

SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches

Mother's Day – May 11th, 2025

Prelude: - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Talbotstreet.ca and Southbuxton.ca

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: The God of day and darkness moves among us... We are the people of Living Water.

People: The God of hope and promise lives among us... We are the people of Living Water.

Eric: The God of the lost and lonely calls us by name...

People: We are the people bathed in the Living Water of Creation, God's kin, traveling toward home and a love that will not let us go. **

Opening Hymn: VU 232 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"

Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,

let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

Opening Prayer:

People: Holy One of the morning, we come together to remember who we are and whose we are. Open our hearts to the nudging of your Spirit that moves among us, empowering us to listen, to nurture, and to care for all creation. Give us eyes to see when you break into our lives through all you have made and wash us once again in your life-giving waters. Amen.

Responsive Psalm: VU 747 "The Lord is My Shepherd"

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table thou has furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be. **

Bible in a Minute: Psalm 23

Children's Story:

Children's Prayer:

Children's Song: VU 337 "Blessed Assurance"

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long. ***

Gospel Reading: John 10: 22 - 30

Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Temple Festival. One day he was walking in the part of the temple known as Solomon's Porch, and the people gathered all around him. They said, "How long are you going to keep us guessing? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly!" Jesus answered: I have told you, and you refused to believe me. The things I do by my Father's authority show who I am. But since you are not my sheep, you don't believe me. My sheep know my voice, and I know them. They follow me, and I give them eternal life, so that they will never be lost. No one can snatch them out of my

hand. My Father gave them to me, and he is greater than all others. No one can snatch them from his hands, and I am one with the Father. **

Message: “The Shepherd”

Today reading in John takes place during the Festival of Dedication, or Hanukkah, that holiday celebrating the rededication of the temple in 164 BCE. John presents Jesus as one who, like the heroes of Hanukkah, might renew Israel and redeem them from their oppression.

John shares many themes in his Gospel. Today John carries on the theme of Jesus’ identity, offering some divine imagery for Jesus: as a shepherd, and as someone who is one with the Father. As we sang the 23rd Psalm “The Lord is my Shepherd”, we hear the words of the Good Shepherd, who the Hebrew Scriptures suggest as God. Yet in Christianity we call Jesus “Lord” and “My God”, which makes sense as we believe in the Trinity, “God Three in One”. Actually throughout the Psalms, we see the imagery about God as the shepherd of Israel and Israel as sheep. Today John claims the same in Jesus.

John shares testifying or being a witness to Jesus and his divinity. John places great importance on the idea of giving witness to the truth of who Jesus is. The Scriptures serve as a witness to Jesus. Jesus bears witness to himself earlier in John’s Gospel, and a few verses later tells that God the Father will also testify to Jesus’ identity. In Jesus’ baptism, we hear of the dove landing and the voice saying, “This is my son, whom I am well pleased”. John the Baptist told folks when Jesus was walking towards him to be baptized, “Here comes the Lamb of God”. Jesus also tells us that the Holy Spirit will be a witness when Jesus sends it. Of course, the disciples will also testify to Jesus as the “Son of God”. Others, such as Mary Magdalene, Martha and her sister Mary, followers of Jesus also witness about Jesus’ true identity. The Samaritan woman witnesses about Jesus to her village. The man born blind testifies to what Jesus did for him. John puts icing on the cake, by showing that Jesus’ own works, done in the name of the Father, bear witness to Jesus’ identity.

John shares that those who believe in Jesus’ identity belongs. John uses the “Shepherd and the sheep” metaphor: those who belong to Jesus’ sheep and those who don’t. Those who belong to Jesus, hear his voice and follow him; they will not be snatched out of Jesus’ hand or the hand of the Father. It’s comforting and beautiful imagery, that we see more times in John’s Gospel. When Jesus calls

Mary's name at the tomb, she hears him and finally recognizes him, and last week we heard where Jesus encourages Peter not only to feed his sheep, but to follow him.

When Jesus says of his sheep, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish", John is elaborating on the theme of life and eternal life. In John's time in the first century, hearers of the Gospel did not have developed concepts of heaven and hell, such as; places where people go when they die. Instead, they would more likely think of "life versus perishing", as "living life to its fullest" versus "just living an existence". When we hear the Shepherd's voice and follow Jesus - in hope we work to co-create the "Kingdom of God". This is a quality of life – a life lived to its fullest.

So what's all this got to do with Mother's Day? For me, it was my mother who testified to me the truth of Jesus. She told me how Jesus would change my life, to be loving, caring and helping others. Because of my mother, I am in Ministry today. Mom pointed me to the stories of John, to the stories of the Psalms, to the stories of Moses and Elijah, David and Jonathan, Joseph and his brothers, and of Jesus. Was it your mom who pointed you to Jesus' true identity?

We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God for our mothers!

Reflection Hymn: VU 344 "How Sweet the Sound of Jesus Sounds"

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes the sorrows, heals the wounds,
and drives away all fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.

Dear Name! the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,

accept the praise I bring.

The effort of my heart is weak,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see you whom I seek,
I'll praise you as I ought. **

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving:

Eric: Today as we celebrate Mother's Day – we celebrate Communion.

People: In Communion we are gathered together in the presence of God, by the Holy Spirit, and by the gifts offered by the Son of God.

Eric: In Communion we are gathered with those around us, those sharing communion from our faith community, and those around the world. The Holy Spirit allows us to share with those saints gone before us – many we have met today, in pictures and stories.

People: It is great to gather together with our mothers on this special day.

Eric: Gathered in this place of rainbows, reflected in the light of heaven is the bread and wine of promise; the body and blood of covenant; the symbol and action of love.

People: Promise-maker: they are waiting here to be broken and shared for this world, itself broken in warring, in prejudice, in hatred, in loneliness, in arrogance, in power. Yet this world is continuously healed by the love of Christ and our mother's love.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We offer our gifts so we can share your love with others.

Music while collecting Offering:

Offertory: VU 541 "Praise God From Whom..."

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.

Offertory Prayer:

People: God, you have delivered us from hunger and from thirst by the fruits of your creation. The gifts you have given overflow before us. In return, we offer these gifts back to you, and back to those who want for fullness of life. May the gifts we give enable the building of your healed world. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 "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:

Remembering Jesus at the Table:

Eric: We speak to these places as we remember that night when Jesus took bread and broke it (*hold up the bread*), took wine and shared it (*Hold up the cup*), took promise and opened it; and we speak to these places as we journey with all the angels singing:

**Holy, holy, holy
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Eric: We speak to all these places as we break and share the food of heaven.

As we partake the bread together:

Eric: The body of Christ,
People: the bread of life.

As we partake the drink together:

Eric: The lifeblood of Christ,
People: the cup of blessing.

Prayer After Communion:

Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live your way and share your joy. Our mother's love also feeds us and strengthens us to go forth out into the world to live and share the love we have received. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Closing: VU 334 "All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name"

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,
*and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.*

O seed of Israel's chosen race
now ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace
*and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.*

Crown him, you martyrs of your God,
who from his altar call;
praise him whose way of pain you trod,

*and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.*

Let every tongue and every tribe,
responsive to the call,
to him all majesty ascribe
*and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all.*

O that, with all the sacred throng,
we at his feet may fall,
join in the everlasting song,
*and crown him, crown him, crown him,
crown him Lord of all. ***

Blessing:

Eric: Let us leave this place in sure and certain faith that we swim in the love of our Creator, to the east, the west, above us, below us, and within us, now and forever more. **

Chorus: VU 337 Chorus

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long. ***

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth