

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Second Sunday of Epiphany – January 17th, 2021

Prelude: “Clare de Lune, Debussy” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

Our Annual Meeting Reports are available today. If you have your service delivered, an Annual Report for your church was included with today’s service. South Buxton Pastoral Charge Annual Reports are available on southbuxton.ca . If you wish a printed copy please contact me at 519-689-7555. Talbot Street Annual Reports are available on talbotstreet.ca . If you wish a printed reports, please contact me or Tracey Major at secretary4tsuc@gmail.com. Thank you for all you do for our churches and Pastoral Charges.

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: We slumbered because we were exhausted.

People: Now we know we must rise and join our neighbours who refuse to give up. We will stumble humbly forward and join the movement inspired by God’s calling.

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Opening Hymn: VU 506 “Take my Life...” (*verses 1 & 5*)

- 1 Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, all for thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

- 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.

Opening Prayer:

Healers and truth-tellers draw near. We honour our bodies by baring our souls to the Creator. We join our hands, hearts, and voices as we are able. We open up our eyes and gaze on simple glories in one face and then another. God who calls, open us to the possibility that we

will wake from our dysfunction and slumber, and serve one another. We give thanks in Jesus' Name.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3: 1 - 20

Dear Mother, I need your advice.

I've lived with Eli long enough to know him pretty well. He has treated me like a son...or perhaps, he has treated me better than he treated his sons. I'll explain why I say this.

Tonight, I heard a voice call to me, and I figured it was Eli because his vision is failing him. He usually needs me to help him at night because it is so dark. So, I got out of bed, ran to him and twice he told me he had not called me. It didn't make any sense; I thought that perhaps he had been calling for me in his sleep without knowing he had.

This happened a third time, and I went to him once again. He instructed me to go back to bed, and stay there. Then he told me to speak to the voice as though it were the voice of God. Would not God rather speak to Eli versus me? I guess not! God called again.

When I answered the voice, I didn't speak very loudly. But as soon as I had the words out of my mouth, the voice began to tell me things - things that only Eli and I would know.

At first, I thought it was all just a dream. I was scared that Eli would ask me what the voice had said to me. If I tell the truth, it would sound disrespectful towards Eli. Eli is God's chosen one - I cannot insult him or his family - especially not to his face. I am not mean, but I have seen people behave in unjust ways, and I have heard people describe their sins and regrets. I know that good people do bad things. I know God forgives people who are sorry.

The voice told me there are things that could not be forgiven in the usual ways. It sounded like unforgivable sins have been committed. I can only hope that the voice was simply saying that forgiveness for these sins would require more than the usual burnt offerings and sacrifices. I honestly hope forgiveness is possible even when all we have to offer, is a remorseful heart or an earnest prayer.

I know I will have to tell Eli what the voice said. To be honest, I think I am more afraid of the voice than I am afraid of Eli... but how do I tell Eli, without hurting his feelings? I hate to see him upset; I have worked so hard to earn his trust.

I know you do not have all the answers. I will continue to work as hard as I can. I have to be truthful. That's tough love, isn't it? Telling the truth is the best way to love someone.

Your son, Samuel

Message: "Coming in the Night"

If we were to hear from God, when might it be or how might that happen. It could be in the quiet of the night. In the messages we have shared - that life can be so busy that we tune out the silent times, including the God times. Yet in life, whenever we want to have a real and deep conversation with another person, we sit down and listen to their story. It may be similar to God. I say this, because if God wants us to know something - God can come to us like a storm, or possibly the quietness of a pandemic. How might we hear God's voice? How might we respond to hearing God calling us?

This time of the Season of Epiphany is where the church hears about the calls from God for prophets to take action, and for the people of God to listen. As

Children of God, we should expect calls to action from God. These calls could be during times of prayer or as Samuel, in the middle of the night. Today's story reminds us we need to be open to messages from God and be responsive to the calls we receive - after all we are Children of God. Any child would expect to hear from their parent.

