

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

## *Second Sunday of Advent – December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

**Prelude:** by Christie Coatsworth

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

The poinsettias are placed in memory of those gone before us. Thank you to those who provided them for our amazement.

St. Patrick's is hosting a Community Carol Sing in the forest at the Shrine, next Sunday December 11, 2022 at 2:30 pm. Bring a lawn chair, blanket and mug for Hot Chocolate.

As Christmas approaches keep in mind our Christmas Projects with Cash donations to support the Chatham Kent Children's Services Christmas Gifts – send to George by Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (St. Luke's will match \$ for \$), and our Annual Personal Hygiene Collection for the Merlin Christmas Baskets – due today - Sunday December 4, 2022.

Need some Christmas Baking? The Royal Canadian Legion in Merlin is hosting their Christmas Bake Sale on this Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – from 10 am to 2 pm. Donations to the Bake Table are welcome – you can drop them off at the Legion at 8 am on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca)

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Imagine a world where God takes shoots and buds and uses them for large purposes.

**People:** Imagine a world, where baby cows and baby bears play together in peace and harmony, where lions and lambs live together in safety.

**Eric:** Imagine God's world, where God's Holy Mountain provides refuge, peace, and safety.

**People:** We come to the mountain to worship the One who takes the tiniest shoot and uses it to signal the Hope of God.

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

**Eric:** Come and let us build a new creation to find a way through the wilderness together.

**People:** Let us imagine how we might turn around and learn from that tiny green shoot of new life.

**Eric:** In the wildness of this moment, we wait for the dawn to break and to give light to all who find the landscape bleak and full of shadow.

**People:** We need light to guide our feet into the way of Peace (*Light the first purple candle*). Today we light another candle in our constant need for Hope (*Light the second purple candle*).

**Eric:** With this one light, we pray:

**People:** O God, we place this light in this holy space as a reminder that we are on this journey together. Be light along all our paths. Lead us to a more just world and help us to stay awake and present to your love in each ordinary day. Amen.

**Hymn: VU 44 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”**

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold,  
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven's all-gracious King!'  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.
- 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and warring humankind hears not  
the love song which they bring.  
O hush the noise, and cease your strife,  
to hear the angels sing.
- 4 For, lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and the whole world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.

**Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:**

**Children's Hymn: VU 6 “A Candle is Burning”**

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,  
a candle to signal that conflict must cease:  
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;

a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,  
a candle of hope in December's dark night.  
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,  
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

### **Scripture: Isaiah 11: 1 - 10 “God’s Mountain”**

**Hello. My name is Isaiah, and I am a prophet. A prophet is someone who tells people about God. A prophet wants all the people to listen and learn about who God is and what God does. Life is difficult for the people of Judah, where I live. The people of the land are afraid and sad that other nations are trying to take over, and they feel that God is not listening to them.**

**I was thinking about all of this, and suddenly a picture came into my mind. I knew that God wanted the leaders and people of Judah to hear about it.**

**The picture was of a tree that had been cut down; it was just a stump, its life and beauty gone. But from the root of that tree, a new branch would grow, and it would become a strong tree again. I told the people not to give up hope; just like the new branch that grew from the stump of the tree that seemed dead, a new leader would come. This leader would have the Spirit of God and all of God’s knowledge and understanding. This person would be happy and really enjoy knowing God by seeing and hearing about all the good things God has done and will do. Caring for the poor and teaching bad people to be good would be something for this person to do.**

**The rest of my story was about what would happen if God made all things good and safe. I told about a mountain where no one would be hurt, and all the animals would live together. No animal would hunt and kill another animal for food. All the animals would live peacefully on the mountain, and a child would lead them on the mountain. The child would teach the world about God and all the good things God can do. No one would harm or destroy anyone or anything else on this mountain. Everyone and everything in the whole wide world would know about God. They would know that God is everywhere, even in the biggest ocean. They would know that all the people have been a part of God’s plan, and all the people will be a part of that plan in the future.**

### **Message: “On God’s Holy Mountain”**

We were talking the other day how we are already in the Second Week of Advent and it doesn’t seem possible that Christmas is under three weeks away. During past Advents, we are running around getting ready for Christmas, as we set our sights on Christ’s coming, and the celebration of Christ’s birth. This year it seems that Advent is here and we are not yet ready.

