

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – September 10th, 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: From many different kinds of soil in this land, we gather in this place, at this time. You are with us.

People: God of the earth, the land, the sky; in difficult times, on rocky ground, when the landscape seems to have changed, we gather to worship, knowing you are with us.

Eric: Find us, O God,

People: shaped by the dust grounded in hope and eager to grow, knowing you are with us.

Eric: Come let us worship, knowing God is with us.

Opening Hymn: VU 333 “Love Divine, All Loves...”

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver;
let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation

perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise. **

Opening Prayer:

People: The land is inviting us in - to join in the song, deep within the earth. Land cries out from the ground, words of grief, but there is a rhythm of hope. We are not separate. Our hearts beat together as one. Where could we go to remove ourselves from the Spirit of Life? Nowhere. God is under our feet. God is over our heads. God is here. Amen!

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 345 "Come Children, Join to Sing"

Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!
Let all with heart and voice,
saved by God's gracious choice,
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
Christ calls his people friends,
the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!

Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
The whole creation o'er
let all God's love adore,
singing for evermore: Hallelujah! **

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 149:

A New Song of Praise

Shout praises to the Lord! Sing him a new song of praise when his loyal people meet.

People of Israel, rejoice because of your Creator.

People of Zion, celebrate because of your King.

Praise his name by dancing and playing music on harps and tambourines.

The Lord is pleased with his people, and he gives victory to those who are humble.

All of you faithful people, praise our glorious Lord! Celebrate and worship.

Praise God with songs on your lips. Shout praises to the Lord!

Scripture: Matthew 18: 15 - 20

If one of my followers sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won back a follower. But

if that one refuses to listen, take along one or two others. The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true by two or more witnesses. If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector. I promise you God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth, but God will not allow anything you don't allow. I promise that when any two of you on earth agree about something you are praying for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you.

Reflection: “Engage the Land”

We as humans are just one part of the story of God’s wonderful creation. The idea of land is the place where we are “grounded”. When we meet someone - we like to know where they come from or where they live. Knowing where helps us to feel more comfortable in learning more about them – or maybe not.

We also want to know where people are born. That grounds them to a community, and also to a particular family. This is quite important for genealogy and government records. Next to your name is your birthplace – the ground you where born on. The land you where born on is important to ground your life.

We are being asked this week during our scripture stories to reconnect with Land. Many humans take land for granted. Some people think farmers take land for granted, but being a farm kid, I know how much my dad worked to know his land, and how to make the best use out of its bounty. Many Rural Conferences share ground breaking learning about how the land works well with crop rotations and help us as humans to understand the land better. Ridgetown College is always doing research to make farming and land practices sustainable and friendly to the land, while increasing crop production.

First Nations folks have taught us about how the land is a gift from the Great Spirit, Mother Earth or as Christians we say God. The First nation folks valued the land, and cared for it, as it gave them their very life. I believe that most landowners do the same thing. Our land ownership today is based on the European governance model where land is divided into plots, with deeds which is usually sold to the highest bidder - for at least a period of time – after you die, the land is transferred to another for another period of time.

We are aware that some corporations have not cared for the land as much as they could have, but ethical land practices in the 21st century have slowed down land exploitation. We likely do have more work to do.

Our faith history and the Bible begins with the story of Land. “In the beginning God created earth.” What happens when we have a discrepancy over land? We do

understand that God created all things including land, water and everything else. Jesus suggests ways that we humans can work out our differences. Yet human understanding of reality is constantly evolving. We know so much more about the earth and how it works. We know more about how to breed plants to grow big healthy and lots of food. We have learnt how to control weeds – although they continue to challenge us as farmers. Where two or three are gathered, the consensus is usually closer to the truth, than it might be if just one person is looking at the situation by themselves.

Land grounds us in many ways. Even in our faith the land that our church sits on is considered sacred. Land is a deep source of life, grounding, nurturing, sustaining and hosting living things. What grounds our faith life?

Today's Psalm speaks of being known by God even before being formed in our mother's womb. This may also remind us that according to those beginning scriptures, man was created from the dust of the earth – from the land.

What about our Spiritual Birth? Is our Spiritual longings intuitive? Is it hereditary? Is it learnt? What is the significance of our baptism?

When we are baptized, we are welcomed into the Universal Church of Christ. We are recognized in ritual that we are a "Child of God". Our Holy Scriptures tell us that we are "God's own" – that God knows us before we are formed inside the womb, and that we are loved by God.

In baptism, we as the faith community, offer the baptism ritual as the opportunity for us to see, feel and experience God's blessing for this child. We offer the element of water –which sustains all life, to mark the child to receive the birth of their spiritual life. We as the church offer the ritual - God offers the power of the Holy Spirit in their life.

We do not know what happens to the child in the baptism service, but if we reflect upon another sacrament that we Christians partake in – Communion, we get the picture. When we as people of faith take communion, we again are offering the space for God to connect and touch us. When that happens – we know it. We trust that same blessing is offered to this child in baptism.

It is in our relationship with the Trinity of God, Jesus the Christ and the Holy Spirit that enables us to live our lives of strong and purposeful faith. It is then that, "We are not alone". God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 232 “Joyful, Joyful We Adore You”

Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Thank You for all your gifts. 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: What can we offer, what can we bring, O God? You are the source of all that is. You are the hope on which we stand. You are the promise that reaches out to an open hand, and leads and holds us securely. We bring our hopes, our dreams, and our fears. Use these gifts to build a world of enough. In Jesus' Name, we pray. 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:

Closing Hymn: VU 325"Christ is Made the Sure..."

Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one,
holy Zion's help for ever,
and its confidence alone.

To this temple where we call you,
come, O Lord of hosts, today;
with your faithful loving-kindness
hear your servants as they pray,
and your fullest benediction
shed within its walls alway.

Here bestow on all your servants
what they ask of you to gain,
what they gain from you for ever
with the blessed to retain,
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.

Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son,
laud and honour to the Spirit,
ever three and ever one,
one in might, and one in glory,

while unending ages run.**

Benediction:

Eric: Go from this place, bringing hope and healing to those we meet this week. The Holy Spirit is always with us, 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
Elaine

Gary

Janet
David
Dave

Alice
Mike and Janice
Leslie
David
Johnston Family
Charlton Family