

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Easter Sunday – April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

**Prelude:** Victory by Don Freudenburg – Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Christ has risen! **Christ has risen indeed!** Welcome to our Easter Sunday Service. This morning we started out on the Lakeshore of Lake Erie waiting for the dawn. In the waiting, we heard of Mary's walk to the tomb in a similar dawning of another day. As the light breaks the dawn apart, we hear, "The stone was rolled away. The Tomb is empty". Thoughts of body snatching come to mind. Mary runs to get the disciples. They run to the tomb, but are too busy or too confused to realize what is happening. Then Mary meets Jesus. Jesus calls Mary by her name, "Mary". The dawn of this new day is the most wonderful dawn ever! He is risen! **He is risen indeed!**

As we take each new day as they come, are we making ourselves too busy to see the miracles in each day? We have events and news that can easily consume our day. Do they bring worry? Do they bring hope? Are we like the disciples running here and there in our minds? We do not stop and notice the sun light breaking into the darkness of night.

We have ended each Holy Week service with, "God is not done yet". Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we can be assured that, "God is not done yet". That God will once again create something new out of death. God will take this pandemic we are in, and create new life. God will create new ways of doing things. God will create new ways of thinking.

So this morning, I invite you to sit back and relax and feel this beautiful new day, created just for you. Notice the stone rolled away. Notice the angels like they are expected to be there. Notice the gardener. Notice the joy of Jesus' resurrection. Because Jesus is resurrected, so are we, you and I. Thanks be to God.

Keep in touch with others and continue to share our websites; [southbuxton.ca](http://southbuxton.ca) and [talbotstreet.ca](http://talbotstreet.ca).

We are blessed in today's service with music by Christie Coatsworth. Thank you Christie. Thank YOU for reading and recording our scripture messages. It is comforting to hear the scripture read by our friends and neighbours, whom we know and care for. It's the personal touch.

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

If you wish – grab a candle to use while we share these 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:** If you continue in life as though there were no resurrection, come here! Come and see the risen Christ!

**People:** If you open your eyes but do not recognize the Holy One, come here! Come and see the risen Christ!

**Eric:** If your life is filled with mourning, come here! Come and see the risen Christ!

**People:** We come as children of the living God!

**Eric:** Come and worship the risen Christ!

## **Opening Hymn: VU 155 “Jesus Christ is Risen...”**

- 1 Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!  
our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!  
who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah!  
suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!
- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing hallelujah!  
unto Christ, our heavenly King, hallelujah!  
who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!  
sinners to redeem and save. Hallelujah!
- 3 But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!  
our salvation have procured; hallelujah!  
now above the sky he's King, hallelujah!  
where the angels ever sing. Hallelujah!
- 4 Sing we to our God above, hallelujah!  
praise eternal as God's love; hallelujah!  
praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah!  
praise the Son and Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

## **Opening Prayer:**

**Today the world is made new! Today we hear the songs of birds and angels, praising God! Today we recognize the signs of life all around us. Life that cannot be held back or destroyed; life that resists all the powers of death; life that rises triumphant! If we did not sing, this day, all of Creation would still vibrate with life. The buds would burst, the streams would chatter, the very stones would sing forth the glory of our God! Let us give all praise to the one who grants eternal life as a present possibility! Let us sing praises to the one whose love is more powerful than all the powers of this world! Praise to God, for death is conquered! Praise to God, for love endures! Praise to God, all the Earth! Praise to God, all Creation! Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## **Responsive Reading: Jeremiah 31: 1 - 6**

*Israel Will Return to God*

The Lord said: Israel, I promise that someday all your tribes will again be my people, and I will be your God.

**In the desert I was kind to those who escaped death.**

I gave them peace, and when the time is right, I'll do the same for you.

**I, the Lord, have spoken.**

Some time ago, the Lord appeared to me and told me to say:

**Israel, I will always love you; that's why I've been so patient and kind.**

You are precious to me, and so I will rebuild your nation.

**Once again you will dance for joy and play your tambourines.**

You will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria and enjoy the grapes.

**Someday those who guard the hill country of Ephraim will shout, "Let's go to Zion and worship the Lord our God."**

**Scripture: John 20: 1 – 18** *(In Story) Bob & Ruth Ann Waites*

**Angel 1:** She was here first, and I think she'll be the last to leave.

**Angel 2:** *The man, the speedy one, the one who could run in the Olympics and hesitated on the threshold...he noticed the stone rolled away and the linen wrapping...*

**Angel 1:** ...but he didn't see us.

**Angel 2:** *No. Neither did the really guilty-feeling one, the denier, though he came all the way into the tomb and even saw the cloth from Jesus' head rolled up by itself.*

**Angel 1:** They believed, but they didn't understand.

**Angel 2:** *I like that – people who believe and let the understanding wait. Yes, even if they don't see us – even if they don't believe in angels at all – it doesn't matter. Believing that Jesus rose matters – not how. But look at Mary of Magdala. She ran to get them, but they went home without her.*

**Angel 1:** At least she saw us...and listened, too. And knew we were angels.

**Angel 2:** You've got your wings in a twist, don't you? We asked her why she's weeping so hard, and she says they took him away. Do you know how she must feel – afraid that someone has stolen the body; stripped the grave clothes and stolen the body – of someone she loves?

