

# **South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges**

## ***First Sunday of Advent – November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022***

**Prelude:** by Christie Coatsworth

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

St. Patrick's is hosting a Community Carol Sing in the forest at the Shrine on Sunday December 11, 2022 at 2:30 pm. Bring a lawn chair, blanket and mug for Hot Chocolate.

What has been collected in the Merlin and Area will be used for the Merlin and Area Christmas Baskets. If you know of a family or person who needs some help this Christmas, please share with Pastor Eric and we will get them added to the Christmas Basket list.

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 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (St. Luke's will match \$ for \$), and our Annual Personal Hygiene Collection for the Merlin Christmas Baskets – due next week - Sunday December 4, 2022.

Need some Christmas Baking? The Royal Canadian Legion in Merlin is hosting their Christmas Bake Sale on Saturday December 3, 2022 – 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 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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)

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Brothers and sisters, awake, awake!

**People:** What time is it?

**Eric:** The night is far gone, and the day is near!

**People:** What time is it?

**Eric:** Salvation is near! How should we live?

**People:** Let us lay aside the works of war. Let us put on the armour of peace. Let us live honourably.

**Eric:** Let us worship God!

### **Lighting of the Advent Candle:**

**Eric:** Come and let us build a new creation because the world feels bleak.

**People:** Salvation is nearer to us than it ever has been before, but right now – in this very moment – as the great season of Advent begins, it feels like we might never learn war anymore.

**Eric:** In the bleakness of this moment, we yearn for light that shines through all our fears as a beacon for all people.

**People:** That light comes into the world and is never extinguished.

**Eric:** We need light to hold on to peace and so today we begin with one candle for peace. With this one light, we pray:

*(Light the first purple candle)*

**People:** O God, we place this light in this holy space as a reminder that we are on this journey together. Be light along all our paths. Lead us to a more just world and help us to stay awake and present to your love in each ordinary day. Amen.

**Hymn:** VU 1 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lowly exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.
- 2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who orders all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show,  
and teach us in her ways to go. R
- 3 O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,  
from every foe deliver them  
that trust your mighty power to save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. R
- 4 O come, O Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery. R
- 5 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
O bid our sad divisions cease,  
and be for us the Prince of Peace. R

**Children's Story:**

**Children's Hymn:** VU 684 “Make Me A Channel...”

- 1 Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your healing power,  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:
- 2 Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

O Spirit, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.

- 3 Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving to all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

**Scripture: Isaiah 2: 1 - 5 “The Voice of the Prophet”**

God sent prophets to God's people to tell them what they were doing wrong and what they were doing right. The prophets also explained God's feelings for them, how powerful God is and that God loves them all. They talked about things that were happening right then and ideas about what might possibly happen later.

After dreaming through the night, Isaiah the prophet woke up worrying about the land of Judah and its largest city of Jerusalem. The Assyrian army was heading in their direction. The people were frightened. They wondered what would happen when the army arrived and if they would be able to keep their homeland. They wondered what was going to happen to them.

Isaiah had been telling the people about how God was feeling about them and all that they were doing. Isaiah wanted to tell them about God's hope for them and the good things God wanted for all people. On this beautiful morning, the message was all about the best ideas that people could have about God and God's hope for all. Isaiah told about future days when the holy mountain of God would be the highest and the best mountain forever. All nations would see it and come. It would be like a big parade. The people would say, “Let us go up to the mountain of God to learn about God and how to live in God's ways.”

Isaiah dreamed that the people would live in peace. The countries would take their weapons, melt them, and then make good gardening tools and make things grow. God would help them take the things used for war and turn them into things that help people and bring peace to the land.

**Message: “Tiptoeing Towards Peace”**

As Advent begins this year, we recognize that as much as we want to be people of peace, we are, in fact, people who live in a world at war or in conflict. War may look like oppression, violence, upheaval. And yet, we as Christians have the example of God's peaceable reign that we strive towards. How do we live as people of peace in a world that seems to be set up to reward the opposite? Perhaps, by taking baby steps – perhaps tiptoeing – we will see that we can move closer to God's reign every day.

