

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Easter – April 23rd, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.ca

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: Children of God, we come into the presence of God to be stilled in heart.

People: **We come to be inspired through imagination.**

Eric: With believing hands, we reach out to receive.

People: **With eyes opened to new perspectives, we will learn how to live in the free and spirited ways of Christ.**

Eric: Come let us worship.

Opening Hymn: VU 157 “Christ the Lord is Risen”

Christ the Lord is risen today, Hallelujah!
all creation join to say; Hallelujah!
raise your joys and triumphs high; Hallelujah!
sing, O heavens, and earth reply: Hallelujah!

Love's redeeming work is done, Hallelujah!
fought the fight, the battle won. Hallelujah!
Lo, our sun's eclipse is o'er! Hallelujah!
Lo, he dwells in death no more! Hallelujah!

Lives again our glorious King: Hallelujah!
where, O death, is now your sting? Hallelujah!
Once he died, our souls to save: Hallelujah!
where your victory, O grave? Hallelujah!

Hail, the Lord of earth and heaven, Hallelujah!
praise to you by both be given! Hallelujah!
Every knee to you shall bow, Hallelujah!
risen Christ, triumphant now. Hallelujah! **

Opening Prayer:

People: **God of broad earth and deep sky, of wholesome bread and delicious wine, you delight us with your nearness. You astonish us through the ordinary ways, you make yourself known.**

May delight enrich our worship, so that gratitude carries us onto roads of grace, goodness, and compassion. In the Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 345 "Come, Children, Join to Sing"

Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!
Let all with heart and voice,
saved by God's gracious choice,
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
Christ calls his people friends,
the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
The whole creation o'er
let all God's love adore,
singing for evermore: Hallelujah! **

Scripture: Luke 24: 13 - 35

Reflection: "Eyes of the Heart"

Biblical scholar John Dominic Crossan remarks, "Emmaus never happened," clarifying that "Emmaus always happens." We are given opportunities over and over again to see and be changed by the risen Christ. Here and now. We are invited to see with new eyes.

The exact location of Emmaus, where the two disciples see the risen Christ – as told in the Gospel of Luke, is unknown. Emmaus may be anywhere. Hearts burning and eyes opening do not occur in only one geographical or spiritual place. Emmaus comes into sight wherever a path leads us toward communion with God and whenever we recognize the risen Christ among us.

When Jesus joins the two travelers on the road, they do not recognize him immediately; perhaps their grief and loss blind them. When they offer Jesus hospitality, a sign of love, and when he blesses and breaks bread, the revelation

happens, and they recognize the stranger with whom they have been walking and talking.

A transformation occurs within the travelers; they shift from standing still in a state of sadness to being “on fire” with hope. In great haste, they return to Jerusalem to tell the other followers of Jesus what they have experienced: Christ’s resurrection and their own.

Sometimes, our hearts are heavy with the burden of grief, sorrow, and anguish. We have been cut to the heart. What might it take for our hearts to see more grace and love? Paula d’Arcy writes, “God comes to us disguised as our life”. We may fail or refuse to recognize how God is changing our hearts, believing we are on a road of our own making. We can be hardened, but God expands the vision of our hearts.

Imagine you are one of the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus that day. Remember, this story takes place on Easter Sunday afternoon. Some women told you this morning that Jesus was risen - but you know that can’t be true. Then you experience this story. At what point in this story, might the light bulb turn on for you? What might it have felt like to hear this “stranger” explain faith history as you walked on the road? When has someone outlined a piece of history as a way to make a present point?

Jesus meets the travelers on the road and in their need, he gives them space to speak and the space to be themselves. Recognition will come in its own way and in its own time. Jesus’ questions invite us to become more aware of what is happening within and beyond us.

Jesus does not reveal Himself to the men while they are on the road. Instead, He waits until they have arrived at their destination and are relaxed, preparing to enjoy a meal, before He allows the men’s eyes to be opened.

