

# **South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges**

## ***Third Sunday of Lent – March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022***

**Prelude:** “Praise to the Lord” – by Christie Coatsworth

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to St. Andrew’s today as we celebrate the third Sunday of Lent.

St. Andrew’s in Chatham are restarting their “Saturdays at 7” concerts with the March 26<sup>th</sup> Concert with the Steel City Rollers at 7 pm. You can view in person or virtually.

Today will be the final day to be involved in donating to Ukraine and your donation matched by the South Buxton Pastoral Charge.

We have planned for St. Andrew’s Annual Meeting for next Sunday March 27<sup>th</sup>. This will be an in-person meeting.

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)

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, readings by Annette Skillings and the slides by Tracey Major. You make all the difference. Thank you!

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

#### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** God will surprise us with kindness.

**People:** **Our lives will be carried beyond the horizons of human mercy and enriched with overflowing love.**

**Eric:** Pause, turn around on the Lenten road and see a new reality.

**People:** **On this road we may find in faith the free gifts of God through Christ.**

**Eric:** Then, in celebration, we will refresh the world, with generosity beyond the commonplace. Come let us worship.

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**People:** Invite us to the banquet of new life flowing from your generous heart, O God. Help us to receive the love which is spread across the table of life and into which we are gathered this day. Call to our hearts in invitation. Take our hands now, we pray, and lead us toward your gifts. Amen.

#### **Opening Hymn:** VU 240 “Praise, My Soul, The God of Heaven”

- 1 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!

2 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!

3 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!

4 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.

5 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!

### **Scripture: Isaiah 55: 1 – 9 “Listen”-**

The message from the Bible for today is one that Jesus heard as a child. It comes from a prophet, a person chosen by God to give a special message to God's people. We call this prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah lived hundreds of years before Jesus and thousands of years before today. However, Isaiah's message is still important to us. This is what God told Isaiah to say:

**Hey! Are you thirsty? Come to the water.**

**Are you out of money? Come anyway. Drink milk and eat.**

**Why do you spend money on things that do not make you happy? Listen to me carefully! Eat what is good and only the best food.**

**Come to me! Listen to God's word. I am making a covenant, a lasting promise with you, just as I did with David. Spend your time with God. Don't follow those who turn from God.**

**God will always forgive you because God's ways are not our ways.**

**God's thoughts are as different from ours as the skies are higher than Earth.**

**Come, listen for God!**

**The people of Isaiah's time listened and were glad.**

**The people of Jesus' time listened and were glad.  
We too can listen and be glad at the goodness of God's love for us.**

**Message: "Open Invitation"**

God invites us to come and eat and drink freely – be glad of the goodness of God's love for us. God provides us with spiritual food and life giving water. God provides us with words that encourage us to do and be the same. May we trust in God's promises.

God invites "all" to the feast. God welcome "all" to receive the love filled relationship with God. God opens our hearts to reconciliation. God gives second chances. Do we turn to God when we need any of these beautiful gifts? Do we trust in our relationship with God?

In this Season of Lent it may seem strange to be focusing on the Hebrew Scriptures, even the Book of Isaiah. Yet the Season of Lent is all about journey. Isaiah and the Hebrew stories we have shared these last three weeks of Lent are about journey, God's promises and our relationships with God. Isaiah also shares the loss of home for the Israelites. They also lost their temple – their physical connection to God. They have been carried off into Exile by the Babylonians. They have lost their home and their faith. Isaiah shares that something new is coming from God. Something "all" are invited to participate with. "All" who could be once again in relationship.

Isaiah offers the hope of a journey home to Jerusalem for the exiles in Babylon. Lent for us reminds us of the journey made by Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem. Both journeys (the Israelites and ours) rely on radical trust in God. Isaiah says this "new thing" will be done by God and bring deliverance from slavery and exile.

These verses in Isaiah testify to key elements of God's character. God is generous and gracious. The invitation to God's table and God's gifts are open to "all" and without cost. Secondly, God is near and does not hide from us. Thirdly, God remains mysterious. God's graciousness is far superior to our abilities to control or manipulate. The freedom of God is without limit, yet God's freedom exercised with love and mercy. We are "all" invited to the feast of such a gracious relationship.

Isaiah even shares what our response in faith to this invitation should be; Listen. Come. See. Seek. Forsake. Return. How could we ever say, "No"? This free and open invitation to God's grace beckons us to respond with an astounding, "Yes".

We do not “earn” the grace offered by God. We are to accept the offer and then make the same offer to everyone we meet. We are to live out our call. This living out our call links Isaiah with Lent. We Christians are to trust in God’s graces and then live those graces out in the actions of our lives. In the Bible, God makes the first move. First, we need to come to the table, then we journey out and we share with others. All of this is offered freely.

