

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

## *Seventh Sunday after Epiphany – February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

**Prelude:** “Lost Without Your Love” - David Gates – by Christie Coatsworth

We are meeting in-person at St. Andrew’s at 11 am each Sunday for 2022 (as you feel comfortable with the changing COVID situation). Our Sunday morning Zoom meeting will gather at 9:30 am, the service will be at 10 am.

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to St. Luke’s today as we celebrate the Seventh Sunday after Epiphany with Jesus sharing with us about love.

We have rescheduled the Annual Meetings to a later date when we can meet in-person.

Thank you for your support of St. Luke’s Lasagna Dinner Take Out yesterday.

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)

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!

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

#### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Trust in God.

**People:** We delight in God,

**Eric:** for God tends to the desires of our hearts,

**People:** and commits us to the bright day of justice.

**Eric:** Do not fret, for God is near.

**People:** We come to worship because God is good.

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**People:** Come closer to us, O God: reconcile us to our brothers and sisters, care for our ageing generations, forgive us for our wrongdoing, protect us from our future famine. Come closer to us, O God, draw us nearer to each other through you. Embrace with us, weep with us, that we may be family again. Amen.

#### **Opening Hymn:** VU 395 “Come In, Come In and Sit Down”

*Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family.*

- 1 You know the reason why you came,  
yet no reason can explain;  
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,  
for we are a part of the family.  
God is with us in this place,  
like a mother's warm embrace.  
We're all forgiven by God's grace,  
for we are a part of the family.  
*Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family.*
  
- 2 There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;  
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.  
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,  
but we are a part of the family.  
There's rest for the weary and health for us all;  
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.  
So come in and worship and answer the call,  
for we are a part of the family.  
*Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family.*

**Scripture: Luke 6: 27 - 38 "Jesus Talks About Love"- by Doug and Pat Jackson**

Jesus often talked about love to his friends. "That's because loving is the most important thing we do," he said to them.

"But who should we love?" asked Mary.

"Yeah," said Peter. "We can't just love everybody."

"We can, Peter. But it's hard," said Jesus. "So why don't we all sit down here on the grass. I'll tell you some things about love."

"Love the people who don't like you," said Jesus. "Love the people who say mean things to you. When you pray to God, talk about those people. Say to God, 'Please help me love them.'"

"Suppose someone hits you. Don't hit them back. Be kind to them instead."

"If someone takes something away from you, don't yell and fight. Give them something else."

"Be kind to others, the way you would like them to be kind to you."

"Those are tough things to do, Jesus!" said Peter.

"I know," said Jesus. "It's easy to love the people who love you. It's easy to love your friends. But God wants you to do more than that – something that is hard."

"Will God help us love people that are hard to love?" asked Mary.

"For sure," said Jesus. "When someone does something you don't like, try this. Don't do or say anything for a little bit; just breathe in and out a few times. Then, in your mind, ask, 'God, what should I do?' Then breathe in and out a few more times. Then God will put an idea in your head, and that idea may be to go and talk it over with some other people."

Mary and Peter looked at each other. It still seemed impossible.

“Do you know why you should do that, Peter?” Jesus looked at his friends. “Do you know why you should love like that, Mary?”

Both of them shook their heads. They didn’t know.

“Because that is what God does,” said Jesus.

“But I thought you said God was sad when someone is mean or steals something,” said Mary.

“Yes,” said Jesus. “God is sad, just as you feel sad when someone does something bad. But even when God is sad about the things we do, God keeps on loving us. People do many things that make God sad, but God never stops loving them.”

“Is that what you mean when you talk about living God’s way?” asked Peter.

“Yes, that’s what I mean. It’s not an easy thing, but you can do it. God gives you so much love; you have lots to share with people who are mean or who hurt you or steal from you.

“And you know something else?” Jesus looked around at his friends. “When you give away lots and lots of love, you’ll find it all comes back to you. When you give love away, you always find you have more love than you started with.”

“Does that mean we have to kiss and hug everybody?” asked Peter.

Jesus laughed. “No. Some people don’t like to be hugged and kissed. When you love someone, you think about the good things they do. You do kind things for them whenever you can. You say kind things about them. You try really hard to be their friend.”

“But what if they just laugh at you?” asked Peter. “What if they say you’re stupid and just walk away. Or maybe they even hit you?”

“I didn’t say it was easy,” said Jesus. “And it may take a long time – maybe years – before they stop acting that way. But you keep trying. Over and over and over. And it’s a good thing to talk to God about it in your prayers. That way you’ll become a stronger person each time you show that kind of love.”

### **Message: “Living As Disciples”**

People can and will get different things from the Bible. Part of this is due to the Bible’s diversity; part is influenced by what people are looking for when they approach it. Perhaps you want to know about the history of God’s people. Perhaps you want hope in a time of personal trial. The Bible gives us a variety of narratives, advice, comfort, and challenge. Many of the passages are not new ideas but responses to the wisdom and events at the time of writing. This makes the Bible an interesting read when we look to its words for insight into our times 2,000 years later. Is the Bible still relevant today?

