

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Epiphany Sunday – January 3rd, 2021

Prelude: “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

We will soon be looking for our Annual Meetings. At some point we will have to work out how we will hold our Annual Meetings; by telephone and Zoom or in person. Either way, we will put together our Annual Reports – to be ready by January 17th – the last Sunday before the anticipated re-opening of the Province of Ontario. Please send all South Buxton reports to me at southbuxtonpc@gmail.com or for Talbot Street, to Tracey at secretary4tsuc@gmail.com . Thank you for your hard work and calmness over these past 9 months.

As part of Light up Chatham Kent, we have decorated the trees east of St. Andrew’s United Church with lights, which we will leave until Wednesday – the day of Epiphany. The hamlet of South Buxton looks great this year with all the decorations. It is amazing!

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.

Call To Worship:

Eric: Praise God, the Creator, who made the heavens and the earth!

People: **We celebrate in awe of God’s beautiful creation.**

Eric: Praise God, the Redeemer, who came in flesh to live among us!

People: **We gather in awe of God’s coming to us.**

Eric: Praise God, the Spirit, who fills us with hope!

People: **We follow in awe, sustained for the journey.**

Eric: Praise God, one in three, and three in one!

People: **We worship in awe of God’s merciful love.**

Opening Hymn: VU 48 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1 Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'

Hark! the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the newborn King!'

Opening Prayer:

Triune God of love and light, dwell among us as we gather to worship you. *(Light candle.)*

Shine your light into our life. *(Light candle.)*

Fill our hearts with your overflowing love. *(Light candle.)*

Accept our offering of prayer and praise. *(Light candle.)*

May we truly see you in this place. *(Light candle.)*

Amen.

Scripture: John 1: 1 – 18 – “The Light of the World” *(Read by Sean Nicholas)*

Imagine a long, long time ago when there was no world. No stars. No animals. No people. No you. Just nothing.

Now imagine that even though there was nothing, God was there.

God was there like a strange light that is everywhere, but doesn't come from anywhere. The light didn't shine on anything, because there was nothing to shine on. Can you imagine that?

Then God had an idea. God decided to make the universe, and the earth, and to fill it with all kinds of creatures, and with all kinds of people like you and me. And in each person, and in every living thing, and in everything God created, God put some of the light that was there before there was anything. You have some of that light in you. People can see that light shining in your eyes when you laugh. Sometimes they also see God's light when you cry.

Then God had a very special idea about a very special person. God decided to make a person who would come and live with us to show us what God is like. A special person to show us how to live God's way.

There was a man named John. God sent John to tell us about the very special person that was coming.

“Look,” said John. “You can't see God because God isn't a ‘something’ you can see. Nobody can see God. But God will send us a person to show us what God is like. God will send this special person to tell us about that wonderful light that all of us have – God's light that comes to us from the time before there was anything.

“The name of that special person is Jesus. Jesus will help you shine. Jesus will help you find God's light that is inside you. Jesus will help you live God's way.”

Message: “We Wait In Love”

This week we have moved from the birth of Christ to witnessing Christ at work in the world. Today we are invited to be a part of that work. When we see who we can be through the power of Christ, we can see how God's love reaches to all the world, and how we engage the world being the church of Jesus Christ.

The first verses of the first Chapter of John is the only “Christmas story”, that John shares with us. John is all about the “who”, not “how”. John shares with us that Emmanuel – God-with-is, doesn't dwell in the specifics of a human birth as Luke does; with Mary, the angels, the shepherds, and the wise men. For John, all we need to know is that somehow “the Word” becomes flesh and becomes a part of

our world in a new and tangible way through Jesus of Nazareth. John connects the event of God breaking into our world – Emmanuel - with our relationship with God. Because the Word has become human, we also being human, can recognize and respond to God in entirely new ways.

In Matthew and Luke we hear stories of Jesus as a human child – Jesus is at the temple being dedicated and then circumcised when he was a week old. Matthew shares that Jesus is a year or two old and living with his mother in a little house somewhere, there are sages and scholars traveling to see the king whose star pierces the heavens no matter how long it takes. They arrive on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany. In the season of Epiphany we leap through time for the baptism of Jesus as an adult. We have three weeks to hear and understand those special stories of Jesus’ childhood, and understanding of Jesus’ divinity.

But for John, stories of Jesus is all about the divine adult. John shares the idea of his Trinity; of the Living Word, the Unending Light and the One who is Eternal Life. The good news is the unending light for us in a world where darkness is scary, cold, and maybe even final.

How do we view our relationships between darkness and light? In John 1, John starts, “In the beginning before God created light there was darkness”. We may be afraid of the dark but God is not. Darkness is a creative space to God. Out of darkness God created everything that is, including light. Could we consider that light and dark are not in conflict, but in balance?

We as humans usually like to think in polar opposites, good/bad, light/dark. Yet we believe God to be supreme - therefore God doesn’t have any competition. For God, life and death are not opposites. We are born to die and die to live. We pass through death to live again. It is called resurrection!

We are called to live a mature faith in a complex world. There is light and dark, shadows and more than fifty shades of gray. The darkness and light co-exist. There is always shadow. We can’t see in the dark. We trip over the smallest thing. But it is not the dark that hurts us. It is our own limitations. Because of our blindness, we need Christ to light our way. Christ is the light that allows us to see the light in all people and all situations.

John uses many images of darkness and light. We too as the church use in our liturgy images of darkness and light. We as the church that is left to our human ideals, we use darkness or unknowing to judge others, mostly unfavourably. Jesus

the Light, helps us to see through the shadows and darkness to see the value in all people. Something that we humans do not naturally do.

John says, Emmanuel – God with us in the form of Jesus, will help you shine. Jesus will help you find God’s light that is inside you. Jesus will help you live God’s way. Once again we are reminded - We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 60 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

- 1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:
come and behold him, born the King of angels;
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
- 2 God of God, light of light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten, not created:
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God in the highest:
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
- 4 See how the shepherds summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*
- 5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we live in God's light - 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:

Gracious God, you love abundantly and provide generously. In gratitude, we give our gifts back to you. May these offerings – our time, money, energy, and prayers – nurture and support your children, and represent to all what a joy it is to be counted among your family. Use us, and these gifts, to your glory. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord’s Prayer:

Eric: Abundant God, we come to you today as grateful people.

People: **We thank you for calling us your children, and for loving us as our parent. You fill us with hope.**

Eric: Today we pray for your children, our family, and we ask that your healing touch, your unbounded peace, and your astonishing love be made known.

People: **With gratitude, we lift into the light our mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, those whom we have known since birth, and all who have been parental figures to us.**

Eric: With thanksgiving, we lift into the light our sisters and brothers; siblings and friends who have loved us, cared for us, and helped us become the people we are today.

People: **With concern, we lift into the light those members of our family who are hurting; those who are living with illness and disease; those who are in pain in mind, body, or spirit.**

Eric: With awe, we lift into the light those family members who have answered your call to serve your children and accepted the path of ministry and discipleship.

People: **With humility, we lift ourselves into the light: for the places where we fall short; for the relationships we have not nurtured; for the areas in our own lives that need healing.**

Eric: With desperation, we lift into the light our siblings around the world; your children who are suffering needlessly under pain of war, poverty and disease, oppression and persecution, injustice and terror, natural and human-caused disaster.

People: **With hope, we lift into the light the youngest members of our family. With peace, we lift into the light the oldest members of our family.**

Eric: With confidence and trust, we pray our prayer to you, as we pray Jesus’ special 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: Go in peace. You are loved by God and you are enough, now and forever more.

Postlude: “Fantasy on Angels We Have Heard” – 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
Ken

Cancer: Wayne
Karen
Ian
Jasmine
Tom
Randy
David
Ross Family and Sean

Special: Richard
June
Melonie
Susan
Zoe
Jerri
Willie
Harold