

**THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
THE ASCENSION OF JESUS  
MAY 24, 2020  
10:30 A.M.**

*Crescent Fort Rouge is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of race, creed, age, ability, cultural background, sexual orientation or gender expression*

*Our mission is to invite all who would join us, to celebrate the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, through worship, music, fellowship and outreach, to help us build a fairer and more joyful world*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TERRITORY**

*We gather for work and worship on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, and Dakota nations, and the homeland of the Metis people. Long before adventurers, colonizers, settlers, refugees, or immigrants from other places came to the place we call Manitoba, the people of Canada's first nations held this land as a sacred trust from the Creator. They offered assistance to the first travelers to this place and shared their knowledge for survival in what was at times a harsh climate. May our relationships as settlers and Original Peoples be based in honour and deep respect.*

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE** (*SE Murray and others, adapted*)

*Marc:* We light this candle as a reminder that for us,  
Jesus is the light of the world.

*Voice 1:* Jesus told us that we don't have to be afraid  
of the dark,  
because he will always be with us,  
even until the end of time.

*Voice 2:* The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has never put it out.

*Marc:* Deep calls unto deep,  
life calls unto life,  
light calls unto light.

*Voice 3:* And where the Spirit's flame burns bright,  
where there is health and truth and light,  
Christ is living, Christ is moving,  
Christ will resurrect the world.

*Voice 4:* Our light may seem small and flickering,  
But it bears the flame to another and another,  
just as the flame of love is passed  
from person to person.

*Voice 5:* We are a rainbow people, and in all our diversity  
Christ's light shines through us, making us one

*Voice 6:* Here is God's good kin-dom!

## ***AN INVITATION INTO CELEBRATION***

*Marc:* And so it is we have gathered at this time,  
some empty, some filled,  
some whole, some broken:  
yet yearning for the Holy Spirit to fill us,  
trusting that God will continue  
to illumine our hearts.  
that graced, we might serve others;  
that healed, we might bring hope to the world.

*Voice 1:* You have heard what was written  
about Jesus in Scripture—  
how he would suffer and die  
and then rise from the dead on the third day;

*Voice 2:* And how the same power  
that raised Jesus from the dead  
raised Him to heaven and seated Him  
at the right hand of God,  
where he now lives to intercede on our behalf.

*Marc:* So let us come before God with confidence,  
through the loving intercession of our risen Lord,  
Jesus Christ!

## ***PRAYER***

*Voice 1:* Let us pray.

God, stretch our imaginations,  
stir in us the newness of life,  
help us to see what you are doing in the world.

Make us alert to the signs of your presence,  
and responsive to the urgings of your Spirit,  
in our communities and in our lives. Amen.

## ***THE LORD'S PRAYER***

*Marc:* Let us now say together  
the words that Jesus' taught us...

**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,  
the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **WE HEAR AND REFLECT ON THE GOOD NEWS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO READING**

*Jesus prays for himself that God will take him back. Then he prays for his disciples, who have received Christ's message and have believed and given him glory, that they may be protected by God's name and may be one as Christ and the Father are one.*

### **SCRIPTURE READING John 17:1-11**

Voice 1: After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup>"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

<sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

<sup>11</sup>And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

## A READING *Malcolm Guite* <https://audиoboom.com/posts/373594>

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory  
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place  
As earth became a part of Heaven's story  
And heaven opened to his human face.  
We saw him go and yet we were not parted  
He took us with him to the heart of things  
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted  
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,  
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,  
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,  
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness  
And sing the waning darkness into light,  
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,  
Which all creation waits to see revealed

## **INTRODUCTION TO READING**

*The Acts of the Apostles is of course a book of movement, a story of journeys. It is always helpful to have a map to chart where everyone is going or has been. The personal journey that many were to make must have been great with a dawning realization that the challenge Jesus had given them would mean a life of sacrifice and service. We often say Pentecost is the birthday of the Church but Ascension marks the start of the mission of the Church as Jesus talks of a mission to the whole world. The disciples question Jesus about the timing of God's restoration of Israel, but Jesus promises the Holy Spirit and then ascends into heaven as they watch. Then two white-robed men tell them that Jesus will return in the same way they saw him leave. As with so many of the mountain top experiences the believers have to return to the reality of life, here in the world to, carry out the commands of Jesus.*

## **SCRIPTURE READING**    Acts 1:6-14    *from The Voice*

Voice 1: When they had gathered just outside Jerusalem at the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus,

Voice 2: Is now the time, Lord—the time when You will reestablish Your kingdom in our land of Israel?

