

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifth Sunday of Epiphany – February 7th, 2021

Prelude: “Edleweiss” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

In ten days, next Wednesday the 17th, is Ash Wednesday – The start of the Season of Lent. We will be offering an Ash Wednesday Service at 10 am for those who wish to join us on Zoom. The Service will be downloaded by 9 am on the South Buxton website on Ash Wednesday for you to view or read. It looks like we will be hosting Easter online this year. Any ideas you have for Easter will be welcome.

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:

Eric: People of God, look around and see the faces of those we know and love — neighbours and friends, sisters and brothers — a community of kindred hearts.

People: **People of God, look around and see the faces of those we hardly know — strangers, visitors, forgotten friends — the ones who need an outstretched hand.**

Eric: People of God, look around and see all the images of God assembled here.

People: **In me, in you, in each of us, God’s spirit shines for all to see.**

Eric: Come - Let us worship together.

Opening Prayer:

God, you play so many roles in our lives. You model creativity, guidance, humility, and servitude. Your love is woven within us and is in the fabric of all creation. You have a compassionate knowledge of each of us, and how we may become or return to the self and health you have in store for each of us. It is good to sing your praises, Holy One. Amen.

Scripture: Mark 1: 29 – 39 – “A Letter to Tabitha”

Dear Tabitha,

I expect you want news of mama’s health. You knew of her decline; when I last wrote, she was not quite herself. She was so tired out by simple tasks that she took to staying in bed and then a fever came on. It began at sundown and continued through the night. Early that day, Simon and Andrew came home from the synagogue with James and John. They brought with them their friend from Nazareth.

I explained to them all that mama was still feverish, and their friend, Jesus, went straight in and took her hand from under the pile of blankets. It was quite a sight to see a young man with skill like a nurse or a physician. He took her hand as though she were his own mother. I waited near the bed and watched his face change as he seemed to pray. He was not afraid of her illness or being so close to her frail body. I have never seen anything like it.

Then, almost suddenly, but without any fuss, his body seemed to move with confidence toward her, as though he had lifted hundreds of sick people from their beds. He put his arm around her and lifted her. As he did so, he exhaled a little as if he were suddenly exerting himself, and he seemed serious and tired. His cheeks and forehead became pale as though he had caught her fever as it left her body.

She opened her eyes, turned toward his face, looked into his eyes; they both smiled as if they were old friends. As quickly as he had begun to turn pale and exhausted, it all fell away, and he was put to right again. So was she.

Mama demanded we go to prepare a meal and told her son and his friends to bring all the sick women from the neighbourhood so Jesus could help them the way he had helped us – she didn't say he had helped her or healed her. She was clear: he had helped us, and he could help so many others.

Tabitha, watch for this man. Pray that he will come to you and your neighbours. Pray for him and the others who will travel with him. They say he is meant to tell stories, to teach about the scriptures and to help us in all our little villages. I hope my letter reaches you in time so you may be sure to meet him and Simon and Andrew when they arrive. You will be so pleased to meet him!

Healthy and happy, your sister, Daphne

Opening Hymn: VU 570 “Jesus’ Hands Were Kind ...”

- 1 Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,
washing tired feet, and saving those who fall;
Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all.
- 2 Take my hands, O Jesus, let them work for you,
make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;
let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.

Message: “Reaching Into the Community”

God's unending love for us and for all Creation is revealed in Jesus, the Christ. With a strong faith fueled by prayer and reflection, we too can serve in fresh and vital ways as messengers of good news. In a strong faith, we act much like Christ, which makes us “Christians”.

Mark uses the word “immediately” repeatedly in his gospel. In just the first chapter of Mark there is a frenzy of activity: the preaching of John the baptizer, Jesus' baptism, calling of disciples, teaching in the synagogue, and casting out an unclean spirit. Now resting at the home of Simon and Andrew, Jesus is called upon

to heal Simon's mother-in-law. Crowds begin to press in around the house, demanding more words and deeds of power from Jesus.

Jesus moves quickly in Mark's narrative, but Jesus also stops, receives ministry of others, retreats away from the crowd, and enters the stillness and into the presence of God. In those brief times apart, Jesus found renewed energy in God, the source of his strength. Jesus moves on with the disciples to preach and cast out demons throughout Galilee.

Such renewal is the gift Jesus offered to Simon's mother-in-law the previous night. Jesus reaches out to this woman who is weak with fever, raises her, and restores her to serve. Jesus is then restored by Simon's mother-in-law to continue preaching and healing. They both are ministering to and with others.

