

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

St. Luke's 119th Anniversary – September 20th, 2020

Prelude: “Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning folks. Last Sunday recording from Talbot Street was good – we did learn a few things such as the window over the organ whiteouts the video, and the pulpit light is part of the picture. Today's service is from St. Luke's as we are celebrating St. Luke's 119th Anniversary. We are learning as we go.

We met this last Thursday at St. Andrew's and Talbot Street to consider what we need to do to reenter the building for Services. We wish to live record during the Services to keep those who are not comfortable or able to come in the church building - a sense of Sunday Worship. St. Luke's Church Board will be meeting this Monday at 7 pm to see what needs to be done at St. Luke's.

Thanksgiving Sunday in our goal for reopening our Church Buildings depending on current Health Regulations.

Last week we talked about The United Way is collecting socks and underwear for the homeless (mainly men) this fall before the cold weather hits us. Usually socks and underwear are not available at the Thrift Stores, hence the collection. Several folks have shared that they have picked up underwear and socks for the homeless.

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: Today we continue with the Season of Creation.

People: Today we share stories of wilderness or the Outback.

Eric: This is the day that we set aside to look beyond ourselves.

People: This is the day we remember the grace, wisdom, grandeur, and experience of the nature world.

Eric: Today, we also share stories of the history of wilderness we have encounter as St. Luke's United Church.

People: Especially as when St. Luke's opened 119 years ago, the church was surrounded by wilderness of trees and forest. Today we share the stories of 119 years of ministry at St. Luke's.

Eric: For many more years than 119, we have been in partnership with St. Andrew's – as the South Buxton Pastoral Charge.

People: So much of the wilderness we have encountered together. There is support in numbers. Let us learn together what the wilderness teaches us about ourselves.

Eric: Come, let us worship, together.

Hymn: VU 229 "God of the Sparrow"

- 1 God of the sparrow God of the whale
God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe
How does the creature say Praise
- 2 God of the earthquake God of the storm
God of the trumpet blast
How does the creature cry Woe
How does the creature cry Save
- 3 God of the rainbow God of the cross
God of the empty grave
How does the creature say Grace
How does the creature say Thanks
- 4 God of the hungry God of the sick
God of the prodigal
How does the creature say Care
How does the creature say Life
- 5 God of the neighbour God of the foe
God of the pruning hook
How does the creature say Love
How does the creature say Peace
- 6 God of the ages God near at hand
God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy
How do your children say Home

Opening Prayer:

Creator God, help us to open our minds and hearts to the grandeur of our creation. Help us to remember that even when we are a rural church in a declining rural population, you still call us to be your hands and feet in South Raleigh. We are not alone. We are part of your wide ministry for our world. We are part of the history of the church born out of the wilderness here in South Raleigh. May we discern our ministry for each other and learn from our ancestors and their time in the wilderness that surrounded St. Luke's. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Romans 8: 18 – 27 – (in story form)

Today's Bible story is part of a letter that Paul wrote to the Romans. Many people lived in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. Paul was not always a follower of Jesus; he had been an enemy of the Christians and had them put in prison, taken them to court, and sometimes hurt them. Paul heard God's voice speaking to him when he was travelling to Damascus to arrest Christians and became a follower of Jesus. The Christians couldn't believe that this was the same man. Paul had two names. He was known by his Hebrew name Saul and also known by his Greek name Paul. Paul relied on the Holy Spirit to guide him and give him strength and hope; he wanted to share this with the new Christians. Paul wanted all people, even all creation, to hope and look forward to a wonderful future.

Dear friends,

We are all groaning in pain because we feel the hurt in our world. It seems all the world is in pain right now; it seems Earth is filled with sadness. This will not last forever. God has plans for good things for all creation. Wait for the good things that God has in mind.

When things are hard, it can be hard to wait, but we are not alone as we wait. We have each other, and we have the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will comfort and help us as we pray and wait, even helping us to know for what we should pray. The Holy Spirit knows what we need and prays for us with deep, deep sighs that speak right into God's heart.

May we all pray that through us God brings healing and happiness to all.

