

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Third Sunday of Pentecost – June 14th, 2020

Prelude: “We Shall Overcome” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Welcome to our service on this Third Sunday of Pentecost.

The Boards of our churches met on Thursday, and have agreed to continue our online services until September and reassess the possibilities in September.

Today’s message is about Jesus sending the disciples out two by two. The harvest is plenty and the workers are few.

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

We are blessed once again to have Christie Coatsworth offer the music for today’s service. Thank you Christie. Thank YOU to Sue Holmes for sharing our story this morning.

Next Sunday will be our Father’s Day Service.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

If you wish – grab a candle to use while we share our 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: From the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, from Wheatley to Merlin, from Charing Cross to Blenheim, from Chatham to Erieau, God calls us together to worship and serve.

People: Out of poverty and wealth, out of health and disease, out of whatever circumstance in which we live, God calls us together to worship and serve.

Eric: Out of a spirit of jubilation and despair, out of times of hope and uncertainty, out of whatever state our heart is in,

People: God calls us together to worship and serve.

Eric: Come, let us worship.

Hymn: VU 507 “Today We All Are Called To be Disciples”

- 1 Today we all are called to be disciples of the Lord,
to help to set the captive free,
make ploughshare out of sword,
to feed the hungry, quench their thirst,
make love and peace our fast,
to serve the poor and homeless first,

our ease and comfort last.

2 God made the world and at its birth
ordained our human race
to live as stewards of the earth,
responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud,
we sow not peace but strife,
our discord spreads a deadly cloud
that threatens all of life.

Opening Prayer:

You name us, O God, with grace we do not fully grasp; for you call us to love as we have been loved.

You send us, O God, to persons and communities in need; for you call us to see and respond with compassion.

In following your call, strengthen us to follow your example in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 9: 35 - 10:23

It will take a bit of effort for us to picture what the scene was like; it happened long ago, and it is hard for us to imagine what things were like, for they were very different from now. But it may have been a bit like a music festival or sports final – a community event at which everyone from the town or suburb was gathered together.

There was a buzz in the air. Everyone had come out to see Jesus. He had been travelling throughout the territory, he'd been to lots of towns, he'd healed many people and had been telling everyone of the love God has for all of us. As you might imagine, he'd attracted a lot of attention, been the centre of many crowds. We don't know why this crowd was different from any of the others, but it was. There was something about the people gathered in this place that really tugged at Jesus' heartstrings. He felt how lonely and sad they were, somehow knew that they had lost their bearings and were struggling to find a way out of distress and into the joy of life. His immediate desire was to do something to lighten the load they were enduring, for Jesus was someone full of compassion.

“There are not many people who understand the love of God as well as you do,” he told the disciples. “You have been travelling with me and have seen how people's lives can be transformed when God enters their hearts. I can't be everywhere, I can't meet with everyone, so I want you to be a part of what I am doing. I want you to travel to the places I can't get to and tell those you meet about God and God's great desire to release

people from their suffering and bring them into a life of love and joy. The more of us who do this, the more God's love will spread throughout the world.

“Not everyone will welcome you and receive your message. For some, it will mean they need to change in ways they are unwilling to do. Offer to teach them but do not linger about trying to convince them, for there are others that need you.”

So, the disciples went and did as Jesus had asked them.

This was the beginning of something extraordinary. More than 2,000 years on from this story we know about Jesus because, ever since, followers of Jesus have travelled away from their safe places into all the regions of the world to tell all those who are feeling lost, lonely, and sad of the friendship and compassionate love of God.

Reflection: “Jesus Sends His Disciples – You and Me”

Today's reading challenges us to think about how we are called by God to perform marvelous acts; such as curing the sick. We will require a willingness to sacrifice our own comfort to serve God, in these unbelievable ministries.

Matthew's story today describes the ministry of Jesus and his disciples. There are many in need of Jesus' healing ministry. Jesus acknowledges that he cannot do this work alone and calls disciples to join him. However, the authority to cast out unclean spirits and cure disease requires that the disciples sacrifice their former lives and any hopes of wealth or prestige.

Jesus tells them to go and begin their ministry in the Jewish community. We might think this is unfair to the Gentiles. But it demonstrates to you, the need to limit ministry at times. Therefore our ministry can be more effective, particularly when resources are few. We also need to remember Matthew was written for the Jewish people, about 70 years after Jesus' death. The temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed at that time following the Jerusalem riots. The temple has been the sacred space and means of connecting to God. Matthew points to the importance of ministering to and strengthening the community. But its not always easy. It will require compassion and even sacrifices for the one who is offering the healing.

Jesus tells the disciples, “Not everyone will welcome you and receive your message. For some, it will mean they need to change in ways they are unwilling to do. Offer to teach them but do not linger about trying to convince them, for there are others that need you.”

