

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Labour Day Sunday – September 3rd, 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: Come through the boundary of the night into the light of this new day.

People: Come to remember what is under your feet, and be surprised by what is being planted.

Eric: Let us grow together in our praise and delight, feeling the wind tickle our branches, and the groundwater feeding our roots.

People: Let us move like the trees of the forest, in this gentle breeze to live and move and have our being.

Eric: Let us find the beauty and wonder in God's wonderful Creation as we worship together.

Opening Hymn: VU 296 "This is God's Wondrous World"

This is God's wondrous world,
and to my listening ears
 all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.

This is God's wondrous world;
I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.

This is God's wondrous world:
the birds their carols raise;
 the morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world:
God shines in all that's fair;
 in the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.

This is God's wondrous world:
O let me ne'er forget

that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world:
why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring:
God reigns, let earth be glad! **

Opening Prayer:

People: Grow with us, God, to understand what it means not only for us to be your Children, but to share Creation with the trees and rocks and creatures creeping, crawling, flying and climbing through the Forest. Open us to find our neighbours and teachers in the Forest today. Help us to look and listen, touch and hear the goodness and wisdom you have planted. Ground us in this wisdom so we can grow more and more into your mystery. 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 139: 1 – 18

The Lord Is Always Near

You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and you know all about me.

You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts.

You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.

Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say, and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side.

I can't understand all of this! Such wonderful knowledge is far above me.

Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight?

If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there.

If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there.

Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean.

Even then your powerful arm would guide and protect me.

Or suppose I said, "I'll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over."

But you see in the dark because daylight and dark are all the same to you.

You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body, and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me.

Everything you do is marvelous! Of this I have no doubt.

Nothing about me is hidden from you! I was secretly woven together out of human sight, but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed.

Even before I was born, you had written in your book everything about me.

Scripture: Acts 17: 22 - 28

So Paul stood up in front of the council and said: "People of Athens, I see that you are very religious. As I was going through your city and looking at the things you worship, I found an altar with the words, "To an Unknown God." You worship this God, but you don't really know him. So I want to tell you about him. This God made the world and everything in it. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and he doesn't live in temples built by human hands. He doesn't need help from anyone. He gives life, breath, and everything else to all people. From one person God made all nations who live on earth, and he decided when and where every nation would be. God has done all this, so that we will look for him and reach out and find him. He isn't far from any of us, and he gives us the power to live, to move, and to be who we are. "We are his children," just as some of your poets have said."

Reflection: "Forest Sunday"

Welcome back to church. We have had quite a summer; with a tornado in the last week of July, and then lots of rain in the last week of August. These events reconnect us with the nature that surrounds us; the trees, the forests, the vegetation – we are all part of this life together. We are all of God's wonderful Creation.

As we reconnected to the trees around us after the tornado went by, we grieved how those wonderful grandiose trees had big branches snapped right off, carried over houses and laying far away in the field. We lament at the loss of those majestic maples at the Pardoville Cemetery - many reduced to much leaner versions of their splendor. We will miss their cooling shade at the July Cemetery Service.

We are reminded today that the trees and plants sustain our lives, as they process the carbon dioxide back into oxygen through photosynthesis. Without the trees and plants, all human and animal life would cease as we use up all the available oxygen.

Over these past few months, we have spent a lot of time outdoors, reading under the shade trees, feeling the cool breeze flowing across the landscape and providing us with relief on a hot summer day. On those days that it rains and when we go back

outdoors, we smell and feel the freshness in the air – it’s like our world has been scrubbed clean. Today we are invited to remember how and where we connect with nature in our daily lives. Today we have the opportunity to give God thanks; as the creator of all goodness around us, for how we appreciate the beauty of nature, and that nature has the responsibility to sustain our human lives. Thanks be to God.

In the Acts story today, we hear Paul’s speech to the Athenians. Paul has traveled to Athens and sees the statue with the inscription that reads “To an unknown God.” Paul believes that these people have this sign because they are open-hearted people – that they know there is a God, but they cannot explain it. Welcome to the world of faith.

Paul shares to the council, *“I want to tell you about God. This God made the world and everything in it. He is Lord of heaven and earth, and he doesn't live in temples built by human hands. He doesn't need help from anyone. He gives life, breath, and everything else to all people. From one person God made all nations who live on earth, and he decided when and where every nation would be. God has done all this, so that we will look for him and reach out and find him. He isn't far from any of us, and he gives us the power to live, to move, and to be who we are. “We are God’s children,” just as some of your poets have said.”*

Howard Thurman says, “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

When we are born as babies we consider that time to be when we have been “born alive”. It is the time we first arrive in the big cool world outside of the womb. It is the time when we take our first breath and start living on our own. We take food to be processed into energy – and waste. We keep our parents busy looking after our every need. We are alive, breathing, exploring, learning and a needy little infant. We are born and life sustains us in many different ways.

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” – much like the Greek poets of Athens declared 2,000 years ago. 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 226 “For the Beauty of the Earth”

For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
*God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light,
*God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,
*God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For each perfect gift sublime
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
*God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise. ***

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 Creation; you invite us to conversations that seek to develop relationships and communities of life with hope. We align our lives with your love for the whole world and join our longing with your desire for all generations to live, move, and be in you. 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 238 "O Lord My God"

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed.
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!'

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art! ***

Benediction:

Eric: As we leave this sacred space, may we always remember we are a Child of God, 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