

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Lent – March 3rd, 2024

Announcements:

Prelude: – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Today is the Third of Lent.

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: The heavens are telling the glory of God,

People: we gather to proclaim God's handiwork.

Eric: God's laws are perfect.

People: God's decrees are sure.

Eric: God's precepts are right.

People: God's commandments are clear.

Eric: God's ordinances are true.

People: God's awesomeness is pure.

Eric: Let us gather to worship God.

Opening Hymn: VU 315 "Holy, Holy, Holy..."

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth
and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Opening Prayer:

As we gather for worship this morning, may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of all our hearts, be acceptable to you, Our God, rock and redeemer. Amen.

Children's Story:

Children's Hymn: "O, Be Careful..."

O, be careful, little eyes, what you see,
O, be careful, little eyes, what you see,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So, be careful, little eyes, what you see.

O, be careful, little ears, what you hear,
O, be careful, little ears, what you hear,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So, be careful, little ears, what you hear.

O, be careful, little tongue, what you say,
O, be careful, little tongue, what you say,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So, be careful, little tongue, what you say.

O, be careful, little hands, what you do,
O, be careful, little hands, what you do,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So, be careful, little hands, what you do.

O, be careful, little feet, where you go,
O, be careful, little feet, where you go,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So, be careful, little feet, where you go.

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 19:

The Wonders of God and the Goodness of His Law

The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, and the skies declare what he has done.

Each day informs the following day; each night announces to the next.

They don't speak a word, and there is never the sound of a voice.

Yet their message reaches all the earth, and it travels around the world. In the heavens a tent is set up for the sun.

It rises like a bridegroom and gets ready like a hero eager to run a race.

It travels all the way across the sky. Nothing hides from its heat.

The Law of the Lord is perfect; it gives us new life. His teachings last forever, and they give wisdom to ordinary people.

The Lord's instruction is right; it makes our hearts glad. His commands shine brightly, and they give us light.

Worshipping the Lord is sacred; he will always be worshiped. All his decisions are correct and fair.

They are worth more than the finest gold and are sweeter than honey from a honeycomb.

By your teachings, Lord, I am warned; by obeying them, I am greatly rewarded.

None of us know our faults. Forgive me when I sin without knowing it.

Don't let me do wrong on purpose, Lord, or let sin have control over my life. Then I will be innocent, and not guilty of some terrible fault.

Let my words and my thoughts be pleasing to you, Lord, because you are my mighty rock and my protector.

Scripture: Exodus 20: 1 - 17 by

The Ten Commandments:

God said to the people of Israel:

I am the Lord your God, the one who brought you out of Egypt where you were slaves.

Do not worship any god except me.

Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth.

Don't bow down and worship idols. I am the Lord your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject me, I will punish your families for three or four generations.

But if you love me and obey my laws, I will be kind to your families for thousands of generations.

Do not misuse my name. I am the Lord your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name. Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me.

You have six days when you can do your work, but the seventh day of each week belongs to me, your God.

No one is to work on that day—not you, your children, your slaves, your animals, or the foreigners who live in your towns.

In six days I made the sky, the earth, the oceans, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested.

That's why I made the Sabbath a special day that belongs to me.

Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.

Do not murder.

Be faithful in marriage.

Do not steal.

Do not tell lies about others.

Do not want anything that belongs to someone else.

Don't want anyone's house, wife or husband, slaves, oxen, donkeys or anything else.

Message: "Faithfully Living Together"

Throughout Lent this year, we are reminded of God's promises to us as Children of God. Today we hear how we have been given guidelines of how we can be in community together. In following God's loving laws, we can praise God more faithfully and live more justly with each other in community. We will be more faithful disciples living in a deep relationship with God. This is what Lent is about –

preparing us for a deeper relationship with God. In these Lenten scriptures, God promises to be faithful and invites us humans to respond in faith.

