

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifth Sunday of Lent – April 3rd, 2022

Prelude: “Welcome, Sweet Springtime” Melody in F, Robinstein - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to St. Luke’s today as we celebrate the fifth Sunday of Lent.

St. Luke’s is hosting their Lenten Fish Fry Take Out this Friday April 8th – pick up from 5 to 6 pm.

Also on April 8th the Ridgetown Chaplain’s Gala is being held at Emmanuel Community Church Hall. Gathering at 6 pm – Dinner at 6:30 pm.

The Dale Family is holding a Celebration of Life for JoAn on Sunday May 22nd, at Club Lentina’s from 2 to 4 pm. Short Program at 3 pm. Please RSVP to Isabelle at 519-365-5380 by May 8th. We have a list to sign up at each church - which will be forwarded to the family on May 8th. A poster is on the Bulletin Board.

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

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, readings by Annette Skillings and the slides by Tracey Major. You make all the difference. Thank you!

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: We gather in the presence of God, the creator of sand and stars: ready to worship.

People: We gather in the presence of Christ, our guide for setting a table of welcome: ready to worship.

Eric: We gather in the presence of the Spirit, our inspiration for moving beyond fear: ready to worship.

People: We gather together in this space and with grace: ready to worship.

Eric: It is time to worship!

Opening Prayer:

People: O God, you are the giver of wonderful things. You gave us life. You have filled our lives with family and friends. You lavish us with your grace. You have given us this day to add to the many we have shared. And you have given us Jesus. Help us grow in our understanding and appreciation of just how much you love us, and open our hearts that our worship this day might be an act of praise and thanksgiving for all you have done for us. Amen.

Opening Hymn: VU 421 “Lead On, O Cloud of Presence”

Lead on, O cloud of Presence, the exodus is come.
In wilderness and desert our tribe shall make its home.
 Our slavery left behind us,
 new hopes within us grow.
We seek the land of promise where milk and honey flow.

Lead on, O fiery Pillar, we follow yet with fears,
but we shall come rejoicing though joy be born of tears.
 We are not lost, though wandering,
 for by your light we come,
and we are still God's people. The journey is our home.

Lead on, O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,
and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.
 We pray our sons and daughters
 may journey to that land
where justice dwells with mercy, and love is law's demand.

Scripture: John 12: 1 - 8 “A Prophet Woman Anoints Jesus” by George and Marg Darnley

One night, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Supper was over and Martha was busy clearing away dishes. The others were resting after the meal. No one noticed when Mary slipped out and returned with a perfume bottle carved from smooth alabaster. But everyone noticed what she did next. Breaking the wax seal off the bottle, Mary stepped close to Jesus. Like a prophet anointing a king, she poured the perfume over his head. The oil trickled down his face and ran into his beard. Then Mary knelt before Jesus. She poured out the rest of the perfume – every last drop – and tenderly rubbed it into his feet. The sweet scent wafted through the warm room. Mary's tears mingled with the perfume.

Then Judas broke the silence.

“What a waste!” he complained. “That was expensive perfume! She could have sold it and used the money to feed the poor!”

Mary, who so often sat and listened quietly, began to speak. Her words were for Jesus. “From the beginning, you have poured yourself out like this perfume. You have held nothing back – not a drop. Your love for all people fills the world like a sweet scent. You have given what is most precious. So I do the same.”

Jesus had tears in his eyes. “Leave her alone,” he said to Judas. “Can't you see what she is doing? She is a prophet, anointing me as messiah and king. But she knows that this also means getting me ready to die and be buried. That is what family members do for their loved ones. This was a gift of love.”

The fragrance of the perfume wove its way into every corner of the room. It made them all a bit dizzy.

Jesus took Mary by the hand. “Remember the poor, of course,” he said. “But give gifts of love while you have the chance.”

Message: “Gracious Ministries”

How do you feel about Mary anointing Jesus. Is this a waste of money? Does Mary understand what this anointing means? Was this Mary's last gift to Jesus? Martha, Mary's sister is in the kitchen cleaning the dinner dishes. Again we see Martha working so hard as the Dinner Host, making sure everything is proper and right. Mary though again leaves the kitchen and the work, to go and fetch her bottle of expensive perfume to anoint Jesus on his head – much like how a king is anointed to be the new king. In reality both Mary and Martha are ministering to Jesus and the disciples.

John the Gospel writer weaves layers of details and themes by blending traditions from Israel and from the other gospels. Today we see the one who comes to minister - becomes the one ministered to - in surprising ways and by surprising ones.

Maybe you like me wonder about this story. All four gospels tell a similar story of a woman anointing Jesus; only John names this woman. Along with Mark and Matthew, John sets the scene in Bethany (although these other gospels indicate the home is that of a Pharisee named Simon). Along with Luke, John associates the woman's act with an extravagant act of hospitality.

We as humans jump to assessing the roles played by Mary and Martha here. In the gospels, we remember the story of when Jesus contrasts Mary's doing of the "needful thing" - with Martha's distraction over her tasks. John might be suggesting the same thing in this Gospel story. Mary anointed Jesus, while Martha "served." The Greek verb translated as "served" makes our modern day "Diaconal" ministry. In most New Testament occurrences this verb is translated as "minister." So in John's story today, we see Jesus is graciously ministered to by the actions of both women.

