



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

Minister of Word and Sacrament: Rev. Gregory Daly

Minister of Community Development: Rev Carmen Llanos

Music Director: Randy Vancourt

August 23, 2020 – Second Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Prelude

Life Is Like a Mountain Railroad

Eliza R. Snow & M. E. Abbey, Charles Davis Tillman

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 18)

We love GOD, in you we find strength.
We come to praise and worship you.

You are the bedrock under our feet,
The house in which we live.
We come to praise and worship you.

GOD – you are the high rugged cliff
where I run for dear life,
hiding behind the boulders,
safe in the granite hideout.
We come to praise and worship you.

We sing to GOD, lofty praise,
and find ourselves safe and saved.
We come to praise and worship you.

Life & Work of the Church

Welcome to online worship



Land Acknowledgement

As we prepare for worship, we 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 Mississauga's of the Credit and Scugog, part of the Williams Treaty. Today, the meeting place around Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory.



We seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

Candle Lighting



Opening Hymn

Seek Ye First

Words and Music: Karen Lafferty
© 1972 Maranatha! Music

VU 356

- 1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God
 and God's righteousness,
 and all these things shall be added unto you.
 Hallelu, hallelujah.
- 2 Ask and it shall be given unto you;
 seek and you shall find;
 knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
 Hallelu, hallelujah.
- 3 We do not live by bread alone,
 but by every word
 that proceeds from the mouth of God.
 Hallelu, hallelujah.

Prayer for Grace

Grace and peace are two things that we search for but are hard to find. We seldom see them in the media. They are rarely displayed in our daily encounters with the world. Fame and fortune cannot buy them. But God, we know that they are found in you - source of Grace, found in our human experience through Jesus, the bringer of Peace. Today, we claim your grace – unmerited and yet freely offered.



*Today we receive your peace – sufficiency and wholeness within ourselves.
Thank you God for these gifts. Thank You for transforming us into people that freely offer grace and peace to all whom we meet, whatever their circumstance without condition, for we know that is how you offer it to us.
We pray in the name of the redeeming Christ, Jesus. Amen*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Prayer of Illumination



Help us O God, to come to you with open lives to receive your words.

May we give them new life as we listen to what you have to say.

Open our hearts as we embark on this journey with each other and with you. Amen

Romans 12:1-8

The Message

¹⁻² So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

³ I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what God does for us, not by what we are and what we do for God.

⁴⁻⁶ In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of this body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvellously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

⁶⁻⁸ If you preach, just preach God's Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don't take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don't get bossy; if you're put in charge, don't manipulate; if you're called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don't let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face.

Hymn

Take My Life and Let it Be

VU 506

Words: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874

Music: Public Domain

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 Your love;
 take my feet, and let them be
 swift and purposeful for thee.
- 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.

Matthew 16:13-20

New Revised Standard Version

¹³ When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

¹⁵ He pressed them, “And how about you? Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter said, “You’re the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Jesus came back, “God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn’t get that answer out of books or from teachers. Abba God in heaven, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I’m going to tell you who you are, *really* are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

¹⁹ “And that’s not all. You will have complete and free access to God’s kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven.”

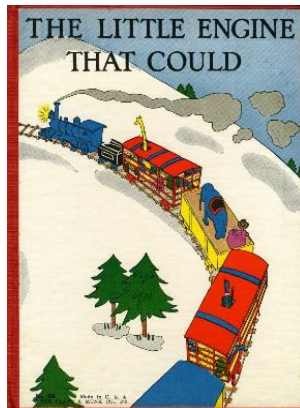
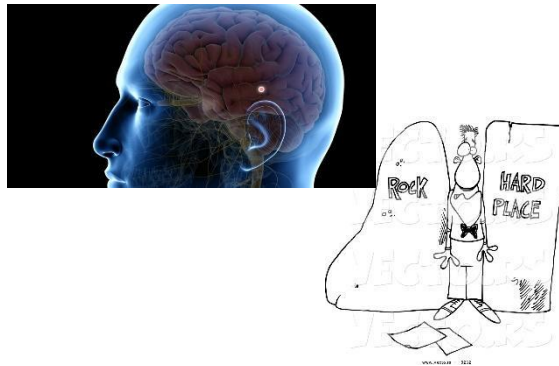
²⁰ He swore the disciples to secrecy. He made them promise they would tell no one that he was the Messiah.

The word of God for the People of God

Thanks be to God

Sermon

Rock and a Hard Place



Hymn

O Jesus, I Have Promised

VU 120

Words: John Ernest Bode, 1866
Music: James William Elliott 1874

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
remain forever near me, my Saviour and my friend:
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

- 2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering our Gifts to God

God has abundantly bestowed upon us the gift of life.
Our best response is to offer our whole lives
as agents for God's mission in the world.
Give as you are able to build the community of God
in our homes, our congregation and around the world.



Prayers of the People



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 for ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

Blessed Assurance

VU 337

Words: Fanny J. Crosby

Music: Phoebe Palmer Knapp

- 1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of the Spirit, washed in the blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

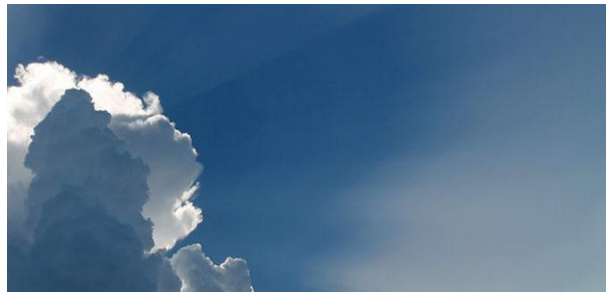
- 2 Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

- 3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

Benediction & Commissioning



Postlude

Austria

Franz Josef Haydn

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Other Resources for Today

Additional Lectionary Readings

Exodus 1:8 – 2:10

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³ The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews^[a] you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” ⁸ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. ⁹ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,^[a] “because,” she said, “I drew him out^[b] of the water.”

Psalm 124

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- ¹ If it had not been the LORD who was on our side
—let Israel now say—
² if it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
when our enemies attacked us,
³ then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;
⁴ then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;
⁵ then over us would have gone
the raging waters.
⁶ Blessed be the LORD,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth.
⁷ We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped.
⁸ Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.