Sharing the Good News can bring joy, but it may also bring suffering. Like we talked on Wednesday, seeing suffering leads us to compassion. Compassion is when we are willing to suffer along with the one suffering. This leads to hope rather than despair. Yet today Jesus demonstrates making the sacrifice to share in his ministry, does not require that we accept “all” suffering and hostility. Instead, we are called to discern where our ministry is most needed.

God calls us, individually and as a church, to the urgent work of carrying God’s love and care into the world, and we can trust in God to sustain us on the way. To what urgent work are you and your church being called to today?

Like many of us in the world today and maybe even more so in these last few months of experiencing the pandemic, we see all kinds of suffering and hurting people around us. We have responded in material ways such as the May 16 Miracle, and by offering what we can. We have offered compassion and hope where we can. Jesus cautions us not to get stuck with someone who does not want to hear or are unwilling to change as needed – and yes, usually that will have to be our judgmental decision. Jesus invites his disciples to share in his ministry – which includes us today, but Jesus also places restrictions on where and how they are to minister.

We talked a few weeks ago how it has never been easier to invite someone to church than it is right now. All they need to do is read the service, or listen to the audio, and on Sundays they can watch the video, if they wish. All we have to do, is send them the invites, the links. But as Jesus cautions, not all will take you up your offer. But that is their quandary, not yours. Many will, and we have proof of that, as you have shared their appreciation of receiving the services. Or the emails I have received from someone you have passed the service on to.

Our local Nursing Homes knew about our services before I contacted them. It was so much easier to ask them to receive the services and use it where they felt it was needed. Ridgetown had heard about our service through Flo and Blenheim has heard through Connie. Now many of our United Church folks and neighbours see our services every week, in our local Nursing and Retirement Homes. When I shared this idea with others, they too started sending their services. Many folks in those homes where once, and still are, our most faithful parishioners. Why would we not want to stay connected to them?

How can we discern the best ways to share our gifts today? How do we do this in community rather than on our own? We just need to listen for the direction of the

Holy Spirit. Jesus will lead us into ministry today, as he led the disciples 2,000 years ago – through the Holy Spirit. We are not alone. Our Triune God is always with us; in Creation, in Jesus’ words and actions, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God!

Hymn: VU 507 “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples”

- 3 Pray justice may come rolling down
as in a mighty stream,
with righteousness in field and town
to cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
an earth where conflicts cease,
a world that was created for a harmony of peace.
- 4 May we in service to our God act out the living Word,
and walk the road the saints have trod
till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
give thanks in one accord
to God who calls us all to be disciples of the Lord.

Offering:

Eric: Why do we share our gifts? Because that is who we are, as Disciples of Christ. We as Christ's Disciples are essential to our community. That is who we are!

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:

God of all, we see where the world is harassed and helpless and are moved to show care and compassion. We notice when those around us manoeuvre about like sheep without a shepherd, and are tossed about like driftwood on the tide. So, we choose to be workers in your harvest, to step out in faith and stand up for what is just, to be bearers of your liberating good news of liberty and love. Abide with and within us. Amen.

Hymn: VU 333 “Listen To Your Children Praying” – Christie Coatsworth

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer:

Eric: We need people to work with the spirit of Jesus.

People: **Then the politicians will be held accountable for the plight of low-income families and the lack of adequate housing.**

Eric: Then the need for pure air and the preservation of good land for our grandchildren will be taken seriously.

People: **Then a college or university education will be available to all, regardless of status or economic realities.**

Eric: Then those advanced in years will be respected.

People: **We pray that people will hear the call, and work with the spirit of Jesus.**

Eric: We need people to work with the spirit of Jesus.

People: **We can be the one who will identify the suffering, and insist on caring for them.**

Eric: We can be the one who will stand beside former prisoners, and advocate with prospective employers for them.

People: **We can be the one who will listen carefully to the stories of those who are addicted, and help them find another way and higher power.**

Eric: We can be the one who will sit with the sick and frightened as they share their fears.

People: **We can be the one who will listen to persons who have experienced a crushing loss.**

Eric: We will remember those we know who are suffering.

People: **As we pray, we remember our families, friends, and those in our church family.**

(time of silent reflection)

Eric: We pray that people will hear the call, and work with the spirit of Jesus.

People: **And God calls us, each one of us, to work with the spirit of Jesus.**

Eric: We will be motivated to discover and work out our ministries.

People: **We will ignore the attractions of better money or benefits if the work is not faithful.**

Eric: We will not fear the stigma of being thought “religious” or “pious” or too heavenly to be of any earthly cause.

People: **We will not fear the threats of the powerful or the scorn of those who “know it all.”**

Eric: We will remember the caring, empathetic work of Jesus and simply find our own sphere to do that work.

People: **It is our prayer that when we hear God’s call, we will joyfully respond and work in the spirit of Jesus.**

Eric: In the spirit of Jesus, we pray his 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: The harvest is large, and there are many workers to gather it in. We are God’s servants, now and forever more.

Postlude: “If I Had a Hammer” – Christie Coatsworth