**Angel 1:** She isn't going to leave until she finds him.

**Angel 2:** *He'll come you know – he always does – lets someone touch the wounds, sponsors an international language fest, flashes bright light on the road to Damascus, heck – twitter feed. Whatever anyone needs, really needs to believe, now or anytime in the future, is given.*

**Angel 1:** It's getting late. She'll go home.

**Angel 2:** *I bet she won't! She will stay here all night.*

**Angel 1:** There he is – looks like a gardener.

**Angel 2:** *That's appropriate since he was at the Creation of the first garden. She sees him. She doesn't know... looks like she's asking directions. No. I bet she's asking where the body's gone.*

**Angel 1:** What's he saying? It looks like one word.

**Angel 2:** *Her name. Mary. That's all he ever needs to say.*

**Angel 1:** She knows. She knows. She's reaching out. No, her hands are dropping.

**Angel 2:** *I bet he told her not to cling. Just to tell the others.*

**Angel 1:** You're right. There she goes! Straight to Jerusalem.

**Angel 2:** *And there he goes – straight to heaven.*

**Angel 1:** For the moment. He'll be back.

**Angel 2:** *Every time he's needed.*

**Angel 1:** Time for us to take off, too.

**Angel 2:** *Let's fly.*

## **Reflection: “The Angels Discuss It”**

We can just imagine the two angels at the tomb on the First Easter Sunday morning. They know what God can do. Yet they see us humans with our disbelief. We scurry around trying to figure out, “What happened”? Then when it does make sense – we scurry home. We end up missing the miracle. Maybe miracles are not to be seen in the moment – miracles need to be understood in the reflection of time and maybe even experience, as with Mary today.

These days more than ever, as we pay attention to the news, it can be easy for us to live as though every day were Good Friday. So this morning, as Christians celebrate our call to be Easter people, can seem foolish. Today’s story will remind us that we are not the first generation to face this hurdle, or even the hurdles of our day. We can learn (as the generations before us did) to see the presence of the living God right before us. They see and recognize the miracle.

The dialogue between these two angels, remind us that as humans we really haven’t changed all that much. As humans, we are a curious species, trying to understand the world in which we live. As humans, we often try to fit our understandings into the structure of our human senses and our collective memories. The angels are watching us much like a parent watches a child – not getting involved – just watching to see and to be there, if and when the child gets it. Then we either celebrate with them, or we hold them and let them cry in our arms. These can be the most extraordinary times in our parenting journeys. These short times make up for all the nights of when they were sick or rebellious. These times help us as humans to see ourselves as part of the larger human relationship. Today’s story helps us to see how our human experiences are part of larger relationship with the people with God - and with God.

Jeremiah, as our Responsive Reading this morning, recounts the Israelites’ return from exile in Babylon. Those who were on the journey to return to Jerusalem would not have experienced Jerusalem before. These are not people who remember the times of peace and joy and growth in Israel. Their experience are of life in Babylon, where for generations they were controlled by oppression, slavery, and then deportation. The Israelite People of Babylon have experienced death: death of their homeland, death of their practices of faith, and death of their very identity. We as human know that death is final.

Or do we? Do we believe death is final? Take a moment and think about how we are continually surrounded with endings that are beginnings? In our scurrying from here to there – trying to figure out this new experience based on our own senses, we become blind to the everyday miracles that surround us. Spring is all about knowing that death is not final. We quickly realize that our own senses are not the most reliable sources of new understanding - for what we think may be happening may not be even close. The angels in their conversation say right out, “They believe, but they do not understand”. That the meanings we first give to new experiences are likely not the only meaning. God is bigger, more creative, more grace-filled than we will ever be. Death is not final.

The angels also tell us of Mary’s determination to stay. Mary alone stays until the morning light breaks. In John’s gospel, light is a symbol of belief and understanding. So, while Peter and the Beloved Disciple see the empty tomb and the discarded cloths, they remain in the dark of their human perception and understanding. Yet Mary’s stillness, her willingness to remain present in a space of grief, allows the light to shine around her. Like the light of dawn, her understanding and her vision grow until she is able to experience the fullness of the Resurrection – the joy of God’s presence rather than the fear of God’s absence – which compels Mary to proclaim what she has experienced. We understand Easter, as we see Mary, running all the way back to the disciples, her cry bursting from her, “I have seen the Lord!”

