

# **SA, SL, TS and DSM United Churches**

***Second Sunday of Pentecost – June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024***

**Prelude:** – Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Good morning! Thank you for your support of all our services, which are posted on our websites - [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca) and [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca) .

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

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

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** We gather today as people God calls to go and share the good news.

**People:** We gather to listen and share God's work in our lives, our families, and our neighborhoods.

**Eric:** We gather to respond to God's grace as we continue on the path of discipleship.

**People:** We gather to again hear God's call to "Go!" as God commissions us to love God and neighbor in everything that we do.

**Eric:** We go knowing that as God's called, gathered, and sent-out people, we are not alone as we carry the weight of God's call into the world together.

**People:** Amen.

### **Opening Hymn:** VU 415 "God, We Praise You For the Morning"

God, we praise you for the morning;  
hope springs forth with each new day,  
new beginning, prayer, and promise,  
joy in work and in play.

God, we praise you for creation,  
mountains, seas, and prairie land.  
Waking souls find joy and healing  
in your bountiful hand.

God, we praise you for compassion,  
all the loving that you show;  
human touching, tears, and laughter,  
help your children to grow.

God, we praise you for your Spirit,  
Comforter and daily friend,  
restless searcher, gentle teacher,

strength and courage you send.

God, we praise you for the Saviour,  
come that we may know your ways.  
In his loving, dying, rising,  
Christ is Lord of our days.

Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
hallelujah, hallelujah!  
Hallelujah, hallelujah!  
Christ is Lord of our days!

### **Opening Prayer:**

**We would sing glad songs to you, Commissioning God, as we enter your heart with thanksgiving on our lips, for you are that love which never ends; that joy which overflows; that faith which is always full.**

**We would proclaim our praise to you, Voice of compassion, as you would send us into the world in which we live, for you are the Word we can speak to power; the healing we can offer to the broken; the justice which can replace oppression.**

**We would offer our hands and hearts to you, Imaginative Spirit, as you teach us new steps in this dance we call life, for you are the cleanser of our messy hearts, the breath of hope for shallow lungs, the password for access to grace.**

**With our hearts, voices, bodies, souls, we offer joyful noise to you, God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.**

### **Children's Story:**

#### **Children's Hymn: VU 299 "Teach Me God to Wonder"**

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see;  
let your world of beauty capture me.

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.*

Let me, God, be open, let me loving be;  
let your world of people speak to me.

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.*

Let me, God, be ready, let me be awake,  
in your world of loving my place take.

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,  
life be celebrated, joy you give.*

Teach me, God, to know you, hear you when you speak,  
see you in my neighbour when we meet.

*Praise to you be given, love for you be lived,*

*life be celebrated, joy you give.*

**Responsive Psalm: Psalm 139: 1 – 6, 13 - 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.

**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.**

Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding, much more than I could ever imagine.

**I try to count your thoughts, but they outnumber the grains of sand on the beach.**

And when I awake, I will find you nearby.

**Pray that our Lord will make us strong and give us peace.**

**Scripture: Mark 2: 23, 3: 6**

One Sabbath Jesus and his disciples were walking through some wheat fields. His disciples were picking grains of wheat as they went along. Some Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why are your disciples picking grain on the Sabbath? They are not supposed to do that!" Jesus answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his followers were hungry and in need? It was during the time of Abiathar the high priest. David went into the house of God and ate the sacred loaves of bread that only priests are allowed to eat. He also gave some to his followers." Jesus finished by saying, "People were not made for the good of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for the good of people. So the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath."

The next time Jesus went into the synagogue, a man with a paralyzed hand was there. The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong, and they kept watching to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus told the man to stand up where everyone could see him. Then he asked, "On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save someone's life or destroy it?" But no one said a word. Jesus was angry as he looked around at the people. Yet he felt sorry for them because they were so stubborn. Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did, and his bad hand was healed. The Pharisees left. And at once they started making plans with Herod's followers to kill Jesus.

**Message: "Jesus - Controversial???"**

Today, as we celebrate Trinity Sunday, we concentrate on God – Three in One; commonly known as God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

These two controversy scenes — one in the grainfields and one in a synagogue — are very important for understanding the Gospel of Mark as a whole.

These stories are setting the stage for us to see why some of Jesus' colleagues (the Pharisees and Sadducees) found him offensive to such a degree that they deemed him dangerous to the Jewish faith, and to their organizations. Today's reading comes from Mark, and this week starts our return to Mark for the Season of Pentecost. Today's scene sets the stage for many upcoming stories we will read from Mark this Pentecost.

It maybe hard for us to follow the many concerns the Pharisees had with Jesus' theology. In reality, even 2,000 years later, we too default to ideals that are human lead, versus Sprit lead.

Jesus is feeding the hungry is an expectation that we would think is paramount. The law says we should do no work on Sunday. We are humans will be quick to put the law out there to judge what Jesus and the disciples are doing. They are not stealing grain as they journey, as Deuteronomy suggests that gleaning is okay as we share – a Jewish Tradition. The problem is the are doing the gleaming on the Sabbath. To the Pharisees, Jesus and his disciples should have prepared their snacks on the previous day. To the Pharisees, this behavior appears to deliberately ignore the rules to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Jesus does not regard the Sabbath commandments as trivial – Jesus sees the bigger picture – a picture that sees the Sabbath in a different light. Jesus uses Scripture to interpret Scripture. Jesus roughly, summarizes 1 Samuel, where David takes the consecrated bread that was supposed to be reserved for priests to feed himself and his soldiers. Jesus suggests the priest did nothing wrong in breaking the strict letter of the law concerning the bread. By remedying David's hunger, the priest sustained the life of a weary traveler and contributed to David's quest to live into his calling as the king anointed to replace Saul.

