

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Advent – December 10th, 2023

Prelude: – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at southbuxton.ca, and talbotstreet.ca

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides. Thank you to Pat Hawley and helpers for changing the banners for us today – they are perfect!

Call To Worship:

Eric: God's spirit is upon us.

People: God has anointed each of us to be bringers of comfort and good news.

Eric: Some of us are discouraged, others are broken-hearted.

People: Some of us are joyful and filled with laughter; others of us long for better circumstances.

Eric: Restore us to each other and you, O God.

People: As we comfort one another and celebrate the good news, we remember God is with us and for us.

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Advent Reflection:

Eric: On this third Sunday of Advent, we focus on Joy. Even in our troubles, we still experience times of Joy.

People: Our scripture today speak of God who works miracles for God's people. Even when we think we can do no more, we cry as we go plant seeds for the harvests. We would only plant seeds, if we are confident they will grow. As we continue our journey through Advent, let us ponder:

- In what ways are you troubled or in fear of? *(pause)*
- What are you looking forward to? *(pause)*
- How are you or those you love, feeling this Advent season? *(pause)*

Hymn: VU 2 "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" Verse 1

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free:
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

Eric: Who do you say Jesus is?

People: I am like a sunflower - Jesus is like the sun, who I always turn towards for energy and strength.

Eric: I am like a team player, Jesus is a great coach who offers leadership, correction, and encouragement.

People: **We wait for Jesus, the bright morning star, who brings joy with his rising.**

(Light Pink Advent candle for Joy)

Eric: We wait for Jesus.

Hymn: VU 2 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” Verse 2

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Acknowledgement:

Eric: Mighty God, you call us to proclaim the good news, but we can be slow in proclaiming joy and faith.

People: **There are times when grief weighs us down; bitterness creeps into our hearts and minds.**

Eric: We feel unworthy of the task of discipleship, afraid to claim the particular gifts you have given us.

People: **Like John the baptizer, however, we are not called to save the whole world.**

Eric: We are called to point to Jesus and invite others into loving community. Restore our faith.

People: **Refocus our understanding of who we are in Christ that we may rejoice once more, and witness to the Light. Amen.**

Hymn: VU 2 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” Verse 3

Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

Affirmation:

Eric: “As a garden grows its seeds, so God will grow righteousness and praise”.

People: **We are made to grow in faith. We are beloved by God, cherished and forgiven always.**

Eric: God is good. And so are we.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn: VU 2 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” Verse 4

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne

Children's Story:

Children's Hymn: VU 577 "I've Got Joy Like A Fountain"

I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
 I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain,
I've got joy like a fountain,
 I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
 I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.
I've got love like an ocean,
I've got love like an ocean,
 I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
 I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 126

Celebrating the Harvest

It seemed like a dream when the Lord brought us back to the city of Zion.

We celebrated with laughter and joyful songs. In foreign nations it was said, "The Lord has worked miracles for his people."

And so we celebrated because the Lord had indeed worked miracles for us.

Our Lord, we ask you to bless our people again, and let us be like streams in the Southern Desert.

We cried as we went out to plant our seeds. Now let us celebrate as we bring in the crops.

We cried on the way to plant our seeds, but we will celebrate and shout as we bring in the crops.

Scripture: Isaiah 61: 1 - 4, 8 - 11

The Spirit of the Lord God has taken control of me! The Lord has chosen and sent me to tell the oppressed the good news, to heal the brokenhearted, and to announce freedom for prisoners and captives. This is the year when the Lord God will show kindness to us and punish our enemies. The Lord has sent me to comfort those who mourn, especially in Jerusalem. He sent me to give them flowers in place of their sorrow, olive oil in place of tears, and joyous praise in place of broken hearts. They will be called "Trees of Justice," planted by the Lord to honor his name. Then they will rebuild cities that have been in ruins for many generations. I, the Lord, love justice! But I hate robbery and injustice. My people, I solemnly promise to reward you with an eternal agreement. Your descendants will be known in every nation. All who see them will realize that they have been blessed, by me, the Lord. I celebrate and shout because of my Lord God. His saving power and justice are the very

clothes I wear. They are more beautiful than the jewelry worn by a bride or groom. The Lord will bring about justice and praise in every nation on earth, like flowers blooming in a garden.

Reflection: “We Wait in Joy”

Psalm 126 shares the joy of the Israelites after their return to the City of God – Jerusalem, from their Babylonian exile. Returning to Jerusalem had been a tough journey and a tougher realization that the City of God was anything, but blessed. Yet Isaiah the Prophet shares that they are not alone – that God had called them home, and God is there in Jerusalem with them. Get out there and plant the crops - continue to do things that show you have faith in the future.