That is the message we receive today from Isaiah's story. War was common in ancient Israel, primarily because of the nation's small size and valuable location. A parcel of land less than half the size of Nova Scotia, Canada, ancient Israel was surrounded by nations who wanted to own it. Biblical scholars remind us that in the lives of ancient Israelites, there was only “wartime” and “preparing-for-war time.”

It is in this context that Isaiah speaks of peace and pacifism, and shows a brave faith. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures we hear this vigorous debate about wars on one hand, and on the other, peace.

Prophets like Isaiah often announce unexpected reversals. Just as war is learned, so is peace. Isaiah proclaims that in God's new world, not only must the weapons be destroyed; they are to be transformed and repurposed. The instruments of wars are turned into instruments of peace.

God's "holy mountain" is a key image in this passage. Jerusalem was built on a ridge. "Zion" was the name of one portion of that ridge. Over time, Zion became synonymous with the temple and Jerusalem itself. Mountains were often identified as "holy." They were seen as places of encounter with God. We encounter God in places on high mountains and in the ordinary living of our lives. In that everyday living of our lives, we can make choices that enable us to find the peace that is envisioned in Isaiah. We choose to live in ways that honour the earth, support movements that honour every person and promote living in peace, not war.

We must remember that today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, war is not always fought with swords and guns. Often war is fought with economics and systemic oppression. Case in point today is the war on Ukraine - the Russians are using guns and weapons. The rest of the world has declared war on Russia using economic measures that we trust will break the war when Russia runs out of money. Either way, it is the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia who suffer.

We definitely have to look at our world in different ways. To reverse our thinking, we also need to glimpse God in different ways. Perhaps as we remake swords into ploughshares, we also re-envision God's mountain into one where all of God's people gather in safety and love.

How might we do that? When children tiptoe, they usually take very small steps. Sometimes they move quickly, sometimes they race. We can tiptoe towards peace. What small steps might we take to welcome all people and promote the welfare of others, and/or transform violence and hate? In the season of Christmas, we take many of these small steps as we look towards the birth of the Christ Child Jesus. We sing of his coming, as the Prince of Peace. We sing of peace. Singing can help us to take those first tiptoeing steps towards peace for all.

Isaiah is challenging and trying to inspire the people of Israel, and of course us today, with images of what it looks like to cease war and learn peace: swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning tools. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank had a

program in some war torn countries to trade in your gun and receive seeds and a hoe to work the land to grow your own food. It may be harder to give up what you consider to be safety, then to eventually get your own food and livelihood.

If we could put emphasis on feeding rather than war, how might we change the world? Even if we are not there ourselves, who might we partner with? What images might we use today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to help us (and the world) to unlearn war? What about trading weapons into wind farms, bombs into bracelets, drones into Amazon package delivery airships?

Isaiah is also reminding the people, and us today that we are waiting for God's reign. As we are in Advent, we translate that into the birth of the Christ Child – Emmanuel. That is four short weeks we will gather to celebrate the birth of Christ, as a baby named Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the one we believe as Christians, to be our Saviour and Redeemer.

Today we wait. Today we prepare. Today we tiptoe by walking lightly. We take small steps – baby steps, so as not to trip and fall. As we look at moving towards peace, how might we make small steps towards God's peace? As we take those small baby steps towards peace, we may look around and notice that we are not only waiting for Christ to come again - we are also called to notice Christ in our midst today - as we seek to promote peace.

Let there be peace on Earth! Let us take small baby steps towards the Peace that only Christ can bring. May we be the makers of peace in God's new creation! Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 678 "For the Healing of the Nations"**

- 1 For the healing of the nations,  
    God, we pray with one accord;  
for a just and equal sharing  
    of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
    help us rise and pledge our word.
- 2 Lead us forward into freedom,  
    from despair your world release;  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
    all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
    fear will die and hope increase.
- 3 All that kills abundant living,

let it from the earth be banned:  
pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow life's brief span.

- 4 You, Creator-God, have written  
your great name on humankind;  
for our growing in your likeness  
bring the life of Christ to mind;  
that, by our response and service,  
earth its destiny may find.

