

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Thanksgiving Sunday – October 11th, 2020

Prelude: “Bringing in the Sheaves” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning folks. Today is Thanksgiving Sunday, and the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend. We have so much to be thankful for – even in the midst of a pandemic. May we be truly thankful.

Today was the day we might have returned to our church buildings for church services. After checking with all three Church Boards, we have postponed the return until January 2021. With so much changing right now, it seemed like the right decision.

Christmas is only a little more than two months away. This year, our Christmas Baskets Programs are strapped for how they may get food, toys and even money to provide to needy families during COVID. This Thursday is the launch of an exciting venture across Chatham Kent to provide for our needy families. Stay tuned. If you miss the announcement this Thursday, we’ll tell you all about it next Sunday.

We are collecting socks and underwear for the homeless (mainly men) until the first week of November. This past Sunday we received several packages with the Food Bank donations. We are sending what we have right now to The United Way, and will do another delivery after Food Bank Sunday in November. Thank you for your gifts.

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at southbuxton.ca, and talbotstreet.ca

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

If you wish – grab a candle to use while we share our services. The flame of the Candle reminds us of the light of Christ that collects us as the faith community, “We are One in the Spirit”. Thanks be to God.

Call To Worship:

Eric: Do you remember who first invited you to worship?

People: **We come in praise of thanksgiving for those who brought us here.**

Eric: Do you remember the first community of faithful ones you joined?

- A nursery class who welcomed you with care and open arms?
- A youth group who accompanied you with energy and open minds?
- A small group meeting in someone’s home?
- A congregation, large or small, rural or urban, quiet folk or rowdy ones?

People: We come in praise of Thanksgiving for those who meet and receive us here.

Eric: Do you remember the God you have come to worship?

People: The One who delivered Israel from Egypt; the Maker of Earth and Sky; the Ground of all Being; the God of Jesus, born of Mary; we come in thanksgiving to worship God in remembrance that leads to hope.

Eric: Let us worship with Thanksgiving.

Hymn: VU 227 “For the Fruit of All Creation”

- 1 For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.
- 2 In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.
- 3 For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Opening Prayer:

Great God, the beauty of creation reminds us of the beauty of your way. Your teachings bind us together as pilgrims, on a common path towards abundant life for all. Your laws are sweeter than honey in a honeycomb. Guide us towards your path, God, and lead us away from dangerous roads, so our words, and the meditations of our hearts may always be acceptable to you, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Scripture: Exodus 32:1 – 14 *(in Story Form)*

Moses had gone up the mountain to talk with God. Leading the people of Israel to a new land and a new life was not easy. The people often grumbled and complained and wondered if Moses knew what he was doing. Moses would listen to God to find out where to go and what to do next. Moses was away for a long time, and the people were becoming impatient. What would they do if Moses didn't come back? They weren't going to wait any longer. They talked to one another and decided to go and speak to Aaron. They asked Aaron to make a god who would lead them to their destination. They didn't know how Aaron would do it, but Moses had made Aaron leader for the time Moses was away, so they were confident that he would think of something.

Aaron sent them away and said that he would call them back in a short time. Aaron thought for a while and then had an idea. He asked the people to collect gold jewellery from their family members – rings, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. The people were excited. At last, someone was going to help them so that they could move on. They rushed around, collected the jewellery, and took the items back to Aaron. Aaron had some special tools with him. (Remember they were on a long

journey, so people had taken tools that might have been useful.) Aaron worked hard, and the people watched eagerly to see what he would do.

At last, he was finished. He had made a golden calf. The people crowded around to look at it. They thought that it was beautiful, and they began to pray to the calf and bring presents to it. They were worshipping the calf. "This is the God who brought us out of Egypt!" they said. Aaron made a stone platform, put the calf on it and announced a festival the next day to praise God. The people had a party. They ate and drank and had a happy time.

God was angry! God had sent a message with Moses, just a little while ago, that the people should be worshipping the one true God. Moses wanted to protect the people and asked God to stop being so angry and remember that these are the people God had brought out of slavery in Egypt. Moses also reminded God of the promises God had made to Abraham. God had promised Abraham that they would have many descendants, as many as stars in the sky and that they would have land – a place to call home. Moses asked God to calm down and forgive the people.

This was a hard time for Moses. What would happen?

Fortunately, God's mind was changed. Moses was very pleased and went back to the people and reminded them again that they must follow God.

Message: "Thanks be to God!"

This is another story of the Israelites turning their backs on God, even after God had shown them so many miraculous things. Moses is gone for a while and the Israelites become impatient. They ask the Second in Command to come up with a replacement for God. A leader should have more sense than turning his or her back on God. The leader's goal is to lead people to a deeper faith.

But God isn't there right in front of us. We in the church have pictures of Jesus and golden crosses to remind us of our Christian Faith. As humans, we need something that we can see and hold unto that helps to keep us grounded. Do we take our faith for granted? Do we take our lives and our blessings for granted? Thanksgiving Day is a great time to remember that we are blessed and to be thankful for the blessings we have received. For at least this weekend, our thoughts are returned to gratitude versus an entitlement to all we have. Taking these gifts for granted erodes away at the value of our hard work, and erodes away at the values of God's blessings. What golden Calves do we make for ourselves?

