

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifth Sunday of Epiphany – February 5th, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

- Ash Wednesday February 22nd 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 and Talbotstreet.ca

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

People: To a society that lives in the shadowed recesses of doubt and fear, God calls us to be light. To a world where every greed is fed until there is no taste to life, God calls us to be salt. To a time when loyalties are discarded as easily as the clothes we wear, God calls us to be faithful.

Eric: Disciples of Christ, come, let us worship.

Opening Hymn: VU 236 “Now Thank We All Our God”

- 1 Now thank we all our God, with heart,
and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.
- 2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ill in this world and the next.
- 3 All praise and thanks to God
for all that has been given,
the Son, and Spirit blest
who dwell in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Opening Prayer:

People: Light of the world, be our light this day. Creator of life, preserve our life this day. Holy God, pour out your righteousness on us this day. Light of the world, we gather to praise you on this day, with our hearts, song, and minds. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: MV 209 "Go Make A Diff'rence"

Go make a diff'rence. We can make a diff'rence.
Go make a diff'rence in the world. (2X)

We are the salt of the earth,
Called to let the people see
The love of God for you and me.
We are the light of the world,
not to be hidden but be seen.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

We are the hands of Christ
Reaching out to those in need,
The face of God for all to see.
We are the spirit of hope,
We are the voice of peace.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

So let your love shine on,
Let it shine for all to see.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.
And the spirit of Christ
Will be with us as we go.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

Scripture: Matthew 5: 13 – 20 "Just Like Salt"

Reflection: "We Are Salt! We Are Light!"

How do we live God's way? "Be like salt", Jesus says. Add flavour to your daily life, as you add flavour into the lives of those you meet. Adding flavour restores and maintains beauty in our community. As we seek to live like God's people, we can be salt, but we can also be light and show people the path. Our light shines from a distance in the dark, which shows others the place to safety, to a place of community.

I do not mind driving in the dark, but when I get to town, I enjoy the street lights that light up the road so much better than my headlights. If it is raining, or foggy, arriving into the place with street lights can help us see so much better. Even when we are still miles out of town, we can see the lights. On a night with cloud cover, we can see the reflection of Chatham's lights in the clouds. On a clear morning, as I leave our house in the dark, I can see the stop light in Charing Cross. I can identify whether it is red or green. You can see a light from far away especially in the flatlands of Kent County.

In today's story, Jesus gives us three images – salt, light, and a city on a hill – to help listeners understand their relationship with God and what it means to live according to the ways of God's realm. Salt and light are metaphors used in the Hebrew Scriptures to describe covenant and law. David and his descendants are called a lamp before God. Jesus expands these Hebrew traditional messages.

Jesus teaches his followers that they are salt (cleansing, preserving, adding flavour), and light (revealing what is hidden and enabling all to see). God's reign is not only a future promise; it also is a present reality. We participate in that reign as we live in God's ways. Our light shines before others, not so they can applaud our piety, but that our works can direct others to give thanks and praise to God. God, through us, gives light to everyone; to "all in the house." The word translated here as house is the word for "the established world" – it is a big house!

For Jews in Jesus' day, the law or Torah was understood as the full content of God's revelation to the people. In the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures, the Torah, included law codes such as the Ten Commandments and many other regulations that governed community life. Some scribes and Pharisees accuse Jesus of not keeping God's law. However, Jesus is faithful to the law's intent. He came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. The concern of the scribes and Pharisees was obedience to God's law.

Jesus calls us to live righteous lives and to show justice and mercy to all. We today as Jesus' followers must be just as wholehearted in following the intent and the spirit of God's laws. How do we do that? By being salt and light! Flavouring and showing the way.

Salt is essential to life as it allows for the proper function of the human body along with other life forms on Earth. We think of salt as seasoning, but it also serves as a preservative and disinfectant. Salt is a common substance. In Jesus' day, it was highly valued, even serving as a unit of exchange.

Salt or sodium chloride is stable material and retains its properties when stored dry. Salt, therefore, cannot lose its flavour, but it can become overwhelmed by other influences. What influences do we deal within life that may overwhelm our faith? Life is always changing, our faith is always changing. As we connect to Jesus' teaching of his vision for our world, we see the world differently and see ourselves differently – maybe even as salt and light. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 79 “Arise, Your Light Has Come”

- 1 Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God,
which shines on you today.
- 2 Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor.
- 3 Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the broken-hearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.
- 4 Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong.

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: You can make a difference through your gifts. We will bring the Word of God to life today. We will bring hope to the despondent. We will bring love to the unloved. We will bring

friendship to the lonely. We will care for the despondent. We will bring freedom to the oppressed. Loving God, receive and bless our offerings, and through the Spirit work joyfully with them. In Jesus' Name, we pray. 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 87 "I Am the Light of the World"

'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.

- 1 When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found
their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun: R
- 2 To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth
and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! R
- 3 To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere! R
- 4 To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! R

Benediction:

Eric: Go now, beloved children God; be surprised by God's wonder, feel God's encouragement for us to be a blessing as we offer blessings to others, 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
Grace’s Family**