Jesus is therefore offering a legal opinion - one Jesus derives from scripture itself. Jesus contends that sometimes certain demands of the law are rightly set aside in favor of pursuing greater values or meeting greater needs, especially when those greater needs promote a person's well-being and facilitate the arrival of divine blessings.

Pharisees “argued” all the time about which scripture is more important than the next. So this conversation would not be scandalous or even new. Jesus notes that the purpose of the Sabbath has always been to serve humankind – versus making humankind serve some stern religious principle. Again quoting Deuteronomy in which God institutes the Sabbath so the slaves could enjoy at a bit of rest each week. The Sabbath is to promote life and praise God as a liberator. Every Jew knew that.

The Pharisees likely did not appreciate that Jesus, thought by some to be a “new and uppity teacher”, was the one who was interpreting the Scriptures to what is right and allowable. When Jesus suggested somehow that he and his calling were comparable to David and David’s calling. The scandal is that Jesus presents himself as no ordinary teacher.

The concern over the healing of the man’s hand again happens on a Sabbath and in the synagogue. Does this Jesus have any reverence for his faith? For the Pharisees, the issue is not whether Jesus has the power to heal the man’s hand – it is the fact that he did it on the Sabbath, demonstrating a willful disregard for the law of God — a law that was believed to “give good order to life” and to provide conditions for encountering God’s blessings and holiness.

Jesus’ response to the Pharisees, “On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save someone's life or destroy it?” Jesus does not break the law in any way, because what Jesus did cannot be considered the kind of “work” that the Sabbath prohibits. Jesus is saying that the chief objective of the law, in general, is to save and preserve life. In essence, “What better day than the Sabbath, a day meant to promote God’s commitment to humanity’s well-being, for the healing of a bum hand?” With the restoration of his hand, the man in the synagogue probably also receives back his ability to work in the Galilean economy. In receiving that ability, the man may recover his ability to provide for a family. In fixing the hand, Jesus is saving the man’s life. Jesus restores the man to a life of wholeness and dignity.

In this scripture story today, Jesus does not attack Judaism. He does not reject the law. He does not render the Sabbath obsolete. He does not even call the Pharisees blind or other names.

Any disagreement about living within the law, that we might have today, will likely escalate into hostility. In that battle of hostility we have winners and losers. The losers are cast out of the community. The Losers lose a part of their life and dignity. Jesus came to offer us “fullness of life”. Following Jesus should not give us the right to banish those who are not. Following Jesus should show us and help us to think of ways we can invite those not in community to become part of our community.

Maybe that invite is not always front and centre in a story of Jesus’ work. But we believe in the Triune God, The Father, the son and the Holy Spirit. Last week we talked of how the Holy Spirit will give us what we need. With the presence of The Holy Spirit, we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

**Reflection Hymn: VU 510 “We Have This Ministry”**

We have this ministry  
and we are not discouraged;  
it is by God's own power  
that we may live and serve.  
Openly we share God's word,  
speaking truth as we believe,  
praying that the shadowed world  
may healing light receive.  
We have this ministry, O God, receive our living.

O Christ, the tree of life,  
our end and our beginning,  
we grow to fullest flower  
when rooted in your love.  
Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay,  
called to service by your grace,  
different cultures, different gifts,  
the young and old a place.  
We have this ministry, O God, receive our giving.

The yoke of Christ is ours,  
the whole world is our parish;  
we daily take the cross,  
the burden and the joy.  
Bearing hurts of those we serve,  
wounded, bruised and bowed with pain,  
Holy Spirit, bread and wine,  
we die and rise again.

We have this ministry, O God, receive our loving.

**Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We have this ministry, as we go out into the world to follow you. Our ministry includes giving of some of what we have been given. Let us share in joy.

**Offertory: VU 544 “In Gratitude and Humble Trust”**

In gratitude and humble trust  
we bring our best today  
to serve your cause and share your love  
with all along life's way.

O God, who gave yourself to us  
in Jesus Christ, your Son,  
teach us to give ourselves each day  
until life's work is done.

**Offertory Prayer:**

**People: God of eternity: we offer our gifts today having heard your call through Jesus to follow. Remind us again this day that being a follower doesn't end at the offering plate. Your call demands we not only say “yes” to following, but that we also say “no” to thousands of things that will lead us away from following you. In your Holy Name, we pray. Amen.**

**Chorus to Prayer: VU 400 “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”**

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:**

**Closing Hymn: VU 679 “Let There Be Light”**

Let there be light,  
let there be understanding,  
let all the nations gather,  
let them be face to face;

open our lips,  
open our minds to ponder,  
open the door of concord  
opening into grace;

perish the sword,  
perish the angry judgement,  
perish the bombs and hunger,

perish the fight for gain;  
hallow our love,  
hallow the deaths of martyrs,  
hallow their holy freedom,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come,  
your spirit turn to language,  
your people speak together,  
your spirit never fade;  
let there be light;  
open our hearts to wonder,  
perish the way of terror,  
hallow the world God made.

**Blessing:**

**Eric:** As you leave - hear God's call to go! Go into the uncertainty of the journey ahead, trusting that - God is with us, and we are sent out together. We are not alone. Thanks be to God, now and forevermore.

**Closing Chorus: VU 602 "Blest Be the Ties That Bind"**

Blest be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
the unity of heart and mind  
is like to that above.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

**Postlude:** – Christie Coatsworth

**Prayers:** - Please include these people in your prayers this week.