

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

## *Transfiguration Sunday – February 19<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:** Let us see a wonder a vision never seen. Do we dare to journey? Yes, for God is there.

**People:** Let us start a journey close to God's hill. Let us tell the world what God will now fulfill.

**Do we dare to journey? Yes, for God is there.**

**Eric:** Let us start a journey to worship in this place.

**People:** Let us seek our God and meet God face to face.

**Eric:** Do we dare to journey?

**People:** Yes, for God is here.

### **Opening Hymn: VU 232 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"**

Joyful, joyful we adore you,  
God of glory, life and love;  
hearts unfold like flowers before you,  
opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,  
drive the gloom of doubt away;  
giver of immortal gladness,  
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,  
earth and heaven reflect your rays,  
stars and angels sing around you,  
centre of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,

ever blessing, ever blest,  
wellspring of the joy of living,  
ocean depth of happy rest!  
Source of grace and fount of blessing,  
let your light upon us shine;  
teach us how to love each other,  
lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus  
which the morning stars began;  
God's own love is reigning o'er us,  
joining people hand in hand.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
victors in the midst of strife;  
joyful music leads us sunward  
in the triumph song of life..

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People: We may not be able to climb a hill for you, O God, but we gather to worship you in this place. We may never see you transfigured in glory in our presence, but we witness to your transforming power in our living. We may not have the words to explain all that you are, but we have hearts that want to worship all that you are. Enable us to meet you in your glory around us, that we may worship you in truth and love. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.**

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

#### **Children's Hymn: VU 299 "Teach Me, God, To Wonder"**

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see;  
let your world of beauty capture me.  
Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Let me, God, be open, let me loving be;  
let your world of people speak to me.  
Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Let me, God, be ready, let me be awake,  
in your world of loving my place take.  
Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.

Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak,  
see you in my neighbour when we meet.  
Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,

life be celebrated, joy you give.

**Scripture: Matthew 17: 1 – 9**

Six days later Jesus took Peter and the brothers James and John with him. They went up on a very high mountain where they could be alone. There in front of the disciples, Jesus was completely changed. His face was shining like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. All at once Moses and Elijah were there talking with Jesus. So Peter said to him, “Lord, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While Peter was still speaking, the shadow of a bright cloud passed over them. From the cloud a voice said, “This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him. Listen to what he says!” When the disciples heard the voice, they were so afraid they fell flat on the ground. But Jesus came over and touched them. He said, “Get up and don’t be afraid!” When they opened their eyes, they saw only Jesus. On their way down from the mountain, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had been raised from death.

**Reflection: “Mountain Top Mysteries”**

Today is Transfiguration Sunday, which closes the Season of Epiphany with the story of Jesus on the top of a holy mountain where God may be found. It is a place of sacred mystery, where shining and shadow convey holy presence. It is a place of community across time, where God’s people past and present meet. It is a place of silence and witness, where visions are kept quiet, and God says of Jesus, “Listen to him.”

The word transfigured is a verb that suggests, “changes deep within a person”. The story of Jesus’ transfiguration uses outward details to hint at the deeper mystery of metamorphosis. The report of how three of Jesus’ friends reacts to his transfiguration reveals the mystery. Peter tries to contain the surprise and delight he feels at the shining Jesus before him. Peter wants to build three dwellings to hold onto the vision of Jesus’ transfiguration. Something extremely important has happened here.

Throughout the Season of Epiphany, we celebrate revelations big and small. We’ve talked about the need to be present in the moment to catch those revelations, or epiphanies. We also think about how those epiphanies can change us. The Season of Epiphany concludes in today’s dazzling vision of Jesus on a mountaintop. Here, heaven and Earth, history and future, all come together with sun, cloud, past prophets, and a voice from above, to reveal the unique and beloved nature of Jesus as God’s son.

Epiphany began with the revelation of the promise of the change a child’s life will bring to the magi and ends with the secret of the freedom that Christ’s death

and resurrection will bring. Throughout Epiphany, we are reminded of how extraordinary the ordinary can be.