Voice 3: God alone has determined the ages and epochs of history. You have not been given this knowledge. Here's the knowledge you need:  
You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses first here in Jerusalem, then beyond to Judea and Samaria, and finally to the farthest places on earth.

Voice 1: As He finished this commission, He began to rise from the ground before their eyes until the clouds obscured Him from their vision.

As they strained to get one last glimpse of Him going in heaven, the Lord's emissaries realized two men in white robes were standing among them.

*Voice 2:* You Galileans, why are you standing here staring up into the sky? This Jesus who is leaving you and ascending to heaven will return in the same way you see Him departing.

*Voice 1:* Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem—their short journey from the Mount of Olives was an acceptable Sabbath Day's walk.

*Voice 3:* Back in the city, they went to the room where they were staying—a second-floor room.

*Voice 2:* The whole group of believers—Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, Simon the Zealot, Judas (son of James), and a number of women including Mary (Jesus' mother), and some of Jesus' brothers—devoted themselves to constant prayer with one accord.

Let us hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

## ***WE REFLECT***

## ***WE RESPOND IN FAITH***

### ***A DRAMATIC READING Loretta F. Ross, *The Praying Life****

*Voice 1:* Something new is coming,  
something incredible,  
beyond imagination  
and manipulation.

Something promised.

Voice 2: Well maybe.  
That is to say, we hope it is.

Voice 1: He said it would.

Voice 2: We watched him rise up  
out on the hill,  
wind blustering all around,  
and the jagged saw of goodbye  
chewing us apart.

Don't go. Don't go. We love you so!

Voice 1: And the love  
filling us up  
and tipping us over  
with its force.

And us, breathless and blown,  
rolling and tumbling down  
the mountain  
flung and spinning  
out from the Center of that splendor.

His Words,  
imprinted  
on our souls like a bright tattoo.

And the angels saying, Get up. Get going!

Voice 2: He said to wait.  
Wait.

Voice 1: There would be more, something else,  
spirit he called it,  
who will help us remember it all,  
help us catch our breath,  
and give us legs for such a world,  
as we have glimpsed.

Voice 2: Oh, why not Him? Why this spirit thing,  
when we had a love  
we could hold in our arms and look in the eye?

The Father, reaching down into humanity,  
snatches back the offspring  
of his selfless, effervescent generosity.

Dear God,  
catching up very God of very God,  
begotten not made,  
by the scruff  
of his collar  
and drawing him back into your joyful dance,  
what are you thinking,  
cutting in like this, sweeping off with our partner?

Voice 1: Life is eternal – that is good news.

Voice 2: But what to do with the life and the love,  
left here as we are, knocking about in the flesh?

God, please do not ask of us such vulnerability,  
this being clueless, with nothing to hang onto,  
suspended between cloud and fire,  
dangling  
from only a dim memory and a bright promise.

## **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

*from "Our World Belongs to God"*

*Marc:* As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world—  
which some seek to control,  
but which others view with despair—  
we dare to declare with joy and trust:  
Our world belongs to God!

*Voice 1:* From the beginning,  
through all the crises of our times,  
until God's kingdom fully comes,  
God keeps covenant forever.

*Voice 2:* The Spirit is at work, renewing creation.  
We rejoice in the goodness of God,  
renounce the works of darkness,  
and dedicate ourselves to holy living.

*Marc:* As covenant partners,  
called to faithful obedience,  
and set free for joyful praise,  
we can offer our hearts and lives  
to do God's work in this world.

*Voice 1:* With tempered impatience,  
eager to see injustice ended,  
we expect the Day of the Lord.

*Voice 2:* And we are confident  
that the light which shines  
in the present darkness  
will fill the earth when Christ appears.

*Marc:* Come, Lord Jesus!  
Our world belongs to you.

## **A CONFESSION OF OUR EASTER FAITH** *Christine Sine, Godspace*

*Marc:* Because Jesus ascended  
and sits at the right hand of God,  
a new world has broken into ours –

*Voice 1:* A world in which justice does come for the poor...

*Voice 2:* Freedom does come for the prisoners...

*Voice 3:* Healing does come for the sick...

*Voice 4:* Because Jesus ascended  
and sits at the right hand of God,  
a new community has been formed –

*Voice 1:* A community that loves and cares for all...

