

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifth Sunday of Lent – March 21st, 2021

Prelude: “Welcome, Sweet Springtime” Melody in F, Robinstein – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

Today is the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Thank you for your support of St. Luke’s Fish Fry Take Out this past Wednesday.

You are welcome to join us this Friday at 7 pm for a Zoom Virtual Ridgetown Chaplain’s Gala. The Presentation will be available to view at Southbuxton.ca after the Gala.

The next Alzheimer Learning Series is the week after Easter on Tuesday April 13th and 20th 10:30 to 11:30 am. These learning sessions will be by Zoom.

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

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call To Worship:

Eric: Come and seek God, with your whole heart:

People: meditate on Christ’s teachings, fix ourselves on the ways of Christ, and delight in God’s Holy word.

Eric: Come and worship God.

Opening Prayer:

Loving Jesus, High Priest of our hearts, draw us close to you, so we may glorify you and proclaim your goodness, in all that we are, all that we do, and all that we say. Amen.

Scripture: Jeremiah 31: 31 - 34 by Brian Pepper

Jeremiah was not a popular man. He said a lot of things that people didn’t want to hear; this made them angry. He talked about the destruction of the great temple in Jerusalem – the temple was an important religious place, so people did not want to hear about that! He also said that people would lose their homes and be forced to leave their communities. Well, no one wanted to hear that either! Jeremiah said so many sad things that he was called the “Weeping Prophet.” No one wanted to hear what Jeremiah had to say!

Jeremiah wasn't just dreaming or imagining that God talked to him about these things. When God talked, Jeremiah listened; and after listening, Jeremiah would share God's message with anyone who would listen. Sometimes Jeremiah wondered if he should keep quiet, but God's Spirit in him was too strong to ignore.

Jeremiah was not surprised when he heard God say that people were not following God's way, that it seemed like they had forgotten God's promises. Jeremiah had been worried about that because he could see that people were not faithful. God had made promises in the past and kept them, but people had not kept their part of the agreement.

Then, one day, Jeremiah heard a loving message. Jeremiah was surprised when God said people would be given help so that they could remember how to act and speak in ways that were loving and peaceful and just. God gave Jeremiah a message with words full of love and forgiveness, and with a new promise to help people remember.

God's message was this: "I have a new promise, and it will be part of each of you – not just in your thoughts, but in your feelings and your body – in your beating heart! And not just in you who have money and lots of possessions, but also inside you who have nothing and feel like you don't matter. Because everyone matters to me, this is the promise I want all of you to keep alive forever: I am God for everyone! Always! Without thinking, experience me, my love, and how I always forgive you. Remembering my promise will be as natural as your beating heart!"

This time, the people wanted to hear what Jeremiah had to say – they wanted to hear him say it over and over again!

Opening Hymn: VU 262 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

- 1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper sure amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing:
for still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
with power and malice great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth he has no equal.

- 4 That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through Christ, who with us sideth:
let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
God's kingdom is for ever.

Message: "A Heart For God"

We in the 21st century believe God is the God of love. We follow in Jesus' way to better know how God wishes us to live – in love. Love for ourselves and love for our neighbours and as Jesus' said even love for our enemies.

This week's reading from Jeremiah brings us another covenant – the fifth covenant this Lent. Jeremiah, the prophet speaks God's words of forgiveness; God forgives the people's sins and seeks to fill their hearts with love. The covenant shared with us today is different than the covenant made with the people who had escaped slavery in Egypt and wandered in the wilderness. God's earlier covenant with the people had included the ten commandments – laws for living together in loving community. The people, however, struggled to keep these laws; they did not hold up their end of the covenantal relationship. But God remains faithful, forgives and gives a new way of living together. In forgiving the people for what happened in the past, God also commits to not bringing up their past sins. That is, future generations will not be reminded of the sins of their ancestors. It is a new beginning.

That's the great thing about forgiveness – is you are offered a new fresh start. This time, God's law will dwell in their very being. The heart, for the Hebrew people, was the place from which a person thought, felt, and acted. It's a similar feeling for us today. Once you have something in your heart it is hard to forget and it becomes part of who you are.

