

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Rural Life Sunday – May 2nd, 2021

Prelude: “Morning Has Broken” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning! Welcome to St. Luke’s for today’s Service, celebrating Rural Life Sunday and the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

Next Sunday is Mother’s Day. Today is the last day to participate in preparation for our Mother’s Day’s Service. Thank you for everyone who has offered something for the Mother’s Day Service.

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.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: As we gather, in this season of new life, may our ears be opened to receive holy dialogue.

People: **As we pause from our busy lives of readying the fields and gardens, may our words be inspired in holy dialogue.**

Eric: As we seek God’s wisdom and God’s blessings on all “seeds”, may God interweave our presence and words to create holy dialogue.

People: **In this time of worship, let us engage in holy dialogue, as children of God seeking to learn, seeking to teach, seeking to be one.**

Eric: Come let us worship the one we seek.

Opening Hymn: “For the Beauty of the Earth” – Video – First Verse

- 1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
God of all, to thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Opening Prayer:

Vine-grower, during this time of worship, we come to grow and learn. You offer us life, nourish us, and create a space to thrive. May our worship draw us closer to you. Shape and form our hearts and minds as we hear your word, sing your praises, and seek your guidance through

prayer. Strengthen us to bear good fruit today and in the days to come. In the name of the one who proclaimed, "I am the vine". Amen.

Scripture: John 15: 1 - 8 "A Growing Community" - by Lori Marchand

Jesus' followers and friends were still uncertain about their safety. Some had to return to their homes, but others stayed in Jerusalem. They gathered together often and talked about Jesus.

"Jesus was so gentle," said someone in the corner of the room. "When he told stories to the children, you could see the love in his eyes."

From the other side of the room, someone else spoke, "O yes, his touch was enough to heal and bring great joy. The person had been blind since birth could see people walking for the first time."

Then Peter spoke, "My mother-in-law was healed by Jesus, too – in the early days. Jesus' way of healing and teaching has brought us together. We are connected through Jesus."

"You are right," came from someone at the table. "Jesus told us that would happen when he talked about the vine and branches.

Jesus said: 'I am the vine. God is the gardener. In the vineyard full of grapevines, the gardener carefully cuts the branches so they will grow lots of grapes. That has already happened to my branches because I have taught you God's word.

'When a branch is broken from the vine, that branch cannot produce grapes. Stay connected to me just as the branches are connected to the vine. Then you will produce good works because we are joined together.

'Yes, I am the vine, and you are the branches. Stay connected to my teachings and me, so they become a part of you. Pray for what you need. God is pleased when we produce good works.'"

As the people looked around the room, they knew that they were each connected to Jesus, and they were connected through him to one another – a growing community.

Scripture Hymn: "For the Beauty of the Earth" – Video – Verses 2 & 3

- 2 For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light,
God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.
- 3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,
God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Message: "I Am the True Vine!"

We as Rural folks especially here in Chatham – Kent are all about growing crops from seeds, or fruits from fruit trees, or cattle from calves, and the list goes on. It is

usually in the spring of the year that all of this new life grows all around us. It starts with those hardy flowers, such as crocuses and daffodils. We see the wheat fields come alive with green new growth. We see the weeds growing in the worked up fields. We start to turn the earth for our own vegetable garden. We head off to the local nursery for this year's additions to our flower gardens. Calves and lambs are being born in nearby barns and fields. New life is springing up all around us.

It is getting about the time that our fruit growers are pruning the trees to ensure great crop this summer. Wine growers are trimming the vines to ensure healthy and plentiful grapes for this fall's wine production. We as Christians know all of this new growth and continued growth, relies on God's blessings of rain and sunshine at the perfect times.

Is it much different for new growth in us? When we abide and trust in God, we grow in our faith in the love of God. We grow in relationship with one another and with God. We bear good fruit. Everything we do reveals the great fruit we share with those we meet – Christians or others.

Jesus says, "I am the vine. God is the gardener". To be in God's Garden we have to be connected to the vine. We receive our nourishment from the vine. We receive life from the vine. "When a branch is broken, that branch cannot produce grapes". "Stay connected to me", Jesus says, "Then you will produce good works because we are joined together". Staying connected to Jesus' teachings and words, until they become a part of you, helps us produce those good works. God will be pleased with you.