Many scholars believe this parallels the discernment process for many of us. Sometimes, when we cannot understand something, we gather information. Then it must settle within our hearts. Only when we have fully “digested” what we’ve learned, allowed it to sink in, does the truth come out.

The men do not seem extraordinarily surprised when they finally realize it had been Jesus that whole time. As they asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

It took a little time for their hearts and their heads to catch up with each other, but they finally did, and they knew the truth completely.

Then, fired up with their new knowledge, they rushed off to tell the apostles the good news.

Jesus chose to reveal Himself at the dinner table. There is something relaxing about the fellowship of the table. There, people are calm, unhurried, there to fill their bellies and rest after a hard day. It's a place of intimacy and friendship, a place where relationships are strengthened. The table is a "regular" place, a fixture of daily life. Perhaps this represents the way Jesus wants people to know Him: on a basic, core, everyday level, practical and authentic, not fancy or fussy or only for a certain class or rank.

This may also be why the men are not named until midway through the story, and then only one of them is identified: Cleopas. They are likely not "important" men. They are not among the 11 apostles, not "special" in any significant, apparent way. At this point, the only other people to have had a supernatural encounter were women, who found the tomb empty save for two angels. At that time in history, women were low in status.

That these seemingly unimportant women received a revelation, followed by these two seemingly unimportant men, perhaps signifies the universality of the resurrection message. That is, the message of Jesus is for all people, not just the rich, the Jew, or the "special."

The experience of the two men and their encounter with Jesus upon the road to Emmaus is powerful. Not only does it serve as one of many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, but it shows us how we can look to Scripture — particularly Old Testament prophecies — to see how God's plan has unfolded.

It also serves as a model for us in our own discipleship: Jesus opened the eyes of these men, steered them to the full truth that is contained in God's Holy Word, the Bible, and ultimately revealed Himself to them as the resurrected savior. That is exactly what we are to do in our own faith journey.

Today's story shares that we can feel Jesus with us without having him physically there. Some of us may struggle with some of the "facts" of the Resurrection. Today's story can help us realize that "the facts" are not the point — the point is an awareness of the risen Christ with us in the things we are doing and facing today. Today's story helps us to see the world and ourselves differently —

much as the travelers did with Jesus. We are not alone. God is always with us.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 332 “The Church’s One...”

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the word;
from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation of peace for evermore,
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the three in one,
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we celebrate Christ’s resurrection, we also celebrate that as we share Christ’s Resurrection, we also share the ministry of Jesus, helping the poor, visiting the lonely, healing the sick and caring for all of creation. Let us give, according to our faith.

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: Giver of life, in the same way, bread is broken and shared for the benefit of all, so might our offerings of money, time, and giftedness be a breaking open of abundant love to the world. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: MV 121 "Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah

Hey now! Singing hallelujah!
Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing hallelujah!
The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 159 “The Strife is O’er”

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun, hallelujah!

The powers of death have done their worst,
but Christ their legions has dispersed;
let shouts of holy joy outburst, hallelujah!

He closed the ancient gates of hell,
the bars from heaven's high portals fell;
let songs of praise his triumph tell, hallelujah!

On the third morn he rose again,
glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain, hallelujah! **

Benediction:

Eric: Go into the world with love and joy, for God’s peace always goes with us, now and forever more!

Closing Chorus: VU 884 “You Shall Go Out With Joy”

You shall go out with joy
and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills
will break forth before you;
there'll be shouts of joy,
and all the trees of the field
will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands,
(clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands,
(clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands
(clap, clap)
while you go out with joy.

Amen, Amen, Amen. *(5 Part Amen)*

Postlude: – 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:

**Carol
Cheryl
Susan
Barb
Margie
Marcus
Ingrid
Jerry**

**Larry
Kerigan
Ken
Natalie
Ruth
Dave
Marj
Sue**

Evelyn

**Richard and Evelyn
Elaine**

**Eric Chamberlain’s Family
Ron
Gary
Janet
Tracey
Abby
David
Coatsworth Family**