

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Third Sunday of Lent – March 12<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca)

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Come into the wildness of possibility where strangers meet, and everything changes in one conversation.

**People:** **Come away from all that you thought you knew and find your voice. We have so much to say, so much has gone unsaid.**

**Eric:** Come into the wildness and find others that are eager and ready to speak with you and hear your truth.

**People:** **We come to tell the truth.**

**Eric:** Come, let us worship.

### **Opening Hymn:** VU 286 “If You Trust in God...”

If you will trust in God to guide you,  
and hope in God through all your ways,  
God will give strength, whatever betide you,  
and bear you through the evil days.  
Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
builds on the rock that will not move.

God will embrace your pain and weeping,  
your helpless anger and distress.  
If you are in God's care and keeping,  
in sorrow will God love you less?  
For Christ, who took for you a cross,  
will bring you safe through every loss.

Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving;  
so do your own part faithfully,  
and trust God's word; though undeserving,  
you'll find God's promise true to be.  
God never will forsake in need  
the soul that trusts in God indeed. \*\*

## Prayer of Confession:

**People:** O God, our prayers often falter when we think we need to get it all right with every word in its proper place, every sentiment correctly stated. Yet we know life is not like that. Our feelings wander, our thoughts scatter, our motivations are mixed. Save us from a politeness of faith that often shrinks back from the messy soul of what it means to be human. From these messy places, we find life-giving desires longing to be felt and given voice. Save us, too, from a sterility of faith that, for the sake of precision, remains closed to wonderment, the facing of hard questions, and possibilities of new adventures. In the deep and hospitable silence, enlarge our trust and free our hearts to live the generous ways of your love and grace.

## Reflection Music: “Hold Us in Your Grace”

## Words of Affirmation:

**Eric:** God’s voice carries over the waters of creation, reaching out to you and assuring you that you are loved into life’s fullness over and over again. You will drink of the living waters and never be thirsty again.

**People:** Thanks be to God! Amen.

## Children’s Story & Lord’s Prayer:

## Children’s Hymn: VU 316 “Praise Our Maker”

Praise our Maker, peoples of one family:  
God is love, God is love!  
Praise our Maker, peoples of one family:  
God is love, God is love!

Love our Saviour, followers of Jesus:  
God is love, God is love!  
Love our Saviour, followers of Jesus:  
God is love, God is love!

Care for others, children of the Spirit:  
God is love, God is love!  
Care for others, children of the Spirit:  
God is love, God is love! \*\*

## Responsive Psalm 95:

### **Worship and Obey the Lord**

Sing joyful songs to the Lord!

**Praise the mighty rock where we are safe.**

Come to worship him with thankful hearts and songs of praise.

**The Lord is the greatest God, king over all other gods.**

He holds the deepest part of the earth in his hands,  
**and the mountain peaks also belong to him.**

The ocean is the Lord's because he made it,  
**and with his own hands he formed the dry land.**

Bow down and worship the Lord our Creator!

**The Lord is our God, and we are his people, the sheep he takes care of in his own pasture.**  
Listen to God's voice today!

**Scripture: John 4: 5 - 15**

*Jesus and the Woman at the Well*

Jesus came to the town of Sychar. It was near the field that Jacob had long ago given to his son Joseph. The well that Jacob had dug was still there, and Jesus sat down beside it because he was tired from traveling. It was noon, and after Jesus' disciples had gone into town to buy some food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well.

Jesus asked her, "Would you please give me a drink of water?" "You are a Jew," she replied, "and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink of water when Jews and Samaritans won't have anything to do with each other?" Jesus answered, "You don't know what God wants to give you, and you don't know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would ask me for the water that gives life." "Sir," the woman said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where are you going to get this life-giving water? Our ancestor Jacob dug this well for us, and his family and animals got water from it. Are you greater than Jacob?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again. But no one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again. The water I give will become in that person a flowing fountain that gives eternal life."

The woman replied, "Sir, please give me a drink of that water! Then I won't get thirsty and have to come to this well again."

**Reflection: "Thirst for New Life"**

Sometimes we think our voices don't matter. We have important things to say and wonder if anyone will listen. As Christians, we often offer a different perspective from the world, and it is rejected. Our voice matters to those whom we are supporting and helping. Our voice matters to those in power, who are honestly looking to understand what matters in society. Keep rising your voice for those who can not.

Today's Psalm encourages us to use our voices to praise God. This could be a psalm of resurrection as we pivot from the grumbling of the Exodus to the joy of worship. Yet even in this joy, we still may have questions.

John tells us about the story of Jesus and a Samaritan woman he meets at the well. We wonder about the brashness of the woman towards Jesus. We know he is Jesus – the woman at the well does not. When we do not know someone, we at many times are more likely to share what we think – than knowing the person and feeling intimidated, that we say nothing. Has that ever happened to you? When you should have said something, but didn't because you felt intimidated?

