



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

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

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

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Guest: Rev. Alan Rush**

**November 19, 2023**

**Twenty-Third after Pentecost**

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this building**

**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BBUC and Food Bank**

**WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Prelude**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

With thankful hearts we gather here where the doors are open to all.

**We come with open hearts and open minds, thankful that we are children of the light of Christ.**

*The candle is lit.*

**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 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.

### **Call to Worship**

100 years ago, the Holy Spirit brought together Birchcliff Bluffs United Church congregation, bringing together like-minded disciples of Jesus Christ.

**So we come together, as God's people, Christ's people, people of the beloved community of Birchcliff Bluffs, to sing and to serve, to live and to love, to pray and to play. To seek justice and live into reconciliation. Alleluia and Amen.**

**Life and Work**      *Beth to intro Alan*

### **Opening Prayer**

God, it is a privilege to worship you today in this place where your people have gathered for 100 years. Like us, they faced challenges and difficulties. They laughed, they cried, and they ate together.

**One of the biggest changes and challenges they faced was a way to join with others. May we, like them, find the courage to face uncertainty, the faith to trust a new vision, and the assurance to trust in your unfailing support and love as we move forward in your name seeking new ways to be your people.**

## Hymn

## O Worship the King

1 O worship the King all-glorious above,  
O gratefully sing his power and his love:  
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might and sing of his grace,  
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

5 O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,  
whom angels delight to worship above!  
Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,  
in true adoration shall sing to your praise!

## RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture    Psalm 123    Rev. Alan Rush

<sup>1</sup> If it had not been the LORD who was on our side  
—let Israel now say—

<sup>2</sup>        **if it had not been the LORD who was on our side,  
when our enemies attacked us,**

<sup>3</sup> then they would have swallowed us up alive,  
when their anger was kindled against us;

<sup>4</sup>        **then the flood would have swept us away;  
the torrent would have gone over us;**

<sup>5</sup> then over us would have gone  
the raging waters.

<sup>6</sup>        **Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us  
as prey to their teeth.**

<sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the hunters;  
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

<sup>8</sup>        **Our help is in the name of the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.**

## Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents

<sup>14</sup>“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once <sup>16</sup>the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Word of GOD for the People of GOD.

**Thanks be to GOD.**

**Hymn**

**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**

**VU 288**

1 Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
as thou hast been, thou forever will be.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -  
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above

join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -  
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow -  
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -  
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

**Sermon**      **Rev. Alan Rush**

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

**Hymn**

#### **Every Time I Feel the Spirit**

Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.  
Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.

Upon the mountain, when my God spoke,  
out of God's mouth came fire and smoke.  
I looked around me, it looked so fine,  
I asked my God if all this was mine.

Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.  
Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.

The Jordan River, chilly and cold,  
it chills the body but not the soul.  
There is but one train upon this track.

It runs to heaven and then right back.

Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.

Every time I feel the Spirit  
moving in my heart I will pray.

(repeat refrain)

### **Offering**

Take what we offer, O GOD, weaving each gift into the rainbow canopy of our becoming.

**Bless us with the courage and freedom to live each unique hue of ourselves for one another, sharing our strengths, our talents, and our hearts in community, discovering anew your love. Amen.**

### **Doxology**

### **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**

*Moment of silence*

**Creator, 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**

### **I, the Lord of Sea and Sky**

**VU 509**

I I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in deepest sin  
my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?

Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain,  
I have wept for love of them;  
they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them;  
my hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

Go into the world using Christ as your tape measure.

**We go forth to measure up faithfully by GOD's grace.**

Go to your families, your friends, your homes, your community.

**We go to weave right living into our relationships.**

## **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**

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