

**UNRAVELED—
SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART
“When Humans Unravel God’s Plan for Justice”**

**The Second Sunday After Pentecost
June 21, 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

Marc: God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all.

There is nothing hidden, that will not be revealed.

We light this flame to affirm that new light
is ever waiting to break through
to enlighten our ways:

That new truth is ever waiting
to break through to illumine our minds,
and that new love is ever waiting
to break through to warm our hearts.

May we be open to this light,
and to the rich possibilities that it brings us.

Deep calls unto deep,
life calls unto life,
light calls unto light.

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

Here is God's good kin-dom!

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Marc: We gather to share in God's dream
of abundant life for all.

We gather to give and receive gifts of deep emotion,
deep wisdom, and deep love.

With gratitude we gather as a community
to praise God,
to seek transformation,
and to celebrate the power of the Spirit
who is always moving.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

Marc: What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we’re on—comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be?

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn’t have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed.

A WORD ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS DAY OF PRAYER

Established in 1996, National Indigenous Day falls annually on June 21. It is intended to give all Canadians the opportunity to participate and share knowledge about Indigenous peoples’ values, customs, languages, and culture. It gives Indigenous peoples an opportunity to showcase the beauty of their cultures and languages.

Although the three Indigenous groups in Canada—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis—share many similarities, they each have their own distinct heritage, language, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. There is much diversity among these peoples.

National Indigenous Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the unique and outstanding achievements and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and to show pride in their accomplishments. That said, one commentator writes that:

“As we approach the celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21 the news has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Then the George Floyd tragedy happened in Minnesota, May 25. This blatant murder by a police officer of an unarmed Black man has caused people to stop in their tracks and really consider what equality for all people is about. The violence toward Black people in the USA, and the racism in our own country shows how deeply divided we are as a society.

I cannot speak for Black people, nor should I, but I can look at our own history and the violence to our Indigenous women, children and Elders. We still suffer in many ways from the legacy of the Residential Schools; we still do not know the number and names of all the children who died while in that system; and we still have Aboriginal women who are murdered with many of the murders unsolved, go missing, or die at the hands of police. None of these incidents have sparked anywhere near the degree of mass protest that has erupted following the murder of George Floyd.

In his book, “The Skin We’re In,” Black author Desmond Cole looks at Canada in the year 2017, month by month, and talks about his own experiences living with the injustices directed toward Black people on a daily basis. He devotes a chapter to Canada’s Indigenous peoples, and urges solidarity with them as their experiences are similar.

We Indigenous people have lived with this for generations and in order to survive we have become numb to it all... You might wonder what keeps us going on, and what is it that we have to celebrate on National Indigenous Peoples day....?

I cannot help but feel gratitude for how far the churches in this diocese and their Aboriginal neighbours have come in building relationships and celebrating each others’ communities. It is a joy to see churches celebrating National Indigenous Peoples Day in their liturgies. It has been wonderful to have an annual celebratory Feast on the grounds of the Synod Office, which includes singing and dancing offered by the Coast Salish and Nisga’a peoples, Métis dancers and fiddlers, and the Big Drum group representing the Plains peoples.

We can all truly look up to Indigenous heroes like; Dr. Martin Brokenleg, Dr. Chief Bobby Joseph, and Archbishop Mark MacDonald. Young leaders are emerging, such as Keane Tait who is keeper of Nisga’a knowledge. There are so many more people we can look up to as our Nations continue to grow and thrive. The national “Indspire Awards” are presented annually by Canada’s Indigenous people to recognize outstanding achievement by individuals amongst their own.

A READING “The Gospel Came With Foreign Tongue,” *Brian Wren*

The gospel came with foreign tongue
disrupting all the ancient ways,
Beside the merchant and the gun,
in search of profit, souls and slaves.

With God we weep, lament, confess
how holy zeal and bloodied hand
Reached out to kill and dispossess,
proclaiming love and taking land.

How hard, today, to meet and share
our needs, suspicions, hopes and fears,
When some have ease, and food to spare,
while others walk a trail of tears!

In hope we come, by grace reborn,
As clashing stories still collide,
to listen, pray, and travel on,
companions of the Crucified.

We tell our varied memories,
assembled in our global room,
that Christ may wash our histories,
as threads for Love's eternal loom.

AN INVITATION TO PRAY (*adapted from “A Song of Faith”*)

Marc: God forgives, and calls all of us
 to confess our fears and failings
 with honesty and humility.

God reconciles, and calls us to repent
the part we have played in damaging our world,
ourselves, and each other.

God transforms, and calls us
to protect the vulnerable,
to pray for deliverance from evil,
to work with God for the healing of the world,
that all might have abundant life.

OPENING PRAYER

Marc: Great Comforter, we know that we are surrounded
by a legacy of pain.

Voice 1: We acknowledge the pain, grief, and sorrow
caused by not living respectfully with all people,
and we are sorry for the ways
that we have dishonoured
the depths of this pain.

Voice 2: Open us, Creator,
to the power of interconnectedness:

Voice 3: Help us to receive the painful stories
as well as the inspiring stories;

Voice 4: Grant us the courage to own any feelings
of vulnerability, shame, fear, and guilt
that may come from our interactions
with each other; And with your healing grace,
lead us through our aching
toward your dream of wholeness.

Marc: Transform us and our community
so that we may continually work
toward reconciliation and new life. Amen.

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

WE HEAR AND REFLECT ON THE GOOD NEWS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING

A READING Exodus 7: 8-23

Reader 1: God said, “Moses, when the Pharaoh asks you and Aaron to perform a miracle, command Aaron to throw his walking stick down in front of the Pharaoh, and it will turn into a snake.”

