

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – January 30th, 2022

Prelude: “Sounds of Silence” – Paul Simon - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to St. Luke’s today as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany with the story of Jesus leaving his hometown.

We are meeting in-person at St. Andrew’s at 11 am each Sunday for 2022 (as you feel comfortable with the changing COVID situation). Our Sunday morning Zoom meeting will gather at 9:30 am, the service will be at 10 am.

We are rescheduling the Annual Meetings to a later date when we can meet in-person. Annual reports are available by email or a printed report can be delivered.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.ca

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, readings by Annette Skillings and the slides by Tracey Major. You make all the difference. Thank you!

Call to Worship:

Eric: The heavens are telling the glory of God,

People: and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.

Eric: Day to day pours forth speech,

People: and night to night declares knowledge.

Eric: We give thanks to God who has created all that we have.

People: And we sing praise to God who has created all that we are.

Eric: Come let us worship our God.

Opening Prayer:

People: Gracious God, we come before you knowing that what you call us to be and want for us is sometimes at odds with what the world expects from us. Sometimes we feel on the edge between the world we live in and the world you call us to be a part of. Show us your way, O Holy One, that we may learn how to be your ministry even as we live on the edge. Open our hearts to receive your word and your guidance for our lives. Amen.

Hymn: VU 589 “Lord, Speak to Me”

- 1 Lord, speak to me that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your erring children lost and lone.

- 2 O teach me, so that I may teach
the precious truths which you impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.
- 3 O fill me with your fullness, Lord,
until my very heart o'erflows
in kindling thought and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.
- 4 O use me, Lord, use even me
just as you will, and when, and where,
until your blessed face I see,
your rest, your joy, your glory share.

Scripture: Luke 4: 21 - 30 "Hard to Hear"- by Lori Marchand

Jesus had returned to his hometown and was sitting in a place of worship – the synagogue. Others were there with him, too. When Jesus started reading scripture, everyone sat very still and listened to him.

When he finished, he rolled up the scroll (in those days the scripture was not written in a book like the Bible, but was written on long pieces of fancy paper) and said, "Because you have heard what God is asking you to do, now you can go out and do it."

Everyone sat very still as they listened. They were so impressed with Jesus and the beautiful words he was saying. They looked at each other and said, "Isn't he Joseph's son? They must be so proud of him!"

But Jesus kept talking.

"You probably think because I'm from here that I'm going to go easy on you. I'm not. I'll always be Joseph's 'young son' to most of you, so I am not sure that you really can hear what I'm saying. Elijah and Elisha were prophets like me. Like me, they were called by God to tell and show God's healing love to everyone. God's love is not only for us. God's love is for everyone – even for people we may not like."

This made the people angry. They chased him out of the synagogue! They chased him right out of town and to the edge of a cliff. In their anger they wanted to push him off.

But, they didn't. Instead, Jesus turned to look at them. Standing there on the edge of the cliff, he just looked at them. He was sad. People came from all over Galilee to hear him talk about God, but people in his own hometown did not like what he had to say. It was time to leave Nazareth. Jesus walked back through the crowd and went on his way to the city of Capernaum. There, he taught in the synagogues, and the people listened.

Message: "Speaking Out"

We are called as God's Children. The message that Jesus today shares in our story is a message to all Christians today. But as it was in Jesus' day – today some Christians do not want to hear these words. Why? Because it is a lot of work! It takes a lot of courage to speak out and live your life with faith, hope, and love. With the power of the Holy Spirit all of these are possible.

Living out your ministry with the Holy Spirit allows us to concentrate on those ministries we are being called to. In regular prayer and discernment it is difficult for others to convince you in what you need to do – for them and for others. Just because I am good at talking to the homeless and helping them out – you may not be – that may not be your ministry. But be sure – you do have a ministry. What is it? That’s where we need prayer and discernment.

In our story today Jesus is very sure of what is his ministry. So sure that he challenges his own hometown folks to get out there and be and act like a child of God. Jesus even tells them he is a prophet like Elijah and Elisha. “Who like me,” Jesus says, “Are called by God to tell and show God’s healing love to everyone.” Jesus continues with these words that make his hometown folks upset. “God’s love is for everyone, not only for us”.

That would set his neighbours and friend reeling as in Jewish tradition following all those Jewish laws would determine God’s love for you. Do the laws consistently - you are in. Don’t do them consistently – you are out. Many Jewish folks tried their hardest to do all the laws of the Jewish faith. Following all those laws was very hard to do – even if you knew the 600 or so laws. Most people knew the main ones, but very few Jewish faithful knew them all. Regardless following the laws consistently was your ticket to be loved by God.

Now this hometown renegade has returned to tell us, “God’s love is for everyone, not only for us”. Then to put the salt on the freshly open wound, “God’s love is for everyone – even for people we may not like”. “What blasphemy!” “Who does he think he is?” “We’ll fix his sorry little behind!” And they chase him out of the synagogue to the edge of town, right up to the side of a cliff”.

