

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Sixth Sunday of Epiphany – February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

**Prelude:** by Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

- Ash Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am.
- Saturday's at 7 – February 25 at 7 pm.

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)

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** How sacred are those whose path is honest and just, who boldly stride out in the spirit of God!

**People:** Sacred are they that pay attention to Wisdom, seeking God's inner voice with all their heart.

**Eric:** People of God, be joyful in the kindness of God.

**People:** May the Spirit lead us further into the ways of costly love.

**Eric:** Come, let us worship.

### **Opening Hymn:** VU 220 "Praise to the Lord"

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation;  
O my soul, praise him, at all times your health  
and salvation.

Come, all who hear:  
brothers and sisters draw near,  
joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so mightily reigning,  
keeping us safe at his side, and so gently sustaining.

Have you not seen  
how all you needed has been  
met by God's gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord who will prosper our work  
and defend us;  
surely his goodness and mercy will daily attend us:  
ponder anew  
what the Almighty can do,  
who out of love will befriend us.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that has life and breath come now  
with praises before him!  
Let the Amen  
sound from God's people again:  
gladly with praise we adore him.

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People: God of our deepest yearnings, give us devoted hearts that seek to listen, think, and feel anew. Open in us the wisdom of Jesus, with the courage needed to travel his life-giving road. In His name, we pray. Amen.**

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

#### **Children's Hymn: VU 340 "Jesus, Friend of Little..."**

- 1 Jesus, friend of little children,  
let me be one too;  
take my hand, and ever keep me  
close to you.
- 2 Teach me how to grow in goodness,  
daily as I grow.  
You have been a child, and surely  
you must know.
- 3 Never leave me, nor forsake me;  
ever be my friend;  
for I need you, from life's dawning  
to its end.

#### **Scripture: Matthew 5: 21 - 37 "Things Jesus Taught"**

**For a long time, your parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents have known that it is wrong to kill another person. There is never a good reason to kill someone. It is called murder.**

**Now I want to tell you something harder. If you are angry and you think that you would like to kill someone, that is just as bad. You are murdering that person in your heart.**

**Don't say things that hurt somebody else. It is wrong to say something that will make them feel bad. It is also harmful if you think mean things about someone. Even if you don't say it out loud.**

**Sometimes you bring money to the church. That's good. But if you are angry at someone, put the money back into your pocket. Go and talk to that person. Try to become friends again. When you've done that, then you can bring your money to the church.**

**Never say what you don't mean. When you tell a friend that you will do something, be sure you do it. Don't say, "I forgot," or "I didn't really mean it."**

**When you make a promise, keep that promise!**

## **Reflection: “Jesus’ Way! Right from the Heart”**

We are now about seven weeks into the New Year, how are your resolutions doing? Do your resolutions feel more like routines than resolutions. Or have you forgot about them and just carried on, “carrying on”? If we have stuck to our resolutions and they now feel like habits or routine – Congratulations you did it! Something we might wish to think about, is how are we thinking about our resolutions? Or are you just doing that new learnt habit?

What I am asking, does your new habit make a difference in your life? Do you feel better because of your new habit? Or are you struggling each day to make it happen. How are you thinking about your new habit? Is it good? Or is it bad? Sometimes in life we live our lives by habit and no longer think about why we are doing it in the first place. What is at the heart of the matter?

You might remember the story of the family who always cut the ends off of their Easter Ham before putting it in the pan to go in the oven for the Easter Dinner. Year after year the husband watched his wife cut off the ends and put the ham into the pan. One year, he asked her, more out of curiosity, “Why do you cut the ends off of the ham before you put it in the pan”. His wife thought for a moment and said, “You know, I am not sure, but my mother always cut off the ends before putting the ham in the pan, so I have always done it that way”.

Her mother was coming for dinner later, so she would ask her why she cut the ends off the ham. Later that day, the wife asked the mother, “Why do you cut the ends off the ham before you put it into the pan”. Her mother replied, “Because the ham was too big to go into my pan”.

This week, Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on Mount help us take another look at some commandments to discover what is at the heart of the law. As the people of Israel look toward a land of promise, the author is clear – following in God’s way leads to life.

The Torah, which is the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, contains many regulations and commandments about specific details of everyday life. Jesus’ followers sought to discover what it meant to apply these teachings in new situations. Applying a traditional rabbinic method: “You have heard it said...but I say...” Jesus addresses the difficult topics of daily life and deepens their meaning for an ethical life. Jesus discusses anger, adultery, divorce, and true speech. Jesus tells his audience not just how to act, but Jesus tells them how to be – to be in the image of God.

When we first hear the rules Jesus sets out, they seem like stricter replacements for the commandments given in Deuteronomy. At a closer look, they deconstruct actions of murder, retribution, betrayal, abandonment, and lying into symptoms of our hard-“heart”edness and refusal to be reconciled to each other. Jesus again gives us the vision of our hearts reconciled with God and with one another in our community. Jesus says, “The judged and the judger are not bound in the past” - together they are responsible for the integrity and reconciliation of the future.

