

# **South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges**

***Third Sunday of Easter – April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020***

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to our service on this Third Sunday of Easter. Today Roy Dusten and I will share with you the background of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. Welcome Roy and Wendy to our service today. So we'll talk about, "What does a Licensed Lay Worship Leader do? How do you become a Licensed Lay Worship Leader? What is it like as the Licensed Lay Worship Leader prepares the service for a congregation who they may not know?"

Continue to keep in touch with others and to share our websites; at [southbuxton.ca](http://southbuxton.ca), [talbotstreet.ca](http://talbotstreet.ca), and [blenheimunitedchurch.com](http://blenheimunitedchurch.com).

We are blessed once again to have Christie Coatsworth offer the music for today's service. Thank you Christie. 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.

## **What is a LLWL?** *(gleamed from the UCC website)*

Many lay people are called to courageously step forward to give leadership in worship. It may be for their own congregation or in a neighbouring Congregation. It is usually when the minister is not available to lead worship, ie; vacation, study leave, sickness etc. Those lay people who have a gift to lead worship, participate in a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL) program, and are choosing to develop their leadership gifts further.

In the Licensed Lay Worship Leader program, the lay leader and the community of faith can have confidence that their leadership is built upon a strong theological and biblical foundation, in the United Church of Canada.

A licensed lay worship leader is a full member who has been determined to have gifts and a sense of call to the ministry of worship leadership and preaching.

## **Roy, can you tell us a bit about your journey and call to be a LLWL?**

I remember several years ago, when I was between jobs, I was visiting my Grandfather, who was a retired Baptist Minister. During our visit, he wondered if he had failed me by not talking to me about the ministry. I remember saying to him that no he had not, I had no desire to follow that path. I had been brought up in the church, had accepted Jesus, had been baptised, had my faith. That was enough for me. Fast forward a few years..

In 2007, Pastor Ed Nicol suddenly had health problems. When he was about to return to the pulpit, after surgery and recovery time, he put out the call for a volunteer to assist with parts of the services, until he regained his strength. A few weeks after this, and having that nagging

feeling in the back of my mind, I asked if anyone had volunteered. When he replied that no one had, I reluctantly said, well I guess I could help. After a few weeks, some in the congregation started to say that I was doing a good job, and that they felt I should take the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Courses. My reply.. NOT ME.. NO WAY.. I can read Scripture, read the announcements, but I could not possibly prepare a Sermon.. Then that nagging feeling started again. I began to realize it was more than a Nagging, it was God trying to tell me, `DO IT.. Are you ever going to listen to Me.. or do you need a swift kick, instead of the gentle nudges. I spoke to Pastor Ed one Sunday after Service, and told him my story, and that I was feeling led to start taking the LLWL courses. His response was “What took you so long?”.. He Knew!! ...And the rest, as they say, is history.

I signed up for my first course, then another and another, and finally completed them all, and was officially recognized as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader in Kent Presbytery in 2012.

### **So you had to take some courses? Tell us more!**

There was 6 courses that were required.. Spiritual & Personal Formation, Church History and Theology, Old Testament, New Testament, Worship Leadership and Sermon Preparation. And every year after being Licensed, at least one continuing education course, had to be completed. Now that Kent Presbytery no longer exists, LLWL are approved for study and recognized by the Antler River Watershed Region and the courses of study are available online through “United in Learning”.

### **What is your normal process to prepare a Service for the Host Church?**

I always ask to have a copy of a recent bulletin sent to me, as well as asking what hymnal is used in each congregation and who usually picks the hymns. I also ask about the makeup of the congregation, ie are there children, teens, seniors, is there a choir, I also ask if they follow the Revised Common Lectionary.

I then read the scriptures over, and pray and meditate over them, to decide what I’m to focus on. I then do research to be able to find or prepare the call to worship and prayers, in order to prepare an order of service. Then comes more research and prayer to prepare a Sermon. With working full time, it’s usually a couple of hours here, a couple of hours there, usually totaling between 8-10+ hrs. to put a service together.. But it’s all worth it when, after the Service, if only one person says that what I’ve shared spoke to them.

**Great – Are you ready to worship?** Roy has helped to put together today’s worship.

### **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 :

**Roy:** People are often unreasonable and self-centred. Forgive them anyway. With God's love be a blessing.

**People:** **If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.**

**Roy:** If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.

**People:** **With God's love be a blessing.**

**Roy:** If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway. With God's love be a blessing.

**People:** **The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. With God's love be a blessing.**

**Roy:** Do good. Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. With God's love be a blessing.

**People:** **For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway. With God's love be a blessing.**

**Roy:** **Come, let us worship.**

## Opening Hymn: VU 506 "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" – played by Christie Coatsworth

- 1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?*

*I have heard you calling in the night.*

*I will go, Lord, if you lead me.*

*I will hold your people in my heart.*

- 2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain,  
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send? R

