

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Ouvry Cemetery Sunday – July 19th, 2020

Prelude: “It’s Me, O Lord” - Christie Coatsworth

Greetings: From Glenn Stephens – Ouvry Cemetery Board Member.

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to our Service. Today we are combining our Sunday Service with the Ouvry Cemetery Service.

I am visiting folks outside in the fresh air. You are welcome to call me at 519-689-755 to offer a visit, or I will call you, and if it works for you, we will visit.

Next week will be our Annual “Service in the Park” from North Buxton.

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

We are blessed to have Christie Coatsworth offer the music for today’s service. Thank YOU to Sandy Campbell and Glenn Stephens for sharing our Scripture Story this morning.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

If you wish – grab a candle to use while we share our services. The flame of the Candle reminds us of the light of Christ that collects us as the faith community, “We are One in the Spirit”. Thanks be to God.

Call To Worship:

Eric: God invites us to gather.

People: We worship the Holy One who is present in all.

Eric: God invites us to come as we are for the sake of who we may yet be.

People: We worship the Holy One who calls us to new ways of being and doing.

Eric: God invites us to journey in awe and in trust.

People: We worship the Holy One in our midst who blesses and commissions us for the good of all.

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Hymn: “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder”

We are climbing Jacob's ladder
We are climbing Jacob's ladder
We are climbing Jacob's ladder
Soldiers of the Cross.

Climbing up from earth to heaven,
Climbing up from earth to heaven,

Climbing up from earth to heaven,
Soldiers of the cross.

Every rung goes higher and higher
Every rung goes higher and higher
Every rung goes higher and higher
Soldiers of the Cross.

If you love him, why not serve him?
If you love him, why not serve him?
If you love him, why not serve him?
Soldiers of the Cross.

Rise, shine, give God the glory
Rise, shine, give God the glory
Rise, shine, give God the glory
Soldiers of the Cross.

Opening Prayer:

Searching God, you who are always seeking us, following behind us when we flee, catch our hearts today and draw us into your waiting presence where we can learn how to wait as you wait: eagerly, hopefully, joyfully, for our holiness to grow. Amen.

Scripture: Genesis 28 – Jacob’s Awesome Experience – In Story Form – by

There are places throughout the world that are known as “thin places.” Places where it is believed that heaven and earth are so close together that you can go from one to the other; they are a bit like doorways or gateways. Today’s Bible story takes us to such a place, a place called Bethel, which means the House of God.

Jacob and his brother Esau had never been friends, they were very different, and they just couldn’t get on. Jacob seemed to know precisely what would antagonize his brother and would delight in doing this. One day, Jacob went too far. In this story, we see him running away from his home because he had made Esau furious. Even Rebekah and Isaac knew it was best if Jacob left and left quickly.

Trying to put as much distance between himself and his brother, Jacob ran all day. When the sun began to set, he knew he needed to rest. He was in a rocky place in the middle of nowhere, right off the border of his homeland. There was no place to shelter. So, weary as he was, he found a smooth patch of ground and a rock that could support his head and lay down to go to sleep.

Jacob began to dream.

He saw a ladder set on the ground, reaching all the way to heaven. Figures were travelling up and down the ladder. Were these angels, Jacob wondered. Suddenly, Jacob heard a voice

saying, “I am the God of Abraham, your grandfather, and the God of Isaac, your father. This land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants. They shall be as many as the dust of the earth and will live all over Earth, to the west and the east, to the north and the south. Everyone, wherever they live, shall be blessed by you and by your descendants. I am with you and will remain with you wherever you go, I will bring you back to your homeland, I will not leave you until all that I have promised is done.”

Jacob awoke from his dream, he was awestruck, “God is in this place – I had no idea! This is an amazing yet frightening place! This is the house of God, a gateway to heaven.”

As he arose, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it upright, like a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it, marking it as sacred. He called the place Bethel, and there he made a vow to God. “You have promised to be with me always, to stay with me as I journey on, to provide for me, and to bring me back to my father’s house in peace. You shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up as a marker, shall be your house, and I promise that of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth back to you.”

Jacob’s life changed after this encounter with God.

Message: “Nearer to God”

Have you ever experienced a “Thin Space”? It’s a space where you can actually feel the presence of God. It is a sacred space or place. Ouvry Cemetery is a sacred place. Here we can make that connection between heaven and earth - much like Jacob felt God’s presence in that place where he laid his head. When we feel that presence, we want to honour the feelings with some type of remembrance. For us today, that is likely taking a picture. For Jacob it was leaving a memorial. He took the stone he had slept on and turned it up as a pillar and anointed the stone with oil. Then he called the space, Bethel, which means the House of God.

