

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges *St. Luke's 120th Anniversary Service – September 19th, 2021*

Prelude: “Largo, from Symphony No. 9, Norvak” – by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Today is St. Luke's 120th Anniversary Service.

Our local Food Banks are getting ready to send kids back to school and are short of school appropriate snacks. You are welcome to make a cash donation to your church to be forwarded. St. Luke's is matching donations received, and Becky Preston has offered to purchase and deliver snacks to Merlin, Wheatley and Blenheim Food Banks.

Please vote in our upcoming Federal Election tomorrow, Monday September 20th.

The Chatham Kent Alzheimer Society is hosting a series of online Zoom Fall workshops – Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 am. Also check out their Tuesday Talks – by Zoom last Tuesday of each month from noon to 1 pm.

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.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: Through sun and shadow, God's love will remain.

People: Through torrent and thunder, God's love will remain.

Eric: Through fog and flurries, God's love will remain.

People: Through breeze and bluster, God's love will remain.

Eric: We have experienced each of these conditions over the past 120 years.

People: Physically and metaphorically – God's love has remained.

Eric: Through rain and rainbow, God's love will remain.

People: Rainbows offer a promise for future life. God's love will remain into our future here at St. Luke's.

Eric: Through all that life brings, whether in the community or in the church, God's love will remain.

People: Let us worship God.

Opening Prayer:

Holy One, you cradle each of us with remarkable hope. You wrap each of us in a deep, mysterious love. You wipe each tear away with infinite gentleness. You celebrate each of us

for the one-of-a-kind beauty we each possess. We have experience these gifts here at St. Luke's over the years. May we celebrate these blessings with open spirits and grateful hearts. Amen.

Opening Hymn: VU 307 "Touch the Earth Lightly" (Video)

- 1 Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.
- 2 We who endanger, who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!
- 3 Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.
- 4 God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
using us gently and making us one..

Scripture: Jeremiah 4: 23 - 28 "Look to the Sky" - by

Prophets are people whose ears and hearts are so open to God that they know what God wants them to say to God's people. A long, long time ago, when people had been hurting each other and creation for a long time, and dishonouring the gifts God had given them, God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, and Jeremiah spoke to God's people. If Jeremiah were speaking today, this is what he might have said:

Pay attention – your actions have consequences. I looked on the earth and saw a wasteland of wars, hunger and domination. Yet I see pockets of faithful people working against these heartbreaks.

I see land ravaged for oil and minerals. I see toxic rivers from chemicals. Yet I also see my people trying to reverse these devastations.

I looked to the heavens: I see clouds, and even clouds of pollution mixed in. I see society with technology making changes to pollution levels.

Pay attention – your actions have consequences.

I looked on the mountains and I see mining, roads and ski slopes. I see adventurers hiking on trails, some leaving their garbage and others stopping to pick it up.

I looked at the air with birds, some species missing – others that have adapted to your ways.

I looked at the land, again some creatures multiplying, others declining.

I look at the waters and see fish swimming around plastics – yet on the shores people are picking up and recycling plastics.

Pay attention – your actions have consequences.

I looked at the fruitful land. Forests and fields used for human life, with many looking after the soil and reforestation, knowing that nothing can grow in soil drained of nutrients.

I looked at the cities; the crime, the hurt and anger unleashed. Yet I see communities of faith reaching out to the poor and disadvantaged – help as they can.

Listen! God is speaking to us...

Pay attention – your actions have consequences.

No matter what happens in your daily life, this is not the end.

Look to the sky, there will be morning and night – Each morning the sun will rise. Each day, I will be with you. I will not leave you alone.

Look to the sky and see what you have done. Keep working with me to make it beautiful.

Look to the sky and ask forgiveness for the pain and hurt you've brought to creation.

Together we continue to recreate.

Look to the sky and remember my (God's) constant and generous love.

Look to the sky and remember the beauty and wonder of creation.

Look to the sky and do your part to make the world "The Kingdom of God".

Message: "The Sky's the Limit"

Many times in our lives we are awe awestruck by the beauty of God's creation. There are times when we are awestruck at the wonder of our relationship with God. It comes like a pleasant surprise or it could come as a harsh reminder. May we look to the sky and notice creation in the heavens; the mystery of the clouds, the wish upon the stars, and in the warmth of the sun. May we be reminded today that these 120 years of faithful history of St. Luke's is also thanks to God and God's special relationship with each of us. That in our faith we have been a part of the South Raleigh Community for so many years – over a century and many more years before this building was actually built.

Folks pass this church daily on their way to work or home. Do they recognize that St. Luke's is an active church? Many times churches silently do what they do in a community and folks know they are the church when they need the church. Our fundraiser dinners are a open door to the community to come and see who we are. At the same time they are helping us to live out our ministry in their very community.

One Monday morning coming home from Blenheim, I was driving north on Bloomfield. As I rounded the corner at the 16th I was struck by a vivid rainbow just slightly to the road side of St. Luke's. I pulled into the parking lot and framed St. Luke's into the picture of the rainbow. It was an awaking of the beauty of God's creation. The very thought I remember is how the rainbow is a promise from God.

In that vision, not only did I see and marvel at the beauty of the rainbow, but also marveled at my relationship with God, and that we are never far apart.

The sky is likely the biggest thing most of us see daily; if we take notice of it, rather than taking the sky for granted. Sunrises over the waters of Lake Erie or sunsets over the waters of Lake Huron, remind us of the vastness of the sky. On a cloudy day, we can lay on the ground and look at the clouds and see images created by the cloud formations – images that are always changing from one day to the next. On a windy day we can see different levels of clouds passing under each other. We can see those dark clouds coming that tell us it is going to rain. We can marvel at the clear blue sky on a clear day and wonder what's beyond what we can see with the naked eye?