### **Invitation to Communion:**

**Eric:** We come walking and running and sometimes even tiptoeing into the possibility of this abundant feast.

**People:** We want to believe in its promise and find its wonder revealed again and again in our everyday ordinary.

**Eric:** Come, let us play with bread and with cup and our hearts full of song to be fed again with grace and love.

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

**Eric:** The psalmist says, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord!" We come to God's house to pray for peace, justice, and hope. And our offerings help us as a community of faith and support us as we work towards God's call. Let us worship God with God's tithes and our offerings.

### **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 our gifts to you – these ordinary gifts of the work of our lives – be used for extraordinary things. We dedicate what we receive to your work for peace, justice, and hope in the world. May our gifts, no matter how small, help us take small steps towards your greatest peace. Amen.

### **Thanksgiving Prayer:**

**Eric:** May God be with you!

**People:** May God be with us all!

**Eric:** Lift up your hearts!

**People:** We lift them up to God!

**Eric:** It is here at this table that we remember all that God has done and all that God is doing right now.

**People:** It is here that we give thanks for all that lives and breathes.

**Eric:** We give thanks even for endings and death as newness and wonder comes anew.

**People:** We give thanks for all the ways God introduces compassion and connection into our world and for every time we are reminded that God finds a way out of no way.

**Eric:** Together we pray:

**People:** Lord of lords, Creator of all things, nature gives thanks, your creatures give thanks. Your praise rises in us like the great river. God of all things, Creator, Provider, we thank you in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **Remembering Jesus – Breaking of the Bread:**

**Eric:** We give thanks for our Creator and the endless work of redemption and renewal.

**People:** We give thanks for Jesus and the path of love made possible.

**Eric:** We give thanks for the Spirit whose presence guides us and bonds us in deeper communion.

**People:** We give thanks to you, O God.

**Eric:** Let us remember together that vision of God's reign shown to us in Jesus at table:

**People:** he shared food with followers and friends, with saints and sinners, with crowds of thousands on the hillside, and a few friends in an upper room.

**Eric:** On the night before he died, he had supper with his companions.

**People:** He took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks, he broke it (*break the bread*), and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then, he took a cup, and after giving thanks (*lift the cup*), he passed it among them, saying: "Drink this. Do this in remembrance of me."

**Eric:** Through this loaf and cup, Jesus lives within us.

**People:** In word and deed, Jesus lives among us.

### **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:** In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be, let us pray 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.*

**Eric:** The gifts of God, for the People of God.

## **Distribution of the Bread and the Juice:**

*(please wait, so we can all partake as one)*

## **Communion Music:**

**Eric:** The Body of Christ broken for you..

*(please wait, so we can all partake as one)*

**Eric:** The Blood of Christ poured out for you.

## **Prayer after Communion:**

**People:** O God, come and bless what we do here. May our eating and drinking in the love of God, broaden the way we think, deepen the way we feel, and send us out walking and running or maybe just tiptoeing into the world to share in the work of creation with you, our God. Amen.

## **Hymn: VU 481 “Sent Forth By God’s Blessings”**

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.

The supper is ended, O now be extended  
the fruits of this service in all who believe.

The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for God and for all.

God's grace did invite us, God's love shall unite us  
to work for the kingdom and answer its call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,  
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.

Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.

With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;  
unite us as one in this life that we share.

Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
give honour to Christ and the name that we bear.

## **Benediction:**

**Eric:** May God give us courage, vision, and unending peace – the kind of peace that God knows is possible, now and forever more.

## **VU 7: Peace is a Ribbon:**

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,  
giving a promise of safety and worth.  
When God is a child there's joy in our song.  
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,  
and none shall be afraid.



**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**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: Chris**

**Paul**

**Sarah**

**Robyn**

**Terry**

**Reg and Mary Jane**

**Dave**

**Bill**

**Jane**

**Donna**

**Martin and Family**

**Larry**

**Kerigan**

**Fran**

**John**

**Ken**

**Grace**

**Mel**

**Natalie**

**Alice**