

Alexandra Presbyterian Church

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Minister: Rev. Vern Tozer
Stephanie Burgoyne, music director
Kaitlin Vandertuin, soprano

GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER

*** Entry of God's Word, our Holy Bible**

PRELUDE Variations on "Christ Is My Life" J. Pachelbel

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name. With the believers down through the centuries we gather in places of worship or in our homes, to give praise to God and to remember His love to us. Let us praise God with heart and soul.

HYMN 209 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

*** PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

Gracious God, who searches our hearts and knows our every thought, we come together in worship. Though unable to gather with fellow believers in our place of worship, we do sense the unity that still exists when we share the same Saviour. We give thanks for your wonderful blessings that enrich our lives. Each day when we awaken we give thanks for health. We praise you that we are able to arise and be aware of our surroundings. In a world where so many are struggling with severe illness we praise you that we can enjoy the day. You know how easy it is for us to complain rather than show gratitude. Give us an attitude of gratitude this day. Enable us to show care and kindness to someone before this day ends. Our prayers we ask in the name of the one who taught us to pray together:

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and
forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Having admitted our need of God's love and forgiveness let us also acknowledge that he has said: If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." All thanks and praise be given to God.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 1

- ¹ Bless are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;
² **but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on that law they meditate day and night.**
- ³ They are like trees planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in season, and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they flourish
- ⁴ The wicked are not so, but like chaff that the wind drives away.
⁵ therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
⁶ **for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

"May the Lord bless the reading of His word to our hearts."

SCRIPTURES

James 2:5-13

Luke 10:25-37

HYMN 631

Jesus' Hands were kind Hands

MEDITATION

“The Good Neighbour”

We are going to think about another person from the Bible. Thus far we talked about Rahab, Mephibosheth and Zacchaeus. All three of those persons were actual individuals. They lived. They had names given by their parents. Their names had meaning. All three of them appeared for just a little while. We know of only one main incident in their lives. Rahab—remembered because she helped the Israeli spies. Mephibosheth remembered because King David kept a promise and showed kindness. Zacchaeus remembered for climbing a tree and then opening his heart and wallet as a demonstration of his new found faith. Today's character does not have a name – like the others had. He may or may not have lived. We only know him because he was in one of Jesus parables. And it is one of the best known stories that Jesus used to teach others.

There are people whose deeds are better known than their names. They are known as the man or woman who did such and such. He's the fellow who invented such and such. She's the woman who sang that song. I have had people say to me: “Oh now I remember you are the minister who drew cartoons for the Children's' Story.” I don't mind that very often I shared some things in those children's stories that it could not be in a sermon. And sometimes I believe after the older folk thought about it they said – you know I think that was an adult story and not a children's story!

The man I am talking about today is known only as the Good Samaritan. Who could ever say how many times this name has been given to people down through the ages? a good Samaritan stopped and helped me change my tire. I am so thankful for the Good Samaritan who did that kind deed. When I served as interim minister at St. Andrew's, Kitchener, I went for lunch at a restaurant – named Oscar's. I didn't notice anyone in there that I recognized. But when I went to pay for my meal, the cashier said—“you don't owe anything—someone has paid for you!”

I don't remember what I ate nor do I remember the amount of the bill—but I have never forgotten that act of kindness. So to this day I have kind thoughts about the unknown Good Samaritan.

Over the years commentators have suggested that Jesus could have been telling about an incident he was aware of when he shared this story. He told the parable in answer to a question. Someone who spent his time explaining the Jewish law to others asked Jesus. Jesus had just finished saying there is a new commandment which I am giving you—“you shall love the lord your god with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.” the law expert said—“who is my neighbor?” instead of giving a lecture, Jesus told a story.

I am sure you know that story. Someone was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. That was a dangerous seventeen mile road to travel because there were plenty of favourite spots for robbers to hide. These were professional robbers. They did not care what happened to their victims. Often the victims died from the abuse they suffered. So when Jesus began his story the listeners expected there was going to be trouble. They knew that road and they travelled it only when really necessary.

Sure enough the traveller was robbed. He fought back—resulting in very serious injuries. We are told he was left half dead. Soon two other travelers came down the road. The first was a priest. The man who was robbed should be okay now – this is a religious man. He has

probably been in Jerusalem to take his turn serving in the temple. He is a holy man and filled with God's love. But he did not want to get involved so he just went over to the other side of the road and passed by. He may even have said a little prayer that someone would help that injured man. Poor soul!

Soon there was a second man coming down the road. This man was a Levite and probably had served his turn serving in the temple. He did the same thing as the priest. He got as far away from the injured man as he could and passed by. He did not want to get involved in the matter. His robe was an expensive one and there might be some blood involved. He may have even commented to himself that the man should have been more careful—maybe even hiring a guard to travel with him—whatever. And besides all that, i am in quite a hurry.

