

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

21st Sunday After Pentecost – October 22nd, 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: God, we have come here today with our love and our longing.

People: God, we have come here today standing firm and still searching.

Eric: Come among us God here today to talk, to dance, to listen, to sing, and to pray.

People: Be with us on this day in our worship.

Eric: Turn toward us and take hold of us and comfort us.

People: Here we are, God, ready for wonder and ready to encounter you.

Eric: Ready to share the rhythm of your love in worship on this day.

Opening Hymn: VU 315 “Holy, Holy, Holy...”

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth
and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity! **

Opening Prayer:

People: God of glory, you call us by name and shape us into a living message. Affirm your presence in our lives and community so we can become strong and faithful witnesses to your way in this world. Amen.

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 412 "This Is The Day"

This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made.

Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God, your gates, O God;
we will go in, we will go in,
to your holy place, to your holy place.
Open to us your gates, O God,
we will go in to your holy place.
Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God.

You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name, we will praise your name;
we will give thanks, we will give thanks,
for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.
You are our God, we will praise your name,
we will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name.

This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made. **

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 99

Our Lord Is King

Our Lord, you are King! You rule from your throne above the winged creatures, as people tremble and the earth shakes.

You are praised in Zion, and you control all nations. Only you are God!

And your power alone, so great and fearsome, is worthy of praise.

You are our mighty King, a lover of fairness, who sees that justice is done everywhere in Israel.

Our Lord and our God, we praise you and kneel down to worship you, the God of holiness!

Moses and Aaron were two of your priests. Samuel was also one of those who prayed in your name, and you, our Lord, answered their prayers.

You spoke to them from a thick cloud, and they obeyed your laws.

Our Lord and our God, you answered their prayers and forgave their sins, but when they did wrong, you punished them.

We praise you, Lord God, and we worship you at your sacred mountain. Only you are God!

Hebrew Scripture: Exodus 33: 12 - 23

Moses said to the Lord, "I know that you have told me to lead these people to the land you promised them. But you have not said who will go along to help me. You have said that you are my friend and that you are pleased with me. If this is true, let me know what your plans are, then I can obey and continue to please you. And don't forget that you have chosen this nation to be your own."

The Lord said, "I will go with you and give you peace." Then Moses replied, "If you aren't going with us, please don't make us leave this place. But if you do go with us, everyone will know that you are pleased with your people and with me. That way, we will be different from the rest of the people on earth." So the Lord told him, "I will do what you have asked, because I am your friend and I am pleased with you." Then Moses said, "I pray that you will let me see you in all of your glory." The Lord answered: All right. I am the Lord, and I show mercy and kindness to anyone I choose. I will let you see my glory and hear my holy name, but I won't let you see my face, because anyone who sees my face will die. There is a rock not far from me. Stand beside it, and before I pass by in all of my shining glory, I will put you in a large crack in the rock. I will cover your eyes with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take my hand away, and you will see my back. You will not see my face.

Reflection: "Together with God"

These last few weeks we have been reflecting on the Exodus journey and the many times the People of Israel have broken trust with God. With trust broken, we will feel alienated from God. Hopefully we can remember God's promise to us his children, and may we keep our relationship in good order with God.

We do not align ourselves with God and God's holy way only once, and then expect the relationship to remain forever. It is with our spiritual disciplines, which renews our relationship with God and God's holy way. We renew our relationship, again and again. It is much like any other relationship we share in our earthly life.

So in Exodus we are finding out that it was one thing for the people of Israel to be freed from bondage; it was another thing to live as free people. Their past experience of captivity and being slaves to the Pharaoh is never far from their hearts and minds. It would take time for them to learn a new way of being and living together in community. Captivity in Egypt taught them there was little or no mercy towards slaves, as the Egypt's systems of domination keep people under control and maintain power for those with authority and privilege. Being a slave, you could not find anything good in living and working as a slave. Now just ahead a few years, and time after time the Israelites have failed God, and they have broken their covenantal relationship, the Israelite People have every reason to expect retribution.