*Voice 2:* A family that welcomes those  
who are abandoned and rejected...

*Voice 3:* A place where all find a place of belonging...

*Voice 5:* Because Jesus ascended  
and sits at the right hand of God,  
a new creation has begun –

*Voice 1:* All that was distorted is being restored...

*Voice 2:* All that is corrupted is being renewed...

*Voice 3:* All that was broken is being made whole...

Voice 6: Because Jesus ascended  
and sits at the right hand of God,  
God's new world has begun.

## ***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE*** (*Rev. Karla, Rev. Abi, and others*)

*Marc:* Let us pray.

Holy One, we gaze towards misty heavens  
knowing you were just with us,  
and now you are gone.

Voice 1: Lord of life,  
We do not know the face of the future,  
any more than your disciples did.

Voice 2: Like them, we have many questions:  
how to live  
how to bear witness.

Voice 3: Like them, we thirst for the spring waters of the Spirit  
to inspire us in our living  
to give us a heart language in our testimony.

Voice 4: We are your people, God,  
and as much as we love sky-gazing,  
we know that you call us to give witness  
in the middle of terror, anxiety, illness, death,  
and apathy.

Voice 5: Help us to listen deeply, see far and wide,  
and live faithfully.

*Voice 6:* We pray for those  
    who need to feel you close,  
    who need the assurance of your love,  
    the encouragement of your Spirit...

*Voice 7:* We pray for those who are persecuted,  
    who are discriminated against,  
    who are mocked because of their faith or race  
    or colour, or sexual identity or gender expression

*Voice 8:* We pray for those who are imprisoned,  
    who are tortured,  
    who are exiled,  
    because they have fought, struggled  
    and spoken out  
    for the rights of their people...

*Voice 9:* We pray for those who are destitute,  
    those who are hungry,  
    those who are refugees,  
    because of the selfishness and apathy  
    of the world...

*Voice 10:* We pray for those who are filled with guilt,  
    who are broken-hearted,  
    who are perplexed,  
    because a relationship has gone wrong...

*Voice 11:* We pray for those who are feeling fed up,  
    who are in discomfort,  
    who are afraid,  
    because they are ill in body, mind or spirit...

*Voice 12:* We pray for those who are numbed,  
who are angry,  
who are desolate,  
because they have been bereaved...

*Voice 13:* We pray for those caught up in war,  
and violence, and hatred;  
especially the innocent victims of these evils...

*Voice 14:* We pray at this time of financial turmoil,  
for those who have lost jobs,  
those who struggle to pay bills,  
and those who have the power to affect  
positive change...

*Voice 15:* We watch the skies for just a glimpse  
of your dazzling grace,  
and you send us angels,  
to bring our hearts and minds and soul  
back into our lives, our bodies,  
this very present moment,  
where your presence is more difficult to see  
in the midst of disease, of hardship, of death  
and random thoughtless cruelty.

*Voice 16:* Your angels come to us  
through the ordinary moments,  
reminding us to pray in spite of and because of...

*Voice 17:* Your angels remind us that You will indeed  
empower us  
to be your light and life and hope in this world,  
to the ends of the earth,  
wherever courage and grace is needed.

*Marc :* Be with us all,  
in all our daily struggles as we seek to follow you.

Be with us all,  
in our periods of doubt and despair;  
and in our times of happiness, health and loving.

Be with us all,  
until that time  
when in your in your Kingdom of Love  
our joy will know no end.

In Christ we pray. Amen.

## ***WORDS OF BLESSING AND SENDING***

*Marc:* The time has come to go into the world,  
where our worship of God will continue  
in every moment of our lives.

*Voice 1:* The time has come to serve those around us,  
to shoulder the burdens of our sisters,  
to ease the pain of our brother  
to uphold all our siblings.

*Voice 2:* The time has come to glorify God,  
with our prayers as well as our praise,  
with songs as well as acts of service.

*Marc:* We are not alone.  
We are surrounded by all the believers  
who have gone before,  
an enormous cloud of witnesses.

*Marc:* So let's throw off any extra baggage,  
let's get rid of the sin that slows us down.

And let's fix our eyes on the example of Jesus Christ,  
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.  
who endured the shame and agony of the cross  
for the sake of the joy that lay ahead,  
and now he is seated at the right hand of God.

Go in peace. Amen.