This space here at Ouvry Cemetery has been anointed as a special place. Our ancestors have been placed here, beside their beloved church. Although the church has been removed those “pillars of stones” are still here. In more recent times, those people whom we have loved and cared for have been placed here after their earthly death. We have named this space as the Ouvry Cemetery. Naming this space makes it a cherished, sacred place. A place when heaven and earth are so closely connected that we can feel the presence of our beloved. What a joy this feeling brings.

Our children have told us that it really doesn’t matter where we are buried, because they are not going there to see us – we are not there. I think that may be the youthful thinking - as life experiences show you those “thin spaces”, like God did for Jacob. He was running away from his family, because he had just tricked his dying father to give his blessing to Jacob, the younger son, versus the oldest son who was to get their father’s dying blessing. Once we realize the reality of “thin spaces”, we may start looking for those times when we can connect to the divine.

This week we talked about those places or spaces when we may feel those “Thin Spaces”. The actual church building can be a particular space where we feel that “Thin Space”. It may be

in the singing, or the prayers or seeing the banners that remind us of those “Thin Spaces”. Music has the ability to take us to that “Thin Space”. Liturgy can also take us into a “Thin Spaces”. Walking into a Basilica or Cathedral in a big city, can create feelings that suggest you are in a “Thin Space”. We do create connections to buildings and spaces that we value and honour in special ways. We may call that sacred – like Ouvry Cemetery.

The only connection I can find to the place “Ouvry” is a place in North Eastern Ireland. Even in naming this hamlet, those ancestors used a name that was familiar to them, and from their beloved places. When we find something we value - we like to name it. Jacob named his special place, “Bethel” meaning the House of God. Names are so important to us. Names connect us as community. Ouvry as a name connects us to this place.

I find it interesting that it is usually at a time when we are unsure of ourselves, or when we are fleeing from life, that we realize those “Thin Spaces”. Yet I think it is at these times that we need to know, “We are not alone”. Coming here to visit your loved ones, or coming today (even virtually), we can share with one another, that “We are not alone”. We come together to support each other in our life journeys. We pray for one another. We support one another in gathering together in a familiar place. Here, we trust we will experience a Holy encounter.

No matter where we go, or where we are - that place can be a place of blessing because of God’s presence with us. We know, “We are not alone”. In their memories, our loved ones go with us, and God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 497 “Nearer My God to Thee”

- 1 Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
- 2 Though, like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
yet in my dreams I'd be nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
- 3 There let the way appear, steps unto heaven;
all that thou sendest me, in mercy given;
angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
- 4 Then, with my waking thoughts bright with thy praise,
out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
so by my woes to be nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
- 5 Or if on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
sun, moon, and stars forgot, upwards I fly,

still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to thee;
nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!

Offering:

Eric: God provides us with our everyday living and with friends and family. In their actions, we can see God's love. We give in love to help our neighbours. Let us trust in God to provide, and 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 of all peoples and God of all places, we present these offerings, that they may be used to extend your liberating reign. With them, we offer our varied ministries, including our continuing ministry at Ouvry Cemetery, and that each of us may be part of your answer to the cries of the world. Amen.

Hymn: VU 333 "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:

Eric: For all who struggle with grief or fear, anger or pain, hear our prayers...

People: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

Eric: For all who face a crossroads, a time of choosing, hear our prayers...

People: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

Eric: For all who find it hard to come into the presence of God, or who have found the church non-receptive and ungracious, hear our prayers...

People: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

Eric: For all on journeys home, for all setting out on new ways, for all who feel trapped and unable to move, hear our prayers...

People: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

Eric: May the spirit be poured on us all.

People: We pray to you, O God, grant us the courage and compassion to live for you.

Eric: Eternal God, we have no reason to fear for we know that, in life or in death, we will always belong to you.

People: Protecting God, we pray for those in our community who are recovering, hurting, or feel all alone.

Eric: We give thanks for all those in our lives, who like you, offer protection, and comforted us when we were afraid.

People: We pray for those families who have lost their loved ones, and now they are the one the family counts on.

Eric: We pray for the families of those who have interned here at Ouvry Cemetery over the past year. May their stories continue to be with us, to lead us and guide us with their love.

People: May each of us take a moment to remember our loved ones (silence). **God you have searched me, you know me through and through.**

Eric: All these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts, we offer to you in the words of Jesus;

*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 have come to this place of worship, but we do not stay here. Like Jacob, the journey continues. Like Jacob, God calls us into new life, now and forever more.

Go Now in Peace:

**Go now in peace, never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen, Amen, Amen.**

Postlude: "Put Your Hand in the Hand" – Christie Coatsworth

Thank You:

- * On behalf of the Community that is connected with Ouvry Cemetery, thank you to the dedicated Board Members who ensure Ouvry is very well looked after.
- * Thank you to each of you who continue to support Ouvry Cemetery and its Board.
- * To Board Member Glenn Stephens for his support and help in organizing this service.
- * Thank you to Sandy Campbell and Glenn Stephens for sharing our Story today.