

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Easter – May 1st, 2022

Prelude: “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to St. Andrew’s today as we celebrate the Third Sunday of Easter.

Monday’s Day Communion Service is next Sunday, May 8th.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites – Southbuxton.ca and 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: From the shores of our lives, Jesus calls us into the celebration of worship. Let us worship our God.

People: **From the edge of our worries and concerns, Jesus calls us into hope. Let us claim the hope in Christ Jesus.**

Eric: From the shallow places in our hearts, Jesus calls us into the depths of his love. Let us celebrate the gift of his love.

People: **From the breaking waves of sadness in our lives, Jesus calls us into joy. Let us renew our spirits in his joy.**

Eric: From the rising tides of conflicts, Jesus calls us onto the shores of peace. Let us rest in peace.

People: **Let us celebrate the love of God and receive the blessings of Christ Jesus.**

Eric: Come, let us worship God!

Opening Prayer:

People: **We come before you, God, in search of courage. Remove from our senses, our minds, and our hearts, the things that keep us from loving, from trusting and from getting to know those who we judge as different. Re-create us and fashion us to be free, in all times and places, to live as you want us to live. Amen.**

Opening Hymn: VU 345 “Come Children, Join to Sing”

1 Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
 Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!
 Let all with heart and voice,
 saved by God's gracious choice,
 now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

2 Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
 Christ calls his people friends,
 the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

3 Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
 The whole creation o'er
 let all God's love adore,
singing for evermore: Hallelujah!

Scripture: Acts 9: 1 - 20 "Saul Sees in New Ways" by Charlene Doyle

Saul was breathing fire against the followers of Jesus; he went to the High Priest and asked for letters to synagogues in Damascus that would give him authority to arrest followers of Jesus, men or women, and bring them to Jerusalem to be prosecuted.

As Saul reached the outskirts of Damascus, a bright light flashed all around. Saul fell to the ground. Saul heard someone speaking. The voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you hurting me?"

Saul, his voice muffled in the dirt, answered, "Who are you?"

"I am Jesus, and you are hurting me. Get up now and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

Saul's travelling companions had heard the voice but saw no one; they were speechless and shaking a little in fear. After a moment or two, Saul stood up but stumbled and reached out to grab his friend's arm. Two of them caught him and helped him to find his balance.

Saul looked around, blinking – "Why is it dark? Have I been dreaming? Is it the night?"

"No," they replied. "Why do you ask?"

"I cannot see," Saul replied, and none of them spoke or moved.

Saul's friends snapped out of their shock, saying, "You've had a fright and are in shock. We will lead you to Damascus."

For three days, Saul could not see. And all that time, he didn't eat or drink but prayed, listening for the message from God that he was told to expect.

About this same time, God spoke in a vision to Ananias, a follower of Jesus who lived in Damascus. "Ananias!" "Here I am," he replied. "Saul of Tarsus is staying at the house of Judas on Straight Street. He is praying; in a vision, he sees a man called Ananias lay hands on him and restore his sight."

Ananias hesitated, then said, "You don't mean me, do you? But this man has done great harm to many of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem – and he has come here to arrest more of us!"

"Yes, Ananias, I know. But Saul has changed," God said. Ananias went and found Saul. He put his hands on Saul's head, saying, "Brother Saul, I am sent by Jesus who appeared to you on your way here, so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

At once, something fell from Saul's eyes, like fish scales, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. After eating some food, he regained his strength.

Saul stayed several days with the disciples in Damascus, listening to stories about Jesus and asking many questions. And Saul began teaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "Jesus is God's chosen one."

Saul was Jewish, but he told many people who were not Jews about following Jesus' way. They called Saul by a different name – Paul.

Message: "Going Global"

Can you imagine what it might have been like for those first early Christians - who once were persecuted at Saul's hand – to now after Saul's conversion to Paul, listen to him preach the gospel of love and grace to them? Even Ananias, when faced with the call to look for Saul, as Jesus had changed Saul's heart, would remember that Saul had persecuted the early church so violently. Would Ananias be walking into a trap – where he may be violently hurt or even killed?

Today's reading speaks of the change in one person – a change so huge that Saul becomes a new man – not only in character but also in name – to Paul. It seemed that quickly the whole believing community realized that Paul was a changed man – not just a wolf in sheep's clothing. Ananias was the first to trust, and then the rest of the community accepted and included the one, Paul, who once persecuted them, as Saul.

