

**TRINITY SUNDAY
JUNE 7, 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!

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 READING *Leslie Dwight*

Voice 1: What if 2020 isn't cancelled?

What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?

*A year so uncomfortable, so painful, so scary, so raw
— that it finally forces us to grow.*

A year that screams so loud, finally awakening us
from our ignorant slumber.

A year we finally accept the need for change.
Declare change.
Work for change.
Become the change.

A year we finally band together,
instead of pushing each other further apart.

What if 2020 isn't cancelled,
but rather the most important year of them all?

Marc: Unraveling is not always the end we fear it will be.

*When the worst has happened, when death or
tragedy has undone us and the vision we had for our
lives tears apart, we come to an end, but it is not the
end. Our story continues.*

*Sometimes unraveling becomes an opportunity—to
untangle ourselves from broken patterns or toxic
situations, or to become unwound from a path or
identity that no longer serves us.*

*Over the next twelve weeks, we will explore 12 stories
of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and
expectations.*

*These are stories where God meets us in the
spiraling, unraveling our plans—and us—into
something new.*

*In the words of one of the writers of this series:
We don't have to dig deep to think of moments when
our life hasn't gone as planned. One day we're
moving through the world with hopes and dreams on
our sleeves. The next, we're laughing out loud, or are
lost in a wave of grief, for the way life has unfolded
around us.*

*Knowing the messy reality of this truth, my hope is
that this theme will create space for people to explore
the holy and surprising ways God moves in and
around us in those moments—weaving together the
loose ends of grief, isolation, or loss in our life, while
also unraveling prejudice, injustice, and suffering.*

*Things don't always go as planned—sometimes that's
good, and sometimes that's painful. Either way, the
Holy Spirit is always working to hem us in before and
behind, and that is worth paying attention to.*

OPENING PRAYER *adapted from lutheranjulia, posted on RevGalBlogPals.*

Marc: God, in our hearts,
we long to be your people,
to carry out your mission,
to be lights in the darkness—
proof that no darkness
can overcome your truth.

Awaken us to action.

Stir us to courage.

Rouse us to prepare a way in the wilderness
for your coming,
clearing the brush of oppression, racism,
injustice, and hopelessness—

So that all may see your light
and perceive your coming. Amen.

WE HEAR AND REFLECT ON THE GOOD NEWS

A GUIDED MEDITATION

Marc: I invite you to close your eyes ...

To relax your breathing ...

To allow distractions to fall away ...

Give yourself permission to be fully present
in this time ...

Take a few deep breaths ...

Open your awareness to God-with-you,
through your imagination ...

Guided Imagery:

Marc : I invite you to imagine a wilderness.

This wilderness can be
whatever your imagination creates.

Perhaps there are many trees, tangled together
and the light is dim ...

Perhaps there is a wide expanse of space ...
and the sunlight is harsh ...

Whatever setting you create,
experience this wilderness through your senses.

What do you see? ...

What do you hear? ...

What do you taste or smell? ...

What can you touch? ...

Now place yourself in this wilderness.

You are alone ...

Look at yourself as if you are an observer.

What do you look like? ...

What does your facial expression communicate? ...

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING

A READING Genesis 21:1-21

Reader 1: God dealt with Sarah as she had been promised.

Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.

Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Now Sarah said, 'God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.'

And she said, 'Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.'

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac.

So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.'

The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham,

‘Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.’

So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away.

And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

A READING “Is This Your Idea of A Good Time God?” *Ralph Milton*

WE REFLECT

- What wilderness are you experiencing at this time in your life?
- What feelings do you experience in the wilderness?
- Does it feel as if resources are scarce?
What is it that you don't have enough of?
- How is it that you might be distancing yourself from loss and pain, within this wilderness?

What are your emotional survival strategies?

- Who may be present in your life,
in the midst of the wilderness, as an “angel”?

Who is drawing your attention to God?

