



**Birchcliff Bluffs United Church**

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

**Minister of Word & Sacrament:** Katie Vardy

**Music Director:** Randy Vancourt

**Reader:** Tricia Reid

**September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

**WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Prelude**

**Welcome to Katie Vardy**

**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.

*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**

**Let Us Build a House**

**MV 1**

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,  
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

- 2 Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.
- 3 Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;  
a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.
- 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.
- 5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace;  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

### **Call to Worship:**

Let us enter this place together, ready to worship with thanksgiving for the abundance of God that we experience every day.

**God gave us a wide and wondrous world in which to live.**

Here, in this holy place, in community, surrounded by the wonders of God's glorious Creation, we will worship with prayer, song, hearts, and minds.

**This is the day that God has made!**

**Let us rejoice and be glad! Amen.**

### **Life and Work**

#### **Opening Prayer**

**Great Creating God,**

**we pause, in awe of your creation, in awe with  
your creation.**

**We pause, amazed that we are your creation, and  
that all of creation is one with you.**

**We pause, enthralled at the ecstasy of love and  
the power of the wholeness we experience in your  
creating power.**

**May we journey in the world always amazed,  
always in wonder, always in awe.**

**May we experience Creation's wonder, and may  
we acknowledge and express the wonder in all  
that we do.**

**We are indeed blessed.**

**You are indeed a blessing.**

**Amen.**

## **RECEIVING GOD'S WORD**

**Scripture: Psalm 146**

Praise God, O my soul. As long as I live I will praise God.

**Yes, as long as I have life I will sing praises to God.**

Put not your trust in princes, nor in any mortal,  
for in them there is no help.

**When they breathe their last they return to dust;  
then their plans come to nothing.**

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
**whose hope is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them,**

the One who keeps faith for ever,  
**who gives justice to the oppressed,  
who gives food to the hungry.**

God sets prisoners free, restores sight to the blind.

**God straightens those who are bent;  
loves those who are just.**

God cares for the stranger in the land,  
and sustains the widow and orphan;

**but the way of the wicked God turns to ruin.**

God shall reign forever, O Zion,  
**your God for all generations.**

**Mark 7:24-37**

<sup>24</sup> From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, <sup>25</sup> but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup> Now the woman was a gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the

demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup> He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup> But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup> Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup> And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon was gone.

<sup>31</sup> Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup> He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup> And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup> They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn**

**Healer of Our Every Ill**

**VU 619**

Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.

1 You who know our fears and sadness,  
grace us with your peace and gladness.  
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.

Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.

2 In the pain and joy beholding,  
how your grace is still unfolding.  
Give us all your vision, God of love.

Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.

3 Give us strength to love each other,

every sister, every brother.  
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.

Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.

4 You who know each thought and feeling,  
teach us all your way of healing.  
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.

Healer of our every ill,  
light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear,  
and hope beyond our sorrow.

## Sermon

### RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

## Hymn

### O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

VU 326

- 1 O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God above,  
the triumphs of God's grace.
- 2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life and health and peace.
- 3 He speaks, and listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive,  
the mournful broken-hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.
- 4 Hear him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,  
your tongues again employ;  
you blind, behold your Saviour comes,  
and leap, you lame, for joy!

5 My gracious Saviour and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of your name.

**Offering:**

In gratitude, we offer our givings this day.

For the work of volunteers,

**we are forever thankful.**

For the untold gifts offered in the past,

**we are forever grateful.**

By the Word made flesh,

**we are forever inspired.**

Through our praise and our gifts,

we offer this prayer:

**May these gifts be used to fulfill the building of your kin-dom here on earth. Amen.**

**Communion**

May God be with us.

**God is here among us.**

Let us open our hearts to God.

**We open them to God and to one another.**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

God, your invitation to come and feast  
in your presence is but a taste of the love you extend to us every day.

By your very nature, you are always seeking us out  
– searching for ways to connect us and connect with us.