Paul, as we know was sent out, or at least he traveled all over the Middle East sharing the story of Jesus the Christ. Paul believed that Jesus' story and Jesus' salvation was to be shared with the whole world – which was the Middle East in Paul's time. Paul took his message - Globally, we might say. How do we, the church today, take our message globally? We offer a helping hand to those in tough situations throughout the world. Our help in many times can make the difference between life and death, especially when it comes to World Hunger.

We in the United Church offer gifts to help those globally with gifts to the Mission and Service and to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, as well as other global interests such as appeals when earthquakes or catastrophe hits an area. World hunger is addressed by both, yet hunger is specifically the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

World hunger is a growing problem. We as the church are part of the solution. We have taken steps to work toward a world without hunger. Some crazy statistics are that around 768 million people in the world experience hunger, that works out to almost 10% of the World's total population. We know that 98% of people experiencing hunger live in developing countries, and we are finding out that Climate Change has made a bad situation into a terrible situation for the people of developing Nations. We also know that close to 80% of displaced people live in countries that are affected by long-term hunger.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 church and church-based agencies working together to end global hunger. Together, our members represent nearly 30 Christian denominations made up of over 12,000 individual congregations across Canada.

Each of our members has an account at the Foodgrains Bank that they can draw from to provide food assistance during emergencies around the world and to fund programs that support families and communities in their efforts to access more and better food in the long term.

We provide additional financial support through a general account and access to matching funds for eligible programs. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank also provides advice for design of programs implemented by our members through their local partners and support for evaluation and assessment to ensure that programs are meeting their intended goal to end hunger.

Video: “What is Food Assistance?” – Canadian Foodgrains Bank

We are told, “The only constant is change” is an expression of which many are familiar but whose reality is often met with resistance – especially in the church. Yet as Acts 9 reveals, change is part of our heritage of faith. We are people of a living Spirit that calls and guides us in ways toward greater inclusion, healing, and witness. The change in Saul is often the focus of this story; however, it also shows the challenges for Ananias and the community of Christ’s followers to change – to let go of prejudice and see in new ways. We as the church witness globally of Jesus’ passion and life changing abilities, by giving of our gifts – which is usually money. We do that through partners such as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Together we can make a change – a big change – even a life or death change to some many people around the world, by working in partnerships with our sisters and brothers in Christ. We do not do it alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 562 “Jesus Calls Us”

- 1 Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea,
day by day his clear voice sounding,
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'
- 2 Long ago apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,

leaving all for Jesus' sake.

- 3 Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, 'Christian, love me more.'
- 4 In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'
- 5 Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We receive new life in Christ. We share our Good News with others, by speaking, by caring and by giving. Let us give to share the Good News.

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 have the power to transform the most unlikely people into influential witnesses. We dedicate ourselves to being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit and moments where we might be agents of healing and change in today's world. Use our gifts to show people your presence in their everyday lives. Help us to be a means for encountering the risen Christ in a broken world. Amen.

Hymn: VU 376 "Spirit of the Living God"

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!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: May this be a place of welcome, a home to all, a community of forgiveness, a place to learn how to be together, a way of growing closer together, learning from each other, beginning to trust one another.

People: May we let go of any prejudice of people. May we see the variety of life in all, rather than live ever more suspiciously with one another. May we believe love can transform. May we refuse to let life make us bitter with one another, and grant ourselves the time to love life again.

Eric: Creator God, may we be the change that opens our community to the impossible; that accepts people can change, and be renewed, and that your patience and time is long enough for us to find the right time to come; to believe love is stronger than hate, goodness is stronger than evil, life is stronger than death.

People: Hear us as we dedicate ourselves and our futures to you, trusting your grace-filled love - that can change everything.

Eric: We offer our prayers for our Community...

Eric: ... as we say together the Lord's 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.*

Closing Hymn: VU 120 "O Jesus, I Have Promised"

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend:
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.
- 2 O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

Blessing:

Eric: The Spirit of Christ says, "Get up and go." Go and extend God's circle of love to the world, now and forever more.

Forth in Your Name, O Christ: VU 416

Forth in your name, O Christ, we go,
our daily labour to pursue,
you, only you, resolved to know
in all we think, or speak, or do.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: “Jupiter, by Holst” – 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 – Allied and Canadian Forces
	Michelle	Glenna
	Ann	Barry
		Franko