Moses talks to God for reassurance that the Israelites, now freed from slavery, will no longer need to live by the old patterns of their past slavery. In seeking reassurance, Moses is holding unto the hope and belief that God is willing to mend the broken covenant, which in God's goodness will be restored with the Israelite People. Yet, at the same time, Moses lays out the truth of the harm done when trust is broken. Moses knows major repair work is needed.

Moses calls upon God to show God the newly forming community of God's Chosen Children. Moses shares with God that they are trying to live into a liberated people of faith. Moses asks God to reveal God's glory, made visible and evident in God's goodness and mercy. God agrees - but there are stipulations.

We stop for a moment to review this morning's Responsive Psalm, which is a song of celebration and worship for the one who is revealed; as a lover of justice, who establishes equity, and executes justice and righteousness. This is the one who guided the people of Israel out of slavery and into an identity as a free people. The people were far from perfect, at times failing the guidance they were offered, but the resulting brokenness was never ignored and was ultimately healed through the forgiveness of God, who set them free.

We are reminded in this story of the importance of being our whole selves in our relationships. Moses attempts to experience God as he understands the Creator, but God is bigger than we can perceive. And yet, God still attempts to be in relationship with Moses and in turn with us. Relationships are important, and a relationship with God is paramount. We too, as the Responsive Psalm suggests, are on the journey of friendship with God, who desires to be in a loving relationship with us. Talk about God being bigger than we can ever perceive! Moses' transparency of his relationship with God can help us to model the relationships we attempt to build with God and with each other.

The Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez wrote, “To believe in God is more than simply to profess God’s existence; it is to enter into communion with God and – the two being inseparable – with our fellow human beings as well.” As Gutiérrez suggests, we know that God is with us when we feel love for one another.

Wow – what an eye-opener to us in the Church today. We may remember last week when we brought whatever emotions we were feeling to Church, we were reminded of how our relationships with the other faithful in our faith community can help us get in touch with our emotions, and connect again in relationship with God. That may be one of the important jobs that God gives to our Churches – to support on another in faith.

Yet as Churches, we can get comfortable in our usual ways. There may be little interest or desire to find new insight. Moses reminds us today, to keep looking, strive to know more, and go ahead to wonder what glory might look like now in the 21st century. Maybe the old ways we talk about God might not function as well as they once did. Maybe we are being given an opportunity to how we share in being the Church together.

We understand God to be everywhere. Much like the air we breathe, the wind we feel on our skin, and a hug or smile from a loving friend. As Gustavo suggested, we know that God is with us - when we feel love for one another. Worship allows us an opportunity to be the church and to connect with God, individually and as a Community of Faith. Like the United Church Creed reminds us - We are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God!

Reflection Hymn: VU 288 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness...”

Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. R

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow -
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide. R **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Thank You for your gifts, of time, talent, skills, prayers and money. All of these gifts added together, makes us the Church. We as givers are so blessed we can give. May those who receive - also know they are blessed. Thank you for being 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: Thank you, O God. We give thanks to you for your goodness, which is in our hearts and minds, in our strength and soul, in our life and love. Praise be to you, O God. 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:

**All living things imitate God.
As flowers bloom, as trees bear fruit,
as dancers leap high in air,
they imitate your creativity, O God.**

**As we struggle for justice,
as we resolve conflict through peace,
as we extend our hand to our neighbour,
we imitate your love, O God.**

**As we stand firm in our faith,
as we teach and nurture our children,
as we pray for our world,
we imitate your love, O God.**

Closing Hymn: VU 663 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine.
Now hear me while I pray;
take all my guilt away.
O let me from this day be wholly thine.

While life's dark maze I tread,
and griefs around me spread, be thou my guide,
bid darkness turn to day;
wipe sorrow's tears away;
nor let me ever stray from thee aside.

May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire.
As thou hast died for me,
O may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire. **

Benediction:

Eric: Go boldly into the world. We go with the Good News of God the Father, Jesus the Son and with the power of the Holy Spirit, 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**

**Neil
Audrey
Edy
George
Harry/Ruth
Joyce
Ron / Sharon
Chris and Reeanna**