

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

## *Second Sunday of Advent – December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

**Prelude:** “River” – Joni Mitchell – by Christie Coatsworth

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to Talbot Street today as we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent with emphasis on Peace.

The CK-Singers present Christmas Joy, this afternoon at 2:30 pm, at St. Andrew’s United Church in Chatham. You must be vaccinated and wear a mask. The event is free, but you need a ticket, and donations are welcome at the door.

Merlin United Church is hosting a Sunday evening “Carol Sing” in their parking lot - tonight from 6:30 to 7 pm. Gathering time is at 6:15 pm, each Sunday night of Advent. All involved will be required to wear a mask and be fully vaccinated. Come to sing or listen. Bring a lawn chair and dress warmly.

St. Andrew’s in Chatham are presenting a Carol for Christmas at the Chatham Capital Theatre on Saturday December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. Tickets are \$20 and are available at CKtickets.com

If you know of a family or person who needs some help this Christmas, please share with Pastor Eric and we will get them added to the Christmas Basket list.

As Christmas approaches keep in mind our Christmas Projects with Cash donations to support the Chatham Kent Children’s Services Christmas Gifts – George needs it by today (St. Luke’s will match \$ for \$ - feel free to ETransfer – see [www.southbuxton.ca](http://www.southbuxton.ca)), and our Annual Personal Hygiene Collection for the Merlin Christmas Baskets – due next week, Sunday December 12, 2021 – all kinds of hygiene products are still needed.

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

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** We gather, longing for gentleness among all:

***Sung Response: God, make us servants of your peace.***

**People:** We gather, longing for healing where there has been harm:

***Sung Response: God, make us servants of your peace.***

**Eric:** We gather, longing for generosity to inform all actions:

***Sung Response: God, make us servants of your peace.***

**People:** We gather, longing for peace in all parts of life:

***Sung Response: God, make us servants of your peace.***

**Eric:** Come, let us worship God in a sense of peace.

### **Lighting of the Advent Candles:**

*(Light the first purple candle – Candle of Hope)*

**Eric:** For the robe of righteousness we are certain does not fit, we light this candle.

**People: For the messengers and prophets encouraging us to prepare, we light this candle.**

**Eric:** For our tired feet exhausted by pacing up and down, back and forth, we light this candle.

**People: For the landscape that has already changed, we light this candle.**

**Eric:** For the refining and purifying of what could be, we light this candle.

**People: For the acceptance we now feel that things are not as they should be, we light this candle.**

**Eric:** For peace in our world, we light this Candle of Peace.

*(Light the second purple candle – Candle of Peace)*

### **Hymn: VU 676 “God, Make Us Servants of Your Peace” (Video)**

- 1 God, make us servants of your peace:  
where there is hate, may we sow love;  
where there is hurt, may we forgive;  
where there is strife, may we make one.
- 2 Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;  
where all is gloom, may we sow hope;  
where all is night, may we sow light;  
where all is tears, may we sow joy.
- 3 Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek  
to be consoled, but to console,  
nor look to understanding hearts,  
but look for hearts to understand.
- 4 May we not look for love's return,  
but seek to love unselfishly.  
For in our giving we receive,  
and in forgiving are forgiven.
- 5 Dying, we live and are reborn  
through death's dark night to endless day;  
God, make us servants of your peace  
to wake at last in heaven's light.

### **Scripture: Luke 1: 68 - 79 “Singing in the Temple, Shouting in the Wild”- by**

**Zechariah knew what was happening, but it was still kind of hard to believe. After spending years serving as a priest in the temple, one day an angel showed up out of nowhere to deliver a message:**

**“Don’t be afraid, Zechariah,” the angel said. “You have waited a long time, and finally your wife Elizabeth is going to have a baby. But he won’t be just any baby. His name should be John, and he will help turn people back to God and to help them love each other better.”**

**Zechariah didn’t believe it. “How will I know you’re telling the truth?”**

**The angel was annoyed. “You will know because I am a messenger sent from God to give you good news. But because you didn’t listen to me, until the baby is born, you won’t be able to talk.”**

**And so it was. Zechariah hadn’t said a word since that day.**

**And now at long last, Elizabeth had a baby, and it was time to choose a name. The relatives tried to name the baby after Zechariah, but Elizabeth insisted his name was John. When they turned to see what Zechariah thought, he wrote out the same words Elizabeth had spoken, “His name is John.”**

**And then suddenly, Zechariah felt something open up in his mouth. His tongue felt looser, freer. And after all these months of silence, Zechariah felt the Holy Spirit welling up inside of him, and in a voice that was clear and true, Zechariah started to sing:**

**“Blessed be our God, who smiles, and we are saved.**

**God has raised up someone to save us, someone from the family of David.**

**Just as God’s messengers have told us, we shall all be saved.**

**God has compassion; God keeps promises,**

**God keeps us safe; God draws us close.**

**And we will serve God for all of our days.**

**And you, child, will be one who speaks the words of God.**

**You will go ahead of God. You will prepare the way.**

**You will teach us how God’s forgiveness can heal.**

**By the tender compassion of our God,  
the sun will rise and give us its light,  
light for those who live in shadow,  
light for our feet to walk the ways of peace.”**

**The child was named John, and he grew. And grew. And grew, until he was a grown man, who lived in the part of the land that nobody had yet tamed.**

**All around the river, John shouted, reminding the people of what God had told them long ago:**

**“Someone will come shouting in the wild, ‘Prepare the way of God! Make crooked paths straight, make valleys rise up, make mountains flat, make the rough ways smooth. For everyone, everyone, everyone will get to see the healing that comes with the forgiveness of God.’”**

**The father sang in the temple. The son shouted in the wild. But no matter who they were listening to, the people could still hear God’s voice.**

### **Message: “Messengers of Change”**

Peace be with you. Today we reflect on the peace of Advent, which will also be the peace of Christmas. Christmas is a fantastic time for our children and grandchildren. Christmas is a time that we spoil each other not only with gifts and food, but also with our time and our talents. Our children and their children are our future and we cherish those times we spend together. We thank God that we are entrusted with the future generations and that we have a role to play in their future.

