

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

First Sunday of Advent – November 28th, 2021

Prelude: “Send in the Clowns” – Stephen Sondheim – by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

We are open at St. Andrew’s today at 9:30 am. We will keep you informed about future updates.

Merlin United Church is hosting a Sunday evening “Carol Sing” in their parking lot, this Sunday November 28th from 6:30 to 7 pm. Gathering time is at 6:15 pm, each Sunday night of Advent. All involved will be required to wear a mask and be fully vaccinated. Come to sing or listen. Bring a lawn chair and dress warmly.

Welcome to St. Andrew’s today as we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent with Communion. Please have your cracker and juice for later in this service.

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 next Sunday, December 5th, 2021 (St. Luke’s will match \$ for \$), and our Annual Personal Hygiene Collection for the Merlin Christmas Baskets – due in two weeks - by Sunday December 12, 2021.

Need some Christmas Baking? The Royal Canadian Legion in Merlin is hosting their Christmas Bake Sale on this upcoming 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.

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: We are people of a promise – God’s promise.

Sung Response: *O come, O come, Emmanuel.*

People: From ancient times, God has promised to be with us.

Sung Response: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Eric: Even though we know Emmanuel has come, in this Season of Advent we experience the waiting all over again.

Sung Response: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

People: Together, we wait for God's reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. We wait for Emmanuel – God with us.

Sung Response: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Eric: Come let us worship, as we wait!

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

Eric: For the signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, we light this candle.

People: For the unknown and the not yet, we light this candle.

Eric: For seeds planted in hope and prayers prayed in earnest, we light this candle.

People: For doubt and confusion, we light this candle.

Eric: For these days of wandering and wondering, we light this candle.

People: For all that we didn't know we were waiting for, we light this candle.

(Light the first purple candle).

Opening Hymn: VU 1 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (Video)

- 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

Scripture: Jeremiah 33: 14 - 16 “Gardens You May Never Get To See”- by Alice Dale

Jeremiah listened to God. But sometimes he wished he couldn't hear what God had to say. Jeremiah's people were being attacked. A cruel king was about to take over the land. But in the middle of the bad news, Jeremiah could also hear God's good news repeating over and over again, like a bell that wouldn't stop ringing:

“A different day is surely coming. You will still be my people, and I will still be your God. You will know me because my words will be written on the inside of your hearts.”

God told Jeremiah to buy a field before the cruel king took over the land. “You will get it back,” God said. “Nothing is too hard for me. And because I love doing good for my people, I will plant them in this land and love them with all my heart and all my soul.”

Jeremiah was bewildered. It was hard to love a God that made no sense. But then God said one more thing:

“A different day is coming. In this land where you are planted, another Branch will grow. This Branch will be a different kind of ruler who will seek justice, who will live in right ways, a ruler who loves the people and longs to keep them safe.”

Jeremiah had not seen this kind of ruler. The rulers he knew were violent and mean and would fight for a long, long time. But maybe, just maybe, if he held on to that little piece of land, this new Branch might grow up in spite of the mean rulers, there in a garden that he might never get to see.

Message: “Hopeful Waiting - Active Trust”

God, in our prayers to you we share the uncertainty of our future - the future of us personally, the future of our church, the future of our depopulating rural communities and the future of the wider world. Yet in faith we keep taking one day at a time trusting in your goodness, much like Jeremiah did 2,600 years ago. As with Jeremiah we continue to buy fields, farms and houses. We continue to live in hope that one day our world will be your realm. May we remain faithful and active in your service.

So what does the future hold? No one really knows. Today in Jeremiah's story we are reminded to trust God in uncertain times. In situations that seem only to threaten loss, we hear words of promises kept; we find statements of steadfast love; we lift prayers of restoration; we wait, actively engaging in God's justice in the world. In God, we trust.

In our story of Jeremiah today, Jerusalem and Judah are on the brink of ruin. An exile that had partially begun ten years earlier - will soon come to full force. Much of the book of Jeremiah pronounces judgment - to prepare Judah for exile, today's message are words of promise. As we celebrate “Hope” on this first Sunday of Advent, today's story announces hope in the face of mounting despair.

Yet God's keeping of promises forms the foundation of Jeremiah's word. A new branch will “spring up”. What will come according to Jeremiah is not clearly seen,

nor is it here yet. Yet for Judah, God promises a new creation. It invites the people to live in hope for restoration.

Today we are in the time when we understand who that branch is that “springs up”. Yet waiting is involved. We are not really all that good at waiting. We are a society of immediate results to our searches. Waiting, we think is a waste of our valuable time. Is it? In waiting we can dream in hope what this “new branch” might be for us today? As we wait for Christmas Day, what are you hoping for? Are your hopes for material things, or for relational-ship events? Which brings you more pleasure and satisfaction?

Jeremiah shares that the Hebrew community will be restored in several ways. The “House” in the Hebrew Scriptures may refer to a dynasty, temple, palace, or dwelling. The promise made to the “houses” of Judah and Israel involves the whole community.

