

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Epiphany – January 24th, 2021

Prelude: “Let ‘Em In!” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

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:

People: God’s Spirit calls to our spirits, inviting us to worship.

Eric: God’s Spirit calls to our spirits, inviting us to love.

People: God’s Spirit calls to our spirits, calling us by name, calling us to grow in faith, calling us to be made new.

Eric: We come to worship in this season of the Spirit.

Opening Prayer:

God who calls, we gather together and wonder what it sounds like, what it feels like, what will occur when you call us. We have set aside this precious time to ponder the question of who we are when you are with us, and who you are when we are with you. Call to us to awaken us to your invitation. Amen.

Scripture: Mark 1: 14 - 20

My dear sons; James and John: You know how difficult it is for me to share my thoughts. As I write this letter my hands tremble as I share my hopes and fears for you as you begin your ministry following Jesus.

We were together when we heard that John the baptizer was imprisoned. You two did not seem too concerned, but I was really concerned. I know the stories of the prophets who suffer and die because of the stories they tell, and the people they upset. John is known to say what he thinks. But you my son James; you are the courageous one, who insisted the prophet would be just fine, and things would be sorted out in due time. Your patience and persistence, James, make you such a good fisherman. And you, John, my beloved dreamer, you imagined the prophet’s miraculous escape: prison walls crumbling like the fortress walls fell in the old story of Jericho. I wish I had your youthful optimism.

I admit I was overcome with fear as Jesus came toward our boats. I kept my head down, pretending to mend the nets. Jesus in a few short days has already created such a fuss

around these parts. It was not much of a stretch to know why Jesus was there. I'm thinking this would be the last time I would work with my boys. We have always been such good workers together. We each take our spot and rarely have we fought or argued with each other.

When Jesus approached us and invited you to go with him to "Fish for men?!" - I almost laughed out loud. Jesus sounded like a salesman, versus offering an invitation. You know my thoughts about religious zealots. Everyone I've ever known who headed off to travel with those zealots, have not been back since. It is my worst fear that I will lose you two. You are such great fishermen.

You both were naturals at fishing. You watch the horizon with wisdom. You can sense in the air even the slightest changes in conditions and understand and be sensible of the dangers all around. You both have a sense of calm and strength in your very core.

Last week, when you dropped the nets and headed off with Jesus, you both did it so casually – like you were heading off for a coffee – like you'd be back in a half hour. I knew there was nothing casual about your departure. It would have been foolish to call you back to me. You likely have no idea what you are going to encounter. Neither do I. I do have some past experience with this sort of thing. Hopefully, I can harness your youthfulness and trust God will keep you safe. Trusting in God is the only thing that calms my fears.

As I release my fears, I do embrace a new kind of hope. My new hope is that you will indeed use all that you know about fishing as you teach and learn from Jesus; that you will use your physical strength and your enduring kindness, that you will share the lessons you have gained by throwing them out like new nets – and that the people will be caught up in the safety of wise teachings. Only time will bring answers to my questions.

I miss you both so much, and it's only been a few days. I "AM" proud to call you my sons and glad that you are following your hearts. Your father, Zebedee

Opening Hymn: "I Will Make You Fishers of Friends" (2 verses)

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".

Message: "Accepting the Call"

We may think of an epiphany as a novel idea, and possibly a new trajectory for our lives. In this Season after the Epiphany we take the time to settle into a new sense of call or a renewed sense of purpose. Today we hear the story of Jesus asking James and John the sons of Zebedee, for them to leave their day job and follow him. They left their father in the boat with the hired workers and went with Jesus.

In Mark, Jesus does not only call James and John the fishermen, Jesus also calls another set of brothers, Andrew and Simon. All four of them left their nets, their boats and their livelihood to join Jesus in his ministry. Jesus calls them away from their routines and away from their established identities. This seems like such a powerful trust in trusting God, and in trusting Jesus. They choose to believe God will shape their lives anew, and use them where they are needed to build God's Kingdom.