In Zechariah's story this morning we hear the words that every expecting father wants to hear, "I am going to be a Father". Zechariah is old and his wife Elizabeth is old – How in the world are they going to be parents. As we learn week after week, nothing is impossible for God. So when the angel tells Zechariah that he will be a Father, Zechariah doubts the news. To prove the good news, Zechariah is unable to talk until after the birth of the child. Imagine being an expecting father and you can't tell anyone. Even if you could sign your message, who would believe Zechariah, after all he is an old man. Yet it is true – Zechariah is a father.

When John is born, Elizabeth and Zechariah take their week old baby to the temple to be dedicated. When the priest asks the name of the child, Zechariah who has not talked in nine months, finds his voice and says, "His name is John". Imagine after months of silence, and now his son is born, how happy Zechariah is. He bursts out in praise and song. First Zechariah praises God for all the blessings we receive. Then Zechariah blesses his son John, by sharing what John's purpose is for humankind. Finally Zechariah blesses God that the light will create a wonderful future for us. Zechariah says, "*By the tender compassion of our God, the sun will rise and give us its light, light for those who live in shadow, light for our feet to walk the ways of peace.*"

Advent offers us the opportunity to look forward again to God's coming and the opportunity for us to prepare in faith – much like we see in Zechariah today. In preparing our faith, we can carry throughout the year the truth that God enters our world, bringing justice and salvation. How do we prepare? Then as with Zechariah, how and what do we proclaim?

Now that John is born and being raised into a toddler, Jesus' birth is just around the corner. We may remember that when Mary heard from Gabriel that she was pregnant with God's son, she went to see her cousin Elizabeth who was very much with child. We understand John to be at least six months older than Jesus. Both boys will share in the revealing of God's promised reign. John will announce that realm. John will also prepare the way for Jesus.

As a priest, Zechariah knew the prophetic traditions. Zechariah also understood his son will become a prophet. Zechariah as the father blesses his child. Zechariah knew what John faced would not always be easy. Zechariah knew the words John would speak may very well not be accepted. Yet Zechariah praises God – and sings of his son as a gift and a call for the sake of a whole people.

The end of today's story jumps ahead several chapters to Luke 3 and we hear the story of John as a grown man preparing the way for the One. John says God's reign is a "now" experience – but it is also a "not yet" hope. John's job is to announce and prepare us as we do not yet fully walk in the way of peace. We live between the times. John prepares us to bridge those times, as we live toward God's reign in experience and hope.

We will never know if John thought of himself as fulfilling the prophecy, but we know that John fulfilled it. John the baptizer is telling those gathered at the banks of the Jordan River – and us today – to remove those obstacles which may hinder our openness to this new way of peace and justice that God has promised. This peace and justice will be revealed through the child to come. John speaks a bold word in anticipation; Prepare!

During Advent, we realize change is coming. John tells us to prepare our lives for what God is working out among us. The surprise of God's reign and its announcement is that God's word will break forth from somewhere and someone unexpected.

How do we live out the "now and not yet" that is the essence and tension of Advent? God will once again break into our world, in the birth of Christ. Can we just be mere spectators in something that is so full of wonder?

We as humans put out many excuses; we are too old, too young, too inexperienced, or not smart enough to be a messenger of change. Yet when we read scripture, we see prophets who match every one of our excuses – yet they answered the call. After all it is God who moulds, shapes, and refines each and every one of us – so we too can act confidently as prophets in the world today. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection Hymn: VU 684 "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" – Video**

- 1 Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your healing power,  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:
- 2 Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.  
O Spirit, grant that I may never seek

so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.

- 3 Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving to all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

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

**Eric:** We live in the wonderful reality of God's promise. We live into the channel of peace of God's new day. Let us give thanks to God as we share our gifts and make an offering.

### **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:** God of mercy, when what we offer seems small, help us remember we are part of something larger. Help us remember that every gesture of kindness magnifies love's reach. Amen.

### **Hymn: VU 400 "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:**

**People:** Holy One, like the shepherds, we give thanks for the beauty of hills and sky, cloud and sun, rock and trees. *(Moment of Silence)*

**Eric:** Like the shepherds, we give thanks for the companionship of the creatures who surround us, and of family and friends who share our days. *(Moment of Silence)*

**People:** Like the shepherds, we pray for the well-being of the many lives that have touched our own. *(Moment of Silence)*

**Eric:** Like the shepherds, we long for the day when the wolf and the lamb live together in peace. *(Moment of Silence)*

**People:** Like the shepherds, we place our lives and our prayers into your hands, O God, for you are the Great Shepherd of us all.

**Eric:** As we pray together the Lord's 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.*

**Blessing:**

**Eric:** Through all of life's ups and downs; guide our minds in the way of wisdom, and our feet in the way of peace, now and forever more.

**Peace is a Ribbon:**

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,  
giving a promise of safety and worth.  
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:** "O Come, O Come, What Child is This" – 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	Allan
	Louise	Louise' Granddaughter - Blake
	Betty	Ingrid
	Alison	Brenda
	Betty	Jim
	Brian	Jack
	Zoe	Becky
	Barry/ Marsha	Francine
	Adrein	Gary
	Melissa	Karen
	Lloyd	Jim
	Flo	Sherie & Will
	George	B.C.