

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Reign of Christ Sunday – November 21st, 2021

Prelude: “Be Thou My Vision” – Irish Folk – by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to St. Luke’s today as we celebrate the Reign of Christ Sunday.

Thank you for your donations yesterday to the “Merlin and Area Community Assistance Collection”. Thank you for all the folks who volunteered; at the Rural Drop offs, at the Kinsmen Hall, picking up from front porches - however you helped – Thank You!

What is collected in the Merlin and Area will be used for the Merlin and Area Christmas Baskets.

As Christmas approaches keep in mind our Christmas Projects with Cash donations to support the Chatham Kent Children’s Services Christmas Gifts – send to George by Sunday, December 5th, 2021, and our Annual Personal Hygiene Collection for the Merlin Christmas Baskets – due by Sunday December 12, 2021.

The Chatham Kent Alzheimer Society is hosting their next “Care Series”, Tuesdays 10 to 11 am on Zoom. Email Tara to register.

Need some Christmas Baking? The Royal Canadian Legion in Merlin is hosting their Christmas Bake Sale on Saturday December 4, 2021 – from 10 am to 2 pm. Donations to the Bake Table are welcome – you can drop them off at the Legion at 8 am on the 4th.

This week the Church Board met to talk about returning to in-person church for Sunday November 28th. It seems that it is a tough decision to move forward, as we reflect on the increases of COVID cases. St. Luke’s has decided to wait until the middle of January with known results of what happens after the Christmas Season with COVID Cases. Talbot Street seems to agree based on the emails I have received in the last few days. St. Andrew’s is holding out until the SBPC Official Board meeting, this Wednesday. Keep us in your prayers, and feel free to let us know what **you think** about returning to in-person worship. Thank you.

SBPC Board Meeting is on Wednesday November 24th, at 7 pm, at St. Andrew’s United Church, and Talbot Street on Thursday November 25th at 7 pm. Both meetings will be in person.

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 of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: Grace to you and peace from the One who is and who was and who is to come.

People: And also to you!

Eric: We gather in the love of Christ to be centred and stilled. We open our hearts to receive anew.

People: We open our hearts to the mercy of Christ, who is our healing and wholeness. We open our minds to receive anew.

Eric: We open our ears to the wisdom of Christ, who is our grounding and inspiration.

People: We open our lives to receive anew.

Eric: Let us open our lives in worship!

Opening Prayer:

People: Eternal God, your word of grace continues to sustain us, even when we think we have stopped listening. Today, may we be moved by One who invites us to follow on the paths of love and justice; paths of tender care for earth and all its creatures. This is our heart's desire. Amen.

Opening Hymn: VU 371 "Open My Eyes, That I May See" (Video)

- 1 Open my eyes, that I may see
 glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
 place in my hands the wonderful key
 that shall unclasp and set me free.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!
- 2 Open my ears, that I may hear
 voices of truth thou sendest clear;
 and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
 everything false will disappear.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!
- 3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
 gladly the warm truth everywhere;
 open my heart and let me prepare
 love with thy children thus to share.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Scripture: John 18: 33 - 37 “Are You A King” - by Doug and Pat Jackson

This well-known exchange can be heard anew with the two main characters speaking this paraphrase face to face with each other.

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus: Are you asking on your own account, or have other people spoken to you about me?

Pilate: Do you think I am a Jew? It's your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done anyway?

Jesus: My Realm is not founded in this world – if it were so, my followers would fight to prevent me being handed over to the Jews. But in fact, my Realm is not founded on all this!

Pilate: So you are a king, are you?

Jesus: Indeed I am a king. The reason for my birth and the reason for my coming into the world is to witness to the truth. Everyone who loves the truth recognizes and listens to my voice.

Message: “Reign of Christ”

Today is the last Sunday of the Church Year. The Reign of Christ Sunday brings us full circle in the Church liturgical year. Next week we start the journey towards the birth of Christ and today we celebrate that Christ is King, and that Christ the King will serve and reign forever. This is the very hope in which our faith is grounded and our lives transformed.

Jesus' ministry was about sharing the truth – the truth about God and the truth about what is important in our human earthly lives. It is all about relationships; quality relationships that empower each other. Today John reminds us about Jesus' truth about why he does what he does here on earth. Jesus' faithful witness to the truth becomes a model for the early Christians and for us Christians today.

Pilate as the governor of Judea needs to know who Jesus is. Pilate's job is to ensure compliance of the citizens of Judea to the Roman power of the day. Pilate would be aware of the Zealots that would rise up and claim power and authority, and suggest they can lead the Israelites to freedom from Roman rule. As with any ruler in authority over another nation, killing off these zealots would be a necessity to maintain power. Pilate giving Jesus a chance to explain himself seems to be gratuitous – just kill him and get this over with. Pilate wants to know what makes this man different.

