here for inspiration to be the best people we can be...
to others and ourselves, today and always.

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 that is in each of us, and that we are called to reconciliation and community.
Let us greet those around you with Peace, saying:

Peace be with you.

And also with you.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Voice of the voiceless, power of the powerless,
We seek a community of wholeness,
A realm of peace,
In which all who hunger and thirst are nourished.
In which the stranger is welcomed,
The hurting are healed,
And the captive set free.

**In which we are guided by truth and love,
with all people united
in a reign of justice and compassion.
Amen.**

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Hymn

Draw the Circle Wide

MV 145

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

1 God the still-point of the circle,
‘round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God’s gracious arms.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

2 Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God’s call.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

3 Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we’ve ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Scripture

Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸ “Blessed are you, the Most High God of Israel—
for you have visited and redeemed your people.

⁶⁹ You have raised up a mighty savior for us
of the house of David,

⁷⁰ as you promised through the mouths of your holy ones,
the prophets of ancient times:

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes.

⁷² You have shown mercy to our ancestors
by remembering the holy Covenant you made with them,

⁷³ the oath you swore to Sarah and Abraham,

⁷⁴ granting that we, delivered from the hands of our enemies,
might serve you without fear,

⁷⁵ in holiness and justice, in your presence all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you'll go before our God to prepare the way for the Promised One,

⁷⁷ giving the people the knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸ Such is the tender mercy of our God,
who from on high will bring the Rising Sun to visit us,

⁷⁹ to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Colossians 1:11-20 The Inclusive Bible

¹¹ And by the might of God's glory you'll be endowed with the strength needed to stand fast and endure joyfully whatever may happen.

¹² Thanks be to God for having made you worthy to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light! ¹³ God rescued us from the authority of darkness and brought us into the reign of Jesus, God's Only Begotten. ¹⁴ And it is through Jesus that we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ Christ is the image of the unseen God
and the firstborn of all creation,

¹⁶ for in Christ were created
all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and invisible,
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers—
all things were created through Christ and for
Christ.

¹⁷ Before anything was created, Christ existed,
and all things hold together in Christ.

¹⁸ The church is the body;
Christ is its head.
Christ is the Beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
and so Christ is first in every way.

¹⁹ God wanted all perfection to be found in Christ,
²⁰ and all things to be reconciled to God through
Christ—everything in heaven and everything on earth—
when Christ made peace by dying on the cross.

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

Hymn

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

VUp.883

- 1 Comfort, comfort now my people;
speak of peace; so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning under sorrow's load.
Cry out to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover
and their warfare now is over.
- 2 For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling all to true repentance,
since God's judgement now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.
- 3 Then make straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits a holy reign.
For the glory of our God
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

Hymn

Jesus, Hold My Hand

1 As I travel through this pilgrim land
There is a friend who walks with me
Leads me safely through the sinking sand
It is the Christ of Calvary
This would be my prayer, dear God, each day
You help me do the best I can
For I need Your light to guide me day and night
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

Jesus, hold my hand
For I need You every hour
Through this pilgrim land
Protect me by Your power
Hear my feeble plea
O Lord, look down on me
When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

2 Let me travel in the light divine
That I may see the blessed way
Keep me that I may be wholly Thine
And sing "Redemption's Song" some day
I will be a pilgrim brave and true
And ever firmly take a stand
As I onward go and daily meet the foe
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

Jesus, hold my hand
'Cause I need Thee every hour
Through this pilgrim land
Protect me by Thy power
Hear my feeble plea
And O Lord, look down on me
When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

3 When I wander through the valley dim
Toward the setting of the sun,
Lead me safely to a land of rest

If I a crown of life have won;
I have put my faith in You, dear God,
That I may reach the golden strand,
There's no other friend on whom I can depend,
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

Jesus, hold my hand
'Cause I need Thee every hour
Through this pilgrim land
Protect me by Thy power
Hear my feeble plea
And O Lord, look down on me
When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

When I kneel in prayer
I hope to meet You there
Blessed Jesus, hold my hand.

Hymn

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"
- 2 Startled at the solemn warning!
Let the earthbound soul arise
Christ, its sun, all sin dispelling
Shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all, to be forgiv'n;
- 4 So, when next he comes in glory
and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy
and with words of love draw near.

Reflection

Anticipating Advent

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

People Look East (v. 1, 2, 4, 5)

VU 9

- 1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the guest is on the way.
- 2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the rose is on the way.
- 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the star is on the way.
- 5 Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

Offering

We are called to give of our time, our talent, our abilities, so that we may help make a better world. We offer our gifts with thanksgiving in our hearts, and songs of hope and praise on our lips. Amen.

Prayers of the People

One week from today we start our journey through Advent, a road where we begin once again learning and receiving the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. May our hearts discover and hold fast to these true messages on the journey to Christmas.

We are called to act and seek justice for all people who long for food, clothing, shelter and peace. Open our eyes that we may see when, where and how to help.

Let us bring comfort and healing to the sick, the lonely, those who grieve and the prisoner in body, mind or spirit. We know we walk together on our upcoming Advent journey, just as in all our journeys. May our hearts and minds keep focused on who and what we are called to be.

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers. (*Moment of silence*)

And now, in the words we have been taught to pray, we sing...

Creator, in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your dominion come, your will be done on earth, as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, For yours is eternity, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever, Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Shine, Jesus, Shine

God, the light of your love is shining.
In the midst of the darkness shining.
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us.
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me. Shine on me.

Shine, Jesus shine,
Fill this land with your radiant glory
Blaze, Spirit blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river flow
Flood the nation with grace and mercy.
Send forth your word, God
and let there be light.

God, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance,
By your blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me. Shine on me.

Shine, Jesus shine,
Fill this land with your radiant glory
Blaze, Spirit blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river flow
Flood the nation with grace and mercy.
Send forth your word, God
and let there be light.

As we gaze on Your holy brightness
So our faces display your likeness,
Ever changing from Glory to Glory,
Nearer here may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me. Shine on me

Shine, Jesus shine,
Fill this land with your radiant glory
Blaze, Spirit blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river flow
Flood the nation with grace and mercy.
Send forth your word, God
and let there be light.

Bread for the Journey

As we stand at the threshold between seasons, which song, scripture, or story helps you sense God's steady presence—and how might that melody guide you as we discern the future together?

Benediction

Now go forth, holding fast to the reign of Christ. Proclaim the good news through word and deed; make your life the demonstration. Keep love as your hope and guide. Testify to the truth. And may the peace that passes understanding be with you all, now and forever.

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 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!

Postlude

O Come Divine Messiah

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