

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – June 25th, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

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

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: In days of trouble, we call out to God.

People: In times of distress, we ask how we can help.

Eric: When hope feels forgotten, we wonder why it must be this way.

People: In times of division, we ask what can be healed.

Eric: In these days, we turn to each other and listen for God.

Opening Hymn: VU 240 “Praise My Soul, the God...”

Praise, my soul, the God of heaven,
glad of heart your carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who, like me, should sing God's praise.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Praise the Maker all your days!

Praise God for the grace and favour
shown our forebears in distress;
God is still the same forever,
slow to chide and swift to bless.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Sing our Maker's faithfulness!

Like a loving parent caring,
God knows well our feeble frame;
gladly all our burdens bearing,
still to countless years the same.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

All within me, praise God's name!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish;
blows the wind and it is gone;

but, while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise the high eternal one.

Angels, teach us adoration,
you behold God face to face;
sun and moon and all creation,
dwellers all in time and space.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise with us the God of grace! **

Opening Prayer:

People: God of sparrows and elephants, of earth and sky, of the great and the small, wonder with us about transformation and division. Wonder with us about the peace we imagine and the disruptive peace about which Jesus spoke. Wonder with us today and always, loving us and caring for us through every question and possibility. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 658 "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go"

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.

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.

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.

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. **

Scripture: Matthew 10: 24 - 39

Students are not better than their teacher, and slaves are not better than their master. It is enough for students to be like their teacher and for slaves to be like their master. If people call the head of the family Satan, what will they say about the rest of the family?

Don't be afraid of anyone! Everything is hidden will be found out, and every secret will be known. Whatever I say to you in the dark, you must tell in the light. And you must announce from the housetops whatever I have whispered to you. Don't be afraid of people. They can kill you, but they cannot harm your soul. Instead, you should fear God who can destroy both your body and your soul in hell.

Aren't two sparrows sold for only a penny? But your Father knows when any one of them falls to the ground. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows.

If you tell others you belong to me, I will tell my Father in heaven you are my followers. But if you reject me, I will tell my Father in heaven you don't belong to me.

Don't think I came to bring peace to the earth! I came to bring trouble, not peace. I came to turn sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law. Your worst enemies will be in your own family. If you love your father or mother or even your sons and daughters more than me, you are not fit to be my disciples. And unless you are willing to take up your cross and follow me, you are not fit to be my disciples.

If you try to save your life, you will lose it. But if you give it up for me, you will surely find it.

Reflection: "Disrupted Community"

Matthew is sharing today words for the early church in about 70 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. The early church was in the midst of persecution. Early faithful Christians and devout Jews came from the same family. In-laws, son and daughters may have become Christian, while their parents remain Jewish. We are well aware of how religions can change family dynamics. We see these divisions today in our community, and we are "Christian". Jesus did not come to bring peace – Jesus came to challenge us to live our lives to the fullest. "If you try to save your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will surely find it."

In the world today there are Christians that are persecuted for their faith. Jesus is especially speaking to them today. Jesus is also speaking to us, in the Christian Church today. We have to commit ourselves to follow in Jesus' footsteps, and we will find peace – the kind of peace that Jesus can give. We live in a world of tension, and we are called to live our faith and travel beside Jesus, being his hands and feet in our world today.

As Jesus brings peace to the world, Jesus disrupts our peace, turning our lives upside down. Jesus can be the disturbing presence in our lives, which is a reminder that we are heard, known, and loved as cherished children of God.

Jesus does not avoid division, conflict, and death that we all experience in our lives. As we live of life following Jesus, we too do not avoid such places. With Jesus at our side, we say, “Bring them on”. With the power of the Holy Spirit we move forward with courage.

That is Jesus’ message today – you as Jesus’ disciple will encounter challenges that can easily derail your ministry for Jesus. Jesus knew you will have those days. For centuries, Christians have lived with these challenges, including the early church. Many people have lost their lives following Jesus. Many have been tortured and hurt because they followed Jesus. Families throughout the last 2,000 years have been torn apart because of Jesus’ disciples. Since Jesus already knows what we will face as his followers, it is imperative that Jesus invites us, as his followers, into a space of discomfort and division. Jesus also highlights that to follow him involves sacrifice and a willingness to disrupt the status quo. Secrets will be brought into the open, family conflicts will arise, and lives will be lost.