- Have you had a chance to talk with God
about your struggle?
- What do you fear, within the wilderness?
- What might God be inviting you to do?
- How might God open your eyes
to the abundance at hand
that you might be missing?
- Often, we cannot see the blessings available to us,
until the time of wilderness is far past.

From this current vantage point,
can you see a blessing?

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

GUIDED PRAYER

Marc: I now invite you to become aware
of what you are feeling,
in the midst of this wilderness.

Allow feelings to come to mind without judging them.

Just notice.

Are you afraid? ...

Are you lonely? ...

Are you hopeful? ...

No feeling is wrong; just become aware ...

In the midst of these feelings, whatever they are,
I invite you to turn to prayer, to talk to God
in the privacy of your own mind and heart.

Be honest.

Hold nothing back.

Tell God how you feel.

Ask God for the help you need ...

(a time of silent prayer)

A READING Psalm 86:1-10, 15-16 *(as paraphrased by Bruce Prewer)*

Voice 1: Bend down and hear me, my God,
for I feel bankrupt and vulnerable.
Look after me, for I am yours,
save this poor servant who trusts you.

Voice 2: Are you listening to me, Holy Friend?
I'm feeling empty and vulnerable.
If I'm yours you'd better help me,
please rescue this nobody who trusts you.

Voice 1: My God, please deal gently with me,
for I pray to you all day long.
Fill this meagre soul with happiness,
for towards you my soul yearns.

Voice 2: My God, please go easy on me,
I need you every minute of the day.
Cheer me up as I serve you,
lift my spirits as I focus on you.

Voice 1: You are always kind and forgiving,
full of love to all who call out to you.
My God, hear this prayer of mine,
listen to the words that pour out.

Voice 2: I know you have always been forgiving,
always there for us when we call out.
So please hear me now when I pray;
beneath my chatter are deep needs.

Voice 1: Whenever I'm in trouble I call on you,
because you listen and answer me.
Among religions there is nothing like you,
nobody else has love like yours.

Voice 2: When I'm in big trouble I call out,
and you never let me down.
Other religions may talk big
but none do the things you do.

Voice 1: Some day all nations will come to you,
bowing down and glorifying your name.
For the things you do are wonderful,
nothing else is Divine except you.

Voice 2: I reckon that one day everyone will come
and give you their best love and praise.
They will find out how wonderful you are
and that nothing's worth more than you.

Voice 1: You, most loving God, overflow with compassion,
you are slow to anger and full of faithful love.
Turn to me and include me in your saving love,
please give this child, your servant, new strength,

Voice 2: Holy Friend, you are patient and generous,
not easily upset but loving without reserve.
Right now, turn and hug me with your love,
give me more faith and determination.

AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

(John Bucki, SJ and posted on the **Center Concern** website.

<https://www.coc.org/ef/pentecost-2013>)

Marc: The coming of God's Spirit transforms us

Voice 1: Locked doors are opened.

Voice 2: Fear is replaced by courage.

Voice 3: Peace is proclaimed.

Voice 4: The power to forgive sins is present.

Voice 5: Those who were afraid now speak up boldly.

Voice 6: Thousands hear the message in their own language.

Marc: The coming of the Spirit
is reflected in our social values.

Voice 1: In a world of racism and xenophobia
and fear of immigrants,
the Spirit speaks to people of every nation
under heaven.

Voice 2: In a world of fear and doubt and confusion,
the Spirit inspires people to open the doors
and speak out
especially about issues of justice and peace.

Voice 3: In a world of selfishness, competition, and control,
the Spirit gives out gifts that are shared
for the benefit of all
especially those who are poor or in need.

Voice 4: In a world with war, violence and terrorism,
the Spirit proclaims a message of peace
and reconciliation to all.

Voice 5: In a world of economic problems,
the Spirit reminds us
that the things of the world
are meant to be shared by all
and are to be used for the common good.

Voice 6: In a world where the environment is abused
and overused,
the Spirit calls to reform how we live
and to use the earth with care and love.