Jeremiah says that God’s “branch” will execute justice. The prophets see justice as equitable relationships. Justice produces fairness and avoids oppression. Rulers who failed to ensure such equity is one reason exile has come. Jeremiah promises that this failure and its effects will be reversed, and God’s promise of justice done.

We as modern day Christians hold out that our hope is enough in the midst of our present difficulties. In the face of Judah’s abandonment by God, Jeremiah assures that in the end God will save Judah. The people of Judah are living in a time that appears anything but safe or trustworthy. Jeremiah announces the promise of a life lived in “safety”. Today, we might literally use the word, “trust”.

We as modern day society also hold out for Christmas. Jeremiah affirms that God’s promise is now “and” not yet. God’s promise calls us to engage in trust that there will be a Christmas and that we should live in ways that strengthen us and our community, as we live between now and December 25th. How might we do that? We continue to work for God’s Kingdom here on earth. We do that by offering Christmas Baskets and Christmas meals to others. We offer that by being thankful and pleasant to our friends, neighbours and strangers. After all, Jeremiah promises a "righteous branch." We are to do what is right, including for Christians attending to our Christian duties and acts of charity; and lastly conforming to God's standards of fairness, honesty, and justice.

Together in hope and in action, we bring forth the justice that God promises. In hope and actions we think of those among us who are not "at home" at this point in their lives? In hope we remember that we have all come from different places and

have things we can learn from one another. In hope we ask, “How can we be in ministry together that will make this world a better place?” Waiting for Jeremiah was not passive. We have lots to do this Advent season as we actively wait, and as we do our part to bring about God's justice and righteousness to life in the Christmas Season of 2021.

This Christmas God will make a new creation. May we be part of God's new creation! Because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 415 “God, We Praise You For the Morning” – Video

- 1 God, we praise you for the morning;
hope springs forth with each new day,
new beginning, prayer, and promise,
joy in work and in play.
- 2 God, we praise you for creation,
mountains, seas, and prairie land.
Waking souls find joy and healing
in your bountiful hand.
- 3 God, we praise you for compassion,
all the loving that you show;
human touching, tears, and laughter,
help your children to grow.
- 4 God, we praise you for your Spirit,
Comforter and daily friend,
restless searcher, gentle teacher,
strength and courage you send.
- 5 God, we praise you for the Saviour,
come that we may know your ways.
In his loving, dying, rising,
Christ is Lord of our days.
- 6 Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Christ is Lord of our days!

Invitation to Communion:

Eric: Take off your heavy coat of sorrow and grief.

People: We come to nourish ourselves in glory.

Eric: Look toward the east and to the west to see the wideness of mercy.

People: We come to feast on grace.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We live in the wonderful reality of God's promise. We live in the joyous hope of God's new day. Let us give thanks to God as we share our gifts and make an offering.

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 of mercy, of hope, of promise: accept these gifts we offer to you, in thanksgiving for all that you have done for us. You journey with us wherever we go, and you promise to bring us into new days and new ways. We dedicate our gifts and our lives to service in Christ's name. 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: O Holy One, Waiting One, Wandering One, who is as close to us as breath and distant as the star, come and join in this feast.

People: Prepare this table before us with the abundance that rained manna down from heaven and fed thousands from just five loaves and two fish.

Eric: Feed our hopes and our fears of all the years as only your steadfast love can.

People: Hear the rumbling in our stomachs for justice and peace in a world full of uneven ground as much as you hear the praise in our song for the prophets standing on the fringes and demanding change.

Eric: We come to this table craving change that will nourish our most inward being and cause us to alter the landscape of our lives so much that there is more righteous peace and godly glory. 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: 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.

Eric: Come, O Holy One, into this cup of gladness and this loaf of possibility so that we can prepare our hearts and minds for all that needs to change in this world and in ourselves.

People: Come, Waiting One, Wandering One, feed us with your glory and grace.

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: Compassionate One, we look to the stormy sky of political unrest – help us to pay attention to the cries for mercy, peace, and justice among us. In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.

People: Earth-keeper, we look to the polluted sky of an ailing planet – help us to pay attention to the ways we can mend and tend your creation. In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.

Eric: Gentle Healer, we look to the twilight sky of suffering and illness – help us to pay attention to the ways we can ease the pain of those who suffer. In the name of Christ, who was, who is, and who shall be.

People: Guiding Light, we look to the dawning sky of a new day and a new way – help us to live your way of abundant promise and blessing.

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)

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:

Life-giving God, may we, who share Christ’s body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation will live to praise your name. Amen.

Blessing:

Eric: May God be ever-present to us in the faces of those we encounter this day. May we see the joy and love in each other, now and forever more.

VU 7: Hope Is a Star:

Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.
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: “Maria” Bernstein/Sondheim – 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”.

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| Cancer: | Tom | Allan |
| | Louise | Louise’ Granddaughter - Blake |
| | Betty | Ingrid |
| | Alison | Brenda |
| | Betty | Jim |
| | Brian | Jack |
| | Zoe | Becky |
| | Barry/ Marsha | Francine |
| | Adrein | Gary |
| | Melissa | Karen |
| | Lloyd | Jim |
| | Flo | Sherie & Will |
| | George | B.C. |
| | Kelly Family | |