Then a third man came along who was also travelling alone. Right away Jesus identified this man as a Samaritan. Now remember the other two were very much involved in the Jewish religion. This man is considered an unbeliever or even worse. He is really hated by the Jewish people especially their leaders in the faith. Those listening to Jesus might smirk and say—"well he will stop. He'll want to see if there is anything left to steal. Even the poor man's clothing has been stolen—there is nothing to steal. This won't take long." But that does not happen.

The Samaritan showed something the other two did not show. We hear that this man took pity on the one lying there in pain. Pity was stronger than his own safety—pity was stronger than whether the injured man was a Jew or a Samaritan. This Samaritan tore up some of his belongings and bandaged up the man's wounds. He used oil and wine—to clean up the cuts and bruises. And then, perhaps most surprising, he hoisted the wounded man onto his donkey—and walked beside him all the way to Jericho. Oh come on now! is this not overdoing it? What will he do when he gets to Jericho with someone in as bad shape as this? Why is he getting so involved in something that has nothing to do with him? Surely the man's own people, the Jews, should be looking after him.

The story does not end there. The man checks into a hotel and keeps the injured man with him. He stays overnight ministering to the man's needs. He would get almost no rest. The next morning arrives—and the Samaritan has to be on his way. He has done all he could—over and above what could be expected—so he can leave. No one would blame him now for leaving. He had gone over and above what a good hearted man would do. But no! He takes out his wallet and gives what amounted to two days wages to the hotel clerk.: "You take care of this fellow until he is able to continue his journey. I will be coming back and I will square up with you—whatever more you spend to care for him."

That is the story. Then Jesus asks the question: "Who do you think was a neighbor to the man who was robbed?" The answer is quite clear isn't it? The legal expert is forced to say:" The one who took pity on him." I think this unnamed man, this stranger; this Samaritan should be honoured when we are talking about people mentioned in the Bible. I too have a question to ask as well. Does our world, our city, our church have an abundance of folk who would or could be considered good neighbours? When we look at our church membership across Canada do you believe we are made up of Good Samaritans? Or do we need to hear this story of Jesus over and over again?

The phrase has often been spoken. "I cannot hear a word you are saying because your actions are speaking so loudly." People's hearts are always touched more deeply by an act of kindness than by a long sermon about caring for others. Those who belong to Jesus will show their faith by what they do. Read again the Scripture Lesson today from the letter of James in the New Testament. He has important words about showing our faith by what we do. I would close by stating loudly that our hurting world needs Christians who are ready to give love and support to others. Christ is praised and honoured when we go the extra mile and perform that unexpected act of kindness. We do it because we love our Master and we wish to share His love with others. We can all witness in this way and it will make a greater impression than words alone. Be a Good Samaritan even if people will not remember your name!

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

PRESENTATION OF OFFERING

*** DOXOLOGY**

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.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We have praised you with our lips, O loving Saviour and now we praise you with our gifts. We offer these monetary gifts and dedicate them to be used to your praise. May we always be ready to lend a helping hand to another who is in need. Pour you're your blessing on these gifts and make them a blessing to others. In Jesus name, Amen.

PRAYERS THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Our Father in heaven, we are not afraid to approach you. We know that you love us with an everlasting love. We know that you never turn a seeking child away. We are so thankful that you listen and you respond. We have benefited from your gifts and your care throughout the years. Most of all we thank you for sending your one and only Son into our world we give thanks that he died for us and has opened up the way to you.

This day there are many things that we would leave in your care. We continue to pray for our country and for the many that are living in fear. May they realize that they can leaver all their burdens and all their cares in your keeping. Hasten the day when this virus will be a thing of the past. Hasten the day when we will be able to gather with your brothers and sisters in worship. In the meantime give us grace and guidance so that we may be good Samaritans to those in need around us.

Place your hand of healing upon the friends and family we would mention in this time of prayer. May they know we are holding them up in prayer as we mention their names at this time.....

We continue in prayer, gracious God, for our country and its leadership. May our Mayor, our Premier and our Prime Minister seek your help and guidance. May they be given wisdom to make the right decisions, the decisions that will glorify you and bless our land.

Dear King and Head of the Church, we leave our concerns for Alexandra Church with you. The future is known to you and you know what will take place with our church family. Bring your will to pass regarding what is to come and may we be ready to follow wherever you may lead. These prayers we leave with you in confidence that you will grant the answers according to your will. In Jesus name we ask, Amen.

HYMN 644

My the mind of Christ my Saviour

*** BENEDICTION**

The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you peace.
The Lord lifts up His countenance upon you and enriches your trust in Him.

*** CHORAL AMEN**

POSTLUDE

“Allegro”

W. Selby



In Our Prayers

Edith Cowper
Bruce Wheatley
Jeannie Carmichael
Joan MacQueen