- 3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send? R

## Opening Prayer:

**All: Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent, and we have not yet recognized your face in each of our sisters and brothers.**

**Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent, and we have not yet shared your bread in grace with our brothers and sisters.**

**Stay with us, blessed stranger, for the day is far spent, and we have not listened to your Word in the words of our sisters and brothers.**

**Stay with us, blessed stranger, because our very night becomes day when you are there.**

**Scripture: Luke 24: 13 - 35** *(By Pat Hawley and Joy King)*

### **On the Way to Emmaus**

On the morning of the Resurrection, two companions were making their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

This journey would take them approximately 11 kilometres (distance from Tim Horton's in Blenheim to Bloomfield and Middle Line). The two companions were talking about all that had happened and were discussing the events of the day with each other. We know from scripture that one was called Cleopas. As they were talking, a third traveler came alongside them. It was Jesus, but the two companions did not recognize him.

The Bible does not tell us why. Perhaps, their grief over losing Jesus had clouded their thoughts and vision both physically and spiritually. The stranger asked the two travelers what they were talking about as they travelled this road together. Their faces were sullen. Cleopas replied, "Are you just a visitor, do you know what events have happened in Jerusalem over the last few days?" "What events?" asked Jesus.

"The events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "Jesus was powerful, and the presence of God was with him. He was able to perform many miracles. He was handed over to the Romans to be sentenced and ultimately crucified. We thought Jesus would free Israel from the oppression of Rome.

Some of the women that followed Jesus went to the tomb this morning, but they didn't find his body in the tomb. Mary Magdalene says she saw Jesus, that he is alive! Some of the men followed and found his tomb empty, but they didn't see Jesus."

The stranger answered, "Didn't the prophets say that the Messiah would suffer and that his suffering would lead to a path of glory?"

They arrived in Emmaus, but the stranger continued on. It seemed he had further to go. "It is nearly dark, come and stay with us" urged Cleopas. As this third traveler sat at the table, he took the bread, and gave God thanks, broke the bread, and began to pass the bread to the two. It was at this moment that their eyes were open to what was before them. It was Jesus who had travelled with them! When all hope seemed lost, Jesus had travelled alongside. And it was Jesus who was breaking the bread. Suddenly, Jesus was gone.

“How could we not know this was Jesus? Weren’t his words touching our souls as we journeyed to Emmaus? We must go back to Jerusalem at once.” Arriving in Jerusalem, they found the others and told them about what happened on their journey home, and how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread. (*Pause.*) I wonder what the others thought about all of this.

**Reflection: “Journey On the Road!”**

*Small snippet of Willy Nelson chorus of “On the Road Again”*

On the road again, Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway  
We're the best of friends, Insisting that the world keep turning our way  
And our way, Is on the road again.

Now I am sure that the men that are in our Gospel reading this morning weren’t singing Willie Nelson’s song, however, I believe that they were thinking that they wanted to get back “On the Road Again”, heading back to their homes, after witnessing all that had happened on that first Easter.

Picture if you will a dusty road. Along it walk two men, both looking down at the ground. They are dressed in the robes of common laborers.

Let us listen in on their conversation.

"How did it happen," one says as he shakes his head. The other responds, "I don't know I just don't know." "And what will become of the others," the first asks again. "I guess they will all go home like we are, to Galilee or wherever."

Just then, as if out of nowhere, a stranger walks up and joins them and asks "So, what are you talking about?"

At that Cleopas stopped dead in his tracks. "Where has this guy been for the last week" he thought to himself. "Or for the last year for that matter?". Cleopas thought back. Back to the time his friends had talked him into going out in the field to hear some Rabbi from Galilee. He recalled the grassy hill and the way that this Rabbi seemed to make sense. He remembered the miracle of the 5 loaves and 2 fish, how that had fed all the people.

Cleopas recalled how from that moment he hung on every word Jesus spoke. He left his family and joined the group of disciples that followed Jesus around.

He remembered how people heard the Good News and responded. He recalled the end of the journey to Jerusalem, how the crowds of people praised Jesus and sang, "Hosanna, Save us!" while waving palm branches. Only a second had passed but it seemed longer. Cleopas looked up and said, "What distant land have you been visiting this past week? Haven't you heard any of the news or what has been

happening in Jerusalem?" "What news?" the stranger asked. "The news about Jesus of Nazareth who was a mighty prophet, who performed wonders for all to behold."

The stranger replied, "But isn't that what the prophets said would happen?" Cleopas and his friend listened in amazement as this stranger quoted scripture after scripture that made them see that Jesus was the Messiah and that all that had happened was fulfillment of prophecy.

When they sat down to dinner the stranger took it upon himself to give thanks. He took the bread, blessed it and broke it. At that moment they recognized him. It was Jesus! There ...alive! And as soon as they recognized him he vanished from their sight.

The two formerly dejected friends were suddenly ecstatic. Why had they not seen him before. As they thought back at the things he had said they wondered 'Why had we not recognized his voice.' For a whole year they had seen him and listened to him and yet at that moment when he broke the bread they finally realized it had been him walking with them that whole day.

