

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Seventh Sunday of Easter – May 16th, 2021

Prelude: “Come, Holy Spirit” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning! Welcome to St. Andrew’s for today’s Service, celebrating the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

Next Sunday is Pentecost.

The South Buxton Official Board Meeting has been rescheduled from Wednesday May 19 to Wednesday June 23. Talbot Street Official Board is rescheduled from Thursday May 20 to Thursday June 24.

Thank you for your support of all our services, which are posted on our websites - 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.

Just a heads up; the Wheatley Food Bank is hosting a Food Drive-Thru Drop Off at the Wheatley Food Bank on Saturday June 5th from 9 am to 3 pm. Tim & Judy Jackson have offered to open Talbot Street from 9 to noon on June 5th, to take donations from the Talbot Street Community. Tim and Judy will transfer the donations to Wheatley Food Bank that afternoon.

We normally do a Food Bank Donation the first Sunday of June, so for the South Buxton folks, I will open St. Andrew’s front door for drop-offs from 10 am to noon on Saturday June 5th. Donations will be delivered to Blenheim the following Tuesday. Thanks for your support of our local Food Banks.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: This is the day that God has made.

People: **We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

Eric: Let us worship the One who turns our sorrow into joy.

People: **Our despair into hope.**

Eric: Our doubt into faith.

People: **Let us feel the wind of the Spirit refresh our lives.**

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Opening Hymn: “This Is The Day” – Video

– First Verse

This is the day, This is the day, That the Lord hath made,
That the Lord hath made. I will rejoice, I will rejoice.
And be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day
That the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day that the Lord hath made.

Opening Prayer:

God, our source of light and life, you lead the way to courage, kindness, generosity, and love. You call us to be your people and to live in community with one another, always moving to a place of wholeness. God, your love makes us whole. Help us to receive your love with open hearts, so that we may become attuned to your will and way. We ask that you strengthen us as your people, gathered to praise and to serve you. Amen.

Scripture: Acts 1: 15 – 17, 21 - 26 “Choosing An Apostle” - by

Peter was feeling impatient. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for something new. And here they were – waiting and praying. Waiting was hard for Peter. He was usually quick to respond to people or events. He was the first to declare that Jesus was the Son of God at the Transfiguration, first to try walking on water to Jesus. Now he was eager to tell about Jesus’ being alive in a new way.

“We need to get organized and name someone to replace Judas who betrayed Jesus and is no longer with us,” he thought. “We need twelve disciples to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Then Peter hesitated. Jesus had chosen Judas – how would they choose his replacement? It could not be just anyone. Then the answer came to him, and he stood up to make his announcement.

“Someone who has been with us during all the time that Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken from us – one of these must become a witness with us to Jesus’ resurrection”.

After much conversation, two names were suggested. Joseph, also known as Justus, and Matthias. How could they choose between them? How would they know which one God would choose? Peter discussed the situation with the others, and they decided God would show them. They would pray and then cast lots.

They prayed, “God, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

We are not sure exactly how they did it, but perhaps they put a stone representing each man in a jar and shook the jar until one of the stones fell out. When that happened the “lot fell on Matthias.” He was the one who would be an apostle.

The word “apostle” means one who is sent on a mission. Matthias’ mission was to tell and show Jesus alive in a new way.

Scripture Hymn: “This is the Day” – Video – Verses 2 & 3

This is the day, This is the day, That the Lord hath made,
That the Lord hath made. I will rejoice, I will rejoice.
And be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day
That the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day that the Lord hath made. (2X)

Message: “We Are the Witnesses”

Today is the seventh Sunday of Easter, and the Easter message means going forward, letting go of the past and embracing the future. How might we do that? With the help of God, through the stories of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer, we can become great witnesses to the acts of Jesus the Christ.

The Book of Acts is all about sharing the acts of Jesus. The Book of Acts was written in the second half of the first century, authored by Luke, shows us the readers and hearers of Acts, that God’s purpose is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of faithful followers. We are those faithful followers today. We are the modern day witnesses.

This past Thursday May 13 was the Day of Ascension. The Day of Ascension is traditionally celebrated in Canada on the 40th day after Easter and Jesus’ resurrection. Ascension Day marks the end of the Easter season and occurs ten days before Pentecost. Pentecost is next Sunday May 23rd. Ascension Day sets the stage for believers to witness Jesus’ Ascension and prepare for Pentecost with a time of waiting in prayer.

