

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost – September 24<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca)

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

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Come to remember all that is between us and God, not just us.

**People:** **Come to remember that the promise reaches to Forest and Land.**

**Eric:** Remember the promise runs through the Wilderness.

**People:** **Let us look at the waters of creation, and feel the water tickle our toes and know that water is vital for life.**

**Eric:** In the waters of life, let us remember our baptisms.

**People:** **May we be nourished by the waters of life.**

**Eric:** Let us come and worship the giver of all life.

### **Opening Hymn: VU 710 “Shall We Gather at the River”**

Shall we gather at the river,  
where bright angel feet have trod;  
with its crystal tide for ever  
flowing by the throne of God?  
*Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.*

Ere we reach the shining river,  
lay we every burden down;  
grace our spirits will deliver,  
and provide a robe and crown. R

Soon we'll reach the shining river,  
soon our pilgrimage will cease,  
soon our happy hearts will quiver  
with the melody of peace. R \*\*

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People: Flow with us, God, through the rushing waters, and among the deep silent pools. Acknowledge our many sources and outlets for sharing our gifts as we come together to find all that grows, nourished by the waters of life from the River of Life. This we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.**

**Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:**

**Children's Hymn: VU 577 "I've Got Peace Like a River"**

I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river,  
    I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.  
I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river,  
    I've got peace like a river in-a my soul.

I've got joy like a fountain,  
I've got joy like a fountain,  
    I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.  
I've got joy like a fountain,  
I've got joy like a fountain,  
    I've got joy like a fountain in-a my soul.

I've got love like an ocean,  
I've got love like an ocean,  
    I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul.  
I've got love like an ocean,  
I've got love like an ocean,  
    I've got love like an ocean in-a my soul. \*\*

**Responsive Psalm: Psalm 104: 27 - 33**

All of these depend on you to provide them with food,  
**and you feed each one with your own hand, until they are full.**  
But when you turn away, they are terrified; when you end their life, they die and rot.  
**You created all of them by your Spirit, and you give new life to the earth.**  
Our Lord, we pray that your glory will last forever and that you will be pleased with what you have done.  
**You look at the earth, and it trembles. You touch the mountains, and smoke goes up.**  
As long as I live, I will sing and praise you, the Lord God.

**Scripture: Revelations 21: 1 - 5**

**I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the**

**past are gone forever. Then the one sitting on the throne said: I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted.**

**Reflection: “The River of Life”**

We are asked today to reconnect with nature, with creation, and our relationship to water specifically with the River, with the Tree of Life beside the River. All of this vision from Revelations comes from the heart of God. It is a vision of the everlasting dream God has for all of Creation, including us humans.

Trevor has shared with us the Noah story and how God makes with us humans, through Noah, a promise - a covenant, that God will not destroy the earth with another great flood. With any covenant there are two sides of responsibility. God says there will be no more great floods, but we as humans have the responsibility to preserve creation against destructive forces – maybe to preserve creation from ourselves.

Water is the most important element for life next to oxygen. Water is needed for us to stay hydrated, and water is needed for plants to grow. We use water as a symbol of new life when we baptize folks. As God provides fresh, clean water through rains and dews, we and all of creation is sustained. In recent advertisements of climate change damage repair, we are told that wetlands do a fantastic job of purifying, not only the water, but also the air and ecosystem around the wetlands.

Even the Alberta Oil Sand operators are investing billions of dollars to make the Oil Sands Climate friendly. Since 2013, the Oil Sands have reduced their CO2 emissions by 70%. Using 2019 recorded figures; Canada produces less than 1.5% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions. Of that, Canada’s oil and natural gas industry produces about 0.3% of overall global greenhouse gas emissions. Canada is committed to Net Zero emissions by 2050. Canada has promised to reduce emissions by 40 - 45% from 2005 levels by 2030. We as the church may consider this a covenant and that we are also responsible to help meet these promises. It does take all of us, public and private actors to meet this promise. It’s like God is working with us to heal the earth.