What makes this man different - is that he lives truth. The truth that motivates Jesus is of a different sort entirely. Their exchange draws a stark contrast between Pilate, a man who, with a word, can send troops anywhere he desires and Jesus, a wordsmith who, with parables about lost children and loving our enemies, upsets

notions about God and how God operates. The governor who holds life and death in his hands - meets the one who offers his life for the life of all.

Truth cannot be accessed by any rational understanding or turning to some textbook, but by revelation. This truth is not a philosophy Jesus offers, but is grounded deep within his being as God's own son. This truth is not a static belief, but is dynamically lived out in faithfulness, in actions such as calling the marginalized to his side, in obedience to God that seeks to do God's will, not one's own. This way of life is so engrained in Jesus, is so important to who he is and what he does, that he is willing to give his life for this truth. From the Book of Revelation, Jesus is titled, "The Ruler of the kings of earth".

We as faithful Christians attend church, listen to sermons, study the Bible at Bible Studies, listen to other preachers on TV or radio – looking for truth we can understand. Yet each day we live our faith in actions that show other people we are more than what they can see. They too like Pilate ask, "What's different about you that allows you to do (fill in the blank)". Yet as we are reminded our faith is not static – we keep asking the questions and we try leading by serving. Sometimes it works - sometimes we do not wait to see the end result. It is in action that we live out our faith. Neighbours and friends see our faith in our actions and see we are different than their other friends and neighbours. Maybe they ask the questions, because they want some of that which you live out in your daily life. They can see it is a part of your DNA.

In today's world we are confronted with messages that commend individualism, self-indulgence, power and wealth. How do we as faithful Christians hold on to God's truth of serving and loving others? As humans, we will most likely try to shape truth to our desires, rather than trusting in our simple acts of faith to find the truth that God offers. That truth may be in listening to the sighs of the Spirit which whisper to us in the middle of the night. It may be listening to the songs God teaches us in the beauty of creation. It may be listening to those words of Truth, which reminds each of us, that Truth brings life. Albeit that life we live in service to others, so that others might know the Truth as well.

In John, Jesus claims his role as a witness to the truth. Pilate wants to know who Jesus is in this world's terms but the truth that motivates Jesus is of a different sort entirely. May it be so with you and I! We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 314 "Come Now, Almighty King" – Video

- 1 Come now, almighty King,
help us your name to sing, help us to praise;
one God all glorious, ever victorious,
come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.
- 2 Come now, incarnate Son,
your life in us begun, our prayer attend;
come, and your people bless,
come, give your word success;
stablish your righteousness, Saviour and friend!
- 3 Come holy Comforter,
your sacred witness bear in this glad hour;
your grace to us impart, now rule in every heart,
never from us depart, Spirit of power!

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We have the opportunity to share our resources to help others in our world today. As we start to plan for the birth of Jesus and the Christmas Season, may we look for ways to be your faithful servants. 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: Alive to the hope that is within us and inspired by the vision of the reigning Christ, we bring these gifts and offer our lives. Use them, O God, as you continue to use us in the generous sharing of your mercy and love. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 "Listen To Your Children Praying"

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: Into this circle of your covenant and hope, we offer our prayers for ourselves and for others.

People: We lift our voices to you, O God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

Eric: We pray for people who have made new beginnings this year.

People: For those undertaking new ministries, support them with your wisdom and patience.

Eric: For those beginning new relationships, support them with your joy and capacity to love.

People: For new commitments to participate more deeply in community life, support them with your guidance and support.

Eric: We give all our beginnings to you. We lift our voices to you, O God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

People: We pray for people who have experienced times that felt like endings this year.

Eric: For those who completed training and education programs, support them with your blessing and ongoing nurture.

People: For those who grieve the death of loved ones, support them with your comfort and assurance of life forever in your reign.

Eric: For those who struggle with the ending of a job, support them with your consolation and creative spirit.

People: We give all the times that feel like endings to you. We lift our voices to you, O God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

Eric: We pray for people with ongoing needs.

People: For those who wrestle with difficult problems, and for those who care for them, support them with your discernment.

Eric: For those who provide public service to our community, support them with your protection and guidance.

People: For those who govern, support them with your direction and wisdom.

Eric: We give all our times to you. We lift our voices to you, O God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

People: Let us live with joy for what is yet to be, with thanks for what has been, and with trust for the blessings and trials of the day.

Eric: Through Jesus Christ we pray, as we offer his 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: Let us go into this week in the wise and courteous spirit of Christ. Be fully present to others and listen for the voice of God within them. In all things, be open to the Spirit who is our guide and light for the pathway, 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: “Praise to the Lord” Klusmeier – 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
Allan
Louise
Louise' Granddaughter - Blake
Betty
Ingrid
Alison
Brenda
Betty
Jim
Brian
Jack

Zoe
Becky
Barry/ Marsha
Francine
Adrein
Gary
Melissa

Karen