Today’s story shows us the Reign of God as the Hope for a world where everyone and everything lives in harmony on God’s holy mountain. Isaiah says “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse”. Jesse was King David’s father, so “stump of Jesse” is a reference to kings who followed David. To call that line of rulers a “stump” might have been shocking to those who thought the Davidic line would continue forever. Have you seen what looks like a dead stump, and new

shoots appear and grow to become a new tree? This is the metaphor that Isaiah uses to show the people of Judah who were living in exile in Babylon, that the line of David will continue. The people of Judah lived in exile in Babylon in the sixth century BCE. For those in Exile, it would seem the Davidic dynasty had ended in their exile from Jerusalem.

We are told that God's Spirit will equip the "shoot" from Jesse's stump with qualities needed for just rule. The prophet is clear about the power of God's Spirit and God's intent for shalom for all creation. There is hope here, not despair. Today we celebrate Hope. Hope is promised in this new shoot, which with God's Spirit will come to vision through a righteous ruler and a peaceable kingdom.

Using animal imagery, Isaiah takes us back to creation – a time of perfect harmony, and then re-creation – a return to that time of harmony. Isaiah promises dramatic change. Isaiah shares that God's power as Creator, grounds our hope in transformation – God created all things, and God's power can renew all things. Again, with the use of the images of animals, the predator and prey will come together, reminding us of God's power to renew. Like the perfect world God created in the first place. If God can do it once, God can do it again. This time we are encouraged to help recreate.

In the Sundays of Advent leading up to Christmas Day and the birth of the Christ Child, we are asked to imagine a new world. "The work of the imagination is serious business because through it we build or destroy the world." Isaiah calls us to imagine a world where opposites co-exist and thrive peacefully. Isaiah calls us to imagine a God far more wondrous, than we can ever comprehend. Isaiah asks us to imagine what our lives can be like if we dream of building God's world.

For the people of Judah, exiled in Babylon, they are looking for hope. Isaiah gives them a dream of a new reality where God's kingdom comes to all of us. For us today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, especially following COVID, we are hoping for a renewed normal to our lives. We as a society deal with violence – in our nations, our neighbourhoods, and our homes. It is easy to give up hope.

As mentioned earlier, this year, we are not ready for hope. Maybe we have not given up hope – is it the same, if you are not looking for hope. Or does hope find you? Will hope be there and ready when we need it? May we this year, be surprised by the transformation we see this Christmas in God's world. What role might we play in that transformation?

We believe the shoot that comes out of the stump of Jesse, is David and then Jesus. On this Sunday in Advent, we focus on the theme of hope. Does our hope lie in the abundance of this creation, or the possibilities to come? In our lives today, can we reach out to welcome one another, and live together in harmony? Can we offer others Hope? Maybe we are not ready for the Hope of Christmas, but chances are that others in our community need the Hope we offer.

We might very well be a candle of hope in December's dark night. Let us do our part to build the kind of community that Isaiah is sharing that God is creating; a community where all live in harmony, a community where we feel as close to God as the People of Judah did at Jerusalem. Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 806 “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”**

- 1 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:
- 2 under the shadow of thy throne  
thy saints have dwelt secure,  
sufficient is thine arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.
- 3 Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting thou art God,  
to endless years the same.
- 4 A thousand ages in thy sight  
are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.
- 5 Time like an ever-rolling stream  
soon bears us all away;  
we fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.
- 6 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
be thou our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

### **Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** With joy, let us present offerings of commitment and support for the work of Christ's church.

### **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:** Almighty and All-loving One, we lift up today our thanks to you. You have truly blessed our lives. We dedicate our lives to you today. Take our very best; may it help bring about Peace and Hope on your holy mountain. With gratitude of thanks and anticipation of the Christ Child, we pray. 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:**

### **Hymn: VU 424 "May the God of Hope Go with Us"**

- 1 May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.  
*Praying, let us work for peace,  
singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that's new,  
faithful when we hear Christ's call.*
- 2 May the God of healing free the earth from fear,  
freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued.  
May the God of love keep our commitment clear  
to a world restored, to human life renewed.  
*Praying, let us work for peace,  
singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that's new,  
faithful when we hear Christ's call.*

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Go forth seeking to see as God sees, with unending love for every creature, now and forever more.

**VU 7: Hope Is A Star:**

Hope is a star that shines in the night,  
leading us on till the morning is bright.  
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.

**Amen, Amen, 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: Chris**

**Paul  
Sarah  
Terry**

**Reg and Mary Jane**

**Dave  
Bill  
Jane  
Donna**

**Martin and Family**

**Larry  
Kerigan  
Fran  
John  
Ken  
Grace  
Mel  
Natalie  
Alice  
Susan  
Joan  
Ingrid**