The precariousness and the cycles of life is highlighted in today’s Responsive Reading. The psalm expresses God’s power and presence within creation. God’s awesome Spirit of creation and renewal offers hope, therefore we give praise. The psalm encourages us to live in right relationship with God. In other verses in Psalm 104, which we did not read today, it talks about how God floods the ground to bring new life. We could take that as a reflection to Noah’s flood, or as a Farm Kid who

grew up beside the river each spring the Thames River would overflow the flats, and as the water retreated the grasses would grow such a bright green. We see all kinds of life near a river. God's wonderful creations can be found near water, whether it's a river or a pond. Not only in plants and foliage, but also in muskrats, fish, bunnies and maybe even beavers.

We are also reminded in scripture of how the Nile River flooded each year, which rejuvenated the soil and watered the soil. The nation of Egypt fed its people and many other nations with the crops grown on the Nile River Delta. We may have heard similar stories from the Mississippi River. In today's world of irrigation, water from the rivers is pumped to further places to water the crops in drier fields. I also understand that around the Mississippi the water is used to flood the rice fields and we are able to grow rice in North America. Availability of water creates many benefits.

Revelation gives to us another image of water – the River of Life. Revelations can be a revealing of our future. John of Pathmos presents a vision of the coming of God's reign. Will that be when we leave this earthly life and are reborn into our next life? In baptism we use water as a symbol of new life in the Spirit. That as a cup of water is needed to sustain life for humans, a dash of water is needed to sustain our Spiritual life.

In Revelation, Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from the Garden of Eden, passing the temple of God, we understand has been realized in Christ. The trees on each side of the River produce twelve kinds of fruit – a symbol of healing of the 12 tribes of Israel, and for us today - a healing of all nations. In this new creation, God creates once again a beautiful place for all of creation.

Water serves as a powerful force that can bring both destruction and new life. In Revelations, John's vision of the River of Life, calls us back into the flow of life for renewal and transformation with God. God's power is that life giving.

Water we also use to clean; our bodies, our food, our cars and our animals. In that cleaning we can keep ourselves healthy and happy. A good shower can make you feel like 100 bucks. If not, just add more cold water to your shower.

Water is also the redemption and hope of God's people. In baptism, we find renewal and strength our faith as we live life, dealing with so much injustice. Our worship will end this morning and we will leave this gathered faith community and go out into the world. May we take the vision of Revelation with us - the River of Life flowing from the throne of God, with fruit trees offering healing to all of

Creation. All of creation; includes you and I, and all of Creation includes everyone else you might meet this week – including animals, plants, trees – all of Creation. You might meet someone this week who is having a tough time - could you share the vision of the River of Life? Remind them that God is always reaching out to heal our hearts – using the images of those beautiful fruit trees growing beside the River. We are not alone, God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 453 “Out of Deep...”**

Out of deep, unordered water  
God created land and life;  
world of bird and beast, and later,  
twosome people, husband, wife.  
*There is water in the river  
bringing life to tree and plant.  
Let creation praise its giver:  
there is water in the font.*

Water on the human forehead,  
birthmark of the love of God,  
is the sign of death and rising;  
through the sea there runs a road. R

Standing round the font reminds us  
of the Hebrews' climb ashore.  
Life is hallowed by the knowledge:  
God has been this way before. R. \*\*

**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:** God of thriving life, we thank you for water that cares for and sustains all Creation. May we follow your example, offering thriving lives to care for one another and all of Creation. 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 670 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"**

Precious Lord, take my hand,  
lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
through the storm, through the night,  
lead me on to the light:  
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear,  
precious Lord, linger near,  
when my life is almost gone,  
hear my cry, hear my call,  
hold my hand lest I fall:  
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears,  
and the night draws near,  
and the day is past and gone,  
at the river I stand,  
guide my feet, hold my hand:  
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home. \*\*

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** May the elements of creation, offer you hope, love, and faith, as we serve this world, 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**