

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

## *World Wide Communion Sunday – October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021*

**Prelude:** “Family of God” - Gaithers – by Christie Coatsworth

### **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to Talbot Street today for Worldwide Communion. Please prepare yourself with juice and cracker for later when we share with each other and all Christians around the world.

Thank you to everyone who donated yesterday to our area Food Banks with their “First of the Month” Donations. We do make a difference

This Saturday at 7 at St. Andrew’s in Chatham is Benjamin Smith concert. You can register for in-person or for virtual viewing. See the poster for more details.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca) and [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca)

Thank you to our production crew; music by Christie Coatsworth, and the slides by Tracey Major. You make all the difference.

### **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

#### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** We gather as fellow travelers, awake to possibility, but worn by life’s demands.

**People:** **We come broken, yet ever hopeful. Weary, yet expectant.**

**Eric:** Today we come, gathered together with Christians all around our world – sharing in our faith and in the sacrament of Communion.

**People:** **And together we are at home in God, enfolded by love, and so we come to be encouraged and renewed in the peace and wholeness that is Jesus the Christ for us.**

**Eric:** Come, let us join our hearts together in worship.

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**God, you are the Hope of our world; everywhere we turn, you are there, loving your creation, present in our struggles. You have given us hearts that question and minds that resist easy answers. Today, as we consider our brothers and sisters from all countries around our globe, be with us as we ponder the mysteries of existence and the part you have called us to play in your amazing world. Amen.**

#### **Opening Hymn:** VU 409 “Morning Has Broken” (Video)

1 Morning has broken like the first morning,

blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

- 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.
- 3 Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

**Scripture: Mark 10: 2 - 16 “Tough Questions”** - by Madeline and Margaret

In the early Christian church, there were different kinds of religious leaders. One group of religious leaders were called the Pharisees. Pharisees believed that it was important to follow the religious laws that had been passed down to them. Another group of religious leaders were called the Sadducees, and they had different understandings of how to follow God. The Pharisees and Sadducees did not always agree with each other. The Pharisees did not always agree with Jesus either, and sometimes they wanted to trick him.

One day, the Pharisees asked Jesus a tough question to test him and to see how he would respond. If Jesus responded one way, then he might offend the Pharisees. If Jesus answered another way, then he might offend the Sadducees. The Pharisees asked the question in front of a crowd so that other people would hear what Jesus had to say.

The Pharisees asked Jesus if the law allowed people to get divorced. Before answering them, Jesus first asked what the Law of Moses said about divorce. They responded and shared that the Law of Moses did allow people to get divorced by issuing a certificate.

Jesus also explained that in God's original creation, when people come together in marriage, they would no longer be separate individuals. Instead, they would form a new union together, and God would bless their union. But, sometimes, relationships fall apart, and Jesus explained that the Law of Moses allowed for divorce since not all unions will last forever.

Sometime later, when they were away from the crowds and back at home, the disciples asked Jesus about divorce again. They wanted to talk about it more. This time, Jesus said very plainly that marriage is about supporting one another and treating each other as equals.

People brought their children to Jesus so Jesus could bless them. When the disciples saw the people doing this, they tried to stop them, but Jesus encouraged the children to come to him and reminded them that God loves them. Jesus spoke of the simplicity of the faith of children.

Then, Jesus reached out and blessed the children. By blessing the children, Jesus reminded all people that all are beloved children of God.

**Message: “Challenging Questions”**

We wrestle with tough questions, and uncertain answers, likely every day. As we get older we lose friends and loved ones, and we wonder why. Sometimes we are quoted those pat answers that make us cringe. Yet may we have the courage to ask what is on our hearts, as in the asking, we get to share our feelings, which helps us to know we are not alone. May we be kind and loving when someone shares opinions we do not understand. God has made each one of us unique.

Today reading is from Mark, and we are told that the Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus, so they ask him a question. “Is divorce allowed”? Over the years the church has taught us that divorce is wrong.

Divorce already has lots of emotional baggage attached to it, as your marriage did not last forever as you thought it would. It is much messier when children are involved. There are relationships when in laws love and care for their parent-in-laws and do not want that great relationship to end. Of course there is the anger, the disappointments, the difference of opinion, and all the misunderstandings. Divorce is like a death – actually it is the death of your relationship.

The reason given for the dialogue in Mark today, has nothing to do with divorce. We are told the question is asked to test, and probably to coax Jesus into making a statement that would disturb, disrupt, shake things up. Yet there are legal implications to this question. For us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are modern understandings that differ widely from Jesus’ day. This very question from the Pharisees also gets our attention today.

The Pharisees’ question is literally “is divorce allowed.” The correct answer is, “yes.” Jesus asks the Pharisees what Moses said about divorce. Then Jesus points out that Moses permitted divorce because of people’s “hardness of heart.” In other words, we are not the ideals that God intended and hoped for and there will be times when relationships simply fail.

But Jesus turns the question to state that if a man commits adultery against his wife, the woman “can” divorce a man. There was no provision in the Hebrew Law for a woman to divorce a man, suggesting that only the man had the say and the power. Jesus say, “Men and women are equal”. Our modern understanding of divorce makes Jesus words uncertain in our minds. We must remember that these teachings of Jesus may have made sense at that time, but times have changed and Jesus’ teachings sound harsh to our modern ears.

Divorce was allowed, but divorce was often undertaken without much thought. For women who had little social status, divorce was often unjust. These injustices

are what Jesus points out to the Pharisees. Divorce is the human way to handle a human problem – but it is not God’s way. God’s way is about love and equality.

