

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Seventh Sunday of Easter – May 21st, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.ca

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: Here we gather, stepping out of the storms to find white billowing clouds and feel God's splendour and glory.

People: Here we gather, when the heavens pour down rain and thunder, and it feels like the whole earthquakes in chaos.

Eric: Here we gather, to dance in the rain and feel the showers of blessing baptize us with new hope and wonder.

People: Here we gather, to listen for God's voice and touch God's grace and see the goodness of sharing in life together.

Eric: Here we come to sing.

People: Here we come to dance.

Eric: Here we come to worship. Let us praise God!

Opening Hymn: VU 211 "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne:
 hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns
 all music but its own!

Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
 and hail him as thy matchless King
 through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
 and rose victorious in the strife
 for those he came to save.

His glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
 who died eternal life to bring,
 and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a sceptre sways
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
 absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end;
and round his pierced feet
 fair flowers of Paradise extend
 their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
 rich wounds yet visible above,
 in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
 thy praise shall never, never fail
 throughout eternity. **

Opening Prayer:

People: O God, we gather together to find words for our prayers. The words of your prayers sprinkle this whole world with possibility. Our eyes are open. Our ears are alert. Our noses await that first scent of glory and our taste buds wonder what will be savoured. Our hands are ready to hold and touch and feel the promise of the Spirit here among us as we gather. O God, fill our senses with your glory. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 296 "This is God's Wondrous World"

This is God's wondrous world,
and to my listening ears
 all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.

This is God's wondrous world;
I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.

This is God's wondrous world:
the birds their carols raise;
 the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
 in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.

This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget
 that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
 Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad! **

Scripture: John 17: 1 - 11

After Jesus had finished speaking to his disciples, he looked up toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come for you to bring glory to your Son, in order that he may bring glory to you. And you gave him power over all people, so he would give eternal life to everyone you give him. Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent. I have brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you gave me to do. Now, Father, give me back the glory I had with you before the world was created. You have given me some followers from this world, and I have shown them what you are like. They were yours, but you gave them to me, and they have obeyed you. They know that you gave me everything I have. I told my followers what you told me, and they accepted it. They know I came from you, and they believe you are the one who sent me. I am praying for them, but not for those who belong to this world. My followers belong to you, and I am praying for them. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine, and they will bring glory to me. Holy Father, I am no longer in the world. I am coming to you, but my followers are still in the world. So keep them safe by the power of the name you have given me. Then they will be one with each other, just as you and I are one.”

Reflection: “The Glory of God”

This intimate prayer in John 17 concludes the “Farewell Discourse.” This is sometimes called Jesus’ “high priestly prayer.” Like the high priest who prayed on behalf of Israel, Jesus prays for others on the eve of his death.

As we get closer to Pentecost, we can see the early church slowly transforming, taking the experience of encountering the risen Christ and trying to find ways to make it real in their world. The Spirit, Jesus prays, will help the disciples to understand more and more of all that Jesus has shown and taught them. Today we as the modern church, we step into this prayer to know the glory of that witness for ourselves.

Jesus offers this prayer immediately before entering the Garden of Gethsemane. Here in John’s gospel, Jesus is described as affirming the hour that has come as one of glorification. The prayer’s power lies in Jesus’ request that God will protect the disciples (the church) and keep them (the church) unified. Jesus prays for those

called to embody God's love in his absence. If God's love is seen, it will be through their (and our) witness.

This emphasis on unity does not mean that all Christians are expected to agree but rather the fervent hope that we will recognize that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

“Glory” in John has to do with the revealing of God. It is how God becomes known to human beings. It is something that the disciples have already seen and heard in the signs that Jesus performed in his life. They tasted it in Cana and smelled it in Bethany when Lazarus was called back to life. Jesus wants even more glory for his disciples. This prayer ends with the hope that they will see the fullness of glory in “love”. It is not mere togetherness that Jesus prays for his “invented” family but the fervent hope that we will find intimacy with God.

Jesus’ “invented” family in Acts 1, when Christians are called to be Christ’s very sisters and brothers – that includes us today. We are called to listen to God’s word and do it.

