

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Easter Sunday – April 9th, 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:

Reflection:

Eric: Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed!

Eric: Much like Mary Magdalene at the tomb, we marvel at the Resurrection. The despair of only a few days ago has disappeared. Jesus' body is gone. Has he risen from the grave?

People: Yes, he has. And the joy of this moment is contagious!

Eric: Mary Magdalene shares the news of the resurrected Jesus with the disciples. We, too, must share the news of resurrection, the joy of a living and loving God.

Opening Hymn: VU 157 "Christ the Lord is Risen..."

- 1 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!
- 2 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!
- 3 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!
- 4 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! **

Call to Worship:

Eric: Open wide the way to renewed life that all may enter and give thanks to God.

People: Our prayers have been answered, and God has become our salvation.

Eric: Christ has risen!

People: Christ has risen indeed! Alleluia!

Eric: This is Love's doing; it is awesome in our eyes.

People: This is the day that God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Eric: Christ has risen!

People: Christ has risen indeed! Alleluia!

Opening Prayer:

People: O God, we come as Easter people to open our eyes to new sights and sounds. We come to find resurrection even when Good Friday hangs so heavily in our world. We come to be changed by songs of birds and angels and find new signs of life all around us. We come to find that we can be different when we open our eyes and ears to joy. We come to touch and smell the good news and find that you, O God, make all things new again. We come to praise you with all of our whole bodies. Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Children's Story:

Children's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 415 "The is the Day"

This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made.

Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God, your gates, O God;
we will go in, we will go in,
to your holy place, to your holy place.
Open to us your gates, O God,
we will go in to your holy place.
Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God.

You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name, we will praise your name;
we will give thanks, we will give thanks,
for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.
You are our God, we will praise your name,

we will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name.

This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made. **

Scripture: John 20: 1 - 18

On Sunday morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran to Simon Peter and to Jesus' favorite disciple and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb! We don't know where they have put him." Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. They ran side by side, until the other disciple ran faster than Peter and got there first. He bent over and saw the strips of linen cloth lying inside the tomb, but he did not go in.

When Simon Peter got there, he went into the tomb and saw the strips of cloth. He also saw the piece of cloth that had been used to cover Jesus' face. It was rolled up and in a place by itself. The disciple who got there first then went into the tomb, and when he saw it, he believed. At that time Peter and the other disciple did not know that the Scriptures said Jesus would rise to life. So the two of them went back to the other disciples.

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside the tomb. She was still weeping, when she stooped down and saw two angels inside. They were dressed in white and were sitting where Jesus' body had been. One was at the head and the other was at the foot. The angels asked Mary, "Why are you crying?" She answered, "They have taken away my Lord's body! I don't know where they have put him." As soon as Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know who he was. Jesus asked her, "Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener and said, "Sir, if you have taken his body away, please tell me, so I can go and get him." Then Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him, "Rabboni." The Aramaic word "Rabboni" means "Teacher." Jesus told her, "Don't hold on to me! I have not yet gone to the Father. But tell my disciples I am going to the one who is my Father and my God, as well as your Father and your God." Mary Magdalene then went and told the disciples she had seen the Lord. She also told them what he had said to her.

Reflection: "Joy Comes Alive"

There are so much bad news that we get every day that it would be easy to live as each day being a Good Friday. We are Christians - and Christians are called to live each day as "Easter" people. Living as Easter people in today's world could seem foolish, even impossible. In John's story today, Jesus' closest friends had trouble

believing that Jesus' was alive and it was nearly impossible to understand that the presence of the living God was right before them.

We as humans are curious, trying to understand this world in which we live. We often try to fit our understandings into the framework of our human senses and collective memories. The scriptures call us to broader views, setting our human experience into the larger relationship of the people with God.

In John's Easter narrative, John does not tell us about God's grace but invites us to use all our senses to experience it. In John, grace tastes like the best wine; smells like a broad expanse of a grassy field when Jesus fed 5000, or like the very-dead stench of Lazarus giving way to the pound of perfume poured upon Jesus by Mary. Here, at the beginning of today's story, grace is the scent of a springtime garden at dawn; the sound of a beloved voice speaking our name; the leaping, uncontrollable joy that propels Mary back into town, crying out that she has seen the Lord!

It is important to note that Mary alone stays until the morning light breaks. In John's gospel, light is a symbol of belief and understanding. So, while Peter and the Beloved Disciple see the empty tomb and the discarded cloths, they remain in the dark of human perception and understanding. Mary's stillness, her willingness to remain present in a space of grief, allows the light to shine around her. Like the light of dawn, her understanding and her vision grow until she can experience the fullness of the Resurrection; until it is the joy of God's presence rather than the fear of God's absence - that compels her to proclaim what she has experienced. He is alive!

