

SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 18th, 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: In the beginning was the Dream.

People: And the Dream was with God and spoke for peace.

Eric: In the beginning was the Dream.

People: And the Dream was with God and spoke for justice.

Eric: In the beginning was the Dream - and the Dream was with God and longed for love.

People: We come to worship the God of the Dream in a spirit of peace, justice, and love, longing to glimpse the promise of a holy dwelling place for all creation. **

Opening Hymn: VU 333 “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver;
let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,

changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise. **

Opening Prayer:

People: Ever-dreaming God, come to us now, in this time, opening our imaginations to your promise for us, in us, and in all you have made. We pray in the name of your Dream made flesh, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 148

Come Praise the Lord

Shout praises to the Lord! Shout the Lord's praises in the highest heavens.

All of you angels, and all who serve him above, come and offer praise.

Sun and moon, and all of you bright stars, come and offer praise.

Highest heavens, and the water above the highest heavens, come and offer praise.

Let all things praise the name of the Lord, because they were created at his command.

He made them to last forever, and nothing can change what he has done.

All creatures on earth, you obey his commands, so come praise the Lord!

Sea monsters and the deep sea, fire and hail, snow and frost, and every stormy wind, come praise the Lord!

All mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars, every wild and tame animal, all reptiles and birds, come praise the Lord!

Every king and every ruler, all nations on earth, every man and every woman, young people and old, come praise the Lord!

All creation, come praise the name of the Lord.

Praise his name alone. The glory of God is greater than heaven and earth.

Like a bull with mighty horns, the Lord protects his faithful nation Israel, because they belong to him.

Shout praises to the Lord!

Children's Story:

Children's Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Song: VU 372 "Though I May Speak"

Though I may speak with bravest fire,
and have the gift to all inspire,
and have not love, my words are vain,
as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess,
and striving so my love profess,
but not be given by love within,
the profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,

our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
by this we worship, and are freed. **

Gospel Reading: John 13: 31 - 35

The New Command

After Judas had gone, Jesus said: Now the Son of Man will be given glory, and he will bring glory to God. Then, after God is given glory because of him, God will bring glory to him, and God will do it very soon. My children, I will be with you for only a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won't find me. I tell you just as I told the people, "You cannot go where I am going." But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples. **

Message: "A New World"

It may seem odd to step back into the story pre-crucifixion as we close of the Easter season. As we get five weeks out from Easter, we too are reminded that Jesus is to return to the Father. What will this mean for his disciples? What does this mean to us – Jesus' present day disciples?

John freely uses the words of "glory" and "glorify" to speak of Jesus. This glory is revealed especially in the Son's loving death on the cross. In the chapter before today, Jesus declares that his hour to be glorified has come. He explains this by saying that a grain of wheat must die in the earth to bear fruit.

Today's story tells us that Jesus' glorification has begun. Judas has just gone out to arrange for Jesus' arrest, and we know what Peter does by denying Jesus three times before the cock crows. Does it surprise you that it is in the context of human failure and betrayal that Jesus declares the "now" of his glory and the glory of the Father through him?

Jesus shares with his disciples that he would be with them only a little while more. They will look for him, but will not find him, nor can they go where he is going. Hours later most of the disciples will prove unable to follow Jesus to his crucifixion. But that is only part of the story. Jesus is returning to the Father, and they cannot follow him there. At least not yet! Jesus leaves them with a commandment. "You can let others know you are my follower when you follow me by loving one another".

Jesus says, “Just as I have loved you.” The Gospel of John in 3:16 reminds us that God loves the whole world. Mutual love within the church is not an alternative to love for neighbors outside the community, but is the foundation for such love. The command to love one another is given with an eye on the rest of the world: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

Yet Jesus calls us to this love even when the world remains hostile and sees only foolishness, just as the world responded to the love of Jesus by crucifying him. That is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus: to let loose such love for one another and for the world. In order to live out such loving discipleship, it will be necessary for the church to be reminded of something: It is already the object of infinite love: “my little children ... as I have loved you.” It is that love that will sustain us.

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

Reflection Hymn: VU 574 “Come Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love”

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true, tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus the Saviour this gospel to tell
joyfully came, joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame,
seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam? why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love, wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!
Come and abide, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be, seeking to be

lowly and humble, a learner of thee. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We offer our gifts so others know they are loved. Let us give to share our 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: Giver of life, you are the source of all good things. We entrust to you our gifts, that you would use them to make all know, that with you, they are beloved, whole, and restored. 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:

Closing: VU 658 “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain

that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be. **

Blessing:

Eric: Jesus gives us the commandment..."love one another!" Let this love flow through the ordinary and the miraculous as we help renew the world, now and forever more. **

Chorus: VU 333 Third Verse

*Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise. ***

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth