

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Second Sunday of Easter – April 19th, 2020

Prelude: *Intermezzo, Mascagni – Christie Coatsworth*

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to our service on this Second Sunday of Easter. Thank you for the feedback of our shared Holy Week services. It was great to share with Sharon and Andrew, and also to help out with Blenheim United Service especially at such an important time in the Christian Year. One of the benefits I receive with this new technology is that I can worship with others leading the service. I also get to pick and choose what ideas they use that I feel might work with what we are doing. I learnt on our Faith Talk on Wednesday morning where the Print Shop in Tilbury are printing lawn signs thanking our Front Line Workers. Thursday, Annette and I went over and picked up four signs to put out on our lawn, and to deliver two to our friends in Erie Beach who for the past month have been thanking our Front Line Workers each evening at 7:30 with acts of making a joyful noise. Thank you for your prayers, your joyful noise and your support to our Front Line Workers. We thank our family, friends and neighbours who are on the Front Line.

Do we see the miracles in each day? Do we see the growth of new life among us? Annette's Easter Cactus bloomed beautiful pink flowers starting the week before Easter and is just finishing up now. How does that cactus know when Easter is coming? What a beautiful display it makes to tell us – it is not dead! Those little purple flowers are springing up all across our lawn. I notice them as I take my letters to the mail box. Thank you to Canada Post. We can still receive the packages that we have ordered on line. The Postal Service gives us some normality – even something to look forward to. We are so blessed, even in times of uncertainty.

We ended each Holy Week service with, “God is not done yet”. Even in the 21st 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 want you to sit back and relax and feel this beautiful new day, created just for you. Notice those little purple flowers. Notice the Easter/Christmas Cactus. Notice the daffodils springing up along the roadside. Notice the joy of picking up your daily mail. Notice all the new life that surrounds you. Jesus is risen! Jesus is alive! So are we. Thanks be to God.

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; southbuxton.ca and talbotstreet.ca.

We are blessed in today's service with music by Christie Coatsworth. Thank you Christie for the prelude, the hymn, and the postlude. Thank YOU to all the readers for reading and recording our service 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: We are gathered to remember whose we are.

People: We come as we are, with questions and doubts.

Eric: We are gathered to be reminded who it is that makes our hearts glad.

People: We come, seeking paths of life and fullness of joy.

Eric: We are gathered as part of God’s people, aware of those who are no longer living and those missing.

People: We come in hope, for in God’s presence there is fullness of joy!

Eric: We come to worship together.

Opening Hymn: VU 211 “Crown Him with Many Crowns” – played by Christie Coatsworth

- 1 Crown him with many crowns,
 the Lamb upon his throne:
 hark, how the heavenly anthem drowns
 all music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
 and hail him as thy matchless King
 through all eternity.
- 2 Crown him the Lord of life,
 who triumphed o'er the grave,
 and rose victorious in the strife
 for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
 who died eternal life to bring,
 and lives that death may die.
- 3 Crown him the Lord of peace,
 whose power a sceptre sways
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
 absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end;
and round his pierced feet
 fair flowers of Paradise extend
 their fragrance ever sweet.

4 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

Opening Prayer:

Dear God, we need you. We need your help to open our hearts and minds to trust you with our lives, with all we hold dear. We hold out our hands to you and open them, releasing our fears and hopes into your great mercy and love. We hold out our hands to you, to be grasped by you and held within your great mercy and love. We hold out our hands to you, to be led by you in your ways of life and peace. Amen.

Scripture: John 20: 19 – 31 *(By, Ken, Ann, Dani and Jordan)*

NARRATOR: It was evening on that day that we call the day of resurrection, the first day of the week. The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Judeans. Jesus came and stood among them.

JESUS: Peace be with you.

NARRATOR: After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Jesus shows his hands and side to the congregation by holding them out and pointing.

Then the disciples rejoiced.

THE DISCIPLES: *shout words such as “Praise be to God,” “Hallelujah” “Wow” ...*

The narrator holds up hands to signal when to stop.

JESUS: Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. And as I breathe on you, receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

NARRATOR: But Thomas, who was called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the disciples told him,

THE DISCIPLES: We have seen the Lord!

THOMAS: *(speaking to the disciples)* Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.

NARRATOR: A week later, Jesus’ disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them.

JESUS: *(speaking to the disciples)* Peace be with you. *(Now speaking to Thomas)* Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe. *(Extends hand, gestures to side.)*

THOMAS: *(speaking to Jesus)* My Lord and my God!

JESUS: *(speaking to Thomas)* Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.