In today’s story from Luke, Jesus relates to the wisdom of the day and interprets God’s commandments for this time. Jesus teaches disciples that it’s not enough to love what is easy to love. We must go deeper, higher, wider and love as God loves – as a gift freely given, regardless of the worthiness or response. Jesus continually pushes his followers to greater and greater depths of compassion and higher and higher visions of love and inclusion.

Jesus understood scripture developmentally. He pushes us to move to the next stage of spiritual maturity; to hear stories and instructions with new ears, to meet

characters with empathetic eyes. “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” is a call to delve into our own vulnerability to see our mutual need for forgiveness, healing, and restoration. Two weeks ago, we shared about being holy because God is holy. These are all lofty visions.

Today’s lesson may seem to set high standards, but Jesus is not asking us to be perfect on our own. Our holiness cannot be achieved alone but can be achieved with a faithful relationship with other like minded disciples. We are the church. Holiness is wholeness. We cannot do it apart from divine love.

As we strive to grow into the people God imagines us to be, as we follow the commandments and the way of Jesus, let us remember that what we will become is more beautiful than what we can imagine because it is God who has created us.

Luke shares about Jesus’ controversial claim about those who believe and act differently: Love your enemies. Sustain all regardless of your judgment of them as good or bad. Be merciful for God is merciful – to go beyond what is comfortable and forgive, reserve judgment/condemnation, be merciful. Here, Jesus turns our focus from an obsession with perfection to a posture of compassion.

Yes we will have difficulties with the difficult ones; forgiveness, holding back judgment, showing mercy, but like weight training, the more you do it the better it works. It takes practice – maybe even daily practice for us to more Christ-like. For humans it is natural to judge. Jesus says we do not need to stay there. We can foster compassion for people we feel a need to judge. Jesus says take a few breaths, send out a silent prayer, take another couple breaths, and see what happens. In those small breaks it allows our minds to process what has just happened, and how we might compassionately care for that person.

When we admit the need for others, we can be more holy in the sense of being connected and a part of the whole. We as the church are full of vulnerable people with vulnerable people: children, adults in the last quarter of life, or our partners in mission and outreach. Our church community is deepened and brightened by the presence of vulnerable people. We learn from each other and we care for each other.

Likely in church we learn more about compassion than anywhere else in life. We are in relationship with each other, and we take the time to know one another. Together we worship, and in the worship service we are led by their voices as they offer scripture and song. Unfortunately we seldom say thank you for the

opportunity to be in a relationship with each other and our mission partners. Yet they bring us joy and understanding to our world.

Our hearts are influenced by what we do. Therefore, how blessed or cursed we feel can be a result of not what we receive in life, but what we give from it. Christ's love and teachings are written on our hearts. We are not perfect, yet in working in community we can transform our world. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 506 "Take My Life and Let It Be"**

- 1 Take my life, and let it be  
consecrated, all for thee;  
take my moments and my days;  
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
- 2 Take my hands, and let them move  
at the impulse of thy love;  
take my feet, and let them be  
swift and purposeful for thee.
- 3 Take my lips, and let them be  
filled with messages from thee;  
take my intellect, and use  
every power as thou shalt choose.
- 4 Take my will, and make it thine;  
it shall be no longer mine;  
take my heart, it is thine own;  
it shall be thy royal throne.
- 5 Take my love: and I will pour  
at thy feet its treasure store;  
take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee.

**Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We live in the wonderful reality of God's promise. In the name of Jesus Christ, we offer our gifts to be blessed, and shared with those in need.

**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 bless our offerings as you have blessed our bodies and lives. Help us give more of ourselves, hearts, and resources to see your merciful love embodied in all of us. 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:**

**Eric:** God who makes us one with each other, one with creation, one with humanity, one with divinity, we pray that we may be seekers and doers of mercy.

**People:** **Dwell in our vulnerability and intensify our compassion until we feel connected, reconciled, and whole.**

**Eric:** We pray for those near and far who have asked us to pray for them.

**People:** **For those worried about the future** *(pause)*.

**Eric:** For those traumatized by the past *(pause)*.

**People:** **For those responsible for the present** *(pause)*.

**Eric:** Grant us all a vision of ourselves as we pray Jesus’ 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:** Bless this day, and may we share God’s blessing to the world, now and forever more.

### **I Am the Light of the World: VU 87**

I am the light of the world!  
You people come and follow me!  
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery  
of what you were meant to do and be.

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**Postlude:** “The Rose” – 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           |                               |
|         | Louise        | Louise' Granddaughter - Blake |
|         | Betty         | Ingrid                        |
|         | Alison        | Brenda                        |
|         | Nancy         | Lisa                          |
|         | Sarah         | Larry                         |
|         | Brian         | Jack                          |
|         | Zoe           | Becky                         |
|         | Barry/ Marsha | Francine                      |
|         | Melissa       | Karen                         |
|         | Jenny         | Michelle                      |
|         | Heather       | Ross                          |
|         | Gary          | Margaret                      |