

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Third Sunday of Easter – April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

**Prelude:** “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” – Christie Coatsworth  
(Hymn sung yesterday at Prince Philip’s Funeral)

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Good morning! Welcome to Talbot Street for today’s Service, celebrating the Third Sunday of Easter.

Thank you for your support of all our services, which are posted on our websites - [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca) .

St. Andrew’s Ham and Scalloped Potato Takeout and St. Luke’s Roast Beef Take Out have been postponed until the COVID restrictions are relaxed. Thank you for your support of our churches. “Together - we are the church of our community”. Thanks be to God!

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** God of the morning is with us as we gather with songs of praise.

**People:** Here we find respite from a busy, frenetic world.

**Eric:** We gather in this place finding the peace that God offers.

**People:** We are more at home within ourselves when we find our rest in Christ.

**Eric:** We are witnesses to God’s glory, steadfast love, and faithfulness.

**People:** We see the beauty of creation and sing praises of joy!

**Eric:** We abide in God’s love and keep God’s commandments.

**People:** Today, we awaken to the call, and show up fully to love one another.

**Eric:** Come, let us worship.

### **Opening Hymn:** “Because He Lives” – Video – First Verse

God sent his son, they called him Jesus

He came to love heal and forgive

He lived and died to buy my pardon

An empty grave is there to prove

My savior lives

*Because he lives, I can face tomorrow*

*Because he lives, All fear is gone*

*Because I know, He holds the future*

*And life is worth the living, Just because he lives*

## **Opening Prayer:**

God of light and life, we gather as witnesses to your abundant love. We are amazed to discover you anew through our prayers, our praise, and our offerings.

God, you encourage us amidst our daily living to become stewards of your love and grace. We ask you to be here with us as we witness your love made real through Jesus the Christ. Amen.

**Scripture:** Luke 24: 36 - 48 “Learning To Believe” - by Janet and Tracey

Disciple 1: Did you hear the news?

Disciple 2: What news? That our beloved Jesus died? Yes. I’ve been so sad. I can’t think. I can hardly eat.

Disciple 1: That’s just it, we’ve seen him.

Disciple 2: What. Are. You. Talking. About?

Disciple 1: Seriously. Listen. We were all gathered talking together. And a voice we didn’t recognize says, “Peace be with you.” Only, it was just like he did. And, it didn’t look like him. We were afraid! We thought a ghost was among us!

Disciple 2: This is unbelievable. Seriously. I don’t believe what you’re saying.

Disciple 1: I’m telling you. Then this ghost man asked why we were afraid – why we had doubt in our hearts. He told us to look at his hands and his feet. He even invited us to touch him. A ghost doesn’t have flesh and bones.

Disciple 2: You’re right, of course. Ghosts don’t have flesh and bones.

Disciple 1: Yes. Yes. So, I stepped forward, cautiously, mind you. What did I see? His hands. His hands. And his feet. It was him! Amazed, we crowded around. I mean, what can I tell you?

Disciple 2: Was it really him? Truly him? Dare I believe?

Disciple 1: Yes! Yes. Yes! And you know, he wanted something to eat! So, we gave broiled fish, and he ate it. Oh, it was like before.

Disciple 2: I wish I’d been there. Did he tell you what to do? Would he stay? What’s next?

Disciple 1: He said, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” And so much made sense to us. It was like our minds were open!

Disciple 2: Woah. You’re blowing my mind! I wish I had been there. Hearing your story makes me feel like I was there! I feel it inside – I believe you!

Disciple 1: There’s more. Then he said, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” I cannot wait to tell the others.

Disciple 2: Me, too. I’m telling everyone I know.

**Scripture Hymn:** “Because He Lives” – Video – Verses 2 & 3

How sweet to hold a new born baby  
And feel the pride and joy he gives  
But greater still the calm assurance  
This child can face uncertain days  
Because he lives

*Because he lives, I can face tomorrow*

*Because he lives, All fear is gone*

*Because I know, He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, Just because he lives*

And then one day, I'll cross the river  
And I'll fight life's final war with pain  
And then as death gives way to victory  
I'll see the lights of glory  
+And I'll know He lives

*Because he lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives, All fear is gone  
Because I know, He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, Just because he lives*

**Message: "We Are Witnesses"**

We are all witnesses to the Risen Christ. Today's story is about another time that the disciples see Jesus. In this case, the disciples see Jesus and do not recognize him. Jesus has been seen by two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They run back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven who are still self isolating in the Upper Room. As the disciples are trying to make out what this all means, Jesus appears before them. We are told, "They are frightened and terrified, because they thought they were seeing a ghost."

To be a witness, it seems, is to exist in complex tensions; of doubt and evidence, of astonishment and faith, of terror and peace, of disbelief and joy, of distress and hope, of who we are and who we could be. The disciples in the Gospel stories are experiencing all of these tensions of emotion. They have an encounter with God that transforms them and compels them to act. Same goes for us today.

Many people in our modern world cannot even imagine seeing someone come back to life from death. Many cannot imagine encountering God – especially in a way that transforms them and compels them to act – like they have seen God. Even we Christians at times, can only stare, mouths gaping and knees trembling, at the sight of God's miraculous presence. We too, like the disciples, stand in disbelief.

