

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

***Third Sunday of Easter – May 4<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://Talbotstreet.ca) and [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca)

## **Lighting the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** God, you call us from the corners of the Earth.

**People:** **From the cities and the prairies, from the ghettos and the tables of the wealthy.**

**Eric:** God, you sing to us from the corners of the universe.

**People:** **In the gentle ocean breeze, in the colors that burst forth from our landscapes, in the faces of children ravaged by war.**

**Eric:** God, you speak to us from the corners of the Earth.

**People:** **To the east, to the west, to the north and to the south, above us, below us, and within us, your voice rings clear.**

**Eric:** Send your voice to sing in us, we pray, as we worship this day. \*\*

### **Opening Hymn:** VU 161 “Welcome Happy Morning”

Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;  
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today;  
come then, True and Faithful, now fulfil your word;  
this is your third morning: rise, O buried Lord!  
*Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;  
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!*

Earth with joyful welcome clothes itself for spring;  
greeted with life reviving our returning king:  
flowers in every pasture, leaves on every bough,  
speak of sorrows ended; Jesus triumphs now!  
*Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;  
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!*

Author and sustainer, source of life and breath;  
you for our salvation trod the path of death:  
Jesus Christ is living, God for evermore!  
Now let all creation hail him and adore.  
*Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;  
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!*

Loose our souls imprisoned, bound with Satan's chain;  
all that now is fallen, raise to life again!  
Show your face in brightness, shine the whole world through;  
hope returns with daybreak, life returns with you.

*Welcome, happy morning! age to age shall say;  
hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today! \*\**

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People: God of love, we bring our very selves to worship; our triumphs, our failures, our vulnerabilities, our greatest joys and our deepest sorrows. In this time set apart, may we hear the voice of Jesus urging us to feed and be fed, to love and be loved. Amen.**

### **Responsive Psalm: Psalm 30**

#### ***A Prayer of Thanks***

I will praise you, Lord!

**You saved me from the grave and kept my enemies from celebrating my death.**

I prayed to you, Lord God, and you healed me, saving me from death and the grave.

**Your faithful people, Lord, will praise you with songs and honor your holy name.**

Your anger lasts a little while, but your kindness lasts for a lifetime.

**At night we may cry, but when morning comes we will celebrate.**

I felt secure and thought, "I'll never be shaken!"

**You, Lord, were my friend, and you made me strong as a mighty mountain.**

But when you hid your face, I was crushed.

**I prayed to you, Lord, and in my prayer I said, "What good will it do you if I am in the grave?"**

Once I have turned to dust, how can I praise you or tell how loyal you are?

**Have pity, Lord! Help!"**

You have turned my sorrow into joyful dancing.

**No longer am I sad and wearing sackcloth.**

I thank you from my heart, and I will never stop singing your praises, my Lord and my God. \*\*

### **Bible in a Minute: Psalm 30**

### **Children's Story: Story of the Seeds**

### **Children's Prayer & Lord's Prayer:**

Creator God, thank you for giving us the power to make a difference, even with just small actions. Bless the people who do these small actions every day. Help us do the same and plant our small, good seeds so that more good things can happen in this world. Amen.

### **Children's Song: "The Magic Penny"**

Love is something if you give it away,  
Give it away, give it away.  
Oh, love is something if you give it away,  
You'll end up having more.

For it's just like a magic penny,  
Hold it tight and you won't have any,  
Lend it, spend it and you'll have so many,  
They'll roll all over the floor.

Love is something if you give it away,  
Give it away, give it away.  
Oh, love is something if you give it away,  
You'll end up having more. \*\*

### **Responsive Reading for Planting our Seeds:**

**Eric:** Eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth, we praise you and give you glory. You have placed the gifts of creation in our hands and called us to till the earth and make it fruitful.

**People:** **Bless the soil, and make it ready to receive and nurture the seeds entrusted to it.**

**Eric:** Bless the seeds, enable them to germinate and grow well, so that they may result in a bountiful harvest, providing food and hope for many.

**People:** **Grant our farmers and gardeners the assurance of your presence, and bestow on them a calm and trusting spirit throughout the growing season.**

**Eric:** God of Creation, protect these lands from wind and hail, drought, flood and disease. Grant favorable conditions throughout this growing season.

**People:** **We praise you for all your good gifts. Make us willing to share our time and resources, so that others may receive what they need to live. Amen.**

### **Gospel Reading: John 21: 1 - 19**

#### ***Appears to Seven Disciples***

Jesus later appeared to his disciples along the shore of Lake Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the brothers James and John, were there, together with two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!" The others said, "We will go with you." They went out in their boat. But they didn't catch a thing that night. Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?" "No!" they answered. So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish." They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat. Jesus' favorite disciple told Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon heard it was the Lord, he put on the clothes he had taken off while he was working. Then he jumped into the water. The boat was only about 100 meters from shore. So the other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish. When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were 153 large fish, but still the net did not rip. Jesus said, "Come and eat!" But none of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the Lord. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave some of it to his disciples. He did the same with the fish. This was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from death.