Controversy arises in interpreting the closing verse's assertion that the poor will always be present, while Jesus will not. In Deuteronomy 15, the Jewish faithful are commanded to care for the poor. It is part of the justice of a community. Jesus inherits his passion for justice from his Jewish roots. It may seem that John is rejecting this tradition in today's story.

But a central theme in John's gospel is what "time" it is. Numerous references have already been made to an approaching "hour." John shares Jesus' assertion of the timeliness of Mary's action, since his time draws short. John makes clear the market value of the nard: 300 denarii is roughly equivalent to the yearly salary of a day labourer. It seems, (since we know the rest of the story) that Mary has taken

the opportune moment to minister to Jesus. Leave it another day or so and it would be too late. Mary ministers to Jesus in ways that seems to waste good money, but her actions can also be seen as a gracious act of justice offered to the one who ministers to us all, then now and into the future.

In what ways do we find ourselves recipients of gracious ministries? Being the church how do we provide gracious ministries? When we are offered an act of gracious ministry, what do we need to let go of to allow ourselves to accept that gift? For me, I have to let go of my pride and accept that others want to show their love and care by ministering to their minister. Many times we as ministers – do minister to folks in the hospital – in these situations the folks we are visiting are vulnerable to their condition and other unpleasanties that happen in a hospital or nursing home setting. Even in these cases we as the one who ministers have to let go of our perceptions of what is expected.

There are times we touch what we might call “outsiders” and offer them gracious ministries that end up touching their lives, maybe even changing their lives. How do we as a congregation equip each other to engage in, and be looking for, such ministries?

At the feet of Jesus, and at the table where Jesus eats, Martha and Mary both minister to Jesus. Yet Martha and Mary minister to Jesus in different ways. How might we minister to Jesus?

This story is considered to have happened on one of the nights of Holy week. We know the crucifixion is just a few days away. This “timing” makes this story all that more important. In hearing this story, we can learn about the power of love, the significance of our actions and what it means to have a relationship of grace. All great qualities of faithful Christians.

Faithful Christians also journey through the Season of Lent. Lent is traditionally a time of “letting go.” What have we let go of this Lent, to prepare for Jesus’ death and resurrection? Could that letting go be considered a gracious ministry? We often speak of grace as what God extends to us. Yet when we extend that same grace to others, what are the possibilities of such “gracious ministries” in our lives and communities? Is that the type of communities we would love to create?

Lent is a time of journey and we understand the journey is not easy. We do not do it alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 642 “Be Thou My Vision”

- 1 Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
naught be all else to me save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 3 Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Remember the words of Jesus who said: “Freely you have received, freely give”.

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: We offer our gifts this day with gratitude. Through them, may hope come to those who know despair, may love come to those who feel alone, may healing come to those who endure pain. May these gifts be a sign of our commitment to serve you in the world. Amen.

Hymn: VU 377 “Holy Spirit, Hear Us”

Holy Spirit, prompt us
when we bow to pray;
speak within and teach us

what we ought to say.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: God of justice, hear our yearning for peace wherever conflict rages; such as The Ukraine and Russia.

People: **We ask for truth wherever deception is the norm; with our fellow Canadians about the Pandemic.**

Eric: We ask for freedom wherever oppression reigns; with the poor and the oppressed. We ask for justice.

People: **God of imagination, hear our passion for new visions where habits are ingrained and inflexible; for inspiration where thinking is tedious and stale; for ingenuity where challenges seem insurmountable. We ask for imagination.**

Eric: God of healing, hear our prayers for all those who suffer, for all those in sickness, for all those who grieve. We ask for healing, as we offer our Community prayers...

People: **God of generosity, we reflect on our lives, remembering every gift of beauty and mercy you have offered to us. We offer our gratitude to you.**

Eric: God of grace, receive all the prayers we offer this day, as we offer Jesus' 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.*

Closing Hymn: VU 149 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God:
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.
- 3 See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small:
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Blessing:

Eric: In every step you take, may you feel anew the peace of Christ, the promise of the Spirit, and the presence of God, now and forever more.

May the Blessing of God Be Upon You: VU 429

May the blessing of God be upon you.
May God's love light all your way.
May the grace of Christ enfold you
and peace around you stay.
May the Spirit of God dwell within you.
May you live in joy each day.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: "Share the People You Love With Love" James Taylor – 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: | Tom | |
| | Louise | Louise' Granddaughter - Blake |
| | Betty | Ingrid |
| | Alison | Brenda |
| | Nancy | Lisa |
| | Sarah | Larry |
| | Brian | Jack |
| | Zoe | Becky |
| | Barry/ Marsha | Francine |
| | Melissa | Karen |
| | Jenny | Michelle |
| | Heather | Ross |
| | Gary | Margaret |
| | Gus (Sick kids) | Dolly |
| | Chris | Ukraine – Allied and Canadian Forces |
| | Michelle | Glenna |
| | Ann | Barry |
| | Franko | |