

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Epiphany Sunday – January 7th, 2024

Prelude:

Welcome & Announcements:

Please send all South Buxton reports to me at southbuxtonpc@gmail.com or for Talbot Street, to Tracey at secretary4tsuc@gmail.com

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at southbuxton.ca, and talbotstreet.ca

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!'

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,

'Glory to the newborn King!'

Hail, the heavenborn Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

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.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 69 "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 98

The Lord Works Miracles

Sing a new song to the Lord! He has worked miracles, and with his own powerful arm, he has won the victory.

The Lord has shown the nations that he has the power to save and to bring justice.

God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen everywhere on earth.

Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the Lord.

Make music for him on harps. Play beautiful melodies!

Sound the trumpets and horns and celebrate with joyful songs for our Lord and King!

Command the ocean to roar with all its creatures, and the earth to shout with all its people.

Order the rivers to clap their hands, and all the hills to sing together.

Let them worship the Lord! He is coming to judge everyone on the earth, and he will be honest and fair.

Gospel Scripture: John 1: 1 – 14

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word. Everything that was created received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone. The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out. God sent a man named John, who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith. John wasn't this light. He came only to tell about the light. The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word. He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him. Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him. So he gave them the right to be the children of God. They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children. The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him the complete gifts of undeserved grace and truth have come down to us.

Message: “The Word Made Flesh”

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, and that there are sages and scholars traveling to see the king whose

star pierces the heavens. They will travel 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 or bad, light or 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, but someone who is blind can "see" in the dark, as well as they can "see" in the light. For us with sight, 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.

Reflection 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:

Closing Hymn: VU 59 “Joy to the World”

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Saviour reigns:
let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground:
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Benediction:

Eric: Go in peace. You are loved by God and you are enough, now and forever more.

Closing Chorus: VU 43 “Go Tell it on the Mountain”

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude:

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”.

**Carol
Susan
Barb
Margie
Jerry
Erin**

**Natalie
Joan
Rick
David
Dave**

**Elizabeth
Mike and Janice
Barb
Rick**

**Don
Audrey
Harry/Ruth
Joyce
Heather**

**Dani
Barb
Branson
Carol
Wayne & Susan
Ian
Ed
Connie
Declan
Marg
Passing of Ken and Larry**