God’s way is shown in the next part of today’s story. We are reminded of the importance of approaching life and faith with the joy, openness, and understanding of children. Jesus blesses the children, which is a powerful reminder that we too are blessed by God.

So in life, we will struggle with difficult questions. That does not mean we need to reject them, but instead approach these questions with caution, enquiry and maybe even more questions. Each question we ask may help us to understand a bit more of life, both physically and spiritually. We may explore opportunities about what is allowed. Our questions may help us to understand what is just. What is allowed and what is just are two different answers. Jesus shows us that in today’s story. Jesus also shows us the true nature of God. Regardless of the anguish and unjust of our human world, in God’s ideal world every one of us is loved by God. This understanding helps us to realize what the Spiritual world will be like. After all, we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection Hymn: VU 357 “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus” – Video**

- 1 Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,  
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:  
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,  
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.
- 2 First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,  
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;  
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,  
all in the lovelight of Jesus' face.
- 3 Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea  
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee!  
And how the Master, ready and kind,  
chided the billows and hushed the wind.

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

**Eric:** We as the church are a necessity to the wider community and through Mission and Service, to the wider world. Today as we gather together and celebrate Worldwide Communion, may we give to help those who are in need. 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:**

**People:** Gracious God, all that we have comes from you. With thankful hearts, we offer our gifts to you. Amen.

### **Invitation to Communion:**

**Eric:** Children of God, from many pasts and pathways we are gathered to this one place; a sacred space that provides homecoming and healing for all who yearn for the mystery of love to deepen and ripen in their soul.

**People:** And so we come, not in a show of strength, nor presumption of privilege. Rather to remember and be remembered; to be held and made whole by the grace of Christ, the mystery of God and the encouragement of the Spirit.

### **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:** Giver and Redeemer of life, we offer our gratitude; we lay down our defenses for a love that creates then calls us forth – often from places of imprisonment and desolation.

**People:** For you are our liberation and hope, you are our mercy and courage for the journey.

**Eric:** And so, ours is the song of countless generations who have also been captivated by your beauty and set free in your healing presence:

**People:** Holy, holy, holy is God,  
heaven and earth resound to God's glory.

Hosanna in the highest

and blest is the One who comes in God's name.

Hosanna in the highest!

### **Remembering Jesus:**

**Eric:** On this day when we take Communion with all the world, we offer these symbols of everyday life – bread for the sharing and wine for gladness of heart – we pause and pray.

**People:** We always remember a Passover in Jerusalem when Jesus borrowed an upper room, soaked and scrubbed the tired feet of others, and explained that there is a God-shaped hole in everyone's belly to be filled with love.

**Eric:** Remembering is beautiful, but there is not much taste in it. Let us fill our hunger and thirst, by sitting down here and now, as people are doing in so many places, to eat and drink, be blessed and whole.

**People:** Jesus said, "This is my body, eat this in remembrance of me" *(pause as the bread is broken)*.

**Eric:** And after that, Jesus took the cup, and said...

**People:** This is my life-blood, drink this in remembrance of me *(pause as the cup is lifted)*.

**Eric:** Christ who calls, rescues, and ennobles, fill us with your spirit of strength and compassion for all.

**People:** Equip and inspire us to be your people in this time and place. 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:** God, at times we have so many questions about why and how so much hurt, suffering and injustice happens in our world today. These are challenging questions with answers that do not work for us.

**People:** **Yet you invite us to offer our prayers to those events we lament. So we quiet our hearts and offer our prayers, knowing you God, hear us.**

**Eric:** Creator God, we give you thanks for this amazing universe and our lives in it, for friends and loved ones, for this community and the knowledge of your presence in both the good and the bad.

**People:** **We come before you today with deep concerns and many questions about our suffering world. We have so many questions and concerns about violence between nations and all who suffer because of it.**

**Eric:** We think of those we are sharing Communion with, in other countries and cultures and their suffering.

**People:** **Then we think of our own community and we have so many questions and concerns about violence within families and we pray for those who suffer because of violence.**

**Eric:** We have so many questions and concerns about earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes and we pray for those who suffer because of them.

**People:** **We have so many questions and concerns about poverty and all who suffer because of it.**

**Eric:** We question sickness and disease and ask why people need to suffer.

**People:** **We question untimely deaths and pray for those who are left to suffer with grief.**

**Eric:** We question prejudice and hatred and pray for those who live with them.

**People:** **Suffering God, you hear our prayers, and you let our cries come unto you. With your help, we will comfort and be comforted, strengthen and be strengthened, feed and be fed, shelter and be sheltered, listen and be heard, in the Name of Jesus the Christ.**

**Eric:** With Christ and through Christ, 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.*

**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:**

**God who sees us, you have welcomed us to your table and nourished us with your own self. By your Spirit, give us eyes to see where old empires need clearing away or where new heavens and new earths are being birthed and need tender care, that we might proclaim your redeeming love to the world with our hearts and hands and voices. Amen.**

### **Blessing:**

**Eric:** Even with all our questions - we know we are loved. Let us go forth boldly - to love and to serve God in every situation that faces us, 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

**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: Tom  
Allan  
Louise  
Zoe  
Becky  
Barry/ Marsha  
Francine  
Alison  
Adrein  
Bob  
Betty  
Ingrid  
Adam  
Lori  
Florence  
Tracy's Family  
Janet and Tracey