Mary isn't trying to figure out how the Resurrection came about, what kind of body Jesus now has, or whether his wounds are healed. Once Jesus calls Mary's name, Mary is filled with the joy of seeing the thing she most wanted - when she least expected it.

Often, what we see depends on what we expect to see. The biases of our culture play a role, but we also rely on previous experience to inform our expectations. The child for whom learning comes easily will approach a test with confidence, while the child who has struggled with learning or with anxiety will approach the same test with trepidation. Even Mary, at first, sees only what she expects - what makes sense to her. At first she sees a gardener. When she hears her name, Mary's expectations are torn apart.

Mary's joy in the moments of seeing Jesus invites us to imagine the unexpected places where the presence of God – might exist, unnoticed, in our own lives. Where might we see resurrection instead of death; joy instead of grief?

John's gospel is filled with very human, embodied ways of seeing, tasting, and smelling God around us; Wine in Cana, a grassy hillside near the Sea of Galilee, fish roasting on a beach. We experience God in moments of unexpected abundance and nurture, whether or not we recognize God's presence as such. These are the moments that this story calls us to see and to recognize as moments of resurrection, as moments when we, like Mary, have seen our God.

Many humans believe that death is final. This is because of the biases of our culture, and that we do rely on previous experiences, which when someone or something dies - we do not physically see them again. Our perceived expectation is that death is final. We as humans are continually surrounded with endings that can be new beginnings. We might get stuck in the ending, it can be later that we see the new beginning. It does take time – it is not immediate. God is bigger, more creative, more grace-filled than we are. Death is not final. For this we should rejoice.

When we lose someone, we miss them. In faith, we believe in new life! In those moments were we do experience the thin spaces - our loved ones can connect when we least expect it. We cannot explain the experience, but like Mary we know they are alive. In these experiences we may better understand Mary, as she runs back to the disciples, the cry bursting from her, "I have seen the Lord!" We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Video Hymn: "I Danced in the Morning"

Invitation to Communion:

Eric: Come from the north and the south, the east and the west. Come from your fears and your grieving, your lost hopes and forgotten dreams – and come to a table set with grace and power that will not be deterred. Christ is risen for you.

People: Love is alive! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: The sharing of gifts is one way we can celebrate resurrection. 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: As the women drew near to the tomb on Easter morning, ready to give care to a loved one, may we reach out with actions of care and justice, and compassion.
As the women left the empty tomb and shared the amazing news of resurrection, may we witness to the life rising up within and all around us. This we ask in the Name of Jesus. 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 & Lord's Prayer:

Thanksgiving Prayer:

Eric: We come with joy into the brightness of this new day and season, to celebrate the presence of the risen Christ,

People: a Christ who embodies love,

Eric: a Christ who blesses the poor in spirit, the meek, and mourning,

People: a Christ who reminds us that there is no greater glory than tending and caring,

Eric: a Christ who welcomes the sinner and the tax collector,

People: a Christ who invites more grace and hospitality in sharing in the wonder of being alive together.

Eric: We are alive! Let us sing with all the angels:

**People: Holy, holy, holy God,
of new and transforming life,
heaven and earth are full of your glory,
hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is the one who comes in your name, O God: Hosanna in the highest.

Communion Hymn: VU 466 "Eat This Bread"

Eat this bread, drink this cup;
come to me and never be hungry.
Eat this bread, drink this cup;
trust in me and you will not thirst.

Remembering Jesus at the Table:

Eric: Here we gather as friends with risen bread and the cup that overflows.

People: We come together to taste and see the goodness of God. The table is wide, and there is room for all of creation.

Eric: Jesus took bread (*bread is broken*) and shared it,

People: Jesus took wine (*wine is poured*) **and offered it, saying, “eat, drink, all of you.”**

Eric: In our thanksgiving may we live as the Body of Christ within the new covenant sealed for all for the forgiveness of sins.

People: We remember Jesus the Christ always.

Eric: The gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

As we partake the bread together:

Eric: The body of Christ,

People: the bread of life.

As we partake the drink together:

Eric: The lifeblood of Christ,

People: the cup of blessing.

Prayer After Communion:

People: May the Holy Spirit renew us at heart and embolden us in soul. Alive and attentive to the Spirit, may our lives confidently express God’s desire for the healing of the nations and the restoration of mother earth as we break bread this day, and celebrate the presence of the risen Christ, here in our very midst. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 173 “Thine Is The Glory”

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.

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.

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. **

Blessing:

Eric: Beyond death is abundant life. We are called to live it!
Christ is risen.

People: Christ is risen indeed.

Eric: Live in the resurrected Spirit of Christ, now and forever more.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

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:

**Paul
Carol
Maureen
Susan
Cara
Margie
Marcus
Susan
Ingrid
Jerry**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Ruth**

**Dave
Marj
Sue
Evelyn**

**Richard and Evelyn
Elaine
Wayne**

**Eric
Ron
Barb
Richard
Cheryl**