In this story of God's call to Samuel, Samuel receives very personal and private information about the nature of Eli's family dysfunctions, Samuel's relationship to Eli, and God's concern for the whole community under Eli's care. When God calls Samuel, it is clear to Eli that God has remained silent, but will not be patient any longer. We can see what happens in our own community when a family forgets who they are and what they represent in their community. As I shared last Sunday, if I was straying down the wrong road, I trust someone would hold me accountable. If that someone is not another person, surely it would be the Holy Spirit – or a restless night with God.

Several times in the Bible, we hear stories of where God awakens a prophet to hold the priests accountable – even Kings, as with Nathan the prophet and King David. These are the people whom God chooses to keep God's servants accountable. Even for ministers and God's servants - life can get in the way. How might God keep us accountable?

Eli's family had forgotten about God. They were just using their priestly duties to help themselves, eating the finest meats of the sacrifice. Eli's problem is that he didn't do anything about their wrongdoing. Eli just let it happen. It would seem from God's response is that Eli knew what his sons were doing, but he ignored their offences towards God. So God gets busy. It is time for a change. Samuel is getting old enough and experienced enough to be placed into action. Samuel will become the next prophet to Israel.

“Wake up!” God says to Samuel. “Wake up!” God says to Eli, as he had Samuel relay God's message to Eli. “Wake up!” God says to the Nation of Israel through Samuel. God tells Samuel that he is now the Prophet for God's people of Israel. Samuel is so effective in guiding the people toward self-reflection, repentance, and honesty; that everyone, everywhere in the whole nation of Israel, knew that Samuel was truly the Lord's Prophet.

Last Sunday, there was some teasing about falling asleep in church, and while watching church on Zoom. We might not fall asleep during the service, but we might fall asleep in our faith life. We are doing church in a new way. For many it

works. Yet, for some, this does not feel like church, and they feel disconnected from their faith community. Maybe they take a break from Sunday Services. It's like they fall asleep to their faith. Do they hear God's voice?

How might we help them recognize and hear God's voice? As with Samuel, if there ever was a time when we need to hear God's voice, it is in these days of isolation, and keeping our distances from one another. Many of the call stories in the Bible are stories about awakening to God's call, after a time of silence. Then we have God's guidance, to help lead us through the unknown. We understand God's ways to be mysterious. Do we believe that God knows all that is happening, and that God has a plan for the Church, to be the Church after the Pandemic?

Yes, we do believe! God's Call to us hinges on seeking truth and wisdom about ourselves and each other. The unknown does not frustrate us; instead we pursue understanding about God and our call as God's people. We continue to forge ahead into the unknown, knowing we do not go alone! God goes with us. God leads us, just as God led Samuel as Israel's new prophet. Thanks be to God!

Hymn: VU 509 "I, The Lord of Sea and Sky"

- 1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

- 2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we share in God's vision for us - we 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:

God who knows us inside and out - You created us to have different experiences of you and taught us to respond to you with gifts of gratitude. We have worked to collect and recollect abundance. We have toiled and felt the weight of the unknown future. But we come now in earnest hope and faith to offer what we have, do what we can, and let go of the outcome. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: God, whose glory the heavens are telling, we praise you for light leaping across northern skies and for the joys of blades upon ice, ski upon snow, fire in the hearth, and friends for celebration.

People: We praise you also for your continuing presence in a world where wealth has so much say, and the wicked prosper, and relationships go sour, and hearts and dreams are broken.

Eric: In laughter and tears alike we praise you.

People: We pray for the peace of the world, O God, and for the peace that only you can give - not only the absence of conflict and battle, but also the fullness of life that is prosperity for all, goodwill among neighbours, and welcome for every outsider.

Eric: Today we lift up to you our nation Canada, especially in the COVID Pandemic.

People: We lift up to you those suffering from unemployment and poverty.

Eric: We lift up those across our world who are living in the midst of war and unrest.

People: We lift up our families, our friends, and ourselves.

Eric: We gather these and all our prayers, those spoken aloud and those too deep for words, in Jesus' name, as we pray his 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: "This Little Light of Mine" – 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".

In hospital:	Cleata	June
	Ken	Melonie
Cancer:	Wayne	Susan
	Karen	Zoe
	Jasmine	Jerri
	Tom	Willie & Gisele
	Randy	Harold
	David	COVID testing
Special:	Richard	