Like the disciples in Luke, we too are invited to "touch and see" Jesus. Jesus says, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and feet and see who I am. Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have." These words are for us today, as they were for the disciples and all of Jesus' followers - right up to us today.

Cleopas and his companion encountered Jesus on the Emmaus road. They run back to share with the eleven disciples plus their companions, who are gathered. They listen to the story of these men meeting and sharing a meal with Jesus.

Last week, John shared with us the story of Thomas doubting the story of the disciples. In Luke, all of the disciples are in the position of Thomas. They are hearing another's account of meeting the Risen Jesus and are not able to overcome their doubt without the evidence of sight and touch. Yet so far, we have heard Mary's story, and Thomas story and now the fallout from the Emmaus Story. In all these stories, we encounter people who find it hard to believe until they see for themselves.

It's no difference today. We as those who have met the Risen Christ share our story with others and they do not truly believe until they too meet the Risen Christ. Our job is to witness our experiences – God will look after the rest. To be a witness is to respond to the call of God. We may not be perfect, but we have been forgiven, therefore we have the power to forgive others. Our job is to share God's complete forgiveness as it is offered to all.

In the United Church we do not share our witnessing stories in each weekly service. Yet we may share in conversation, or in weekly faith talks or other times of opportunity. Even sharing our personal witness story can cause us tension – will the one we are sharing with accept our evidence or will they doubt? How might we help them to accept that tension and work towards a resolution? In belief, let us trust God will look after the details.

Can we doubt and still be a witness? I think so. I believe we do that in our Faith Talks when we share our idea and another person builds on that and another etc. If we couldn't share when we have doubts, we'd be locked in fear. Courage is moving ahead with your fear.

During these weeks of Easter, we are reminded again and again of the joy surrounding the witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. Before that joy is fully realized, the disciples are stuck in their experiences of grief. Last week we shared how Jesus' voice influenced Thomas and Mary – that once hearing Jesus' voice they believed. The disciples on the Road to Emmaus heard Jesus' voice, but didn't recognize Jesus. Yet they did recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

We may never know how we are going to recognize Jesus, until we recognize Jesus. We too may need to move from that which is holding us back from believing,

to believing in faith. Part of our faith is built upon the words we have heard today – words of scripture that share the stories of grief - resurrecting into shouts of joy.

We each bear our grief, our struggles, and our own mistakes. We are called to examine our hearts and lives and move into a place of forgiveness. The Easter story becomes our witness story, to share our journey from grief into joy. We are called to turn toward the Risen Christ with open arms and open spirits, welcoming the good news! Christ is alive. Christ is risen. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 173 “Thine is the Glory”**

- 1 Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.  
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes where the body lay.  
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
- 2 Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!  
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.  
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
for the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting.  
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
- 3 No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.  
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

**Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We are here to offer a portion from our abundance – our time, our energy, our resources. May we begin with gratitude, giving thanks to God who is steadfast in love and faithful. Let us give in love!

**Offertory: VU 541 “Praise God From Whom...”**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

## **Offertory Prayer:**

**People:** God, we give you our thanks for all that we have and all we are. May the tithes, gifts, and offerings we bring be of healing service to our hurting world. May our collective offering be an expression of love and healing through the risen Christ. Amen.

## **Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:**

**Eric:** God, we give thanks for your steadfast love abiding presence, and your creative council and guideposts along the way.

**People:** You enrich our lives with a world filled with colours, scents, and tastes that delight our senses.

**Eric:** We see the goodness that surrounds us and give you thanks and praise.

**People:** We are witnesses to the world in which we live, and see injustices and colossal failures. *(Moment of silence)*

**Eric:** Sometimes, we close our eyes and wish we could unsee some of what we've witnessed. *(Moment of silence)*

**People:** Witnessing has its own form of pain, but the true suffering we see is incomprehensible. *(Moment of silence)*

**Eric:** We pray for those in daily pain, whose bodies and spirits require great effort. *(Moment of silence)*

**People:** We pray for those who are hungry for food, encouragement, relationship. *(Moment of silence)*

**Eric:** We pray for those whose spirits are diminished. *(Moment of silence)*

**People:** Restore each of these into your attentive care.

**Eric:** What some lack, others have in abundance.

**People:** Guide us to know what is ours to keep and what is ours to share.

**Eric:** Help us to loosen our grip on belongings and possessions, and awaken our hearts so we may live with hearts attuned to the rhythms and needs of our community and our world.

**People:** We live from this moment.

**Eric:** We love from this moment.

**People:** May we live this day as a gift and move into the days ahead with gratitude and generosity.

**Eric:** May we do so, sharing together the Lord's Prayer...

*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:**

**Eric:** As we go, proclaim God's message of justice, grace and love. Go to love deeply and show great care. Go in peace and love, now and forever more.

**Postlude:** "Jupiter, by Holst" – Christie Coatsworth

**Prayers:** - Please include these people in your prayers this week.

We have offered prayer for these people each Sunday morning just before the Zoom Service.  
It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as “In the Spirit We Are One”.

Cancer:	Karen	Gary	Allan
	Jasmine	Jerri	Billy
	Tom	Ingrid	Robertson
	Randy	Willie & Gisele	Family
	George	Earl	Francine
	Cindy & Connie	COVID deaths	Leone
Special:	Susan	Barry/ Marsha	
	Zoe	Glen	
	Becky	Baby Carly	