

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

First Sunday of Lent – February 18th, 2024

Prelude: – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

Today is the first Sunday of Lent.

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.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call To Worship:

People: Through healing waters, through troubled waters, through still waters, through dangerous waters, through welcoming waters. God is with us.

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Opening Hymn: VU 222 “Come Let Us Sing”

Come, let us sing to the Lord our song,
we have stood silently too long;
surely the Lord deserves our praise,
so joyfully thank God for our days.

O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;
God's living waters will never fail.
Surely the Lord will help you to stand,
strengthened and comforted by God's hand.

You dwell among us and cause us to pray,
and walk with each other following your way;
our precious brothers and sisters will grow
in the fulfilling love they know.

Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing
to the desire of all living things.
Come, all you creatures, high and low,
let your praises endlessly flow.

Opening Prayer:

We are grateful, Creator, for sacred water that flows in our bodies and through the earth. Water is a powerful force that both creates and destroys, sustains and erodes, deposits and washes away. Yet, water is wasted, polluted, and ignored... In this time together may we seek ways to restore good relations, and remember all the ways your gift of water is life. Amen.

Children's Story:

Children's Hymn: "Rise and Shine"

The Lord told Noah, there's gonna be a floody, floody.
Lord told Noah, there's gonna be a floody, floody.
Get those children out of the muddy, muddy,
children of the Lord.

The Lord told Noah to build him an arky, arky.
Lord told Noah to build him an arky, arky.
Build it out of gopher barky, barky,
children of the Lord.

*So rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory,
children of the Lord.*

The animals they came, they came in by twosies, twosies
The animals they came, they came in by twosies, twosies
Elephant and Kangaroosies, roosies,
Children of the Lord.

It rained and poured for forty daysies, daysies,
It rained and poured for forty daysies, daysies,
Almost drove those animals crazies, crazies
Children of the Lord.

*So rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory,
children of the Lord.*

The sun came out and dried up the landy, landy.
(Look, there's the sun!) It dried up the landy, landy.
Everything was fine and dandy, dandy,
children of the Lord.

*So rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory,
children of the Lord.*

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 25: 1 – 10

A Prayer for Guidance and Help

I offer you my heart, Lord God, and I trust you.

Don't make me ashamed or let enemies defeat me.

Don't disappoint any of your worshipers, but disappoint all deceitful liars.

Show me your paths and teach me to follow; guide me by your truth and instruct me.

You keep me safe, and I always trust you.

Please, Lord, remember, you have always been patient and kind.

Forget each wrong I did when I was young. Show how truly kind you are and remember me.

You are honest and merciful, and you teach sinners how to follow your path.

You lead humble people to do what is right and to stay on your path.

In everything you do, you are kind and faithful to everyone who keeps our agreement with you.

Scripture: Genesis 9: 8 - 17

Again, God said to Noah and his sons: I am going to make a solemn promise to you and to everyone who will live after you. This includes the birds and the animals that came out of the boat. I promise every living creature that the earth and those living on it will never again be destroyed by a flood. The rainbow that I have put in the sky will be my sign to you and to every living creature on earth. It will remind you that I will keep this promise forever. When I send clouds over the earth, and a rainbow appears in the sky, I will remember my promise to you and to all other living creatures. Never again will I let floodwaters destroy all life. When I see the rainbow in the sky, I will always remember the promise that I have made to every living creature. The rainbow will be the sign of that solemn promise.

Message: "Signs of Promise"

God, who has created all things, wants to have a deeper relationship with all things including us. When life's waters threaten to overwhelm us, we need to trust God is with us – right here, right now. When we make poor choices, may God re-orient us to choose life with God.

Water and God's promises are key themes of today's story. After a great flood, God promises to safeguard the world and to be in deep relationship with all creation. This is a good time to remember that in our baptismal water, we are given new life with Christ.

It's interesting that we start our Lenten journey off with the story of Noah and the flood. Lent is known to be a time of waiting – being prepared. Yet we do see the waiting in Noah's story, as they have to wait until the flood waters recede – before they can get off the ark. I can imagine with an ark full of animals that waiting for those flood waters to recede could be very trying. Noah's family had to care for all the animals, including cleaning out the leftovers.

The dove becomes an important part of the flood story. Each time the dove is sent out, and the dove returns with nothing - it would be a sign that all earth is still

under water. Life for those on the ark would carry on as it had been. They would need to wait longer to receive their freedom to dry land. Eventually the dove returned with a leaf in its beak – a sign of dry land. Noah, his family and all the animals could now be free from the ark and all its smells. They have reached dry land.

After the ark is emptied, God promises to protect and never destroy the earth and makes a covenant with all creation. A rainbow is a sign, a reminder, of the promise. God wants to be in a deep and mutual relationship with all of creation. So when we see a rainbow we are reminded of God's deep relationship with each one of us.

What are we waiting for? Spiritually, our waiting is the preparation we are doing as we journey towards Easter. Lent is a time of reflection of becoming closer to God and reflecting on God's promises. Throughout our Lenten journey - life continues. We will still go to work, still shop for groceries, still order online, still pray for our friends and family who are sick, comfort one another when someone dies. Yet in the midst of many of these events, we will have to wait. Not so much because of Lent, but more because it's a part of life. Like Noah, we are being forced to wait until it is safe to go outside.

Trusting and relying on God's promises – even when life is difficult, and the wait is long – is key in today's story. In all times, God invites us into a deeper relationship.

Have you ever done something – and then after, say, “I promise never to do that again?” Have you been able to honour that promise? How strong are your promises? Promises can be signs of integrity. To ensure that integrity, there is a time of waiting. Waiting to ensure you will do what you said you will do.

We all know how rainbows are created. We understand the theory and science behind the wonderful display of refracted light. Even with this knowledge, a rainbow bursting through clouds still touches our hearts and imagination in mysterious ways. How many times do quiet adults exclaim, “Look at that rainbow?” If you are having a tough day, the sight of a rainbow can change your whole mind-set. We become lost in the grandeur and beauty of the rainbow, maybe even standing in awe that we are experiencing a divine moment, seeing in real life one of God's mysterious ways.

As we travel through Lent and experience life at its fullest, all the good, and the bad, waiting for Easter Sunday, let us remember the rainbow with all its grandeur and promises that we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 266 “Amazing Grace”

- 1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.
- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me,
this word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we see these Signs of Promise today - let us give whatever our gift may be.

Offertory: VU 542 “We Give Thee But Your Own”

We give you but your own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone,
we give it gratefully.

Offertory Prayer:

Creator God, in all that we do, all that we say, and all that we give, may we live out your covenant to care for all creation. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: VU 371 “Open My Eyes That I May See” Chorus

*Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 675 "Will Your Anchor Hold"

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow. R

It will surely hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;
on the rising tide it can never fail
while our hopes abide within the veil. R

When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore. R

Commissioning: *Adapted from Meister Eckhart*

Eric: Love God in all things equally.
For God is equally near to all creatures.
And among these creatures God does not love any one person more than any other.
God is all and is one.
All things become nothing but God.
Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.

If we spent enough time with the tiniest creature
– even a caterpillar –
we would never need sermons.
So full of God is every creature.

Go and spend time in God's Creation
and in the amazing presence of God in all things, now and forever more.

Closing Chorus: VU 108 "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights" (verse 1)

Throughout these Lenten days and nights
we turn to walk the inward way,
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,

we live in hope till Easter Day.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: “On the Wings of a Dove”

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

Barb
Margie
Jerry
Erin
Natalie
David
Audrey
Ian
Ed
Connie
Jennifer
J.P.
Rick
Mike
Joan