When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating, he asked, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than the others do?" Simon Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I do!" "Then feed my lambs," Jesus said. Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!" "Then take care of my sheep," Jesus told him. Jesus asked a third time,

“Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus had asked him three times if he loved him. So he told Jesus, “Lord, you know everything. You know I love you.” Jesus replied, “Feed my sheep. I tell you for certain that when you were a young man, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will hold out your hands. Then others will wrap your belt around you and lead you where you don’t want to go.” Jesus said this to tell how Peter would die and bring honour to God. Then he said to Peter, “Follow me!” \*\*

### **Message: “Feed My Sheep”**

We find a powerful story of community and care in John 21. After a night of unsuccessful fishing, the disciples, guided by Jesus’ suggestion, cast their nets on the other side of their boats and bring in a bountiful catch. This abundant harvest is not merely a gift; it comes with a call to action. It is a call to recognize the potential for plenty when we collaborate and share resources. Following this moment of provision, Jesus charges Peter with the responsibility to “feed my sheep,” emphasizing the importance of caring for others — to tend to their tangible needs for food, safety, and community support. What a bold invitation to recognize the Risen Christ among us and make his presence real to one another through food.

Nigatu Demam is a 58-year-old widow living in Bambasi, Ethiopia. For many years, she and her children were able to get by farming on their small plot of land. But even when the rain came as expected and her growing season was successful, she still wasn’t quite able to support her family and earn a livelihood the way she wanted. The family would still need to go out looking for other kinds of work in order to pay for things like school fees, additional food, and anything else they might need.

It was an uncertain and stressful way to live. Add in the additional challenge of a changing climate, and Nigatu was ready to try something new. She’d always managed her land using conventional agricultural methods like tilling the soil. But she was curious about a new type of agriculture being introduced, called conservation agriculture.

Conservation agriculture is a way of farming that emphasizes minimal soil disturbance, soil cover, and crop rotations and associations—to make sure their land is productive for years to come, and to better cope with drought and unpredictable weather.

That’s why Nigatu decided she would take part in training activities through a Foodgrains Bank-supported project. She started incorporating what she’d learned through the training on a small piece of her land in her first year.

When that proved successful in helping her increase her yields, she increased the amount of land dedicated to farming using conservation agriculture methods the

next year. That first trial year was back in 2016. Today, Nigatu is still going strong, even despite the economic restrictions that have brought on by the pandemic, and have led to difficulty for many other small-scale farmers in Ethiopia.

“Today I and my family members are very happy, my children are well in their schooling, we have enough food in the house, and we have an iron sheet roof on our house,” she says.

The call to action to “Feed my Sheep”, can feel daunting, but even the smallest actions can have massive impacts. We see people choosing to act in small and big ways all around us. The question then is: “How can you act to justly feed your human and other-than-human neighbors?”

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

**Reflection Hymn: VU 226 “For the Beauty Of The Earth”**

For the beauty of the earth,  
for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies,  
*God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the beauty of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
sun and moon, and stars of light,  
*God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the joy of human love,  
brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth, and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild,  
*God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

For each perfect gift sublime  
to our race so freely given,  
graces human and divine,  
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,  
*God of all, to you we raise*

*this our hymn of grateful praise. \*\**

**Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We offer our gifts so others can also feel your grace. 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:** Risen Lord, as the wild flower scatters its seeds far and wide, so may your people scatter the seed of hope in the soils of despair, bringing to growth those good things that are your gift and promise. And may the blessing of God Almighty, rest on us and on all our work and worship done in his name. 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 & Blessings for the Fields and Crops:**

Loving Creator God, we acknowledge you as the only source of growth and abundance. You provide us with food for body and spirit. With your help we plant our crops, and by your power they produce our harvest. In your kindness and love, make our work fruitful. Bless our fields and the crops we plant; let them yield a rich harvest. Grant favorable weather to make these fields productive. Guide the work of our hands, for in you we live and move and have our being. Help us bring you glory by using well and sharing the good things we receive from you. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Closing: VU 520 “We Plough The Fields and Scatter”**

We plough the fields and scatter  
the good seed on the land,  
but it is fed and watered  
by your almighty hand;  
you send the snow in winter,  
the warmth to swell the grain,  
the breezes and the sunshine,

and soft refreshing rain.  
*All good gifts around us  
are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God,  
for all your love.*

You only are the maker  
of all things near and far;  
you paint the wayside flower,  
you light the evening star;  
the winds and waves obey you,  
by you the birds are fed;  
much more to us, your children,  
you give us daily bread.

*All good gifts around us  
are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God,  
for all your love.*

We thank you then, O Maker,  
for all things bright and good,  
the seed-time and the harvest,  
our life, our health, our food;  
accept the gifts we offer  
for all your love imparts,  
and, what from us you long for,  
our humble, thankful hearts.

*All good gifts around us  
are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God,  
for all your love. \*\**

### **Blessing:**

**Eric:** As we go today, we give thanks for God's grace and blessings of sun and rain to grow our field and gardens. We thank you, God, O Holy God for all you love, now and forever more. \*\*

### **Chorus: VU 213    Chorus**

*God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise. \*\**

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

### **Postlude:** – Christie Coatsworth