



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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22nd Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

You assure us, Jesus, that wherever two or three are gathered in your name, you are there.

We light this candle to remind ourselves and to celebrate your constant presence.

May we always seek your guiding light in our lives. Amen.

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. The land we are worshipping on today is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

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

Called By Earth and Sky

MV 135

Called by earth and sky,
promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky.

1 Precious these waters, endless seas,
 deep ocean's dream,
waters of healing, rivers of rain,
 the wash of love again.

 Called by earth and sky,
 promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
 treasure of life sanctified,
 called by earth and sky.

2 Precious this gift, the air we breathe;
 wind born and free.
Breath of the Spirit, blow through this place,
 our gathering and our grace.

 Called by earth and sky,
 promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
 treasure of life sanctified,
 called by earth and sky.

3 Precious these mountains, ancient sands;
 vast fragile land.
Seeds of our wakening, rooted and strong,
 Creation's faithful song.

 Called by earth and sky,
 promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,
 treasure of life sanctified,
 called by earth and sky.

4 Precious the fire that lights our way,
 bright dawning day.
Fire of passion, sorrows undone,
 our faith and justice one.

 Called by earth and sky,
 promise of hope held high.
This is our sacred living trust,

treasure of life sanctified,
called by earth and sky
called by earth and sky
called by earth and sky.

Call to Worship

As the rains pour from heaven, soaking the earth that it may produce good things,
so God pours God's love upon us, that we, too, may produce goodness and peace.

We have been blessed with many gifts and talents.

God desires that we use these gifts and talents for healing, peace, and hope.

Come, let us worship and celebrate the mighty love and power of God.

Praise be to God who has blessed us in so many ways. Amen.

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 of Christ that is in each of us, and that we are called to reconciliation and community.

Let us greet those around you with the Peace of Christ, saying:

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Life and Work

Opening Prayer

Creator, everywhere we look we see the imprint of your creative love.

The wondrous works of nature show your majesty.

As we gather today to celebrate your love and creation,

keep us mindful that we are part of that created order,

meant to be stewards and not destroyers.

Prepare us to work for you in ministries of peace and justice.

Amen.

RECEIVING GOD'S WORD

Scripture Psalm 104

Praise God, O my soul.

Eternal God, you are great indeed.

You clothe yourself with light like a garment.

You spread the heavens like a tent;

you lay out the beams of your dwelling on the waters above.

You make the clouds your chariot,

and ride on the winds of the wind.

You make the winds your messengers,

and flames of fire your servants.

You fix the earth on its foundations,
so that it can never tremble.

You cover the earth with the ocean as with a cloak.

When the waters covered the mountains,
they fled at your rebuke;

at the sound of your thunder, they took flight.

They flowed over the mountains, ran down the valleys
to the place you had appointed for them.

**There you set limits not to be passed,
that they might not again cover the earth.**

O God, how manifold are your works!

**With Wisdom at your side you made them all,
the earth is full of your creatures.**

There lies the great and mighty Sea,
teeming with living things both great and small.

**Upon it sail the ships,
and there is Leviathan, the monster you made to play in it.**

All these look to you,
to give them their food in due season.

**What you give them they gather up.
When you open your hand,
you fill them with good things.**

But when you hide your face they despair.

When you take away their breath, they died, and return to dust.

**But when you send out your spirit, they live again,
and you renew the face of the earth.**

May your glory, O God endure forever.

May you rejoice, O God, in your works.

When you look at the earth it trembles,

when you touch the mountains they smoke.

I will sing to God as long as I live.

I will praise my God while I have being.

Mark 10:35-45

The Request of James and John

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶ And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷ And they said to him, “Appoint us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to

drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to appoint, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

O Jesus, Let Me Walk With Thee

VU 560

1 O Jesus, let me walk with thee
in lowly paths of service free;
teach me thy secret, help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

2 Help me the slow of heart to move
with some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.

3 Teach me thy patience; still with thee,
in closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sure and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

4 in hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broadening way,
in peace that only thou canst give,
with thee, O Jesus, let me live.

Sermon

Whoever You Are: Greatest & Least

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

Offering

Through these gifts, O God,
**may all who heed the voice of justice,
hear the call to compassion,
embrace the way of sharing,
and know solidarity with the loving Christ.
Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Trusting that God receives all our prayers and responds to each of them in love,
let us pray saying:

Gracious God,
You call us to follow in the way of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve.
We come before You,
seeking to live out this calling in a world that often values power over humility,
and privilege over service.

Open our hearts to Your Spirit as we offer these prayers
for the world, the Church, and all in need.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your Church in all places,
that we may embody the servant leadership of Christ.
Teach us to set aside ambition and status,
seeking instead to be a community of love, grace, and service to all people,
regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the leaders of nations and communities,
that they may govern with justice, humility,
and a deep concern for the well-being of the most vulnerable.
May they serve not for their own gain, but for the common good,
working for peace, equity, and the dignity of every person.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are struggling
—those who are poor, oppressed, sick, or burdened by life's challenges.
Just as Jesus served those in need,
may we be inspired to walk alongside them,
offering our hands in compassion and our voices in advocacy.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift up those in our community
and around the world who feel forgotten, unseen, or unloved.
Empower us to be Your presence in their lives,
reaching out in friendship and care,
embodying the love of Christ that knows no boundaries.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves,
that we may resist the temptations of pride and power.
Guide us to seek greatness not in recognition or status,
but in humble service to others, as Jesus taught us.

Creator, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we offer these prayers in the spirit of Jesus,
who taught us that whoever wishes to be first must be last,
and whoever wishes to be great must be a servant of all.
Give us the strength to follow this path of humility, justice, and love.

And now, as a community of faith,
we pray all this, using the ancient words you taught us, saying:

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy Kindom 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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kindom, 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

How can we shift our focus from seeking recognition **to** serving others with a heart of genuine humility?

Commissioning and Benediction

Gracious and loving God,
we are reminded that true greatness is found not in seeking power,
but in serving others.

Help us to follow the example of Jesus,
who came not to be served but to serve.

**As we go out into the world,
fill our hearts with humility and compassion,
that we may serve one another and those in need with grace and love.
Empower us to be vessels of your peace, justice, and mercy, in all that we do.
In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

May the love of God
which gives life to the world, sustain you;
May the bread of life, Jesus Christ,
feed you with the food that endures to eternal life;
May the power of the Holy Spirit
nourish and strengthen you in faith.
Amen.

Choral Respons

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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