Through Epiphany as we live our ordinary lives, we see the potential for everyday events to become sacred through revelation and reflection. In doing so we are challenged to make God's perfect love through action and devotion. To do this, we are called to be present and open ourselves to the magical experiences at any time and in any place.

Epiphany begins with the light of the star leading the magi to the Christ Child. Today's story which ends Epiphany, the light is brighter than ever before, but it doesn't last long; the moment passes all too quickly. Many times epiphanies are like that – it happens, and you have to move on. In the next weeks as we enter into the Season of Lent, the light of Epiphany diminishes. Yet, for us in the Northern Hemisphere, the light of each day gets longer.

In today's story we hear Peter offering to build a shelter for Jesus. Why did it feel imperative to Peter to do this, in that moment? Could it be like Jacob in the wilderness, when he put rocks around the well, where he had encountered God? What significance would this hold for Peter?

The answer is in Leviticus, where we learn about the Sukkot. God gave Moses instructions for three Jewish Festivals in the Book of Leviticus. The Festival of Booths is detailed in Leviticus, and is known as the Sukkot. Every year, the Israelites built a sukkah to remember how God alone sustained them through the wilderness during the Exodus. A sukkah was a portable tent, using palm leaves and material to set up quickly, then carry it with you until the next night. This is what the Israelites used during the Exodus.

So Peter would have lived in a sukkah for a week every year during the Festival of Booths. Some Bible translations actually use the word Booths. Sukkot was a celebration, and a spiritual retreat of sorts, where Peter (or any devout Jew) learned to go without most conveniences of life to rely on God, just as his ancestors did. It is reminiscent of their years of wandering in the wilderness.

As the transfigured Jesus, along with Moses and Elijah, the pillars of everything he believed, stood right before him, I imagine Peter thinking *I have to do something for them! I can't just stand here gawking like an idiot!*

Peter knew a sukkah was a place to meet with God, so it seemed appropriate and necessary to welcome and accommodate the glory of God as he'd always done.

We may think of Peter as being the passionate, loose-cannon-disciple. While that may be in some places, if we look at the transfiguration through Peter's life experience, we can see that he wasn't impulsive or disrespectful at all. He was simply trying to worship the best way he knew how.

There are only three recorded instances of people hearing God's audible voice in the New Testament, and one of them was God speaking directly to Peter and the disciples to listen to Jesus.

Many Jews continue to observe the Festival of Booths today as a beautiful reminder of our dependence on God, and to be grateful for God's provisions. It's an opportunity for us to focus on what God's done and who God is. We don't have to be Jewish or wait for the Festival of Booths to meet with God. Peter met God in a tent, but today the Holy Spirit allows us to have a relationship with God, through Jesus the Christ.

Transfiguration can be a complex concept to grasp. For even in today's story, we see Jesus for those moments beyond our reach. The ordinary and the extraordinary can be so fluid. We can experience both, every day when we enter a room with others and call it a sanctuary, then find ourselves in worship; when we listen to others and feel we have learned something new; or when we offer our time or skill and discover we have served the needs of others. Where have you experienced the extraordinary in ordinary places? Has it been in other places than the church sanctuary?

As we connect to Jesus' extraordinary transfiguration, we see the world differently and may see ourselves differently – that our faith is not so much about building booths, but by experiencing the extraordinary in the ordinary. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 238 “How Great Thou Art”**

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,

I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away my sin.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!'

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

### **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:** Call us out of our complacency, generous God. Open our ears to your voice, our eyes to your brilliance, and our hands and hearts to share the blessings that you have made possible for us. We dedicate these gifts and our lives to your service. Send us out to follow the Christ, the one with whom you are well pleased, and in whose name we make our prayer. 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 264 “Immortal, Invisible, God...”**

Immortal, invisible, God only wise;  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;  
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,  
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all praise we would render, O help us to see  
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee!more step.

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** In every journey, may we encounter the Christ, now and forever more.

**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**