These words we can say were for Matthew’s first readers. The disruptive space mirrors the trials occurring within Matthew’s primarily Jewish audience. The community struggled with leadership, tradition, and ritual practice issues following the temple’s destruction in 70 CE. Those who were following Jesus, presented further complications as they disrupted the unity of their community by worshipping on Sunday, not Saturday - the Jewish Sabbath, and the sharing of their new beliefs of the freedom of the laws, found in believing in Jesus.

Jesus reminds us to bring about the reign of God requires radical change in society, changes that challenge power structures. Followers are called to enact this change and face the consequences that emerge from it. Jesus reassures his followers that God values and cares for all people and all Creation. While this reassurance might bring comfort, Jesus concludes with a reminder that his message does not bring peace but the sword. We will be challenged.

We are challenged to reflect upon the power dynamics that play in our lives today, and how we are called, as people of faith, to live into Jesus’ call of turning tables – disrupting the status quo – and giving voice to those who are silenced. How might we live in right relationship with others and with God? How do we find courage together in community? Who might we work with as partners to do this important work?

Jesus still disrupts the peace of communities today. For example, we as Rural Churches are being stretched in resources, both personal and financial. The

response to our churches from our communities are, “Be there when we need you”. That might sound a bit harsh, yet when do we see the wider community involved in our church or in faith at all; Church Suppers, funerals, weddings, baptisms, and the occasional Christmas Eve service. Yet that is pretty much all we offer to the wider community. Yes, the door is always open. Is what we do as church familiar to anyone who is not churched? Do they know when to stand or sit? Do they know the edict that is expected in the church? Even when Annette and I go to churches during our vacation, we wonder whose pew we might be sitting in. We are usually safe because we sit near the front. We know what happens at church.

Jesus still disrupts and disturbs the peace of the world today. Look at the countries that allow religion, but do not allow them to challenge the powers to be – even in Canada, churches have felt pressure from the powers to leave well enough alone. There are countries where Religion is not allowed. We have heard for years of Communist countries where religion is not allowed, but the churches are active in their communities caring for the poor and hungry. We have shared some time and stories through Zoom with some of these churches, but the information we post as summaries are sterile to the work they do in their community because it happens underground. They would be put in jail if they shared what they really do. Jesus is speaking to these folks today. May we remember them in our prayers.

We would rather skip over the awkwardness of any disruption. We prefer our worship to be peaceful and a place of sanctuary and renewal, but we often find that there are big questions that weigh on us as a community, that force us to seek and struggle for fresh understanding.

So let us be a community that acts in response to God’s grace and kindness. Let us be that community that reaches out for fresh understanding. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 559 “Come. O Fount of Every...”

Come, O Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing
call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unfailing love.

Here I pause in my sojourning,

giving thanks for having come,
come to trust, at every turning,
God will guide me safely home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God,
came to rescue me from danger,
precious presence, precious blood.

O, to grace how great a debt
or daily I am drawn anew!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it,
wander from the love I've known:
here's my heart, O, take and seal it,
seal it for your very own. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Thank You for all your gifts. Your gifts of time, talent, skills, prayers and money. All of these gifts added together, makes us the Church. We as givers are so blessed we can give. May those who receive - also know they are blessed. Thank you for being the church!

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: Great and loving God, who hears the cries of all people, and who proclaims each and every one of us to be of great worth: take these gifts we offer. May our giving help your church proclaim the gospel of justice and truth worldwide. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: VU 892 "Who Comes From God"

Who comes from God, as Word and Breath?
Holy Wisdom.
Who holds the keys of life and death?
Mighty Wisdom.
Crafter and Creator too,
Eldest, she makes all things new;
Wisdom guides what God will do,
Wisest One, Radiant One, welcome, Holy Wisdom.

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 509 “I, The Lord of Sea and Sky”

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send? R

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send? R **

Benediction:

Eric: Go into the world without fear. Do not be afraid to change the world. God goes before us, now and forever more.

Closing Hymn: MV 145 “Draw the Circle Wide” (2X)

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.
Let this be our song: no one stands alone.
Standing side by side, draw the circle wide...

Amen, Amen, Hallelujah, Amen. (2X)

Postlude: – 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:

**Carol
Cheryl
Susan
Barb
Margie
Jerry**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Evelyn
Finn Family (Richard)**

**Huffman Family (Mildred)
Elaine**

**Gary
Janet
Tracey
David**