Reader 2: Moses and Aaron went to the Pharaoh and his officials and did exactly as God had commanded—Aaron threw the stick down, and it turned into a snake.

Reader 1: Then the Pharaoh called in the wise ones and the magicians, who used their secret powers to do the same thing—they threw down sticks that turned into snakes. But Aaron’s snake swallowed theirs.

Reader 2: The Pharaoh behaved just as God had said and stubbornly refused to listen.

Reader 1: Let us hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

A VIDEO CLIP “Prince of Egypt”

WE REFLECT

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP (*Gunilla Norris, Being Home*)

Marc: We are not separate from the deaths, the demands, and the dealings, the disasters, the deceits, the demagogues, and the diplomacy.

This is our incompleteness, our separation,
our greed at work. Let us own our part.

The world's hunger is ours.

The world's helplessness is ours.

The world's failure to love is ours.

May God sober us to this connection in our lives.

Let the news be printed on our consciences.

And may God help us to bear it.

A READING “Reconciliation” *By Rebeka Tabobondung*

We are waking up to our history
from a forced slumber

We are breathing it into our lungs
so it will be a part of us again

It will make us angry at first
because we will see how much you stole from us
and for how long you watched us suffer

We will see how you see us
and how when we copied your ways
we killed our own.

We will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again

But we will go home to cry
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old
and it will be new.

Then we will breathe our history back to you
you will feel how strong and alive it is
and you will feel yourself become a part of it

And it will shock you at first because
it is too big to see all at once
and you won't want to believe it

You will see how you see us
and all the disaster in your ways
how much we lost.

And you will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again
but we will cry with you
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old
and it will be new.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE “How Long? Not Long”

AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP (*adapted from “Song of Faith”*)

Marc: Jesus announced the coming of God’s reign—
a commonwealth not of domination but of peace,
justice, and reconciliation

Voice 1: He healed the sick and fed the hungry.

Voice 2: He forgave sins and freed those held captive
by all manner of demonic powers.

Voice 3: He crossed barriers of race, class, culture,
and gender.

Voice 4: He preached and practised unconditional love—
love of God, love of neighbour, love of friend,
love of enemy.

Marc: And he commanded his followers
to love one another as he loved them.

Let us pray.

PRAAYER (*adapted from the Staffordshire Seven, John Bucki, John van de Laar*)

Marc: O God save us from hardness of heart,
where your word cannot take root.

Voice 1: O God, save us from shallowness of mind,
where your word withers away.

Voice 2: O God, save us from the deceitfulness of riches,
where your word is choked by everyday cares.

Voice 3: Grant that our hearts may be fertile soil,
where your word flourishes and yields a harvest,
bringing salvation to ourselves
and those about us.

Voice 4: Help us to break down the barriers in our community,
enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,
and free us to challenge and uproot it
from ourselves, our society and our world.

Marc: It would be much easier, God,
to ignore the hard truths around us:

Voice 1: ...the widening gap
between rich and poor,

Voice 2: ...the consistency with which the powerful
get their way,

Voice 3: ...the bending of rules and the self-enrichment
of the connected and influential,

Voice 4: ...the lack of adequate care, protection and resources
for the most vulnerable among us;

Marc: We would rather not see these signs.

Voice 1: It would be much easier if we could just pretend
everything was alright,

Voice 2: if we could prophesy goodness and light,
and ignore the darkness and evil;

Voice 3: if we didn't have to offend the status quo,
or challenge the comfortable;

Voice 4: if we could convince ourselves that the cross,
was just a one time thing –
your calling, not ours.

Marc: But, we can't do this, God,
because we know too much;

Voice 1: your Gospel has captured us and opened our eyes,
and we have become slaves to love,

Voice 2: ...the love that must speak for the voiceless,

Voice 3: ...the love that must challenge injustice,

Voice 4: ...the love that draws lines of division
between truth and denial,
between compassion and expediency.

Marc: Give us the courage to acknowledge what we see,

Voice 1: ...to name the signs of the times,

Voice 2: ...to disrupt the 'way things are'
in the name of what should be,

Voice 3: ...to divide in order to heal and restore,

Voice 4: ...to be crucified for the sake of love.

Marc: Let your breath, O God, fill us with life anew,
that we might love as you love
and do what you would do.

Let us know the peace that comes
from good relations with each other and with you.

The Creator has chosen to walk with us.
We are blessed. Amen.

WORDS OF BLESSING AND SENDING

FINAL WORDS “Blessing For Knowing”—*Jan Richardson*

Marc: To receive this blessing,
it may feel like
you are peeling back
every layer of flesh,
exposing every nerve,
baring each bone
that has kept you upright.

Voice 1: It may seem
every word is written
on the back of
something that your life
depends upon,
that to read this blessing
would mean tearing away
what has helped you
remain intact.

Voice 2: Be at peace.

It will not be
as painful as that,
though I cannot say
it will be easy
to accept this blessing,
written as it is
upon your true frame,
inscribed on the skin
you were born
to live in.

Voice 3: The habits that keep you
from yourself,
the misconceptions
others have of you,
the unquestioned limits
you have allowed,
the smallness you have
squeezed into:
these are not
who you are.

Marc: This blessing simply wants
all this to fall away.

This blessing—
and it is stubborn on this point,
I assure you—
desires you to know yourself
as it knows you...

to let go of every layer
that is not you,
to release each thing
that you hide behind,
to open your eyes
to see what it sees:

Voice 1: how this blessing
has blazed in you
since before you were born;

Voice 2: how it has sustained you
when you could not see it;

Voice 3: how it haunts you,
prickling beneath your skin
to let it shine forth
in full and unstinting
measure;

Marc: how it begins
and ends
with your true name.