

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

World Wide Communion – October 1st, 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: Let us listen and remember the stories our Biblical ancestors told.

People: Let us give thanks for the glorious deeds of God.

Eric: We give thanks and remember, on this World Wide Communion Sunday.

People: As we share the Holy meal with Christians all around the world.

Eric: Listen to the stories we tell each other.

People: We come today to listen. May we hear each other's story.

Eric: On this World Wide Communion Sunday let us search our wide world for reasons to praise.

People: May we give voice to the hope we need in a world full of conflict and discord.

Eric: May we share these wonders from generation to generation, as we worship today.

Opening Hymn: VU 651 "Guide Me, O Thou Great..."

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,

land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee. **

Opening Prayer:

People: God of desert days and wilderness nights, we rest in the comfortable space of your presence and trust words and actions that tell the story of who we are and from where we have come. We thank you for the abundance of your gifts, and for the blessing of the unexpected. Surprise us here again, O God, as we come together in Jesus' Name in Holy Communion. Amen.

Children's Story:

A poem by Barbara Dickenson titled "Go to the Ant":

I have always considered the grasshopper to be the finer fellow
He did not scrape and hoard worldly possessions
He would not have turned away a friend hungry
He had more fun in one fiddle foot than the ant in his whole diligent body

Gladly the grasshopper glorified God
by the sensuous enjoyment of each irretrievable moment
while the ant grieved his yesterdays and grumbled each tomorrow
IS THERE A LIFE BEFORE DEATH ? Wrote the grasshopper on the lavatory wall
and added NOT FOR ANTS

Children's Hymn: VU 579 "The Church is Wherever..."

The church is wherever God's people are praising,
singing God's goodness for joy on this day.
The church is wherever disciples of Jesus
remember his story and walk in his way.

The church is wherever God's people are helping,
caring for neighbours in sickness and need.
The church is wherever God's people are sharing
the words of the Bible in gift and in deed. **

Responsive Reading: Psalm 78: 1 - 4, 12 - 16

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.

We will tell what the Lord did for our ancestors near Zoan in Egypt.

God made a path in the sea and piled up the water as he led them across.

He guided them during the day with a cloud, and each night he led them with a flaming fire.

God made water flow from rocks he split open in the desert, and his people drank freely, as though from a lake.

He made streams gush out like rivers from rocks.

Scripture: Exodus 17: 1 - 17

The Israelites left the desert and moved from one place to another each time the Lord ordered them to. One place they camped, there was no water for them to drink. The people started complaining to Moses, "Give us some water!" Moses replied, "Why are you complaining to me and trying to put the Lord to the test?" But the people were thirsty and kept on complaining, "Moses, did you bring us out of Egypt just to let us and our families and our animals die of thirst?" Then Moses prayed to the Lord, "What am I going to do with these people? They are about to stone me to death!" The Lord answered, "Take some of the leaders with you and go ahead of the rest of the people. Also take along the walking stick with which you struck the Nile River. When you get to the rock at Mount Sinai, I will be there with you. Strike the rock with the stick, and water will pour out for the people to drink." Moses did this while the leaders watched. The people had complained and tested the Lord by asking, "Is the Lord really with us?" So Moses named that place Massah, which means "testing" and Meribah, which means "complaining."

Reflection: "God's People Complain – Again!"

Just when we thought we were done with our connections to Creation, we find ourselves back in the wilderness. Today's story happens in the most memorable wilderness known to the Jewish, Islamic and Christian People - the time of the Exodus. Not only are God's People in the physical wilderness, but they are in the wilderness of "lack of control". The people have lots and lots of questions, and lots and lots of complaints. What is God thinking? If God was here – God wouldn't let us die of thirst. Moses is at his wits end. I am sure Moses has heard enough complaining. Yet after every complaint and after the questions God has provided.

They didn't have food, so God sent manna and quails, with a double dose on the day before the Sabbath. This manna would not stay fresh on all the other days – so God's People had to eat what was collected. But on the day before the Sabbath, the manna would stay fresh for an extra day. Therefore the Israelites could honour the Lord with not working on the day of rest. With all these great wonders shown to the Exodus People, why are they complaining again?

Since leaving Egypt, this is the third time there have been mumblings from the crowd. First, the people complained that the water of Marah was bitter. They grumbled and complained again when they found themselves hungry. Now, the

people are camped at this new place, called Rephidim and they cannot find water. Is that because there is no water or that the Israelites did not know how to look for water in this new place.

God's People lash out at Moses. They ask question after question. How could God forget them? Where is God when we need God? Where is God, Moses!?! Despite all God has done for them, such as their deliverance out of Egypt, by parting the waters of the Red Sea. Providing daily food provisions and water when they needed water. The guidance of clouds leading them by day and the pillar of fire leading them by night. The Exodus People are once again complaining to Moses – in fact they accuse Moses of intending to kill them.

Moses is beside himself. Moses is frustrated with the People. Maybe even Moses is wondering if the People are right. Moses then cries out to God. "What shall I do with these people?" We might wonder if Moses feels all alone in his leadership role. Where is Aaron?

God is there. God receives the questions from Moses and the People, even if the questions are posed in a pout or with a temper. God invites them (and us) to enter into the wrestling and resolving of the questions, and not expect easy answers! As of yet they can see no way out. They have to trust that God will provide.

