

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Third Sunday of Epiphany – January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023*

**Prelude:** by Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

- Reminder of South Kent United Church's Gathering, this Wednesday at 7 pm at the Merlin United Church.

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)

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

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** We bring all of our unanswered questions together in our worship.

**People:** We bring our praise of God to the one who reminds us that we belong.

**Eric:** We belong here in this family of faith.

**People:** We belong to each other and to our God.

**Eric:** Come let us praise God together.

### **Opening Hymn: VU 562 "Jesus Calls Us..."**

- 1 Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult  
of our life's wild restless sea,  
day by day his clear voice sounding,  
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'
- 2 Long ago apostles heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred,  
leaving all for Jesus' sake.
- 3 Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us,  
saying, 'Christian, love me more.'
- 4 In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
'Christian, love me more than these.'
- 5 Jesus calls us: by your mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear your call,

give our hearts to your obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People:** There is so much that remains unknown and uncertain. We push against you, but you will not push us away. You hold us close.

When we wonder what the day might bring, you whisper, “follow me, I will make you: readers to little children, bandagers of bruised hearts, lovers of the forsaken, pilgrims who show the way to others.”

We ask so much of you, O God. We want your beauty and comfort. We need your strength and peace. You hear our cries and answer us with your endless grace and love. You are our joy. Amen.

### **Children’s Story & Lord’s Prayer:**

#### **Children’s Hymn: VU 579 “The Church is Wherever... ”**

- 1 The church is wherever God's people are praising,  
singing God's goodness for joy on this day.  
The church is wherever disciples of Jesus  
remember his story and walk in his way.
- 2 The church is wherever God's people are helping,  
caring for neighbours in sickness and need.  
The church is wherever God's people are sharing  
the words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

#### **Scripture: Matthew 4: 12 - 23 “A Day by the Sea”**

#### **Reflection: “Follow The Call”**

Following Christ’s call is risky and full of uncertainty. Even for us as Christ’s followers today, there is a lot of uncertainty in our day to day faith lives. Living our faith by following Jesus, does not take us leaving our jobs and going on the road. Living our faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century takes decisions that involve everyone; decisions of justice, love and care. In this Season after the Epiphany, we are invited to journey into those choices and changes that mark the lives of those who follow in God’s ways. We also discern together what it means to follow Jesus today. We do this by the decisions we make for our church and for ourselves, as we plan at our Annual Meetings.

In today’s story, Jesus has gone to Galilee to gather disciples. He first reaches out to Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. His call to follow sounds absurd and abrupt. Matthew likes to show Jesus’ stories as rushed, even those significant events

in the stories of Jesus. Matthew does not indicate the passage of time. For Matthew, “Jesus speaks, and the brothers respond”. These brothers change the direction in their lives and follow Jesus.

Andrew and Simon have no idea what they are following Jesus for. When Jesus says, “I will make you fish for people,” that does not offer clarity for these two. As humans we have many questions; Why these two people? Why this community? Why fishers and not someone else? This move by Andrew and Simon must have seemed impulsive at best and foolish at worst. What was it like for Zebedee, to watch his children, James and John, make what may appear to be a foolish and impulsive decision to follow a stranger and leave behind their responsibilities for providing for family and community? How might we have responded to our own kids making such choices?

What we may not think about, is that our own kids may have been thinking about their move, and working through all the pros and cons. What we hear is the final decision. To us, it may seem that they are being impulsive, maybe even making foolish decisions – leaving town, moving across the country with no job, not even a bed to lay your head. Yet time has shown they have done okay making that life changing decision.

Matthew is also known to show us that the Hebrew Scriptures are being fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew says that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah’s description of God’s faithful and peaceful servant. Jesus’ actions indicate God’s new ways and set a model for the church and all who seek to follow Jesus. Within this one passage, all the elements of Jesus’ earthly ministry are included: proclaiming the presence of God’s reign, teaching, healing, and calling disciples. An indication of the way Jesus ministers is found here, in today’s story.