NARRATOR: Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection: “Trust, Then Rejoice!”

May God open our hearts and minds to see new life among us. May God help us to trust in God with our lives. May we know God’s joyful presence in every part of our lives.

This morning is one week after we have celebrated our hallelujahs of Easter morning last Sunday. We’ve had a week to think deeply about what has taken place. We, in the 21st century, are removed from the actual story by 2,000 years of time and the fact that we are on the other side of the globe. But the disciples are fearfully gathered together in what was likely the Upper Room. It is not safe for them to be seen in public. They are grieving the death of their leader – the one whom they had trusted and followed. Now the disciples are lost without a purpose.

Then in bursts Mary, who tells them the tomb is empty. Simon Peter and “the other disciple” go and see the empty tomb. Did they understand what had happened? Then when they get back to the Upper Room they share with the other disciples about what they had seen and what it may have all meant. Then in bursts Mary again, who says, “I have seen the Lord!” Mary is obedient to Jesus as she then shares Jesus’ words of instruction to the disciples, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God”. They return to their discussion, “What does this all mean?”

Later, then in bursts Jesus – right into the middle of their locked room - Jesus’ first words to the disciples are, “Peace be with you!” Jesus tells the disciples, “As the Father sent me – I send you. Go with the Holy Spirit! When you forgive sins – they will be forgiven. If you retain their sins – they will be retained”.

Poor Thomas. He was out that night. He did not see Jesus. When Thomas gets back to the Upper Room, the disciples tell him, “We have seen the Lord!” Oh no, not this again, Mary has already put us through this rollercoaster twice – now you want to lead me astray! Give it up, you guys. I won’t believe until I can see the nail holes and place my finger into Jesus’ pierced side”. I can imagine Thomas storming out to take time to settle his nerves. What a rollercoaster the disciples have experienced. “What is truth?” Thomas must be asking himself, much like Pilate asked Jesus a week before, “What is truth?”

Sometime later, Thomas returns to the Upper Room. You could slice the tension with a dull knife. Then once again Jesus bursts into the locked room. Jesus' first words to the disciples are, "*Peace be with you!*" Then Jesus looks right at Thomas and says, "*Thomas, put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe*".

Thomas immediately replies, "My Lord and my God!" Immediately Thomas has no doubts. Immediately Thomas believes. Thomas does not need to touch his hands or put his finger in his side. No! Jesus has called his name, "Thomas". Once you are called by Name – you are a believer.

Even after Jesus called Thomas by name, Jesus asks the question that is actually for us today; "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe*". In reflection - It is about seeing, but it's also about hearing Jesus' voice calling your name.

We are also in locked rooms. Even for a similar reason – we don't want people to come and hurt us – to endanger us. We can come and go, but we need to do it privately. We cannot run out our front door and invite all our friends over. We can take a car ride, but just to get out. We cannot stop and have a coffee. We cannot go to a restaurant for lunch. We can go out, then just back home. I do not get the impression that people are hunkering down in fear. People are hunkering down to be cautious. We all know this is temporary, and this too will end.

Yet it can be a bit scary because we do not know how long, or whether we are really safe, which may lead us to wonder what to believe, and whom to trust. When we gather as the church, be it for worship or other church life events, we come with differing lives and experiences, yet as we call each other by name, we create a trust with each other. Right now, we are meeting electronically. Last Sunday as I helped Blenheim United with their Service, it was so comforting to have each other see one another, but what touched me was when they called each other by name. I know we may not be able to do a Zoom call with everyone, but when we connect by phone, we are calling each other by name. That call helps to settle us and helps to keep the trust we have with one another. That is the reason we must call each other.

When the Holy One we believe in offers us his greeting of, "Peace be with you," we are invited to receive God's gift of presence with joy and trust. We know we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

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: "We Give Thee But Thy Own"

We give thee but thine own,
what e'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O God, from thee.

Offering Prayer:

God of life, in whose presence is the fullness of joy, we offer and entrust to you these portions of our labours, talents, and time. May you receive and use them and us to provide life, hope, and joy to those in need in our world, to your glory. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

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 is love; even in the midst of fear, there is comfort; even in doubt, there is trust. Trust in you God, and trust in one another. 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 share the Good News: Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen indeed! Love has conquered death!

In trust, 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."*

Benediction:

Eric: As we have gathered at our respective places, we have gathered in Christ's name, - God is with us. So as we go forth (when we can), we go, knowing we go not alone, and that Christ speaks to us as in times of long ago, "Peace be with you.", now and forever more.

Postlude: Jerusalem, C.H.H. Parry – *Christie Coatsworth*