Message: "Seeing God in the Wilderness / Outback"

We are celebrating the Season of Creation, and today's focus is on the wilderness. Back when St. Luke's was created, wilderness or trees and forests surrounded this building. This building may have given a sense of order for this young community of faithful believers as they farmed in the wilderness – not only in the trees, but also in the fact they were miles away from anyone else.

Yet we see in the wild, a beautiful and changing world – especially as the fall colours come on the trees. This is beyond our understanding. In the wilderness, we find wonder and awe. Thinking back 119 years ago, we fantasize what it would be like to live in the middle of the wilderness. Yet in times of trouble or death, we as a faith community mourned together, and in times of joy, we rejoice together. That is the glue that holds our rural communities together.

Many Biblical readings depict the wilderness as a place of spiritual sustenance. We know the story of Jesus heading into the wilderness as he prepares for ministry. Today's reading is from Romans, and we are reminded - all creation is one. What might we learn from the wilderness about God – like Jesus did?

Our manta is, "We are not alone". Paul is telling us that today, in a letter he wrote to the Romans. That what the Rural Church is all about – sharing life and faith together in whatever comes towards us. In the wilderness of the countryside around St. Luke's and in the wilderness of being afar from any town, St. Luke's folks look after each other when they gathered for Sunday afternoon service or on Sunday night, as they gathered. Chicken dinners and potlucks were a time of coming together to

share food and fellowship. Freshly baked pies or butter tarts were always a welcome favourite. If your wife couldn't cook a pie, no problem you could get some at the church. I am sure the ladies would gather and teach one another how to bake, cook and sew. That's what Rural Church Communities just did – they supported each other.

Although we may fantasize today about wilderness like 120 years ago, we have the challenge in modern day society that the concept of wilderness is something we understand as removed from human life - likely because very few of us live in a modern day wilderness. I know I won't live well in the wilderness – I have very little wilderness skills. But it will be much easier if a bunch of you went with me. Together I may know something about this, and you may know something about that, and with all of us we can support each other and get along reasonably well.

That's what it was like in the 1900's - everyone working together to better the common community. Our community heritage has grown out of the fact that, "We are not alone!" We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: VU 288 "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

- 1 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!*
- 2 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.
*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!*
- 3 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.
*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!*

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: God provides us with learning from unexpected places. We are blessed by the beautiful nature that surrounds us including the wilderness that created the fertile lands that surround our church building. In everything we do, including celebrating the Anniversary of St. Luke's, we honour all the blessings our ancestors and us today have received. Today, we honour those gone who built this church, by keeping ministry alive and well in South Raleigh. 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:

We are called to step out beyond our homes and to see our world, in all its vastness, including the ministry that happens in our own neighbourhoods. May God bless us and our gifts to do the work of ministry in this place. In the name of Jesus, 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:

Eric: God of the wilderness, we pray that we can better aim to protect, live with, and defend the wilderness at the core of our beings and around the world. O Lord, hear our prayer.

People: We pray for the restoration of full and flourishing life across the world, in places that have seen destruction from humans and natural disasters. O Lord, hear our prayer.

Eric: Help us to remember our connection with all elements of creation, and to embrace that connection with exuberance, joy, and our full energy. O Lord, hear our prayer.

People: Help us to see how the wilderness helped our ancestors to work together to form this wonderful community. May we know – we are not alone. O Lord, hear our prayer.

Eric: Help us to remember those whom we have been connected with throughout the years – those folks that we shared laughter and joy, fears and grief. O Lord, hear our prayer.

People: We pray that we as part of the community of South Raleigh, that we can work for community betterment and social goodwill. That we do these good works together. O Lord, hear our prayer.

Eric: Help us to be the glue in this community. Help our church here at St. Luke's be a light in the middle of the wilderness of life. O Lord, hear our prayer.

People: We as faithful people gather this community in prayer each and every week. Through us may God bring healing and happiness to all. O Lord, hear our prayer.

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:

Eric: We are alive, we are whole, and we are members of this great community. Let us go forth, to serve, love, and nourish this world, 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 To The Lord" – Christie Coatsworth