You meet us in the most ordinary of places and you make them sacred.

By your grace, we come to recognize the holiness that dwells in the world around us,  
in our neighbors, in our own internal depths.

Therefore, we join our voices with your people on earth  
and all the company of the heavens,  
singing praise to you:

**Holy, Holy, Holy One  
God of justice and love  
Heaven and earth are full of your wonder  
Hosanna, among us.**

Blessed are you and blessed is your eternal table.

You welcome all who thirst for justice and hunger to grow in love.  
You ask us to extend this same welcome to all our neighbors,  
but God, since our beginning, we have struggled.

And so in your love for us, you took on flesh in Jesus.  
Through his life, you pointed to your presence on the margins.  
You revealed the sacredness in all life.  
You showed us how to live together,  
even among forces of destruction.

Believing it could transform the world,  
Jesus proclaimed the Good News.  
He called for the captives to be set free.  
He spoke of the lowly being lifted up.  
He talked of redistributing wealth  
and eradicating the causes of poverty.  
His commitment to practicing love knew no bounds  
– not even the bounds of death.

On the night of his arrest,  
Jesus shared a meal with his companions.  
He took bread, blessed it, broke it,  
gave it to his disciples and said:  
“This is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.”  
After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying:  
“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”

In remembrance of all you have done to save us,  
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ was birthed among us.**

**Christ was killed among us.**

**Christ rises again among us.**

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God.  
Make these ordinary elements into the Sacred gift of your presence  
with us once again.  
May they awaken us anew to your everlasting invitation  
into a life of resurrection.  
Aliven us in our pursuit of a world where all needs are met,  
power is balanced, and the worth of every creature and creation is celebrated.

In collective longing for a taste of your Kindom on earth,  
we join together in echoing the prayer of Jesus:

**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.**

### **Sharing the Meal**

God, by the bread of heaven and the cup of life,  
you make us one body.

**Bind us together by your spirit  
that we might live into your hopes for us,  
a community centered in Christ  
and rich in compassion, commitment, courage, and care.**

Eternal and gracious One, though we live in a world of need,  
here we have tasted your goodness and hungered for a world more just.  
Though afflicted by brokenness and division,  
here we have heard your call to be a people of healing community.

**Send us forth, O God,  
in faith, in hope, and in love.**

May it be so.

**Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

#### **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH**

#### **Closing Hymn**

#### **God's Choir in the Sky**

I heard the angels sing: Glory, Hallelujah!  
A mighty chorus way up high  
I heard the angels sing: Praise the name of Jesus  
Singing in God's choir in the sky

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory  
Telling the story how he came to earth to die  
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus.



I heard the glorious song  
Coming out of heaven  
The sweetest music ever heard  
I heard a mighty song  
Sung by all the angels  
My soul thrilled at every loving word.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory  
Telling the story how he came to earth to die  
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus.  
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I fell down on my knees  
when that chorus ended  
They shouted out a loud Amen  
I fell down on my knees,  
Prayed that when in heaven  
I would hear that choir once again.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory  
Telling the story how he came to earth to die  
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus  
Singing in God's choir in the sky.

I heard a thousand trumpets sounding out His glory  
Telling the story how he came to earth to die  
I heard a million voices praise the name of Jesus  
Shouting Hallelujah in the sky!

**Commissioning and Benediction:**

Go into the world:  
dance, laugh, sing, and create.

**We go with the assurance of your blessing, O God.**

Go into the world:  
risk, explore, discover, and love.

**We go with the assurance of your grace, O God.**

Go into the world:  
believe, hope, struggle, and remember.

**We go with the assurance of your love, O God.**

**Thanks be to God.**

Go now into the world, with a daring and a tender heart -  
go in peace, the world is waiting.

And whatever you do, do it for love,  
remembering that you follow Jesus.  
And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and ever.  
Amen.

### **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!

### **Choral Benediction**

### **Postlude**

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