As many churches seek to grow in their understanding of Christian unity and beyond that to the interconnectedness of all creation, we remember Jesus’ simple plea that “we all be one”. Simple, but not always easy. Integrated into the United Church Crest is the saying in Latin, “That all may be one”. How interconnected are we to other Christians beyond our congregation? How interconnected do we feel with all of creation?

In her book *The Wisdom Jesus*, Cynthia Bourgeault observes:

“In the gospels, all the people who encountered Jesus only by hearsay, by what somebody else believed about him, by what they’d been told, by what they hoped to get out of him: all those people left. They still leave today. The ones who remained – and still remain – are the ones who have met him in the moment: in the instantaneous, mutual recognition of hearts and in the ultimate energy that is always pouring forth from this encounter. It is indeed a wellspring.” We talked last week of the Holy Spirit leading us to what’s next. May the Holy Spirit take us there.

We just need to look to the Book of Acts, where we hear the resurrected Jesus tell the disciples of the “power” that will come upon them. This power speaks of the new choices, actions, voices, and values that will go into the world through the spirit of the witness of Jesus’ followers. Is that what we are looking for in our churches – for our churches?

In John we see prayer as a vital ingredient in coping with the realities of the world. Let us keep praying for the Holy Spirit to make a difference in your community?

We may be familiar with Jesus' prayer that "all may be one". Often, we take this to mean all churches, or all Christians, or – perhaps on the outside – all people. The prayer of Jesus can be a springboard to explore our connectedness with one another – people we know and like, and those we may not know or may not like – including those right here in our churches. Soon we will be exploring our connectedness with other people from another church, whom we do not know. At the same time, we can explore our connectedness with all of creation: the flowers, rivers, rocks, sky. Our creation stories remind us that we "all are one".

Will this all be easy? Look at the disciples - they had to work out what this all means and how to live that out. The disciples were energized by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to share the message of who Jesus is – in words. As the disciples helped the early church into existence, there was plenty of prayer. When things went sideways, the disciples discerned where God was leading them. In prayer they could hear the voice of God. They didn't walk away and head back fishing. They worked to form the early church so "All may be one".

Let us discern, pray, listen, work out what this all means and how to live it out. Let us do this as "all may be one". Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 334 "All Hail the Power of Jesus"

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.

O seed of Israel's chosen race
now ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace R

Crown him, you martyrs of your God,
who from his altar call;
praise him whose way of pain you trod, R

Let every tongue and every tribe,
responsive to the call,

to him all majesty ascribe R

O that, with all the sacred throng,
we at his feet may fall,
join in the everlasting song,
and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Thank You for all your gifts. Your gifts of time, talent, skills, prayers and money. All of these gifts added together, makes us the Church. We as givers are so blessed we can give. May those who receive - also know they are blessed. Thank you for being the church!

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: Almighty God, we bring gifts of time, talent, and treasure and offer them that you might be glorified. Bless all that we offer, that it might be for the stewardship and the nurture of your beloved creation and of your children. By our gifts, may your presence in this world be made known. By our gifts, may we embody your grace and love towards all that you have made. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: MV 121 "Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah

Hey now! Singing hallelujah!
Hey now! The morning has come!
Hey now! Singing hallelujah!
The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: B 363 "To God Be the Glory"

To God be the glory, great things He has done!
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Chorus: *Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!*

*O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory - great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives. R

Great things He hath taught us,
 great things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. R **

Benediction:

Eric: Go, for Christ is out in the world, calling us to life and love. May the grace of Christ Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you, now and forever more!

Closing Hymn: VU 884 “You Shall Go Out With Joy”

You shall go out with joy
 and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills
 will break forth before you;
there'll be shouts of joy,
 and all the trees of the field
will clap, will clap their hands!

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands,
 (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands,
 (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands
 (clap, clap)
while you go out with joy.

Amen, Amen, Amen. (5 Part Amen) X2

Postlude: – 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:

**Carol
Cheryl**

Susan

**Barb
Margie
Ingrid
Jerry**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Dave**

**Richard and Evelyn
Elaine**

**Gary
Janet
Tracey
Abby
David
Shaw Family
Ronald
James
Lori**