God's faithfulness is shared with confidence in Mark. Jesus drew from God's source of strength as his authority for healing and teaching. As Jesus calls Simon's mother-in-law to service, we too are indirectly invited to trust in the power of God. How might our confidence in God's faithfulness give shape and purpose to our lives, either as individuals or as the Church family?

First of all we are all called to serve in Jesus' name. We as the Church would do this by looking out into our community and see something that is not right – so we work for change to make it right. One recent example may be the Chatham Kent Hospice. Many people in Chatham-Kent felt the hospital setting was not ideal for end of life situations. Many families opted to care for their loved ones at home – which is a great option. Yet the extra work needed to care for someone at home, including availability of nursing help and access to doctors in a meaningful timeframe, just added extra stress to those families trying to do the right thing.

In a short time, people all across Chatham-Kent including faith communities offered financial support to make the Chatham-Kent Hospice a reality. For the families that have experienced the Chatham-Kent Hospice, they were able to support their loved ones, while they themselves are being supported – both spiritually and physically. Together we make a difference.

One of today's concerns has the whole world taking notice, is the excess of junk we hoard, or send to landfills, which are rapidly filling to capacity. Especially bothersome is those plastic items that do not decompose. We are told in one hundred years that plastic bottle will still be almost identical as it was when we threw it away.

Here in Canada, we have recycling programs that allow the plastic to be remanufactured into new products such as car parts, or building supplies. In other countries, plastics have become a complex problem because local governments don't have funding for infrastructure such as landfills, garbage collection, or recycling services. Yet some communities in Brazil have turned recycling into employment opportunities for unskilled labourers. They organize and staff sorting facilities, apply for microloans and offer training to develop business models, and share in the humble, but honest income generated by the resale of clean recyclable materials.

The city of São Paulo, the largest metropolis in South America, produces massive amounts of solid waste on a daily basis. In order to manage this constant flow of trash, the municipal government provides recycling services for most of its neighborhoods. However, the sheer volume of recyclable trash overwhelms the capacity of these services. In an effort to curb this problem, a program of recycling co-operatives was started by the city, and now services 16 districts. A program operates out of a municipal waste sorting facility, employing citizens with difficulties getting work elsewhere, such as middle-aged blue collar workers and those with previous substance abuse issues.

Ultimately the goal is to take people off the streets and give them legitimate, green jobs. As part of this development, a few younger workers were given e-waste management training at a local university, and will expand the programs on-site this year. As part of its agreement with the city, the cooperatives must handle all of the recyclable waste collected by city trucks in its district, and is put in charge of finding buyers for the material. Workers are paid based on hours worked and on the net profits made from material sales.

While these programs are only a good start towards the problem, other communities are seeing the results and are gearing up for their own version of the cooperatives, all across Brazil. God works in unbelievable ways.

With our eyes on our community and listening to what needs help to get done, may we as the Church, reach out with our strong faith, and offer our help where it is needed. Together we can make a difference! We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 670 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

- 1 Precious Lord, take my hand,
lead me on, let me stand,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

2 When my way grows drear,
precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone,
hear my cry, hear my call,
hold my hand lest I fall:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

3 When the darkness appears,
and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone,
at the river I stand,
guide my feet, hold my hand:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we reach out into our community and the world - let us give in Love.

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:

We offer ourselves and our resources to the care of community in this space and around the world, in the ways Jesus taught us – as servants – adapting our hearts to show love to those who are unfamiliar to us. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: We pray for those among us who have need of support and encouragement. *(pause)*

People: **We pray for them within the presence of loving community.**

Eric: We silently name those on our minds. *(pause)*

People: **Who are the strangers, orphans, and widows who we need to invite into our loving community?** *(pause)*

Eric: We pray for those situations and places, where we cannot engage personally. *(pause)*

People: **Yet we know God will provide to them using those resources we give.**

Eric: May we be willing, when we see where we can be of service.

People: We pray for those global concerns for people and places we do not know personally.

(pause)

Eric: Yet we do offer our resources and prayer, even globally.

People: Holy God, we commend ourselves and all of creation to your care and your use. *(pause)*

Eric: Please restore us to our full selves and purpose, 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.

Benediction:

Eric: We may fail - God does not. We may end - God does not. We are blessed and a blessing, now and forever more.

Postlude: "So Long, Farewell" – 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: Wayne
Karen
Jasmine
Tom
Randy
David
George
Special: Richard
Cleata
Ken
June
Melonie
Susan

Zoe
Ingrid
Jerri
Willie & Gisele
Ronald
COVID testing
Garth's Family
Coombs/Darnley Family "Harold"
Ritchie Family "Art"