The thing that strikes me about this story is the fact that Jesus was with these disciples and they didn't see him. In the midst of their despair Jesus was with them. But they couldn't see it. It was not until a moment of revelation that Jesus' presence was revealed. And at that moment their despair was transformed into Joy. They only saw him for a moment and then he vanished.

That is like our lives. We who believe in Jesus often walk down the road of life not realizing that the risen Jesus is our companion on the journey. We often despair and think that all our hopes have been killed. Then someone or something comes to us and we bear our souls just as Cleopas did. And surprisingly that stranger gives us comfort. Then, in some brief moment of revelation we realize that Jesus is with us. And in simple things like bread and wine and conversation we realize the Joy of God in the midst of our despair.

I don't know where you are on your journey to Emmaus. You may be in the midst of despair. You may be finding comfort in the words of a friend. Or you may have seen the presence of God in the journey behind. Wherever you are let me tell you that Jesus is Alive. And he is with us, walking with us as a companion in our lives. Open your eyes and see the risen Christ in our midst!

### **Eric's Reflection:**

For Cleopas and the other disciple, the road was familiar, except Jesus – the one they were counting on – had died and they did not know where the body was. We too today are traveling familiar roads when we can get out, but we are aware that

the circumstances have changed. The roads are not busy. We cannot jump out of the car for coffee or lunch. We are to just head to where we are going and then go right back home. In fact, you are only to be out on the road to go to work, get groceries, to the drugstore and for medical appointments – otherwise we are to stay home.

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. We like the disciples are trying to understand what's going on. Then another person, a stranger joins us on our journey. We get to talking about the events of the day. We share what each is thinking. The stranger shares words of scripture and glimpses of truth, that tells the disciples what is happening.

Do we meet strangers on the road that share with us glimpses of truth that helps us to understand what is happening? We may hear stories of people who are living their life like normal – going to work, heading our for groceries, helping their elderly parents, etc. They may not be so worried about themselves. They do tell their parents to stay home, so they have some idea of the seriousness of what is happening. Then they get a call from work telling them a co-worker had tested positive for the Corona Virus. They are told, “Do not come in to work, until we get this place disinfected and safe again”. What an eye opener. You may have been working with that person for the past 6 weeks. Yes you are each to keep the social distance of 6 feet – but where did he get it from? Will I get it? Your whole perspective changes in an instant.

In a Facebook Post this week by one of our Merlin Nurses, she shared a post where yes, we might be young and healthy, but it's up to all of us to protect those with compromised immune systems. They still need groceries, medication, and maybe even their job. Many folks who have compromised immune systems are invisible to the rest of us because they “look and act” normal. We do not even know they have a compromised immune system. We are not about protecting ourselves and our family, we are also about protecting the vulnerable – whether we know them or not.

I have heard several stories this past week that folks are being “awaken” to these realities. People at work six weeks later are testing positive. They find out a coworker has a compromised immune system because of crones, arthritis or psoriasis. It's much like a stranger has come along beside them and opened their thinking to see the truth – to see the bigger picture.

When the stranger offers us the bigger picture - we realize we are in this together, and it is the responsibility of all of us to protect each other. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. P.S. God is not done yet!

### **Offering:**

**Eric:** 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.

**Roy:** 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.

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

### **Offering Music: VU 541 “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”**

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.

### **Offering Prayer:**

**All: Jesus, you break bread and we recognize you; you are the fire that burns within us. Use us and these gifts to light the world. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.**

### **Pastoral Prayer:**

**Eric:** Merciful and loving God, we come into your presence today hoping in some way to touch you, to see for ourselves the truth of your resurrection. Gather up our lingering fears and confusion, meet our doubts with compassion and understanding.

**Roy:** Open our eyes to your love and grace surrounding us. Open our ears to hear you calling us to new challenges. Open our imaginations to new possibilities.

**Eric:** Come anew to all who have been unable to believe; come anew to all who have known you but turned away from you.

**Roy:** Help us to experience you standing in our midst, saying, “Peace, peace.” May our broken world and our broken lives be transformed in your image.

**Eric:** 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.

**Roy:** We pray today for those who are lost in thoughts of death; for those who are hungry, or unsure when and where their family’s next meal will be. Today we think of Annie’s family, Sue’s family, Wendy’s aunt’s family and Roy’s sister’s family.

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

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

**Eric:** 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.

**Roy:** Help us to see 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.

**Eric:** We trust in you God, and we trust in each another – that everyone is doing their part. May we share the story of Resurrection - the active promise of new life in our community, and in our lives.

**Roy:** We pray this in the blessing of God’s love and grace to all who are in need. O God, you are our strength, our hope, and our salvation. 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:** Go in peace. And may the Holy God surprise you on the way,

**Roy:** May the Christ Jesus be your company, and the Spirit lift up your life, now and forever more.

**Closing Chorus: 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