

# **SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches**

***Third after Pentecost – June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

**Prelude:** - by Christie Coatsworth

**Welcome & Announcements:**

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca) and [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca)

**Lighting the Christ Candle:**

**Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Our freedom comes as life in the Spirit.

**People:** **We reject the works based only on our fleshly desires.**

**Eric:** We live a new life of spirit and truth.

**People:** **Let us worship the Lord in full spirit. \*\***

**Opening Hymn:** VU 236 “Now Thank We All Our God”

Now thank we all our God, with heart,  
and hands, and voices,  
who wondrous things has done,  
in whom this world rejoices;  
who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
and keep us strong in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ill in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God  
for all that has been given,  
the Son, and Spirit blest  
who dwell in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore;  
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore. \*\*

**Opening Prayer:**

**People:** **God of all life and love: we are your children, and you made us free to live in joyful relationship with you and one another. Your grace empowers us to love our neighbors as we**

love ourselves. Give us the courage to love ourselves as much as you love us and to love others with the same compassion. Amen. \*\*

**Responsive Psalm: Psalm 77: 1 – 2, 11 - 20**

***In Times of Trouble God Is with His People***

I pray to you, Lord God, and I beg you to listen.

**In days filled with trouble, I search for you.**

And at night I tirelessly lift my hands in prayer, refusing comfort.

**Our Lord, I will remember the things you have done, your miracles of long ago.**

I will think about each one of your mighty deeds.

**Everything you do is right, and no other god compares with you.**

You alone work miracles, and you have let nations see your mighty power.

**With your own arm you rescued your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.**

The ocean looked at you, God, and it trembled deep down with fear.

**Water flowed from the clouds.**

Thunder was heard above as your arrows of lightning flashed about.

**Your thunder roared like chariot wheels.**

The world was made bright by lightning, and all the earth trembled.

**You walked through the water of the mighty sea, but your footprints were never seen.**

You guided your people like a flock of sheep, and you chose Moses and Aaron to be their leaders. \*\*

**Children's Story:**

**Children's Prayer & Lord's Prayer:**

**Children's Song: VU 379 "Spirit of the Living God"**

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, move among us all;

make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:

humble, caring, selfless, sharing.

Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love! \*\*

**Gospel Reading: Galatians 5: 1, 13 - 25**

***Christ Gives Freedom***

Christ has set us free! This means we are really free. Now hold on to your freedom and don't ever become slaves of the Law again. My friends, you were chosen to be free. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do anything you want. Use it as an opportunity to serve each other with love. All the Law says can be summed up in the command to love others as much as you love yourself. But if you keep attacking each other like wild animals, you had better watch out or you will destroy yourselves. If you are guided by the Spirit, you won't obey your selfish desires. The Spirit and your desires are enemies of each other. They are always fighting each other and keeping you from doing what you feel you should. But if you obey the Spirit, the Law of Moses has no control over you. God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no

law against behaving in any of these ways. And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. God's Spirit has given us life, and so we should follow the Spirit. But don't be conceited or make others jealous by claiming to be better than they are. \*\*

**Message: “True Freedom For All”**

This week we celebrate both Canada Day on Tuesday and the US Independence Day on Friday. Both of our countries celebrate our freedom – well we celebrate freedom as an abstract - as a concept. We claim that we believe in freedom. We tell stories of how our brave soldiers fought for freedom, while we at home sacrificed for freedom. So what are we free from - freedom for what? Well, like anything we want!

Yet we are offered freedom through Christ. Real freedom as we are no longer ruled by the actions of the world. We may still be ruled by the actions, but they will not mean much to us, as Christians.

Paul says that we can make a list from what we are freed from. Most of that list would be life actions that get us into trouble, like immoral actions. So this list is more about what we need to avoid.

Then Paul gives us another list – remember we are looking for actions for fullness of life. This list gives us the new possibilities that are ours in Christ. We know this list as the “Fruit of the Spirit”. *“God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways.”*

It is known as the “Fruit of the Spirit” – it's not “Fruits”. The fruit of the Spirit is all of these items together in one – it is called love. All we need is love. The fruit of the Spirit is love - but it is love that is joyful, love that is peaceful - peace bringing, peace bestowing. It is love that is patient and kind. It is a love that is generous, that pours out like the rain of grace that is poured down on us constantly. It's a love that is faithful, that honors the relationship, that lifts up the other, and doesn't always ask, “What do I get out of this?” The fruit of the Spirit is a love that is gentle – a love that strengthens - not drains.

*And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. God's Spirit has given us life, and so we should follow the Spirit.*

Now what? It's time for us to go to work. In rural work sense it is time to till the soil, to plant the seeds, to prune, to pull the weeds. Yes it not about sitting back in your easy chair saying, "I have received God's salvation, so I will sit here and wait". Receiving God's salvations is not about receiving that mountaintop experience. Yes it is knowing - without a doubt that we are alive in Christ. Yes, there is joy; there is enthusiasm; there is passion. But there is the work too. There is the daily choosing to let the Spirit lead, the monumental effort of surrendering our will again and again and again.

There are tools to harvest this fruit of the Spirit, and every gardener needs tools to work on the fertile ground. These tools allow God to work in us and through us, to accomplish God's grace to the world.

John Wesley the great father of Methodism identified five instituted means of grace: prayer, searching the scriptures, Communion, fasting, and gathering in groups to share faith and hold one another accountable. These disciplines are the means by which we work toward the harvest, through which we cultivate the fruit of the Spirit within us and between us. They are the life's blood of living the life that Christ came to bring us, and air we breathe as we inhale the Spirit into our very souls.

We are called to the freedom that brings forth a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God!

**Reflection Hymn: VU 238 "O Lord My God"**

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. R

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,

sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away my sin. R

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!' R!\*\*

### **Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We strive to understand the mysteries of God. We offer our gifts today to share our love with our neighbours, both friend and foe. In giving, we are loving like God!

*Music while collecting Offering:*

### **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: God, you call us to true freedom, and so we offer these gifts as signs of our commitment to live by the Spirit's leading. May our generosity reflect your love that is joyful, peaceful, patient, and kind. Through your grace, may we sow seeds of compassion and justice, nurturing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and the world. In Christ's 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:**

### **Closing: VU 806 "O God, Our help in Ages Past"**

O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:

under the shadow of thy throne

thy saints have dwelt secure,  
sufficient is thine arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting thou art God,  
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight  
are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

Time like an ever-rolling stream  
soon bears us all away;  
we fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
be thou our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home. \*\*

### **Blessing:**

**Eric:** Children of God: you are loved into freedom, set loose on the world to share the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so go and love your neighbor, all of your neighbors, as you love yourself, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 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:** – Christie Coatsworth