God’s call often comes through the gradual unfolding of events and experiences in our lives. This call becomes our invitation to follow in God’s ways, extending the good news of God’s saving love to others. We may need to remember this, as we live through the changes that we know are before us as the church. When we are in the middle of the change, and things feel messy, we are in that place when our child says, “We are moving to Alberta – no job, no house, just a dream”. After the passing of time and the opportunity to look back, we realize those gradually unfolding of events and experiences. This may help us to journey into new territory without freaking out. It becomes part of the journey – part of our faith journey. Do we make these types of change journeys relying on our faith and the fact we believe, “We are not alone”?

William Loader, who ministers in the Uniting Church in Australia and Professor of New Testament at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, gives us a definition of a disciple. Loader says, “Disciples’ has become a term for church members, so that we often hear it as an instruction to make recruits. That’s not what is meant. It meant: Go and make learners. ‘Disciples’ meant ‘learners,’ people who will join in learning community and carry on learning – lifelong, to the end of the age.”

We in the United Church have been taught that our faith learning and faith journeys - are life long learning and journeys. That we will be always learning, each day we live our faith. Have you experienced that time when you just don’t get it, and then a few days later it like the light bulb is turned on, and it all makes sense? That is what we call an epiphany.

Each day we live our faith, we are learning and on our journey. Some days we are moving ahead. Some days we are stepping back, maybe even taking a different road - then heading off again. A similar journey will accompany us, as we the church of South Buxton, move ahead to whatever ministry God is calling us to do.

We do not see the first disciples struggle with their response to Jesus’ call, but we know we struggle with following Jesus in our lives. We may see some churches make their changes effortlessly, but we are watching from the outside. Similar as we see the first disciples, saying, “Sure, why not”, we do not get to talk to them about their fears. Surely they had some. We do.

God’s call to us as the church in South Buxton can be considered a gift from God, as God is giving us an opportunity to re-vision being the church in this very place. Yes, God’s call will be a challenge, and it also is a gift. Maybe it reminds us that there is not one call in our lives – but that there are many invitations that God offers. Some we may not choose to follow.

As we continue to explore our Epiphany experiences, how might we hear Jesus’ call to follow? Are we reluctant or joyous? Do we see ourselves being sidetracked from the future we have planned? Or do we see ourselves stepping into a great light?

Like Jesus, we are God’s beloved. As Jesus walked his ministry with God, may we do the same. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn:** “I Will Make You Fisher of Friends”

I will make you fishers of friends, fishers of friends, fishers of friends.  
I will make you fishers of friends, if you follow me,  
If you follow me, if you follow me,  
I will make you fishers of friends, if you follow me

Hear Christ calling “Come unto me, Come on to me, Come on to me”,  
Hear Christ calling “Come unto me, I will give you rest”.  
“I will give you rest, I will give you rest”.  
Hear Christ calling “Come unto me, I will give you rest”.

### **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:** We are called to follow, yet are often slow to respond, God of grace. We are blessed with more than we ever need or can use, yet we are reluctant to part with even a portion of this abundance. As we offer our gifts to you, remind us that learning generosity is part of our call to follow Jesus, who models your gracious nature in every word, every gesture, every day. 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 120 “O Jesus, I Have Promised”**

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend:  
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.
- 2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;

my foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.

- 3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you,  
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Go now and follow the love of God. Be a blessing as you offer blessings to others now and forever more.

**Sending Out Hymn: VU 378 “Spirit of God, ...”**

Have you not bid me love you, God and King;  
all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength and mind?  
I see your cross: there teach my heart to cling.  
O let me seek you and O let me find!

**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**

**Reg and Mary Jane  
Dave  
Bill  
Jane  
Donna  
Martin and Family  
Larry  
Kerigan**

**Fran  
John  
Ken  
Grace  
Natalie  
Susan  
Ingrid  
Johnathan**

**Richard and Evelyn  
Elaine  
Wayne  
Marcus  
Ed Sykes  
Connie**