God is bigger, more creative, more grace-filled than we will ever be. God is with us, in life, in death, in life after death. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

**Ministry of Music: The Church's One Foundation, 5 verses for A New Easter Hymn**

*– Christie Dawson*

### **Offering:**

We might not be able to place our money unto the offering plate, but we give of ourselves each Sunday as we also give our gifts of cash. People have been asking how they might continue to support our ministries. You are welcome to send your monthly postdated cheques to your church treasurer. We have added a ‘Donate’ page to our website at southbuxton.ca - we can accept ETransfers, credit cards, and all the information to mail cheques is there.

In this time of uncertainty, let us continue to share our wonderful gifts of compassion, empathy and love with each other. Continue to share our Spiritual gifts of prayer, of thought, of calling and checking in with others. The longer we are separated; the more we can assume that folks in our community will be affected by job loss, by being sick, or by needing to be

quarantined. We as followers of Jesus, in faith, will offer our help. If you are doing okay, consider increasing your offering and gifts to support these realities.

Let us take a moment to consider the gifts we may offer today.

**Offering Music: “Gentle Shepherd” – Lois Pratt**

**Offering Prayer:**

**Holy One, giver of life and conqueror of death, we recommit ourselves to you this day: We have witnessed your resurrection. We have been given new life. We dedicate ourselves to living as a people of peace; as a people of hope; as a people of your holy and grace-filled love. May all that we do reflect the love that you have poured out upon us: may we love all of your Creation as you have loved us, with generosity, abundance, and mercy. Alleluia! Amen.**

**Pastoral Prayer & Lord’s Prayer:**

On this Easter morning we celebrate that Jesus is risen! We have seen our God! It is by God’s grace and in God’s own holy love, we turn our hearts to the divine that surrounds and upholds us. Yet we are called, not merely to see our God, but to help make our God visible in this world: to do the work of love put into action in service to the Body of Christ. And it seems God we are reaching out and helping more these days than in our past.

And so, we pray for all for whom crucifixion still seems a clearer reality than resurrection; for those who are hungry, or unsure when and where their family’s next meal will be.

**Help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are ill or in pain; those who are swamped in bills; those who struggle to receive adequate care.

**Help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are living with mental illness, who suffer all the more from stigma and shame and social exclusion.

**Help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who work long hard days to provide for us, while risking their own health and safety.

**Help us to be your light, O Christ.**

For those who are now living in places of fear, where families are torn apart, and living with COVID-19 and its trauma is now a way of life.

**Help us to be your light, O Christ.**

Help us to learn that even in the midst of despair, there may be love; even in the midst of fear, there may be comfort; even on Good Friday, there is the seed of Easter. May we nurture God’s light and God’s love into this world that is in

desperate need of healing. May we be the active promise of new life in this community, and the blessing of God's love and grace to all who are in need. May we receive the Good News: Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed! Love has conquered death!**

May we return to the work of discipleship with glorious hearts and praising hands. In the name of the risen Christ, we pray his special 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."*

### **Invitation to Communion:**

**Eric:** Holy One, today we, as your scattered congregation, come before you in the company of the Communion of Saints, and with the power of the Risen Christ.

**People:** **In the presence of Christ the whole earth rejoices. In the beginning, God made order out of the chaos.**

**Eric:** We trust that God will make order out of our chaos, as we gather in Community.

**People:** **God's love has shaped the history of our fore parents, freedom from slavery, new relationship with the Holy One.**

**Eric:** Like the disciples at Passover, we too pray that the Holy Spirit rests upon our individual tables and our gifts of the bread and the cup.

**People:** **Like those of the early church, we pray for our need for protection and our work in the earth.**

**Eric:** May our bits of bread, grow great with your blessing.

May our cups of juice or everyday drink overflow your loving hope, now and forever more.

**People:** **Amen.**

**Eric:** We take this, our simple piece of bread, and as we hold it up, we think of Jesus' words: "Take and eat; this is my body broken for you."

**People:** **Be known to us in our bread transformed.**

**Eric:** We hold up our simple cup, and we think of Jesus' words: "Take and drink; this is my blood, poured out for you for the forgiveness of sin."

**People:** **Be known to us in our drink poured out.**

**Eric:** Be known to us as the Christ in our midst, here and everywhere. May we feel you among us and know we are in your sacred place.

**People:** **Amen.**

**Eric:** The meal is now ready!

### **Distribution of the Bread and the Wine:**

*(we can all partake as one)*

**Eric:** Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.

*(we can all partake as one)*

**Eric:** Jesus Christ, the Cup of Love.

**Easter Prayer after Communion:**

**We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world united in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Now go out into the world, aware of the presence of new life continually around you. Go out, living in the promises of the God who will not abandon us, but whose love endures now and forever more.

**People: Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed!**

**Postlude: Christus Regnat (Jesus Shall Reign) – *Christie Coatsworth***