Through Jeremiah the prophet, God says, "I will forgive and remember their sin no more" What do we understand sin to be? Last month in February being Black History Month we are reminded how the affluent white people enslaved our Black brothers and sisters to work as their slaves. We remember so we never do that again. Question may be for us today, "Does God forgive without us asking?" Seems so in Jeremiah. What about us in the 21st century?

Once we start having a loving relationship with our coloured neighbours (with for me that includes red yellow, black and any other skin colour we may encounter), our hearts will make us do the right things. How might we know if we today are causing a sin by not caring for our neighbours?

Taylor Branch, who was a civil rights historian once expressed his surprise that Montgomery, Alabama, became the nucleus of the civil rights movement: "There weren't many real activists in Montgomery at the time." Branch did not think that

the people in Montgomery had “a heart” for activism. Everything changed the Monday morning that the bus boycott started (initiated by Rosa Park’s arrest); suddenly, for the Black Folk of Montgomery Alabama, their time to act had come – and despite the personal risk, they acted together as a united community. Montgomery might not have been filled with the type of people we often label as activists; still, it was filled with people who were ready to do what was right. This is the type of community we hope to create: a community with a heart for Christ’s mission, ready to act together for Christ’s sake in the world.

Once our faith is embedded in our hearts, taking action becomes the right thing to do. We have to let go of the past. We have to ask for forgiveness. We have to love those who we once may have hurt. According to Jeremiah God does forgive. God forgiveness, God’s love and God’s very presence is beating in our very hearts. We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 657 “He Leadeth Me”

- 1 He leadeth me: O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.
 He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
 By his own hand he leadeth me!
 His faithful follower I would be,
 for by his hand he leadeth me!
- 2 Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom,
sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,
by waters calm, o'er troubled sea,
still 'tis his hand that leadeth me.
 He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
 By his own hand he leadeth me!
 His faithful follower I would be,
 for by his hand he leadeth me!
- 3 Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
nor ever murmur nor repine,
content, whatever lot I see,
since 'tis my God that leadeth me.
 He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
 By his own hand he leadeth me!
 His faithful follower I would be,
 for by his hand he leadeth me!

4 And when my task on earth is done,
when by thy grace the victory's won,
even death's cold wave I will not flee,
since God through Jordan leadeth me.
He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
By his own hand he leadeth me!
His faithful follower I would be,
for by his hand he leadeth me!

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We wish to see the fruits of Jesus' ministry. We want to experience God's reign on Earth. The sharing of gifts is one way we can catch a glimpse of the reign of God.

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:

Loving God, open our hearts to a new world. A world where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor. A world where there is enough for all, and all treated as beloved children of God. Until that day comes, bless our small contributions of time, talent, treasures and may they work towards the building of your new world. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: Loving God, we pray for your church and its ministry around the world...*(time of silence)*

People: **We pray for your faithful followers, our siblings in Christ...***(time of silence)*

Eric: We pray for this community of believers and for all the joys and sorrows we share with you from our hearts...*(time of silence)*

People: **God, may the law of love written on our hearts become our song as we journey.**

Eric: A song with words that comfort when hardships on the road burden us...*(time of silence)*

People: **a tune that lingers leaving warm thoughts with those whom we meet on the way, and with a rhythm that lilts,**

Eric: buoying our spirits and strengthening our resolve to see the journey through.

People: **You promised to write your law within us, so that no matter where we are, we will always know, deep in our hearts, you and your ways.**

Eric: Hear these and all our prayers, as we pray together 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: Go and embody God's song to the world.

With your words, sing hope.

With your actions, dance peace.

With your being, play love, now and forever more.

Postlude: "Share the People You Love With Love" James Taylor – 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:	Karen	June	Barry/ Marsha
	Jasmine	Melonie	Bliss Family
	Tom	Susan	Beecroft Family
	Randy	Zoe	Walker Family
	George	Becky	Sharon's
	Cindy & Connie	Gary	Family
Special:	Richard	Jerri	
	Cleata	Willie & Gisele	
	Hillie	Earl	
	Ona	COVID deaths	