

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Eighth Sunday of Epiphany – February 27th, 2022

Prelude: “Ol’ Man River” – Jerome Kern – 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. Andrew’s today as we celebrate the Eighth and last Sunday of Epiphany. This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Today is also known as Transfiguration Sunday as Jesus is transfigured on the mountain top.

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

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and 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: We come into this ordinary place expecting the extraordinary:

People: **community in the hands and hearts of everyday people,**

Eric: spirits lifted in the words and music of weekly worship,

People: **and nourishment in broken bread and shared cup.**

(sound chime)

Eric: A way is made through the wilderness of our souls;

People: **valleys lifted and mountains brought low, for Spirit to come alive with us again.**

(sound chime)

Eric: A voice assures us, “You are my beloved ones”

People: **and we are called to be Christ’s community, proclaiming that now is the time of God’s favour.** *(sound chime)*

Eric: Let us worship in the glory of God.

Opening Prayer:

Through clouds of wonderment, of uncertainty, of anxiety, sometimes, we hear your voice, O God, proclaiming the presence of Spirit in the midst of our day-to-day living. We pause and become mindful. We pause and listen to the voice within and around. We pause and worship the astounding glory of your presence. Amen.

Opening Hymn: VU 264 “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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!

Scripture: Luke 9: 28 - 36 “Jesus on the Mountain”- by Pat Hawley

Peter was worried. More than once now Jesus had talked about dying.

Every time Jesus brought it up, Peter protested. “Don’t be silly,” he would say. “If you are the beloved Son of God, God will keep you safe. Look at the power you already have! God will give you more! Some day you will wear a crown like a king!”

But Jesus shook his head. “Stop it! I’ve heard all that before. It’s a lie.”

Peter was puzzled and hurt. Why was Jesus so angry? What was wrong with expecting good things?

Peter was glad when, a few days later, Jesus asked him to go for a long walk. James and John came too. It felt good to have some time alone with Jesus. They walked until they came to a mountain.

In many of the old stories, people climbed mountains to be close to God. It was on a mountain that God spoke to Moses and whispered to Elijah. Peter wondered if this was why Jesus was leading them up a mountain. Would God speak to them? Show them the way? Would there be smoke and fire? Angels? Voices? Peter did not know what to expect, but he felt sure something amazing was going to happen.

When they reached the top of the mountain, something amazing did happen. Peter, James, and John could hardly believe their eyes. Two figures appeared out of nowhere and began to talk with Jesus in low murmurs. It was Moses and Elijah! Then Jesus began to glow with light – the light of creation – the light no darkness can put out.

This was what Peter had been waiting for! “How wonderful this is,” he blurted out. “Why don’t I build some tents for all of us so we can stay here longer?”

Maybe Peter did not want to leave that glorious light and return to ordinary life with all its troubles. Or maybe he was remembering the story of how his ancestors escaped from slavery in Egypt and lived in tents in the desert. God had gone with them as a pillar of fire and cloud all the way to the promised land.

Suddenly a mist wrapped itself around Peter, James, and John. Peter could see nothing. He could hardly tell up from down.

Then a voice spoke familiar words.

This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.

When the fog cleared, Jesus was standing there alone. Looking the way he always looked. Perfectly ordinary.

“What just happened?” asked Peter. “What did it mean?”

“Peter,” said Jesus, “listen to me. You call me the Messiah, the anointed one, the Christ, the one you have all been waiting for. You call me the Son of the Living God. You think you know what this means. You think it means power and glory and crowns and thrones. But you are wrong. I am here to do the work of God. And when has that ever been safe?”

Peter was very quiet.

“Do you still want to follow me?” asked Jesus.

Peter thought about this. “Will you stay with me?” he asked.

“Always,” said Jesus.

So Peter followed Jesus back down the mountain.

Message: “Holy Mystery”

This last Sunday of Epiphany is also known as Transfiguration Sunday. Transfiguration Sunday reminds us that things are not always as they seem. We celebrate God’s presence with us and share stories – ordinary events that shine with extraordinary grace. Throughout the Season of Epiphany our eyes have been opened to many kinds of events that are not what they seem.

The Season of Epiphany is one of the short seasons in the Church liturgical calendar. It ends in the shortest month of the year February. February is also reserved as “Black History Month”. There are a lot of eye openers in the short month of February.

Luke shares with us the story of Peter, John, and James witnessing Jesus’ transfiguration on a mountaintop. As Jesus is praying, Moses and the prophet Elijah appear with him. This event is a vibrant revelation of God’s power in Christ. It is an eye opener to the disciples and a reminder to us that Jesus may not be, as they may have seemed.

Despite this amazing moment, Peter, John, and James find themselves overwhelmed with sleep. Peter groggily suggests that they build three booths, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. But this is not a time to stop and commemorate; there is so much more to be revealed. As Peter is speaking, a fog covers them. The disciples are terrified when a voice from the cloud announces that Jesus is the chosen one and commands the disciples to listen to him. When the fog lifts, Jesus is alone again with the disciples. The disciples are to tell no one. How could they even tell someone – who would believe them?