Then later at night in the dark, we can see the stars – on a good clear night millions of stars – way too many to count. We can see and identify those stars that are brighter and/or in formations. We can marvel at the Harvest Moon, the Blue moon or the red moon – each reminding us of the seasons – maybe even the seasons of life. Lighted by the moon we can see the cloud formations at night - a whole new experience from the daytime visions. Night brings it own offerings of beauty to the beholder.

Can we compare St. Luke's to the sky? We do have different times of active ministries at St. Luke's, and we can recount the many times of celebrations and the times of saying good bye to dear friends. We have baptized the new born, and sent our teenagers off to college, university or to a new job in life somewhere across this vast country of Canada. We have celebrated marriages, and marriage renewals, as well as special milestones in our family lives. In the past, the Church hall was used regularly for Community showers – wedding and baby showers. It was used for community meetings and a place for the community to gather.

There are times such as Christmas Eve where the community gathers to share in worship celebrating the birth of the Christ Child. The folks at St. Luke's have been responsible for the Easter SONRise Service, with early morning traffic control and helping at the Lake, but also the crew back at the church preparing the Easter SONRise breakfast, which we all enjoy after the Service. The church is decorated with the fruits of the gardens at Thanksgiving, and with flowers making special occasions. The 100th Anniversary twenty years ago brought several crafters in the congregation together to create the 100th Anniversary quilt. Created in images of landscape surrounding St. Luke's of what it may have looked like in 1901. The horse shed was included in the image as in 1901, cars were not really invented yet.

St. Luke's for at least 50 years after this building was built in 1901, has been the community hub for South Raleigh Community. Today it still is that community hub but in different ways, as community needs have changed over the years.

Today's reading describe the sky in very different ways; the reading laments the sky's destruction, and celebrates the sky's place as part of Creation. The reading remind us that we as human beings are not in control, a reality that is both terrifying and liberating at the same time. Yet the reading also reminds us that folks are working (many times in the background) to correct the wrongs we have done. Some of these wrongs are evident so many years later, and we are taking action today.

That is the story of our country churches - which includes St. Luke's. For 120 years this building has been at these four corners of Bloomfield and the Fifteenth Line, silently being the church and lifting its presence when needed by the community. As humans, we take so many things for granted; the sky, the sunrises and sunsets, the rainbows, the clouds, the moon and the stars of the night. We may also at times take our church for granted until it is needed and then we too become that driving force to help the community, the world, and the environment. We are not alone. We have our relationships with God, the world and with each other. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Happy 120th Anniversary St. Luke's. May God bless your work and keep you strong, ready and willing! Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 289 "It Only Takes a Spark" – Video

- 1 It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing:
that's how it is with God's love,
 once you've experienced it:
you spread God's love to everyone,
you want to pass it on.
- 2 What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees
 are budding,
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
that's how it is with God's love,
 once you've experienced it:
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring,
you want to pass it on.
- 3 I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found -

on God you can depend, it matters not where
you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountain top;
I want my world to know:
the Lord of love has come to me,
I want to pass it on.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We as the church are a necessity to the wider community that we serve. St. Luke's has faithfully served the community of South Raleigh for at least 120 years. We give to help those 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, we thank you for your many gifts to us: the gift of faith, of community, of presence; while being the church, while preparing and serving meals, while sewing and quilting, while collecting for food banks and Christmas Baskets, for sharing compassion to those who are grieving. We are reminded of your presence when the cool breeze blows through St. Luke's stained glass windows on a hot summer day. These gifts, and many more, have filled this sanctuary of St. Luke's for over a century. We now offer these gifts in response as a sign of our gratitude and a gesture of our love. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: Creator God, along with Jeremiah, we lament the destruction of community, earth and sky.

People: We pray that your Holy Spirit will be with us as we work towards the "Kingdom of God".

Eric: We thank you for the many years that St. Luke's has reached out in the community and offered gifts of help and compassion.

People: We pray for all of the people and places that are suffering in crisis; for communities where there is conflict; for neighbourhoods filled with the smoke and ash of wildfires; for people who live in daily despair or depression.

Eric: We thank you for the opportunities for St. Luke's to help around the world with gifts to Mission and Service – to be a part of a worldly presence, as we all live under the same sky.

People: Creator God, show us how to step back and allow Creation to flourish; guide us to help in reducing our damage to your wonderful creation.

Eric: Help us to co-create with you, to care for Earth and sky and all creatures therein; and how to use our voices to take action against the wrongs of this world.

People: We continue to look to the sky, the movement of the sun, clouds, moon, and stars. May we acknowledge your mystery around us.

Eric: Receive all our prayers this day, as we celebrate St. Luke's Anniversary – a time to look forward in hope, and a time to recall the past in love.

People: Hear our concerns and our dreams; hear our deep desire to reflect your love to you, to each other, and all of creation.

Eric: This we pray, as we offer Jesus' 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.*

Blessing:

Eric: Grace to you and peace. May the rain of kindness fall upon our faith communities, especially St. Luke's as we celebrate the 120th Anniversary. May each cloud spark our imaginations. May the light of the stars remind you we are not alone, 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: "Jupiter From the Planets, Hoist" – 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	Tracy
	Louise	Lori
	Zoe	Florence
	Becky	Rick Maynard's Family
	Barry/ Marsha	
	Francine	
	Alison	
	Adrein	
	Bob	
	Betty	
	Ingrid	
	Adam	
	Audrey and the Dawson Family	