

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Pentecost – November 12<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca)

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Give ear, O people, to God's teachings. For in parable and story God's wisdom is revealed.

**People:** Let us listen for things we have heard and known, for the stories that are so important that we keep telling them over and over again.

**Eric:** Let us remember God's glorious works in our own words. People of God, be a witness and a light.

**People:** Let us share what you know and trust in the goodness of God. Together, let us raise our hope and remember every opening and possibility.

**Eric:** Let us worship God in wonder and truth.

### **Opening Hymn: VU 245 "Praise the Lord"**

Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,  
praise the Lord with the harp and lute,  
praise the Lord with the gentle-sounding flute.

Praise the Lord in the field and forest,  
praise the Lord in the city square,  
praise the Lord anytime and anywhere.

Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine,  
praise the Lord in the dark of night,  
praise the Lord in the rain or  
snow or in the morning light.

Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,  
praise the Lord on the highest hill,  
praise the Lord, never let your voice be still.

Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal,  
praise the Lord with the pipe and string,  
praise the Lord with the joyful songs you sing.

Praise the Lord on a weekday morning,  
praise the Lord on a Sunday noon,  
praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.

Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow,  
praise the Lord in the time of joy,  
praise the Lord every moment,  
nothing let your praise destroy.  
Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet,  
praise the Lord in your work or play,  
praise the Lord everywhere in every way!.

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People: Come, O God, open to us. We come with our whole hearts ready and waiting to share in your graceful abundance. We come uncertain and indecisive. We come hopeful and curious. We come expectant and eager. Open all the doors and welcome us in. Invite us to share in your story, O God, where there is more than enough love and even more grace. Amen.**

### **Children's Story:**

#### **Children's Hymn: VU 289 "It Only Takes a Spark"**

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,  
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing:  
that's how it is with God's love,  
once you've experienced it:  
you spread God's love to everyone,  
you want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees  
are budding,  
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;  
that's how it is with God's love,  
once you've experienced it:  
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring,  
you want to pass it on.

I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found -  
on God you can depend, it matters not where  
you're bound;  
I'll shout it from the mountain top;  
I want my world to know:  
the Lord of love has come to me,  
I want to pass it on.

#### **Responsive Psalm: Psalm 78: 1 – 7**

##### ***What God Has Done for His People***

My friends, I beg you to listen as I teach.

**I will give instruction and explain the mystery of what happened long ago.**

These are things we learned from our ancestors, and we will tell them to the next generation.

**We won't keep secret the glorious deeds and the mighty miracles of the Lord.**

God gave his Law to Jacob's descendants, the people of Israel.

**And he told our ancestors to teach their children, so that each new generation would know his Law and tell it to the next.**

Then they would trust God and obey his teachings, without forgetting anything God had done.

### **Scripture: Joshua 24: 1 - 20**

Joshua called the tribes of Israel together for a meeting at Shechem. He asked the leaders, including the old men, the judges, and the officials, to come up and stand near the sacred tent. Then Joshua told everyone to listen to this message from the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors lived on the other side of the Euphrates River, and they worshiped other gods. This continued until the time of your ancestor Terah and his two sons, Abraham and Nahor. But I brought Abraham across the Euphrates River and led him through the land of Canaan. Then Joshua told the people: Worship the Lord, obey him, and always be faithful. Get rid of the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates River and in Egypt. But if you don't want to worship the Lord, then choose here and now! Will you worship the same idols your ancestors did? Or since you're living on land that once belonged to the Amorites, maybe you'll worship their gods. I won't. My family and I are going to worship and obey the Lord! The people answered: We could never worship other gods or stop worshipping the Lord. The Lord is our God. We were slaves in Egypt as our ancestors had been, but we saw the Lord work miracles to set our people free and to bring us out of Egypt. Even though other nations were all around us, the Lord protected us wherever we went. And when we fought the Amorites and the other nations that lived in this land, the Lord made them run away. Yes, we will worship and obey the Lord, because the Lord is our God.

### **Reflection: "Know Who to Follow"**

Today's story summarizes the Exodus journey once the Israelites have settled in the Promised Land. They are living the freedom that they were promised and received from God. They are living in a land of good fields and pastures. They are living in peace. The Israelites have been liberated from the slavery of Egypt, They have settled in the new land, because of God's liberation.

We as humans do not do a good job of figuring out how to permanently move people from one place to another. There are very few places in the world that are barren – and if it is barren, it is because nothing will grow there – especially not people. Even several hundred years ago when we as Europeans came to North America, we needed to remove others from the land, so we could set up our European ways of growing food, cutting wood, and mining resources that we sold to and shipped back to Europe and the home country. Several hundred years later we are trying to right the wrong.