The community who Moses gives the Ten Commandments, were once enslaved people who are now wandering in the wilderness. These Ten Commandments are so important to the Israelites that Moses names these ten commandments again in Deuteronomy. The God, known to the enslaved Israelite people, was their Egyptian slave driver. The Israelites were not free and had to work 7 days a week of long days of hard work. Moses shares that their God is the one and only God and here is how you worship God. When you come from slavery you have no idea how to live on your own.

In the Ten Commandments, God tells the Israelites about the Sabbath. That after 6 days of work you take a day of rest. Rest is so important to human life and our sanity. Now no longer enslaved, the Sabbath offered rest for the workers.

The Israelites have always been told what to do. There may be a struggling for dominance over their fellow men from neighbours and even family members. The Israelites do not know how to live in a free loving community. The Ten Commandments help them to live together caring for each other in love, and working together to ensure justice for one and all. After all, they are God's Chosen People.

For us of the 21st century we might find this hard to imagine, but we have been schooled and raised in a society that cares for one another, with our roots going back in our Christian faith all the way back to the Ten Commandments. This Season of Lent gives us an opportunity to reflect on what it means to live faithfully together. God calls us to respond in faith in our daily lives, asking us; "How shall we live?"

Today we may consider commitments we have made to change how we live. What prompted that commitment for change? Think back to your New Year's resolution. What promises did you make to yourself that would change how you live? Other than our New Year's resolutions, Lent is also a time when people make commitments: to give something up or take something on. What Lenten commitments are you considering this year?

We have just recognized Black History Month in February. One of the reasons we recognize our Black brothers and sisters is because of how we as white humans treated them in slavery in the 1800's, and maybe even how we still treat them today. If a white person protected a Black Person in the 1800's - it was against the law. As

a result, many faithful and white people were tortured or killed. In some contexts, demonstrations or protests are also against the law – demanding punishment for those who tried to change the laws of the day.

During times of enslavement of Black peoples in North America, even peaceful demonstrations or sit-ins that challenged racial inequality and segregation were against the law and could result in arrest and imprisonment. Some churches and church leaders were among those involved in protests.

When looking back at the great injustices of our time, we might wonder, did the people involved realize that they were on the “wrong side” of history? More importantly, we might wonder, are we on the right side now? Hindsight makes for an unfair critique of the past. It’s hard without hindsight to distinguish between the law and rule of the “powers that be” and the law and rule of the power of love (aka The Ten Commandments). The path of following Jesus can be tremendously hard. Yet we continue our journey through Lent, remembering God’s promises to our faithful ancestors. Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 375 “Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”

*Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness,
Wind, Wind on the sea.*

You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the
valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing:
wake from your slumbers and rise on your wings. R

You swept thro' the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with their idols and lies,
then you spoke thro' your prophets to open their eyes. R

You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world
was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush
of the wind. R

You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams,
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes,
with bold new decisions your people arise. R

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we hear the Ten Commandments that help us in our lives - let us give in Love.

Offertory: VU 542 "We Give Thee But Your Own"

We give you but your own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone,
we give it gratefully.

Offertory Prayer:

Gracious God, bless these, our gifts. May they be a beacon of light. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: VU 371 "Open My Eyes That I May See" Chorus

*Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 686 "God of Grace, God of Glory"

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power;
now fulfil your church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn your Christ, assail your ways;
fears and doubts too long have bound us;
free our hearts to work and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness,
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton selfish gladness,
rich in goods and poor in soul.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places,
gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christlike graces,
pledged to set all captives free.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee.

Blessing:

Eric: Go into the world ready to be kind when others are unkind, and to be passionate when others are complacent. May the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the abiding friendship of the Holy Spirit go with you, now and forever more.

Closing Chorus: VU 108 “Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights” (verse 3)

We bear the silence, cross and pain
of human burdens, human strife,
while sisters, brothers help sustain
our courage till the Feast of Life.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth

Prayers: - Please include these people in your prayers this week.