Though this scene is so out of the ordinary, we can relate to some themes. Everyone goes through times when there are more questions than answers. Epiphany is about receiving glimpses of those answers. The star that shone over Bethlehem is now the same light that shines at Jesus' transfiguration. We are half way from Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan to his death on the cross and Jesus' resurrection three days later. What God spoke at the Jordan at Jesus' baptism is again spoken here on the mountaintop. "This is my beloved Son, listen to him".

Transfiguration Sunday provides an opportunity to remember those times when we encounter Holy Mystery in astounding ways. Some of you may have had mountaintop experiences that have transformed your lives. Others of us, we find God's presence to be more subtle. We find God in smaller – maybe even daily – ways.

As much as Epiphany opens our eyes to whom Jesus is to the world, including Jesus' transfiguration, Lent prepares us to be reflections of Christ. We move with opened eyes to recognizing within us the presence of Holy Mystery that will empower us for the journey into Lent. It is not an easy journey, but one we must travel. We do not travel it alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Black History Month:

Black History Month is a time to celebrate and pause as we recognize the many achievements of Black Canadians who through history have done so much to make Canada the diverse place it is today. Every February we mark this month dating back to 1926, when time was set aside to honour the accomplishments of African Canadians and to heighten awareness of Black History in North America.

It wasn't until December of 1995 that the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada, following a motion introduced by the Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament.

Once considered a destination for freedom seekers, Chatham-Kent is home to some of the most successful Black settlements in Canadian History. It is important to recognize Chatham-Kent's significant Black historical figures and our role in the Underground Railroad. The Buxton settlement is one of those most successful Black Settlements. St. Andrew's United Church is at the centre of that history.

In November of 1949, Reverend William King and fifteen slaves arrived at the Buxton Settlement. The Buxton Settlement was formed after several years of legal

work to secure 9,000 acres of forested swamp land – six miles long and three miles wide. This section was granted to the Buxton Settlement by the Governor General of the day, Lord Elgin.

The 9,000 acres was divided into fifty acre lots, sold only to Black settlers at \$2.50 per acre payable in ten equal annual installments. When payments were complete, the Black settler was given the deed of his property. Many Black settlers took advantage of this offer, and became land owners. The last remaining slave was Robert Phares, who had been a slave of Reverend King’s first wife’s family in Louisiana.

Robert Phares was born a slave in 1810, in Louisiana. He was one of the original 15 slaves who came to Buxton in 1849 with Rev. William King. In Buxton, Robert settled at Lot 9 on Concession 10. Robert and Rev. King remained good friends.

In 1861, Robert was still single. Solomon King lived with him, helping him with farm chores, and clearing the land.

In 1866, Robert Phares married Fanny Fraser. Fanny was the widow of Luke Fraser, and she was one of the original slaves of William King. Fanny had had six children when she was a slave; somehow, they were separated from her. After slavery ended, Fanny placed an ad in a newspaper to find her children. Robert and Fanny did not have any children together. In 1869, Fanny died and was buried in South Buxton Cemetery.

After Fanny died, Robert married Barbara Freeman, a widow with seven children. Barbara’s three oldest children (Mary Ann, Edith, and Chris) were grown up when she married Robert. Robert helped Barbara raise her youngest four children (Isaac, Joshua, Caleb, and James) and they took Phares as their last name.

Barbara Phares died in Buxton in 1890. In 1894, Robert moved into a nursing home in Chatham. In 1898, Robert died in Chatham. Robert’s body was brought back to Buxton to be buried in the South Buxton Cemetery.

Reflection Hymn: VU 413 “O Splendour of God’s Glory”

- 1 O splendour of God's glory bright,
from light eternal bringing light;
O light of life, light's living spring,
true day, all days illumining:
- 2 come, Holy Sun of heavenly love,
pour down your radiance from above,

and to our inward hearts convey
the Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.

3 O joyful be the passing day
with thoughts as clear as morning's ray,
with faith like noontide shining bright,
our souls unshadowed by the night.

4 O Christ, with each returning morn
your image to our hearts is born;
O may we ever see anew
our Saviour and our God in you!

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: We have been awakened to the glory of God shining around us in gifts both great and small. Thankful for God's faithful presence, we give this offering – a symbol of our faithfulness in return. May it bring healing where there is brokenness, comfort where there is chaos, and justice wherever there is a need. 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: Holy Mystery, we have experienced your glory in things both grand and ordinary:

People: in red earth canyons and the call of an owl;

Eric: in ancient forests and children on the playground;

People: in a hope-filled birth and a quiet walk on the beach.

Eric: To all these things, we say, "Glory! Praise be to you!"

People: We bring to mind those times recently when we were startled by your presence unveiled and free in our midst.

Eric: Grateful for the experience of your sacred presence, we pray for those who are in need of healing, justice, and peace.

People: **May each moment of glory – each embrace of the Sacred More – empower us to be more. And through our faithfulness, may your realm be established among us as it is in the heart of your holy mystery.**

Eric: As we share the prayer Jesus taught...

*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: The Season of Epiphany closes, and the Season of Lent begins. Lent moves us towards the cross and to new life. We are Children of God and we are in the presence of the Christ, 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: "Hymn to Freedom" - Oscar Peterson – 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