Marc: In a world of ideology and prejudice,
the Spirit calls us to think about things
in a new way.

Voice 1: In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*,
Thomas Merton invites us to consider whether:

“Perhaps we are stronger than we think.

Perhaps we are even afraid of our strength,
and turn it against ourselves,
thus making ourselves weak--making ourselves
secure, making ourselves guilty.

Perhaps we are most afraid
of the strength of God in us.

Perhaps we would rather be guilty
and weak in ourselves
than strong in the God whom we cannot know.”

Voice 1: Building on this theme, assassinated Archbishop
Oscar Romero, puts it like this:

“Those who...would save their lives—that is, those
who want to get along, who don’t want
commitments, who don’t want to get into
problems, who want to stay outside of a situation
that demands the involvement of all of us—they
will lose their lives.

What a terrible thing to have lived quite comfortably,
with no suffering, not getting involved in
problems, quite tranquil, quite settled, with good
connections politically, economically, socially—
lacking nothing, having everything.

To what good? They will lose their lives...

AN EXPRESSION OF INTENTION (*Gunilla Norris, Being Home*)

Marc: We are not separate from the deaths, the demands,
and the dealings, the disasters, the deceptions,
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.

PRAYER

Jason R. Jenkins, Stephen Fearing, J. Lee Hill

Voice 1: God, we ask that by your holy light
you illuminate the instances in our lives
where we have not lived up to your name.

We denounce “obvious” evils in our society
such as murder, rape, domestic violence,
thievery, and sexual exploitation.

However, we often fail to remember
that your gospel calls us to see the world
as you see it –
from the vantage point of the “least of these.”

In looking around us in this manner,
we see the daily evils
that boldly counter your gospel.

We see societal ills that habitually oppress the poor.

We see societal ills that blatantly disobey your Word.

We confess that we have not been
extravagantly generous with our time, resources,
or prayers.

Forgive us.

Forgive us for not speaking against
an immoral budget
that exploits our brothers and sisters.

Forgive us for ignoring the plight of those
unable to afford health care because of rising
costs.

Forgive us for denying the tremendous damage
that racism does to our society.

Forgive us for remaining silent
over issues of immigration,
the death penalty, and the need for a living wage.

We pray for those who have been hurt
by words of hate:

for refugees and immigrants
with or without documentation,

for women and girls who have endured
words of sexism,

for people of color who hear words of racism,

for people with disabilities who are told
they are “less than,”

for elderly people who are told they are useless,

for young adults who are told they are entitled, selfish,
and irresponsible.

Help us speak the truth in love
and to care for one another
with the words we choose to speak.

Voice 1: God of new beginnings, God of sacred endings,
we gather in this in-between time and space,
unsure of what the future holds...
awaiting transformation, renewal,
the chance to begin again.

Our times are in Your hands, O God,
give us hope for the journey.

Voice 2: We have traveled through dangers seen and unseen,
we have tiptoed through dark nights of the souls
and wrestled against powers
that should have kept us down.

Our times are in Your hands, O Lord,
give us courage for the journey.

Voice 3: Encourage us to be ever mindful
of Your Still Speaking Voice;
to dance without fear
when the morning has come,
and to know that with the coming of Your Light
fear must release its death-grip on our lives.

Our times are in Your hands, O God,
give us light for the journey.

Voice 4: We stand in this present moment,
frustrated by miscarriages of justice,
angered by the lack of collective concern
for black and brown bodies,
exasperated with a broken immigration policy,
racism, sexism, homophobia, mass incarceration
and we deeply grieve the growing numbers of
deaths by gun violence;

Our times our in Your hands, O God,
give us justice for the journey.

Voice 5: The future stretches out before us
full of mystery and full of surprise.

We need You, God of New Beginnings,
to set the course,
and guide our feet in the way of righteousness.

Our times are in Your hands, Triune God,
give us life.

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.**

WORDS OF BLESSING AND SENDING

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Marc: God continues to create
out of the chaos and brokenness of our lives:
filling our hearts with love,
transforming our despair into hope,
shaping our selfishness into servanthood.

