

# **South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges**

***Third Sunday of Advent – December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020***

**Prelude:** “Jesus Christ, The Apple Tree” – Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Good morning!

The South Buxton Pastoral Charge and Talbot Street is matching church donors donations to Kenesserie Camp up to \$1,000. Today is the last day for donations – if you haven’t got it done and want to, please call Don or George to let them know you are donating. For Talbot Street folks; make your cheques payable to “Talbot Street United Church” put “Kenesserie” in the memo, and give to Don Jackson. Don will send a cheque to George to be matched by the South Buxton Pastoral Charge. For South Buxton folks; you can donate online at southbuxton.ca (put “Kenesserie Camp” in the message), or write a cheque to South Buxton Pastoral Charge (memo; “Kenesserie Camp”) and mail to:

SBPC - George Darnley  
106 Blake Street  
P.O. Box 266  
Merlin ON N0P 1W0

To keep things simple, you will be receipted by the South Buxton Pastoral Charge, or Talbot Street, as they too are involved as they contribute to the South Buxton Pastoral Charge yearly budget. Thank you for your support to our local United Church Camp!

I challenged other former Kent Presbytery United Churches to also contribute to the Kenesserie Cause. Rural United pastoral Charge and their Minister Wanda Burse have accepted the challenge. Rural United is made up of St. Paul’s, St. John’s - Botany and Turin United Churches. Let see how we make out!

Today is also the last Sunday for Talbot Street to donate to the Wheatley Community Chest, the Wheatley Food Bank and / or the Potato Project. Please make cheques payable to “Talbot Street United Church” (writing in the memo which projects you wish to support), and give or mail to Don Jackson - today.

Christmas Eve is only three weeks away, and we are looking at recording a Christmas pageant by Zoom. On Christmas Eve it will be shown on Zoom at 7 pm, but will be available on video on southbuxton.ca around the same time. We are still planning to showcase the new babies we are expecting or who have arrived this year. Please send me those pictures and any info you might have of who, what and when.

We have decorated the trees east of St. Andrew’s United Church with lights, as part of “Lighting Up Chatham Kent”. In fact, South Buxton is so lit up this year - that it is amazing!

So you can see the banners behind me including the banner of Joy, which is the them we are celebrating today.

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at [southbuxton.ca](http://southbuxton.ca), and [talbotstreet.ca](http://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 1 "O Come O Come Emmanuel" Verse 1**

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lowly exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

### **Lighting of the Advent Candle:**

#### **Video: "Jesus, Our Morning Star"**

**Eric:** Who do you say Jesus is?

**Annette:** To me, a sunflower, Jesus is like the sun, who I always turn towards for energy and strength.

**Eric:** To me, 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 1 “O Come O Come Emmanuel” Verse 6

O come, O Dayspring, from on high,  
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

**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.**

**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.**

**Scripture:** 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.**

**Message:** “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. I wonder if some gave up? Did some 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. No - 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 notice and they say, "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. These first few verses of Psalm 126, grab the pain with which these people are dealing, and then the next verses offer the very nature of God – which in turns brings Joy. Out of their brokenness comes restoration and rejoicing.

Our present day situation with COVID Restrictions may not be anywhere as serious as the return to Jerusalem. Yet the Israelites still had their community to keep their moral up, and work together as one. They had the community to support each other. Can you imagine them building the walls of Jerusalem singing this Psalm? 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.

Our despair may be that we cannot have the community support us – that 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 is 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.

**Hymn: VU 59 "Joy To The World"**

- 1 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.

- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.

### **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. Amen.**

### **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:**

**Eric:** God of comfort and promise, we pray for the brokenness of the world.

**People: For the hungry and the hurting, the disappointed and the angry, we pray for your healing and restoration.**

**Eric:** Help us be involved in creating communities that actively care for the broken.

**People: We pray for those who mourn and live with grief.**

**Eric:** May we be a presence and solace.

**People: We lift to you those discouragements we have experienced this week.**

**Eric:** Discouragements in our families, our friendships, our jobs, even discouragement in ourselves.

**People: We lift to you, O God, the different things that drag us down.**

**Eric:** Restore our faith in you, O God.

**People: Restore our faith in ourselves and each other.**

**Eric:** We have different hurts, worries, fears.

**People: We name them in our hearts and ask for help to trust you with them.**

**Eric:** Bring us comfort; plant the good news deep within our hearts.

**People: Help us to see your restoration of the world when we welcome a shy or unsure young child, when we listen to the dotting story and share the joy of a grandparent.**

**Eric:** Help us to see your promise of healing in the crusty exterior of someone genuinely trying to be kind.

**People: As we grow in faith, we pray for the ability to rejoice always and to pray continually.**

**Eric:** We trust that the one who calls is faithful, as we share his 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.*

### **Benediction:**

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

### **VU 7: Hope Is a Star:** (Verse 3)

3 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:** “Bright and Joyous is the Morn” – 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”.

In hospital: Cleata  
Ken

Cancer: Wayne  
Karen  
Ian  
Jasmine  
Gary  
Tom

Passing: Reverend David Fuller

And the Blenheim Trinity and Erieau St. Paul's  
Congregations.

Special: Doug  
June  
Melonie  
Becky  
Bruce  
Jerri