The Israelites are living in fear; fear that Moses will not return, fear that they will die right there where they are, fear that God has abandoned them in the middle of the desert. They needed to be pacified that despite the obstacles that the world throws at them – they could still boldly walk with God. But they

need to see this God. They needed to party with this God. They needed to bring this God gifts. They needed to see the God that will save them. So Aaron builds them a golden calf, which immediately they worship, bring gifts to, and hold a big party with their new statue of God. Yet it was only a short time earlier when Moses had brought down from the mountain the Ten Commandments. The first Commandment was, “I am the Lord your God. Do not worship any other god except me”. Aaron must have missed that one, because that is exactly the law he broke, therefore dragging the whole nation of Israel to insubordination towards God.

God sees everything and God is not pleased with what God’s people had done. Moses is their mediator, and he tries to convince God to give them some slack, after all it was only a short time since they had been slaves. This story can remind us how quickly as humans we can be dragged back into our old habits. Even as we accept a life of faith, it does take a lot of focus and trust to boldly walk with God - to firmly believe that God has this all under control. It’s easy to throw up our hands and say, “We’ve had enough”.

Are you there yet? I am wondering about those who are ignoring the officials by not wearing a mask, or partying with their friends sitting side by side – Have they given up? Are they like the Israelites; impatient, unfaithful, jealous and fearful? That regardless of their actions, they are determined to live their life the way they want. They may think they are doing their best with the information and ideas that they have – even if we consider they are misguided.

Today on this Thanksgiving weekend, this story can help us to realize that we need to slow down and recalibrate our lives. We live with a lot more stress in a pandemic. We too become fearful of what is out there and how we might fair out in this fight. We are told to slow down. Take a moment and give thanks. In giving thanks, we are recalibrating our lives, we are recalibrating our brains to be thankful, not fearful – to be thankful, to love God, to once again love life trusting in our faith, not trusting in earthly things.

Anxiety, fear, and a desire for quick solutions are an understandable and common response to uncertain times. We are in uncertain times. Let us slow

down and give thanks for all that we are thankful for; good health, good friends, a safe, dry and warm place to live with food on our tables. As we gather together as a family to share the Thanksgiving feast, which is equally as festive as a Christmas dinner – let us give thanks and know we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 516: “Come, You Thankful People, Come”

- 1 Come, you thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home!
 All is safely gathered in,
 safe before the storms begin;
God, our maker, does provide
for our needs to be supplied:
 come to God's own temple, come,
 raise the song of harvest home!

- 2 All the world is God's own field,
harvests for God's praise to yield;
 wheat and weeds together sown,
 here for joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade, and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear:
 Harvest-giver, grant that we
 wholesome grain and pure may be.

- 3 For our God, one day, shall come,
and shall take this harvest home;
 from the field shall in that day
 all offences purge away;
giving angels charge at last
in the fire the weeds to cast;
 but the fruitful ears to store
 in the garner evermore.

- 4 Even so, God, quickly come
to your final harvest home!
 Gather all your people in,
 free from sorrow, free from sin;
there for ever purified,
in your presence to abide:
 come, with all your angels, come,
 raise the glorious harvest home.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we gather on Thanksgiving weekend, we gather to give thanks for food family and friends. We gather to share in a Thanksgiving meal that reminds us of our abundance that we have, and can share. Let us share of our abundance, as God shares abundance with us. In thanksgiving, let us offer our gifts to better our world. 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:

Thank you, God, for these gifts; gifts that we now return to you. May they be faithfully used for the building of your kingdom here on Earth. In Jesus’ Name, we pray. 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: Let us remember in prayer those who suffer the brokenness of grief: of friends and loved ones who have died in this week, or in times more distant yet still fresh with pain and longing. *(silent prayer)*

People: **Let us remember in prayer those broken in body or mind or spirit: those who are ill and hospitalized, those treated for cancer or other diseases, those who are depressed.** *(silent prayer)*

Eric: Let us remember in prayer those whose brokenness is in relationship: with partner or child or parent, in vocation or friendship, estranged from hope or from God. *(silent prayer)*

People: **Let us remember in prayer the brokenness in creation: rivers polluted and hillsides denuded; overabundance hoarded and need ignored; for denial of natural crises.** *(silent prayer)*

Eric: Let us remember in prayer the brokenness among nations and peoples: for growing accustomed to war; for achieving ends with violence; for demonizing those who differ from us. *(silent prayer)*

People: **And let us remember in prayer the one to whom we pray: whose way is love; whose wisdom is justice, whose heart is compassion; whose promise and call is peace. Remember us, O God, and make us whole.**

Eric: All these things we pray in Jesus’ Name as we 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.

Benediction:

Annette: Rejoice in God. Help one another, and trust that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, 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 God From Whom All Blessings Flow" – Christie Coatsworth