



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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October 18th, 2026

21st Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light this candle as a sign of Christ among us: a light no empire can possess, a love no power can contain, a hope that continues to shine. *Candle is lit.*

Lighting the Rainbow Candle

We light this rainbow candle as a sign of God’s extravagant welcome. In every colour, every identity, every beloved life, the image of God shines. *Candle is lit.*

Land Acknowledgement

As we gather for worship, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Peoples, including the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat, the Chippewa, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. We acknowledge that colonialism has too often been supported by the Church and continues to shape our relationships with the land and with Indigenous Peoples.

As people of faith, may our acknowledgement become more than words, moving us toward truth, right relationship, reconciliation, and justice.

Opening Hymn

Today We All Are Called To Be Disciples

VU 507

1 Today we all are called to be
disciples of the Lord,
to help to set the captive free,
make ploughshare out of sword,
to feed the hungry, quench their thirst,
make love and peace our fast,
to serve the poor and homeless first,
our ease and comfort last.

- 2 God made the world and at its birth
ordained our human race
to live as stewards of the earth,
responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud,
we sow not peace but strife,
our discord spreads a deadly cloud
that threatens all of life.
- 3 Pray justice may come rolling down
as in a mighty stream,
with righteousness in field and town
to cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
an earth where conflicts cease,
a world that was created for
a harmony of peace.
- 4 May we in service to our God
act out the living Word,
and walk the road the saints have trod
till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
give thanks in one accord
to God who calls us all to be
disciples of the Lord.

Call to Worship

We come bearing the image of God.

We come as people beloved and called.

We come into a world shaped by many powers and competing loyalties.

We come seeking the way of Christ.

Let us give to God what belongs to God:

Our lives, our love, our courage, and our worship.

Come, let us worship God together.

Passing the Peace

Jesus invites us into relationships shaped not by domination or division, but by the peace of God.

May the peace we share here become the peace we practice beyond these walls.

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

Let us share signs of Christ's peace.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

Holy God, you have created us in your image and called us your beloved. In a world filled with competing demands upon our lives, help us discern what belongs to you.

Open our hearts to your presence, our minds to your wisdom, and our lives to the way of Jesus, that our worship might lead us toward justice, compassion, and peace. Amen.

Hymn

Each Blade of Grass

MV 37

1 Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.
Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

2 Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.
Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

3 Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.
Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Exodus 33:12-20

¹² Moses said to God, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favour in my sight.' ¹³ Now if I have found favour in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ God replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And Moses said, "If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

¹⁷ God said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And God said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, 'I AM,' and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," God said, "you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live."

Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?

¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, “Whose head is this and whose title?” ²¹ They answered, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” ²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

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

What Belongs to God?

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn

When We Are Living

- 1 When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
- 2 Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
- 3 'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,
when sensing beauty or in love's embrace,
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
- 4 Across this wide world, we shall always find
those who are crying with no peace of mind,
but when we help them, or when we feed them,
we belong to God; we belong to God
we belong to God; we belong to God.

Offering

God of abundance, all that we have and all that we are belong ultimately to you. Bless these gifts and the lives that offer them. May they become signs of your generosity, serving our neighbours, seeking justice, and helping build a world where every person may flourish. Amen.

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 holiness and mystery, you know us completely, and still you call us beloved.

You created humanity in your image, not the image of wealth, power, productivity, or empire, but in your own image—an image of sacred worth that cannot be bought, earned, or taken away.

And so we pray for a world that too often forgets the sacredness of human life.

We pray for those whose dignity is denied because of poverty, race, gender, sexuality, disability, citizenship, or circumstance. We pray for people treated as problems to be solved rather than neighbours to be loved. Give us courage to recognize your image in one another, especially in those whom society teaches us not to see.

We pray for those entrusted with political and economic power. Give our leaders wisdom, humility, and compassion. Where systems exploit, awaken a hunger for justice. Where fear divides communities, raise up peacemakers. Where wealth is concentrated while others struggle for enough, stir us toward an economy rooted in the flourishing of all.

We pray for places scarred by war, violence, occupation, displacement, and environmental devastation. Be near to those who mourn, those who flee, those who wait for news, and those working courageously for peace.

We pray for our own communities: for those worried about bills and housing, those seeking employment, those carrying grief, those living with illness, those providing care, and those quietly carrying burdens few others can see.

God, remind us that our faith is not simply something we profess. It is something we embody. Help us give to you what belongs to you—not only our songs and prayers, but our choices, our resources, our relationships, and our lives.

Teach us again the way of Jesus, who resisted the powers of domination and revealed another way: the way of justice, mercy, generosity, and love.

And now, as one people bearing your image, we pray together in the words Jesus taught his friends: Divine Creator, our Holy Parent, our Mother and...

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

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Go Now With God

Filled with the Holy Spirit
Go now with God, go now with God
Into the world as a servant
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Offering a hand to a stranger
Go now with God, go now with God
Trusting in the risen savior
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Waters of mercy have found us
Go now with God, go now with God
Grace on the journey surrounds us
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Crossing every boundary, every nation
Go now with God, go now with God
Dancing in the gift of liberation
Go now with God, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Go now, go now, go now with God
Go now, go now, go now with God

Bread for the Journey

If everything belongs to God, how might that change the way you use what has been entrusted to you?

Commissioning

Whose image do we bear?

We bear the image of God.

Then go into a world that places many claims upon our lives.

We will choose the way of Christ.

Give to God what belongs to God: your love, your courage, your compassion, your lives.

We will seek justice, love our neighbours, and walk in hope.

Benediction

Go knowing that you bear the image of God.

May the love of God ground you, the courage of Christ guide you, and the Spirit strengthen you to seek justice, practice compassion, and choose love. Go in peace.

Amen.

Choral Response

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God our Creator
Family all are we
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me

Postlude

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