In John, Jesus shares many metaphors of who Jesus is in his statements of, "I am..." Last week Jesus shared with us he is the Great Shepherd. Today Jesus is the True Vine. Both of these images work for Rural folks, as we experience animals, trees and plants each day. Our children need our help to grow big and strong. We need help from our community partners to grow a big and strong community. It only takes one wolf or one loose horse to cause all kinds of havoc. That is true with our animals and crops and also in our communities.

Today's metaphor invites us to use our daily workings of cutting down and pruning vegetation to make them good and strong, to also look at our roles in examining the condition of our vineyard and how we might improve its health. I don't think this metaphor gives us the right to cut off those unproductive branches no matter how we might want to. But how might we help that unproductive branch become productive? In horticultural class in high school we learnt about grafting a

branch from one fruit tree to another. Together the tree and the new branch produced lots of good fruit. Have you noticed the apple trees along Number 3 Highway and how short they are? That is a kind of hybriding that gives lots of apples on short trees so they can be easily picked without a tall ladder or cherry picker.

In today's liturgy we shared abiding in God, and God abiding in us. This abiding is thick with significance. Much like the graft on the tree, when we abide in God, we are secure, deeply attached, close, loyal, and continue walking with God and doing God's work in our world. We are in this together yet with interdependence. This interdependence with the vine grower promises to be a relationship that will continuously shape, form, and re-form us.

As Easter people, we live both in the shadow of the cross and the light of the Resurrection. After Easter we try to work out, "How should we live as Christians?" or "How do we tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection"? We might even wonder, "What is new life?" The easy answer to all of these questions is love. Love in God. God's love for us. Jesus' love for us in the cross, and Jesus strength and presence that abides in us in our daily lives – shaping and forming us to do great work! We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 520 "We Plough the Fields and Scatter"

- 1 We plough the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by your almighty hand;
you send the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.*

- 2 You only are the maker
of all things near and far;
you paint the wayside flower,
you light the evening star;
the winds and waves obey you,
by you the birds are fed;

much more to us, your children,
you give us daily bread.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.*

- 3 We thank you then, O Maker,
for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food;
accept the gifts we offer
for all your love imparts,
and, what from us you long for,
our humble, thankful hearts.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.*

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Generous Giver of Life, we bring before you now the fruits of our lives. As a Rural Community in the season of new life, we understand the need to give - to plant the seed and receive the blessings of the harvest. Let us give in love.

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: In celebration and thankfulness for all we are given, we now give back to further your kingdom. In this season of new life, may our "seed" meet the basic needs of those in our community. May they nourish and strengthen our community, and be used to grow bigger gardens to feed your children yet to come. You are the vine, and we are the branches. Connected in love, may we share all that we have, in your holy name. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: In times of seeding, planting, calving, lambing and caring for your creation, we trust in your abiding love.

People: In times of waiting, nurturing, trimming and fertilizing, we trust in your abiding love.

Eric: In times of sadness, loss, and disorientation, we pray, Holy One, that you would abide in us
(*moment of silence*).

People: In times of anger, betrayal, and slander, we pray, Holy One, that you would abide in us
(*moment of silence*).

Eric: In times of hopelessness, brokenness, and failure, we trust that you abide in us, and we are not alone. (*moment of silence*).

People: In times of hopefulness, renewed faith, and the assurance of the good yet to come, we trust that you abide in us, and we are not alone. (*moment of silence*).

Eric: In times of forgiveness, happiness, and thankfulness, we celebrate that you do abide in us.

People: In times of joy, unity, and peace, we celebrate that you do abide in us.

Eric: Your love, O God, is ever-present in our times of deepest despair as well as through the vastness of our praise.

People: Your invitation to abide in you has no qualifications, but promises to be ever-close and ever-present when life is at its best, at its worst, and at every time in-between.

Eric: Abide in us, as we abide in you, as we offer 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: As you go from this place, remember we are blessed children of God, now and forever more.

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:	Karen	Special:	Susan	Canadian
	Jasmine		Zoe	Armed Forces -
	Tom		Becky	Soldiers all around the
	Randy		Earl	world.
	George		Barry/ Marsha	Burke Family
	Cindy & Connie		Glen	Robinson
	Lynn		Billy	Family - Randy
	Jan		Leone	Morris Family -
	Allan		Francine	Hillie
	Len			