BLESSING “A Blessing When the World Is Ending”

(Jan Richardson, Circles of Grace)

Marc: Look, the world
is always ending
somewhere.

Voice 1: Somewhere
the sun has come
crashing down.

Voice 2: Somewhere
it has gone
completely dark.

Voice 3: Somewhere
it has ended
with the gun,
the knife,
the fist.

Voice 4: Somewhere
it has ended
with the slammed door,
the shattered hope.

Voice 5: Somewhere
it has ended
with the utter quiet
that follows the news
from the phone,
the television,
the hospital room.

Voice 6: Somewhere
it has ended
with a tenderness
that will break
your heart.

Marc: But, listen,
this blessing means
to be anything
but morose.

Voice 1: It has not come
to cause despair.

Voice 2: It is simply here
because there is nothing
a blessing
is better suited for
than an ending,

Voice 3: nothing that cries out more
for a blessing
than when a world
is falling apart.

Voice 4: This blessing
will not fix you,
will not mend you,
will not give you
false comfort;

Voice 5: It will not talk to you
about one door opening
when another one closes.

Voice 6: It will simply
sit itself beside you
among the shards
and gently turn your face
toward the direction
from which the light
will come,
gathering itself
about you
as the world begins
again.

GLOBAL APPLICATION: *John van de Laar, Sacrediese*

The world's systems are all built on the foundations of self-protection and self-interest.

Our systems of power, whether religious, political, ideological, or relational, all work on the assumption that some must lose in order for others to win.

Our economic systems are based on the idea that competition is healthy and natural and that winners are rewarded while losers are unimportant.

Our systems of entertainment and pleasure are all based on the idea that instant gratification and constant novelty are always better.

The values of contemporary Western society leave no consideration for altruism, self-sacrifice, service, simplicity, collaboration, and mutual care.

Yet, our current ways of doing things are not helping us to address the greatest challenges of our world, and they are not bringing us peace, happiness, or deeper connection with one another.

As we seek to save our lives, we are losing them, and when anyone stands up to challenge the status quo, they are shouted down, at best, or silenced through persecution or execution, at worst.

Yet, our world desperately needs those, both leaders and ordinary citizens, who will embrace a different set of values and priorities.

Our world needs those who will embrace the Gospel call to sacrifice, service and simplicity, and who will willingly turn away from the self-protective habits of contemporary society.

If, as followers of Christ, we can do this – each in our own small corner of the world – we can have a massive impact on how our world operates.

As we begin to support clean energy, just and honest leadership, fair trade and equitable labour relations, mindful consumption, and caring, forgiving, diverse communities, our influence spreads through society, and begins to make the alternative values of God's Reign visible.

LOCAL APPLICATION: *John van de Laar, Sacrediese*

We all face moments of decision, when we have to choose whether to preserve our own lives through silence and compliance with those who threaten us or others, or to endure ridicule, persecution and rejection for speaking out for what we believe is right.

These decisions are often much smaller, but more significant, than we may realise.

When we refuse to laugh at racist, homophobic or chauvinistic jokes, we put ourselves in the firing line.

When we stand alongside those whom others want to judge and reject, we risk being rejected and judged ourselves.

When we refuse to participate in acts of violence or retribution against our “enemies” we may be seen as traitors.

In our own families and churches, when we begin to embrace beliefs and values that are different from the “norm” we may be disowned or excommunicated.

Yet, if we fail to stand up for our convictions, we lose something of our own souls, and we contribute to making the world an unsafe and threatening place for anyone who is “different” in any way.

While it may hurt to live out the welcoming, forgiving, serving, peaceful and justice-seeking values of God’s Reign, to fail to do so hurts us and our world far more.

This is why the Lectionary challenges us this week to love the Gospel above all – for only then will we live as people who truly, and selflessly love family, friends, neighbours, and even enemies as God calls us to.