

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 15th, 2022

Prelude: “Morning Has Broken” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to St. Luke’s today as we celebrate the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

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: Imagine a place where all are welcome and everyone hears the sound of their name.

People: **Imagine everyone having enough food and water and a home free of hatred and fear.**

Eric: Imagine a place where creativity is valued and the spirit is nurtured in love.

People: **Imagine just imagine this is that place.**

Eric: With one voice, one joy, one faith, one love we worship God together.

Opening Prayer:

People: **We praise you, O God, for the gift of creation and the surprise of re-creation. Open our eyes to see new things. Open our minds to think fresh thoughts. Open our communities to welcome new partners. Open our spirits to follow your Spirit. Amen.**

Opening Hymn: VU 574 “Come, Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love” - Peninsula UC Surrey BC

- 1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
 tender and true, tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
 streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

- 2 Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell
 joyfully came, joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
 sharing their sorrow and shame,
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam? why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Scripture: Acts 11: 1 - 18 “What Everyone Learned” by Doug Jackson

Peter looked at all the people around him. They were a little confused by what had just happened. “Why are you spending time with those people?” they wanted to know. “They’re not like us.” Peter began to explain:

“Let me tell you what happened. A few days ago, I was sitting in the sun, waiting for lunch. I had a daydream – at least, I think that’s what it was. I saw this big net coming down out of the sky, full of every kind of animal you could imagine. Farm animals, wild animals, reptiles, and birds – all kinds of animals. Animals that we would eat for food and animals that we were taught are forbidden food. In my dream, I heard God tell me that all this food was good to eat.

“‘Oh no,’ I said, ‘some of those animals are ones that our laws tell us are forbidden foods, unclean foods. I’ve never eaten, and I won’t start now.’

“But then I heard God say, ‘Peter, these are all God’s creatures. Don’t say they’re unclean.’

“I didn’t know what to think. But it happened again. And again. That’s when I decided God must be serious, but I still wasn’t sure what it all meant. I was soon to find out.

“A little while later, someone knocked on my door. They were different from me, but I had a strange feeling that I should go with them. So, I did. We went to Simon’s house. Now Simon isn’t one of us, either, but I started to realize this was what God was trying to teach me.”

“What was it?” everyone asked.

“That there aren’t any differences between us. I mean, there are – we all look different, and we like different things, and stuff like that. But deep down, we’re all the same. And God wants us to treat each other as if we’re all the same.”

“So, we should love everyone no matter what?” they asked.

“Yes,” Peter said.

Message: “Breaking Boundaries”

We hear this scripture today and remember that Scriptures will open our eyes to see new things. May it also open our minds to think fresh thoughts, and in turn open our communities to welcome new partners. Today we ask God to open our spirits to follow the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit breaks open the community of Christ to move in new ways. This was a tough learning for the people of Peter’s Day, as it was a tough learning for Peter himself. The Holy Spirit had to show Peter the vision three times for Peter to know this vision is from God. Peter and the Early Church are being offered a new vision for God’s people and for the rest of creation. Where the Holy Spirit leads, the church is called to follow in love. Peter is also challenging us today to offer God’s love to our wider community. It begs us to consider who we might not offer God’s love to, much like Peter was not willing to eat certain meats. Do we set boundaries

in our Christian community where we are willing to share the gracious nature of God's love?

Already the Early Church is becoming inclusive. We hear this in the stories of Acts as the Early Church is trying to figure out who is in and who is out. Some of who is in and who is out may be based on your culture, which includes what you eat. The dietary codes set out in Leviticus 14 had defined what could and could not be eaten by followers of Judaism. In today's story, Peter describes the animals he saw in his vision, coupled with the command to "kill and eat." The animals listed by Peter are not all "unclean." There is no distinction made between those that are "clean" and those that are not.