God shares with Moses what he must do. When Moses strikes the rock, water rushes forth. As with any great time in history the place where the water flowed is given a name to remind folks of God's goodness. The springs found there are named Massah and Meribah, Hebrew words that recall the Israelites' quarrelling and testing.

The question of, "Is God among us or not?" is a question that people of faith have wrestled with throughout the ages. Likewise, this will not be the last time that the people of Israel grow anxious and fearful on their journey to a new land. Still, as is often the case for them, it is a time of crisis that leads them to deepen their trust in God's presence.

We are reminded of that very point into today's Responsive Psalm. Trust in God's provision is celebrated with joy. As a remedy against the rebellions and questions, the psalm calls us to remember and recite, accounts of God's powerful works.

How we approach God matters. Respect does not necessarily mean “handle with care” as if the stories, or God, might break if we push back, ask questions, get mad, or name our confusion or frustration.

When have we as God’s People been frustrated and frightened, unsettled and uncertain? Have we lashed out at God? God didn’t tell Moses to tell the People not to express their frustration; Both God and Moses restate the promise and point to the evidence again: “God is with us”.

In our times of crisis, how might we act? To the man in a hospital bed with two legs and one arm in casts – how do you get day to day things done. It is great that the hospital will look after you, feed you, move your body around, but who looks after paying the bills? Who looks after making your spouses funeral arrangement, as she died because of the accident? Where is God in all this mayhem?

Or the family member that has just be diagnosed with stage 4 cancer that is untreatable and terminal. Where is God? What advise can you offer? How might prayer help? Can we offer any hope? How might we remind them that God is here with them in this journey?

Communion. The act of Communion offers us a place and space to connect with God. In that connection we know we are not alone. We may share today’s story to remind us we are not alone. In Communion, God is with us. Thanks be to God!

Reflection Hymn: VU 675 “Will Your Anchor Hold?”

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife,
when the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

It will surely hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers tell that the reef is near;
though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow. R

It will surely hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill our latest breath;
on the rising tide it can never fail

while our hopes abide within the veil. R

When our eyes behold, through the gathering night,
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heavenly shore,
with the storms all past for evermore. R **

Invitation to Communion:

Eric: Friends, we come to celebrate the joyful feast of the people of God.

People: **We come to this table with people from all over our world, sisters and brothers in Christ, to eat and drink.**

Eric: We come to this table to be nourished and renewed for the ongoing work of justice and love.

People: **We come to taste and see how good God is.**

Thanksgiving Prayer:

Eric: It is not a huge banquet that we share, but just enough bread and just enough drink for us to share, for us to taste and see the abundant goodness of God.

People: **It is this hope that springs from a rock and this delightful surprise that gathers us again on this World Wide Communion Sunday.**

Eric: Today, we celebrate the space we create around the table, all across this vast world, by the cup and loaf we share.

People: **Though we might not be in the same room, we witness to the power of this amazing story passed down from generation to generation to remind each other of God's glorious deeds.**

Eric: We come together into the ebb and flow of faith where our quarrels might be louder than our praise and our doubts may overshadow our hope to create this space again.

People: **At this table, we will be renewed with Christians around the globe to live more and more fully into the goodness of God.**

Eric: As we drink from the cup and share this bread, may your Spirit be with us, O Holy One, enlivening us and increasing our ability to always choose your love over all of our fears.

People: **May this meal increase our wonder in all of your glorious deeds as we remember another time, not unlike our own, when the future was unknown.**

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We give thanks for the gifts we are able to give. We give thanks for the gifts received. We give thanks that these gifts allow us to be 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: **O God, use these gifts to create space for every grumbling and complaint to be met with compassion and grace. Transform our whole world with love and hope, we pray. O God, we offer our open hands to share in this healing and change work. Amen.**

Remembering Jesus:

Eric: We remember the story when the disciples were gathered at a table in an upper room. On that night, Jesus took the bread, lifted it up to Heaven, gave thanks, broke the bread, and then shared it with the disciples, saying, "This is my body, given for you. When you eat it, remember me".

People: **On that same night, Jesus took the cup, lifted the cup up to Heaven, gave thanks, and then shared it with the disciples, saying, "This is my blood poured out for you. It is the promise of God. When you drink it, remember me."**

Eric: As we break bread (*Break the bread*) and share a cup (*Lift the cup*), may we remember the Christ present with us through all these years and across all this world, present with us as we rededicate ourselves to you. 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 & Lord's Prayer:

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:

People: **Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the Body of Christ and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Now send us forth to be your people in the world. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim in all we are and do your Good News in Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen.**

Closing Hymn: VU 477 "I Come With Joy"

I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved and free,
the life of Jesus to recall
in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love

in Christ's communion bread,
in Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share,
each proud division ends.

The love that made us, makes us one,
and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.

The Spirit of the risen Christ,
unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known,
alive among us here,
alive among us here.

Together met, together bound
by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one. **

Blessing:

Eric: Today we have remembered the glorious deeds of God. We have heard stories of old. We have shared the sacred meal. We are empowered and blessed by God the creator, Jesus the redeemer, and the friendship of the Holy Spirit, we go and tell others the glorious deeds of our God, now and forever more.

Closing Hymn: "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**

**Larry
Ken
Natalie
Joan**

Rick

**Janet
David
Dave**

**Elizabeth
Alice**

Mike and Janice

John and Barb

David

Lloyd

Don

Shanks Family

Seney Family

Mifflin Family (Gavin)