We as followers of Jesus and scriptures, we know the rest of story. We know what their ministry was like. We know the ups and the down, the believing and those times of doubt, or totally not understanding what's happening or what comes next. We have the whole story before us – we know what was expected of these four men. Would we still be willing to work for God – knowing the whole story?

Would we be willing to drop everything when we are invited to a deeper relationship with God? It can be challenging to leave behind what we once found reliable. We hold on to beliefs until they no longer serve a purpose. Some beliefs, such as those we held in childhood, last only a short time. We grow from our childhood faith to our faith that sustains us as adults. As adults we have the opportunity to question our faith ideals. We may discover that they are indeed worth holding on to or we replace them with other beliefs that will serve us better.

As Christians, we applaud the faith of those who would walk away from their past ways or those who would drop everything and follow Christ's call. In the fishermen's situation, Jesus was there with the people he called; perhaps having Jesus' physical presence makes following the call more compelling.

In our world today, we hear of folks who drop everything to follow Jesus. Do they see or feel a physical presence of Jesus among them, maybe like Saul did on the road to Damascus? We understand Jesus as being human allows us to see as a fellow human the ways to follow God's ways. We also understand Jesus to be divine therefore Jesus can intercede for us when we offer our prayers. We can understand Jesus as the Christ as we do understand his humanity. We also understand Jesus teachings as being divine – full of mystery and wisdom.

When God calls us amidst our everyday living, what are the skill sets and work characteristics that we have that will help us to follow the call in the way of Jesus? Many times we are called to use our everyday skill sets to do God's ministry in our world. Some times it is our work abilities that allow us to do God's ministry in a new position, such as helping at the food bank, or overnight shelter, or drug

rehabilitation centre. It can seem like God has been grooming us for that new position we take and absolutely love and find so fulfilling. It feels like a win-win situation.

Many of us find ourselves at the mature age of our human lives. Would we expect God to call us? It is possible. It might not be a call to street ministry in downtown Windsor, but it could be a call to help out those in need in our local community. Many times we do ministry together as the local church. In December, we did the ministry of the Merlin Christmas Baskets, as a community. Many churches together with the local Service Clubs and folks from the community came together to distribute food, clothing and toys to those in our community in need. The same happened in Wheatley, as the community gathered to provide for the vulnerable.

On November 21st with “The Gift”, the community including our churches offered the food, toys and clothes to the organizations that would distribute those items. This was so important in 2020 because the usual ways of collecting food and toys were not available to us during the Pandemic. God called us collectively into a new and exciting ministry. Community folks who may find themselves compelled to help, may not consider themselves to be very religious; regardless they were there and they did their part.

To what is God calling us as we move into a new future? We can consider the call individually, or for our local church, or for our local community, for the wider church, or for the wider community. We can respond to this call trusting in God’s steadfast and constant presence, because we are not alone! God is always with us. Thanks be to God!

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.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we accept God's call for us - 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:

God who calls us by name, shouting truth in the streets; We dedicate a gift of gratitude to you for your use. We have toiled and felt the weight of futility. So, 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: Gracious God, we learn of you from one another.

People: **We humbly think of the names of those who have taught us of your love and ask that you bless and keep them.** *(Silence)*

Eric: We discover you when you call us by name.

People: **We whisper our names aloud and remember that you know each of us and call each of us by name.** *(Silence)*

Eric: We trust that you know the truth and will share it with us so that we may be honest and courageous always.

People: **We share one thing we know to be good about the world in which we live.** *(Silence)*

Eric: We hope in your care for all that concerns us.

People: **We think about the circumstances that cause pain, death, danger, and frustration in the lives of our neighbours and all of creation.** *(Silence)*

Eric: We entrust all of the people, places and things we have named into your care, 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: "All You Need is Love" – 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	Ruth
	Karen	Melonie
	Jasmine	Susan
	Tom	Zoe
	Randy	Ingrid
	David	Jerri
	George	Willie & Gisele
Special:	Richard	COVID testing
	Cleata	Stu
	Ken	
	June	Harold's Family
	Lloyd	