The Israelites have spent many centuries of war and domination to stay living in that Promised Land. In the next 1,200 years, up to Jesus' day, the Promised Land

was under Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Rule. In some cases the Israelites were dragged off the Promised Land and exiled as slaves in their rulers homeland. Even in Jesus' Day the Israelites could live, farm, work the land, but they had to pay taxes to Rome. Today and for the last 60 years the Israelites continue to hold control with military might. But as we all hear in the News, some one, some where are always fighting – a push here, a push there – and basically the rest of the world stands by – not sure what to do, so it seems we do nothing.

We, as modern day North Americans, several hundred years ago were liberated by God's grace. After we sent the English, the French and the Spanish back home, we started to make deals to trade and set up political agreements to leave each other alone. So today we live life liberated from slavery, injustice and other worldly blunders. We live in very peaceful conditions, we get to have a say in our leaders with our votes every four years. We can own land, houses, cottages, cars and other luxuries. Of course through taxes we pay for all the infrastructure that it takes to operate any of these luxuries. But we live our lives liberated from the many pitfalls that other societies have to deal with on a daily basis.

How did we North Americans luck out? The easy answer is to say, "In God we trust". It may seem there has been some of that in our history. As we settled in Southwestern Ontario, or any other place in North America it wasn't long before churches sprouted up everywhere across the countryside, towns and cities. Churches immediately became the gathering place for the local community. Offering prayers of grace for our blessings, offering rituals for all of life's transitions; birth, marriage and death, holding community dinners and potlucks, offering a place for the local school to practice and perform their plays, pageants, musical and orator events.

Soon after the return of Veterans from the Second World War, as towns and cities grew – churches grew. They added on Christian Education wings, with lots of stairs to the many rooms. Buildings were full. Money was good. Denominations grew, and trust funds grew. Churches were working with government on education, hospitals and other areas of societal needs. Maybe this all needed to happen to bring us into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But these everyday ministries, who are being used by everyone, no longer has any affiliation to their founding members. Most people do not know that all major Universities in Canada were started by the Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Baptist and the list could go on. Most people do not know that many of our modern day hospitals were built and operated by many of these same denominations, along with the Salvation

Army, and a few more key players. They use all the services, but do not realize how it got there.

Why were we involved in the finer things of life such as Health Care and Education? Because we believe that God wanted North Americans to have every opportunity to live life to the fullest and therefore we chose to serve God!

North Americans have every opportunity to live life to the fullest! Many folks don't. Why? I wonder who they are following. How is that working out for them? I am thinking of the very successful people who are addicts, including celebrities. I think of those who have all the money in the world but succeed with suicide.

How do we keep our faith in the midst of all that the world throws at us? We chose who to follow, who to serve and who to believe. It is not always easy. God's story is not finished. Each and every day, we continue to write God's story in our own lives and faith. Like the United Church Creed reminds us - We are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God!

### **Reflection Hymn: B 356 "Seek Ye First the Kingdom"**

Seek ye first the kingdom of God  
and God's righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you.  
Hallelu, hallelujah.

Ask and it shall be given unto you;  
seek and you shall find;  
knock and the door shall be opened unto you.  
Hallelu, hallelujah.

We do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of God.  
Hallelu, hallelujah.

### **Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** Thank You for 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:** With these gifts, O God, we commit ourselves again to tending the light of Christ and opening every door to welcome love. Fill us, and these gifts, with your grace and wisdom. Amen.

**Chorus to Prayer:** VU 291 "All Things Bright..." Chorus

*All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful:  
in love, God made them all.*

**Pastoral Prayer:**

**Closing Hymn:** VU 560 "O Master, Let Me Walk with You"

O Master, let me walk with thee  
in lowly paths of service free;  
teach me thy secret, help me bear  
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move  
with some clear, winning word of love;  
teach me the wayward feet to stay,  
and guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me thy patience; still with thee,  
in closer, dearer company,  
in work that keeps faith sure and strong,  
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

in hope that sends a shining ray  
far down the future's broadening way,  
in peace that only thou canst give,  
with thee, O Master, let me live.

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Go and prepare yourself to share the love of Christ. Live your life as an expression of God, now and forever more.

**Go Now in Peace:**

**Go now in peace, never be afraid.  
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.  
Know He will guide you in all you do.**

**Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.  
God will be there, watching from above.  
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.  
Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**Postlude:** – Christie Coatsworth

**Prayers:** - Please include these people in your prayers this week – as “In the Spirit We Are One”.

**Cancer:**

**Carol  
Susan  
Barb  
Margie  
Jerry  
Erin**

**Larry  
Ken  
Natalie  
Joan  
Rick**

**Janet  
David  
Dave**

**Elizabeth  
Mike and Janice  
John and Barb  
Rick**

**Lloyd  
Don  
Audrey  
Edy  
George  
Harry/Ruth  
Joyce  
Rob / Sharon  
Leora and Clarence Rodwell**