God invites us to open ourselves to the presence of God in the sights and sounds of our daily lives. We will see God’s generous goodness all around us and within us. Stop and take a moment to look and listen for these gifts that God offers to “all”. Then we can continue our spiritual journey during the Season of Lent, in total trust of God’s promises to “all” of us.

Where in our community have we seen people exiled or their life filled with emptiness? Where in this world are the people who fear they may never be satisfied – that they will never receive God’s invitation? The pandemic has exiled many of us from each other for two years. We know that loneliness has exiled many from support services and help for their mental health. This exile (separation) has only made life so much tougher, even more lonely and eventually displacing people from their communities with no support.

Isaiah offers us God’s invitation to come; to feast, to eat to drink. God knows what truly satisfies our human needs. As humans it is good to be reminded what we need, because many times we look for satisfaction in ways that do not enrich our lives.

We humans are made to be in relationship with God .We are spiritual beings. Some humans may scoff at the notion and deny their experiences. Some humans don’t seem to care one way or the other. Some of us hope for and welcome these experiences with God, and others, usually referred to as mystics, seem to be especially attuned to the divine.

May we respond to God’s invitation through Isaiah to listen, come, see, seek, forsake, and return. In doing so, may we encounter God - who holds us in kindness and gives us fresh water of understanding and comfort. We are on our Lenten Journey. Lent is a journey that is grounded in the reality of human life. Lent also speaks of a more personal relationship with God and trust in that relationship. May we feel God within this our Lenten journey. Our Lenten journey may not be an easy journey, but it’s a journey we must travel. We do not travel it alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection Hymn: VU 600 “When I Needed a Neighbour”**

- 1     When I needed a neighbour, were you there,  
          were you there?  
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
          were you there?
- 2     I was hungry and thirsty, were you there,  
          were you there?  
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
          were you there?
- 3     I was cold, I was naked, were you there,  
          were you there?  
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
          were you there?
- 4     When I needed a healer, were you there,  
          were you there?  
When I needed a healer, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
          were you there?
- 5     Wherever you travel I'll be there,  
          I'll be there,  
wherever you travel I'll be there.  
And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
          I'll be there.

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

**Eric:** Remember the words of Jesus who said: “Freely you have received, freely give”.

### **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:** Add to your table of generosity, all that we bring you today, O God. Place our gifts among those whose lives are failing to grow because they wait for justice. Then lead us on toward ever-expanding horizons for growing in the life of Christ. Amen.

**Hymn:** VU 377 “Holy Spirit, Hear Us”

Holy Spirit, prompt us  
when we bow to pray;  
speak within and teach us  
what we ought to say.

**Pastoral Prayer & Lord’s Prayer:**

**Eric:** Our prayers can become like seeds of new life, planted in faith, fed, and watered by our hands and cherished with the love of the Creator and the Christ.

**People:** **The Holy Spirit, the warm passion for good, will inspire us with fresh intentions:**

**Eric:** We will tend the life of the creation.

**People:** **We will rely less on the consumer goods around us and share more with those who long for basic necessities.**

**Eric:** We will honour the insights of the Indigenous people of this land.

**People:** **We will bring love to those whose lives are stunted by discrimination.**

**Eric:** We will add to the reconciliation and peace of the world.

**People:** **We will receive migrants and refugees with generosity.**

**Eric:** O God, we pray for the faithfulness to nurture all that lies within our prayers today.

**People:** **Help us to truly receive all that you offer us, so that our lives wave in joyful hope in a world that dies with cynicism and shallow solutions.**

**Eric:** This we pray in the name of the Christ, as we pray Jesus’ prayer...

*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.*

**Blessing:**

**Eric:** The Lenten way stretches out before us: May we travel the journey with our thirst quenched with the waters of God’s generous gifts, now and forever more.

**May the Blessing of God Be Upon You:** VU 429

May the blessing of God be upon you.  
May God’s love light all your way.  
May the grace of Christ enfold you  
and peace around you stay.  
May the Spirit of God dwell within you.  
May you live in joy each day.

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**Postlude:** “Put Your Hand” – 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:	Tom	
	Louise	Louise' Granddaughter - Blake
	Betty	Ingrid
	Alison	Brenda
	Nancy	Lisa
	Sarah	Larry
	Brian	Jack
	Zoe	Becky
	Barry/ Marsha	Francine
	Melissa	Karen
	Jenny	Michelle
	Heather	Ross
	Gary	Margaret
	Gus (Sick kids)	Dolly
	Chris	Ukraine
	Michelle	Gord
	Kim	Chris
	Ann	Canadian and Allied Forces