Last week's story of Nicodemus, and this week's story of the woman at the well, show us two different seekers – one knowing who Jesus is and the other having no idea, yet both are struggling to understand Jesus' talk about spiritual things.

This woman is everything Nicodemus was not – a woman with no voice or standing, a despised Samaritan, morally suspect, and isolated from her community. Why else would she be alone at a well at the hottest time of the day? This is a story about how her voice changed a community. Yet her community has shunned her. She is alone rather than with the safety of others, seeking water in the most dangerous part of the day. She is in the wilderness even though she is familiar with the terrain.

Jesus broke Jewish custom to engage her in conversation. The woman was interested, initially confused and defensive, but, unlike Nicodemus, she felt she had nothing to lose by engaging with Jesus. Perhaps it was this fact that allowed her finally to “see” past her physical needs to the spiritual truths that Jesus was teaching her. While the woman needs physical water for her body, it is the spiritual water, the living water of Jesus, that gives her a voice others will hear.

In verses that follow today's reading, the woman asks a bold question of her community, “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” She testifies to her community that “he told me everything I have ever done” and uses her voice to tell the truth about her encounter. There is a realization that her voice can effect change. The openness which this woman had in the conversations with Jesus leads to change. We may imagine her ostracized and invisible as she approaches the well alone.

Her assertions, led her community to believe her about Jesus, enough that they dropped what they were doing to go find him. Her voice was enough for her community to invite Jesus to stay in town and reach more people. The woman asked Jesus hard questions and she spoke about what mattered most. Together they made a difference in the wider community.

We can use our voices to change our communities. We can use our voices to praise God. In praising God, we thirst for new life. In turn we find refreshment in the water offered by God in the desert places of our lives.

We know that there was animosity between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus' day. Yet here Jesus is speaking with a Samaritan - a Samaritan woman. Jewish rabbis would not speak with women in public. Normally men would not talk to women at the well as they would have no status – if they did, their servant would be getting the water.

A man asking a woman to draw water from the well for him to drink would be very uncommon. Add that she is a Samaritan woman, and Jesus is considered to be an outsider, and that Jesus asks her to provide him with water. This would be a tough story for any First Century Christian to understand and believe. It is a far fetch!

Then the woman asks Jesus about life's hard questions and then speaks about what matters most. A far fetch, that any woman to engage in conversation with a man, especially a rabbi. The expectation is the woman would give him the drink of water and be silent. Her voice brought change for her and her community.

What about our community? How might we as the Church provide refreshment, for those thirsting in our community?

Jesus offers grace to the woman at the well and conversed with her about what matters in life and faith. As we hear today's story, we see that God's grace is with us. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection Hymn: VU 472 "O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"**

O Jesus, joy of loving hearts,  
the fount of life, the light of all  
from every bliss that earth imparts  
we turn, unfilled, to hear your call.

Your truth unchanged has ever stood;  
you plead with all to call on you,  
to those who seek you, you are good,  
to those who find you, life is new.

We taste your everliving bread,  
and long to feast upon you still;  
we drink of you, the fountainhead,  
our thirsting souls from you we fill.

O Jesus, ever with us stay;  
make all our moments calm and bright;  
chase the bleak night of sin away;  
shed o'er the world your holy light. \*\*

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

**Eric:** As we offer our gifts to God, we also bring with us our faltering steps, our brokenness, our hopes, our risking and our hearts, that as God transforms our gifts, God will also transform us to be God's blessed people. We give as an act of gratitude and worship.

**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 are closer than our breathing, and you know of our needs before we ask, bless the gifts we bring today, O God. Through us, use them in the love and service of others. This we pray in Jesus’ Name. Amen.**

**Prayer Hymn: MV 66 “Senzeni Na?” *(What Have We Done?)***

Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?  
Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?  
Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?  
Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?

**Pastoral Prayer:**

**Closing Hymn: VU 266 “Amazing Grace”**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
this word my hope secures;  
God will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise

than when we'd first begun. \*\*

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Go out into the world and share the living water that God gives to us so freely, now and forever more.

**Sending Out Hymn: MV 71 “When the Wind of Winter...”**

When the wind of winter blows  
bringing times of solitude,  
fill the silent icy night,  
be our hearts’ compassion.

*Holy Light, warm our night;  
warm the time of winter,  
Holy Light, warm our night;  
warm the time of winter.*

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**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:**

**Chris  
Paul  
Carol  
Maureen  
Susan  
Cara  
Margie  
Marcus  
Susan  
Ingrid  
Jerry**

**Reg and Mary Jane  
Dave  
Bill  
Jane  
Donna  
Martin and Family  
Larry  
Kerigan  
Fran  
Ken**

**Natalie  
Ruth  
Dave  
Marj  
Sue  
Evelyn  
  
Richard and Evelyn  
Elaine  
Wayne**

**Ed Sykes  
Arley Smith  
Eric  
Ron  
Wes  
Turkey/Syria  
Mass Murders  
Grant Family**