Jesus also shares the truth about making a promise, “If you make a promise keep it”. We in rural communities have used the saying, “sealing the deal with a hand shake”. Many deals people make today are overly connected to their own self-interest. We are either too concerned with being liked or accepted. On the other hand, we can be unconcerned with offering words of pledges and vows that we do intend to keep. Jesus says, “Only speak words that are true, and it is up to you to make sure they stay true.

Do you like rules, and like to follow rules, and in doing so, it makes your life so much fulfilling? What is your experience of living following the rules?

Or do you like to ignore the rules, or say, “Rules are for breaking” – that living against the rules gives you purpose in life? What is your experience in living against the rules?

In Matthew, Jesus addresses the difficult topics of the daily lives of those who have gathered to hear him teach. I wonder what topics Jesus might address today – as many of the topics he addresses thousands of years ago, are everyday occurrences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We as the Church wonder how we can connect with those in society who consider themselves “Spiritual”. Jesus kind of addresses this question in today’s story. We are told that, “Being spiritual is not the same thing as being religious”. We understand Religion to be what you believe and do. “Spirituality” has more to do with the things of the heart. Religion draws lines. Spirituality reads between them. Spirituality tends to avoid definitions, boundaries, and battles. Spirituality is inclusive and holistic. Spirituality crosses frontiers and makes connections. Spirituality is characterized by sensitivity, gentleness, depth, openness, flow, feeling, quietness, wonder, paradox, being, waiting, acceptance, awareness, healing and inner journey. These are words from Brian Woodcock in his 2002 book “This Is the Day”.

Jesus spoke to the Religion of the Pharisees and Sadducees as they tried to have the faithful, be faithful, by following hundreds of written laws. Jesus says, “follow the intent of the law in your heart” - much like Brian Woodcock shares about a life-giving spirituality. Jesus’ in the traditional rabbinic method: “You have heard it said...but I say...”

“Religion draws lines, Spirituality reads between them.” It may seem like we are bashing religion. For many centuries the lines of Religion have kept people faithful. That may have been very important as we settled the lands around our Rural Churches, but we also know we made mistakes, that we understand today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be matters of “Spirituality”. We are likely to understand Jesus words today much differently than our grandparents or great grandparents. Much like our grandchildren would understand Jesus’ words differently than we might today.

When we start and operate ministries that reach out into our community; such as food banks, Chaplaincy Programs, Christmas Food Baskets, even Canada Day events, we are living our faith from the heart. There are no rules or religious expectations to serve our community, other than Jesus tells us that doing so, ushers in the Kingdom of God.

As we connect to Jesus’ teaching of his vision for our world, we see the world differently and see ourselves differently – that our faith is not so much about the rules and regulations, but about the things of our hearts. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 595 “We Are Pilgrims”**

- 1 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
- 2 Sister, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping,

when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.

5 When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6 Brother, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

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

**Eric:** We see God in the ordinary places of our lives – sometimes without realizing it. We see God with us; when we hold a hand, offer a smile, feed a stranger. Let us give to God as an act of worship and gratitude.

### **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:** We dedicate these gifts to you, O God, whose love teaches us abundance and belonging. May we use them to face the death and adversity we bring on ourselves and others. May we be inspired by the life and prosperity you infuse in Creation. Amen.

### **Prayer Hymn: VU 378 “Spirit of God, ...”**

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
stoop to my weakness, strength to me impart,  
and make me love you as I ought to love.

### **Pastoral Prayer:**

### **Closing Hymn: VU 639 “One More Step Along...”**

1 One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go,  
from the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you:

And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

2 Round the corner of the world I turn,  
more and more about the world I learn;  
all the new things that I see  
you'll be looking at along with me:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

3 As I travel through the bad and good,  
keep me travelling the way I should;  
where I see no way to go  
you'll be telling me the way, I know:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

4 Give me courage when the world is rough,  
keep me loving though the world is tough,  
leap and sing in all I do,  
keep me travelling along with you:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

5 You are older than the world can be,  
you are younger than the life in me,  
ever old and ever new,  
keep me travelling along with you:  
And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Go now, beloved, to follow the love of God to be surprised by God's wonder, and to lift your voice for love and compassion, and know that you never, ever go alone.

**Sending Out Hymn: VU 378 "Spirit of God, ..."**

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,  
no angel visitant, no opening skies,  
but take the dimness of my soul away.

**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  
Carol  
Maureen  
Susan  
Cara  
Margie  
Marcus  
Susan  
Ingrid  
Kathy Kelly  
Jerry**

**Reg and Mary Jane  
Dave  
Bill  
Jane  
Donna  
Martin and Family  
Larry  
Kerigan  
Fran  
John**

**Ken  
Natalie  
Johnathan  
Ruth  
Dave  
Marj  
Sue**

**Richard and Evelyn  
Elaine  
Wayne**

**Ed Sykes  
Beatrice’s Family  
Sarah’s Family  
Marg Newham’s Family  
Ruth Malott Family  
Arley Smith  
Nelson  
Jackie McKillop’s Family  
Eric**