

SA, SL, TS and DSM United Churches

Trinity Sunday – May 26th, 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 and 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: In many places, we gather:

People: We are one in spirit.

Eric: From many backgrounds, we come:

People: We are one in Christ.

Eric: For many purposes, we serve:

People: We are one in our calling.

Eric: Together, let us worship God!

People: Who makes us one body, one spirit, in Christ.

Opening Hymn: VU 402 “We Are One”

We are one as we come,
as we come, joyful to be here,
in the praise on our lips
there's a sense that God is near.

We are one as we sing,
as we seek, we are found;
and we come needful of God's grace
as we meet, together in this place.

We are one as we share,
as we share brokenness and fear,
in the touch of a hand
there's a sense that God is here.

We are one as we care,
as we heal, we are healed;
and we share warmth in God's embrace
as we pray together in this place.

We are one as we feast,
as we feast, peace becomes the sign;
in the bread and the wine
there's a sense of love divine.

We are one as we come,
as we feed, we are fed;
and we feel God's refreshing grace
as we meet at table in this place.

We are one as we hear,
as we hear, heart and hand unite;
in the word we receive
there's a sense that God is light.

We are one as we leave,
as we love, we are loved;
and we seek justice in God's ways
as we move together from this place.

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, in your wisdom, you have called us together to reflect the body of Christ. As we gather in your presence, we acknowledge our imperfections and the times we have fallen short of loving as you have taught us. Forgive us for the moments we have acted in isolation rather than seeking the strength of our community. Open our eyes to the beauty of our shared life, and strengthen our hearts for the journey we undertake together. Teach us to cherish each other's gifts and to face our challenges with courage and love. As we worship today, knit us closer to one another and to you, mending our spirits and renewing our purpose. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen

Children's Story:

Children's Hymn: "Our God is An Awesome God" (2X)

Our God is an Awesome God
He reigns from heaven above
with wisdom, power and love
Our God is an Awesome God

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 29

The Voice of the Lord in a Storm

All you angels in heaven, honor the glory and power of the Lord!

Honor the wonderful name of the Lord, and worship the Lord most holy and glorious.

The voice of the Lord echoes over the oceans.

The glorious Lord God thunders above the roar of the raging sea, and his voice is mighty and marvelous.

The voice of the Lord destroys the cedar trees; the Lord shatters cedars on Mount Lebanon.

God makes Mount Lebanon skip like a calf and Mount Hermon jump like a wild ox.

The voice of the Lord makes lightning flash and the desert tremble.

And because of the Lord, the desert near Kadesh shivers and shakes.

The voice of the Lord makes deer give birth before their time.

Forests are stripped of leaves, and the temple is filled with shouts of praise.

The Lord rules on his throne, king of the flood forever.

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

Scripture: John 3: 1 - 17

There was a man named Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a Jewish leader. One night he went to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know that God has sent you to teach us. You could not work these miracles, unless God were with you." Jesus replied, "I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see God's kingdom!" Nicodemus asked, "How can a grown man ever be born a second time?" Jesus answered: I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God. Don't be surprised when I say that you must be born from above. Only God's Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied: How can you be a teacher of Israel and not know these things? I tell you for certain we know what we are talking about because we have seen it ourselves. But none of you will accept what we say. If you don't believe when I talk to you about things on earth, how can you possibly believe if I talk to you about things in heaven? No one has gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from there. And the Son of Man must be lifted up, just as the metal snake was lifted up by Moses in the desert. Then everyone who has faith in the Son of Man will have eternal life. God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them!

Message: "Life Together"

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.

The Gospel of John is the gospel with rich language that helps us to explore the relationship between God, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. John is not so much about establishing doctrine – John is more about telling the story of God's love for the world. Nicodemus is confused about the relationship between God, the Son, and the Spirit (as well as many of us are confused about the Three-In-One), Jesus shares the unity within the Three, and reveals the purpose of God's interaction, and love, with the world.

The story of Nicodemus takes us back to John 1, verse 1; "In the beginning was the Word". John goes on to say that the Word created everything, but the world did not know the Word. This is exactly what Nicodemus is showing us today.

Nicodemus says to Jesus, “We know you are a teacher who comes from God,” which is true. Jesus responds in a way that side steps Nicodemus’ compliment and truth. Jesus says, “You must be born again, before you can see God’s Kingdom”. “What?” Nicodemus exclaims, “How can a grown man ever be born a second time?”

John’s Gospel is not like Matthew’s – where everything happens immediately. In Nicodemus’ story, it takes the rest of John’s Gospel to make us aware that Nicodemus does in fact recognize the significance of Jesus’ words. It is in the story where Nicodemus assists Joseph of Arimathea in preparing the body for burial, that we see Nicodemus’ insight increase over time. In the Gospel of John, insight is not immediate. Insight comes through the raising of questions, and through later remembering and reflection.

The “world” being God’s concern is the “meat” of the Gospel of John. John 3: 16 says, “God so loved the world, he gave his only son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die.” Then John gives us the rest of the story, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. God sent him to save them!”

John distinguishes between the kingdom of God and the world, and John also distinguishes between the Spirit and flesh. Flesh is not necessarily negative, but it belongs to the world. The Spirit, according to John: Like Jesus, the Spirit comes from above and the Spirit blows where it will – The Spirit belongs to God. Like Jesus, the Spirit is truth. Finally the Spirit is an Advocate, whom Jesus asks God to give to the community of faith, to teach, testify to, and remind them of what Jesus has said to them.

Jesus is the means by which God reaches out to the world, entering into the world as flesh so that what is flesh may receive the Spirit of God.

Neither the Spirit nor Jesus can be separated from God. Both come from “above,” and both are expressions of God’s truth and communicate God’s purpose. God loves the world beyond measure. God “gave” the Son to save the world—an expression of generosity, not a “handing over”. The unity of purpose is highlighted in where Jesus says, “I lay down my own life of my own accord”. The Holy Spirit, as the Advocate, testifies that the words of Jesus are from God and that the community of faith in the world will continue to abide in God’s love forever.

With the presence of The Holy Spirit, we (and they) are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 374 “Come and Find the Quiet Centre”

Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: Let us give as we have received, abundantly and with joy, knowing that through our combined efforts, we are doing God's work, making a tangible difference in the world. Our generosity shares God's love and justice with all.

Offertory: VU 540 “Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving”

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.

Offertory Prayer:

People: Generous God, we offer to you the gifts of our hearts and the resources you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, the finances collected here, those given digitally and all other shared resources and talents as a sign of our shared commitment to your work in the world. May they strengthen the church and spread your love and justice near and far. With grateful hearts, we dedicate all gifts to you. Amen.

Chorus to Prayer: VU 665 “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour”

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour, hear my humble cry;
while on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.
Saviour, Saviour, hear my humble cry;
while on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 271 “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice
which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such gracious judgement given.

There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that Christ has shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.

Troubled souls, why will you scatter
like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts, why will you wander
from a love so true and deep?

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

Blessing:

Eric: Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to what is good, support one another in faith. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore.

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.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth

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