At the edge of the cliff, Jesus stops turns around, and walks through the crowd and carries on his journey to another town.

Some scholars suggest there may have been friction between Nazareth, a small farming village, and Capernaum, a more populous fishing centre. Matthew tells us that, “Jesus left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum.” This adopted home might not have sat well with the folks back home in Nazareth. It is believed that Capernaum may have been home to a Roman garrison and a number of Gentiles. So many hometown folk may wonder, “Why would ‘our’ Jesus live among enemies and outcasts?”

Do we get that friction between small town in Southern Kent? We do hear of the friction that rural Chatham Kent shares with the City of Chatham. Is not some

competition good for us? I am sure it is, as long as that competition does not control us and make us not like the competition. Sometimes we gossip about what other churches and rural communities are doing. Hopefully we do not get in the mindset of not liking them. Rural communities are doing the best they can to hold on and continuing to be home for so many wonderful people. We are resilient and have to support each other – that is part of our rural culture.

What do we think of our hometown folks who come back from afar? Many have left our local area to live in the bigger cities for work opportunities. Yet some of that culture is changing since COVID when so many people can work from home. We are usually excited to see our hometown girl or boy. But what if they stood up on Sunday morning and shared that we need to believe God loves everyone? Even as much as we know that, we are disturbed by being reminded by someone who has just returned home from being away in the big city. We can likely relate to Jesus' predicament, but we can also relate to the thoughts of the home town folks.

Sometimes people become used to overlooking parts of their tradition they find uncomfortable. That is part of the story we hear today for the hometown folks of Nazareth. It is the story we hear of other faith and traditions. It is part of our stories as Christians. We all get pretty comfortable in doing those things (as Christians) that we are willing to do. As the saying goes, "Learning what we already know, is often painfully difficult." Being reminded of what we should be doing is even that more difficult, especially when we don't want to do that.

Faith is not always an easy way to live, and always must be a way engaged with love. Today, God calls us to speak out, proclaiming God's love and justice for everyone, including those on the margins. If that rubs you the wrong way – take a moment and ask yourself, "Why am I stressed about this?"

We're called to show courage, to speak out, as Jesus did to the people in his hometown. Remember Jesus had the Holy Spirit with him. Maybe the Holy Spirit worked in the minds of the hometown folks who were willing to throw Jesus over the cliff? In faith we trust!

What God wants for us does not always coincide with our wants. These "hard" ways of God sometimes challenge the way of life we are used to. They may challenge the way our church has done ministry and mission in the past.

Let's us remember we live in the abundance of God's love, and we live in the power of the Holy Spirit. We trust in our faith and our relationship with God. We

can transform our community and the world. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 658 “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go” – by Christie Coatsworth

- 1 O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.
- 2 O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.
- 3 O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain
that morn shall tearless be.
- 4 O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We live in the wonderful reality of God's promise. In the name of Jesus Christ, we offer our gifts to be blessed, and shared with those in need.

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: Holy and Living God, doing your will, living out the ministry you put before us, can be scary. It is not just our tithes and offerings that you ask of us – you ask everything. Show us how to live out the ministry you have called us to do at all the edges of our lives, including speaking out when needed, so that we can be truly faithful to you. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 “Listen To Your Children Praying”

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord’s Prayer:

Eric: O Holy One, being a Christian is risky business.

People: **You ask of us to follow you, and sometimes we find ourselves standing on the edge afraid that we are going to fall over.**

Eric: But, you’ve been there before us.

People: **You have stood on the edge for what you believed and what you proclaimed.**

Eric: There is nothing that we are asked to bear or endure that you do not understand.

People: **You cannot promise us that everything will turn out the way we want it to, but you do promise us that you will stand with us at all the cliffs of our lives as well as those times when we think we are on stable ground and have all the answers.**

Eric: Yes, being a Christian is risky business.

People: **We thank you for being on this journey with us and for leading and guiding us along the way.**

Eric: As together we share 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.*

Blessing:

Eric: As we go, God goes with us. Together we go out to serve at all those edgy places where we are called to serve, ever mindful that we are not alone, now and forever more.

I Am the Light of the World: VU 87

'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!'
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: “Put Your Hand In The Hand” – Gene MacLellan - 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:	Tom	
	Louise	Louise' Granddaughter - Blake
	Betty	Ingrid
	Alison	Brenda
	Nancy	Jim
	Brian	Jack
	Zoe	Becky
	Barry/ Marsha	Francine
	Adrein	Gary
	Melissa	Karen
	Lloyd	Jim
	Flo	Sherie & Will
	George	Hunter – Doctor
	Jenny	Janet / Tracey
	Shawna	Sarah
	Ethan – Brian Surgery	Donna
	Jeannie	Michelle
	Larry	