This dream of Peter's draws criticism from the early believers because it was against the Jewish Law. The Holy Spirit is working through Peter to expand Jesus' ministry which was to enhance the law. Peter explains his own opposition to the first dream, but when the same dream happens again and then again – Peter takes it seriously. For Peter, the dream was not so much about what meat to eat, than it is about inviting others into the fold who do eat different meats than the Jews. God's love is for everyone, not only the Jews.

The Jewish believers were considered to be the Nation of Israel – God's people. God, through the power of the Holy Spirit is expanding the Early Church's perception of who Jesus' Good news is for, and who can benefit from a life with Jesus. It seems the Early Church gets the message as their criticism of Peter gives way to praise of God.

Peter appears before the Jerusalem believers, some of whom have taken exception to the mission to the Gentiles. It is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that witnesses to Jesus find themselves questioned. Earlier, it had been by the Sanhedrin, as we shared several weeks ago. Today Peter is questioned by a council of Christian leaders. Later we will hear stories that the apostles will be questioned by local magistrates and Roman officials. The question remains, "How do we as the Church, balance our commitment to tradition with an openness to hearing a new way of being the Church?"

God has done, and still does, new things in our midst. God seeks individuals and communities willing to risk new ways of seeing and receiving. For many of us in the Church today, we struggle with church traditions and worship traditions, because these are important to us. We may even say, "This is the way we do it!" Traditions are important let's be clear, but today we are being challenged to be open

to new ways of doing things. A case in point may be the COVID 19 restrictions which caused us as the Church to rethink the way we “do” church. COVID 19 was a time when we lived outside the walls of the building. We found ourselves looking for new ways to worship, and wondering how to build bridges and connect with the broader community. How did we do? Likely we are a work in progress. We do not do it alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 372 “Though I May Speak” - Strathroy United Church

- 1 Though I may speak with bravest fire,
 and have the gift to all inspire,
 and have not love, my words are vain,
 as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.
- 2 Though I may give all I possess,
 and striving so my love profess,
 but not be given by love within,
 the profit soon turns strangely thin.
- 3 Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
 our spirits long to be made whole.
 Let inward love guide every deed;
 by this we worship, and are freed.

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: Giver of Life, we share what we have received. We dedicate these gifts as we rededicate ourselves to preparing the way for a new heaven and renewed Earth, where all people and all creation know the full measure of your peace. May these gifts reflect a praise and gratitude for the work of your spirit, drawing us ever deeper into the richness of relationship upon which we all depend. 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: Let there be visions again – signs and wonders of how life might be, a brief glimpse into the mind of God that sees what our eyes fail to see; the particular, strange beauty of folk like you and so different from me.

People: **Let there be dreams again – voices and pictures of a world renewed, heaven and Earth blessed and beautified, fit for God, made ready to be something, something that lacks violence, hatred, division where folk like you and folk like me find a way to be together.**

Eric: Let there be miracles again – healings and sharings of all that we are or might become, a weaving of the world's many strands, differences of race, colour, creed telling creation's story in all its splendour that all folk whoever they are witness to the wisdom and wit of God.

People: **Let there be peace again – brothers and sisters bonded across the seas, weapons left to rust, words of hate left in the past the will of God for all humanity, lived, not whispered, spread abroad to all folk for the greening of Earth.**

Eric: Let there be a new heaven and a new Earth – the former things passed away, no more mourning or crying or pain for God makes all things new. We offer prayers for our Community... .. 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 658 "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me..."

- 1 O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.
- 2 O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.
- 3 O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain

that morn shall tearless be.

4 O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

Blessing:

Eric: Go out in love, and may others know that you are Christ's disciples, 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: "The Homecoming" – 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
	Francine	
	Melissa	Karen
	Jenny	Michelle
	Gary	Margaret
	Gus (Sick kids)	Dolly
	Chris	Ukraine – Allied and Canadian Forces
	Glenna	Barry
	Ann	Joe
	Jim	Flo
	Lori	Dave