They are weeping in despair as they planted their seeds. Oh, they had so much work ahead of them. There is all the clean up, all the planning, all the work of mixing mortar and laying stones and rebuilding the beautiful City of Zion. Oh, it would be so much easier just to return to Babylon. Did some give up? Did some actually return to Babylon? Did some just go into solitude and disappear from all that needed to get done? For those who took Isaiah’s words and planted the crops – they were rewarded with new shoots and green growth. The land was not dead. The land was alive. They were not dead – they were alive. They had seen God at work through those dead seeds planted into the earth. They had seen God’s blessings in the growing stocks of wheat. They would not starve. God would provide. They were not alone – God was with them. They celebrate with joy. They are so joyful their neighbouring nations noticed and they said, “God has worked miracles for God’s people”. The people of Israel said, “So we celebrated, because the Lord indeed has worked miracles for us”.

Rejoicing in God is not something we often intentionally do. We rejoice with friends and family at different events in our lives: a birthday celebration; an anniversary; the birth of a newborn. Sometimes after the celebration has ended, we may take a moment to rejoice in the blessings God has provided us in our lives.

Many times in our lives, we get wrapped up in all the things that are happening to us, those things that frustrate us, those things that cause us despair, those things that pull us down and hold us down. Today’s Psalm reminds us that our feelings do not have power, if we only think of ourselves. When we celebrate God’s power in our lives, we use God’s power to help us accomplish what needs to be accomplished.

Take our Christmas Baskets for example. Regardless of what we feel our lives are offering us, when we offer some of what we are blessed with to others who need some help, it is like we are doing God’s work – therefore using God’s power to

bring ourselves joy, and share that joy with those who Christmas will be so much better than expected this year. It's not so much about us, as it is about God's work, and God's power to accomplish God's work. Together we can do so much more.

This news of Joy shared today is good news for the oppressed, the broken-hearted, the captives, and prisoners. These Israelites have lived the lives of the oppressed, of the broken-hearted, of captive and prisoners, regardless of whether they were exiled by the Babylonians or left in the wake of the destruction in Jerusalem. Jesus shared these same words many years later as he was telling about his ministry. These words offer the very nature of God – which in turn brings Joy. Out of their brokenness comes restoration and rejoicing.

Our present day situation with all that is going on in today's world may not be anywhere as serious as the Israelites' return to Jerusalem. The Israelites still had their community to keep their moral up, and work together as one. They had the community to support each other. Working together building the walls of Jerusalem singing this Psalm – after all Psalm 126 is a song of Joy! God is restoring the people of Israel from exile. Knowing that gives Joy to God's people.

God didn't just use the people of Israel to share this Joy. God used another nation to bring it about. As the foreign nations celebrated in Joy for God's people – God's people see the realization of God's deeds. This is not going to be a walk in the park, but as the Israelites returned to Jerusalem – one dream has been realized. The next dream is to rebuild that which has been lost, is still before them. Their neighbours show them that their dreams will come true, but with the power of God.

As we age, we may despair that we cannot support the community as we once did – maybe we feel all alone. Yet we still have the opportunity to support our community from the sidelines. It may be the newspaper article that shares the good that comes from our support. It may be the neighbour who phones you to share the good news they were blessed by the generosity of our community. All this new knowledge has the ability to give us Joy. It's all about doing the work of God, that God's power can be realized in our community, bringing to us all Joy. Imagine all of us doing our work, and encouraging others by singing "Joy to the World".

On this third Sunday of Advent we are still waiting for the one to come. And we wait in Joy, knowing that the one who is to come - comes because of God, not because of us. As we work for God, God's greatest gift comes for everyone – to us and to those we helped this Christmas! Emmanuel – God is with us. We are filled with Joy knowing we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 79 “Arise, Your Light Has Come”

Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God,
which shines on you today.

Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the broken-hearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we wait in Joy - 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:

The prayers we offer, the gifts we give, are like seeds sown in trust that God's love will water these seeds and bring new life, hope, and joy to those who weep. May Joy be within us.

Hymn: VU 400 “Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying”

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 59 “Joy To The World”

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:

let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Benediction:

Eric: Go out into the world with the joy of God's grace and with God's anointing of each and every one, now and forever more.

Hope Is a Star:

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth

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

It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as "In the Spirit We Are One".

Cancer:

**Carol
Susan
Barb
Margie
Jerry
Erin**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Joan
Rick**

**David
Dave**

**Elizabeth
Mike and Janice
Barb
Rick**

**Don
Audrey
Harry/Ruth
Joyce
Jordan Family
Gilbeault Family**