As Peter shares with us today, there are only eleven “picked by Jesus” apostles left, and there are twelve tribes of Israel. “Apostle means “sent out” or “sending.” Peter announces the qualifications for apostleship - they must have been with Jesus since Jesus’ baptism by John and they must have witnessed the Resurrection. They proceeded through prayer after the Ascension to pick a replacement apostle. Setting the stage and the tradition of the 10 days between Ascension Day and the Day of Pentecost, Peter and the other disciples are praying, inviting God to choose between two qualified men by casting lots. We are told, “The lot fell on Matthias”. Although Matthias replaces Judas, there is no mention of Matthias after this event.

The Jesus story continues in the lives of his followers who are sustained by the Holy Spirit, along with the instruction of scripture within the community of faith, and through their prayerful relationship with God. Are these the ways that we are sustained in our lives of faith?

Acts sets the stage for how the church is to go about choosing and qualifying deacons or ministers for the church throughout the last twenty centuries. Personal experience with Jesus was critical for making sure the apostles’ testimony to the Resurrection would be believed. This belief is still true today for modern day churches.

Since no minister in the church for two thousand years has actually seen or experienced Jesus' actual Resurrection, the question becomes how can we be witnesses in our time? We need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, our relationship with God and Jesus, and our understanding of the Holy Scriptures. In all of these procedures and requirements, we especially need the courage to hear and act on the facts that we know ourselves and we will allow the Spirit of God to empower us.

Thirty years ago when I was a truck mechanic, salesperson and manager, I remember sharing with the minister of my home church how I felt the way I ran my business, felt like a spiritual calling. I did not know at that time God was calling me into ministry as a church minister. Yet I have always truly believed we are called to do what we do, whether it be as a mechanic, a nurse, a teacher, or even as a minister – and that God gives us spiritual gifts with which to build up the Body of Christ and to reflect God's presence in the world.

People will see our faith in our actions, our words and our integrity. They will see our faith in all that we do, whether it be in business or in church ministry.

Maybe one day God will ask you, "Whom shall I send"? If you are not careful, you might find yourself answering, 'Send Me.' You may hear the voice of God say, 'Go.' Just go." Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 509 "I, The Lord of Sea and Sky"

- 1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?
 Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
 I have heard you calling in the night.
 I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
 I will hold your people in my heart.
- 2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.

Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We are the witnesses. In our witness, we share who Christ is and what Christ is about. We give in love as a witness to our faith.

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, may these material gifts reflect our gratitude for your presence in our lives. We pray your blessing on their use, and on us, as we offer ourselves in your service. Use them and us as witnesses to your redemptive love and grace. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: God our Creator, we give thanks that we are here together, that we live this day.

People: We come with praise, celebration, and hope for renewal.

Eric: We give thanks for believers everywhere, for that great cloud of witnesses that have gone before us.

People: May your presence be known to each of us at the point of our need.

Eric: We lift our hurts, our disappointments, our hopes, and our dreams (*Moment of silence*).

People: We come seeking guidance for decisions about our relationships and vocational choices (*Moment of silence*).

Eric: We come with concerns about our health or the health of others (*Moment of silence*).

People: We come in grief about the losses in our lives (*Moment of silence*).

Eric: Hear our prayer, O God.

People: Help us sort out the different influences and opportunities in our lives as we strive to live for you.

Eric: We pray that we will be numbered among the blessed, that we will be among those who are the poor in spirit, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, those who show mercy, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers.

People: We know what is required of us, and we pray in faith in your power, in hope for your Kingdom, and in love for one another.

Eric: As we pray together the prayer Jesus taught us...

*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 forth into the world, renewed by the knowledge that you belong to God. Go forth as witnesses to the love and life of Christ, now and forever more.

Postlude: "He Touched Me" – 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
Jasmine
Tom
George
Cindy & Connie
Lynn
Jan
Allan
Len

Special: Susan
Zoe
Becky
Earl
Barry/ Marsha
Glen
Billy
Leone
Francine

Canadian
Armed Forces -
Soldiers all around the
world.
Roe family –
passing of John
Arthur