

**“SEEKING UNDERSTANDING
WHEN EVERYTHING FALLS APART”
The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
July 5, 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 "Making Sacred," *Stephen Shick, adapted*

Marc: Here we have gathered
the elements of our lives.

Aware and unaware,
we have carried them to this place:

the joy of waking and living,
the pleasure found in meaningful work,
the blush of health,
the pain of illness,
the grief of loss,
the gift of love.

Some of these we have carried a long way.

Some have bent our backs until our eyes
could no longer see the horizon.

Some have carried us upward with purpose,
feathered wing in flight.

All we have carried through the seasons of our lives
has brought us here to this time
we make sacred by our coming together

OPENING PRAYER *Kate McIlhagga,*

Marc: God of unending surprises,
Our life is a tapestry of moments woven together.

Today we gather and pray
that you would unravel our bias.
Unravel our assumptions.
Unravel whatever it is that keeps us from you.

May your Spirit Breath, flowing free,
flow in and through us,
to cleanse and bring a new beginning,
a fresh start,
right relationships
and peace.

Clear space in our hearts for your Word.

We are listening. We are praying. Amen.

WE HEAR AND REFLECT ON THE GOOD NEWS

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.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS

Everything Job holds dear—his property, his family, his wealth, his physical health—has been taken from him. Reduced to suffering and misery, Job laments his circumstances and tries to make sense of what has happened to him.

WE REFLECT ON OUR EXPERIENCE

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Can you identify a time in your life, or the life of someone you know when it seemed like everything was unravelling?
2. Did others try to provide support? Did you find their support helpful or hurtful?
3. Did you try to make meaning of what was happening? How? What conclusions did you come to?

A READING—Psalm 22, as paraphrased by Wendell Berry

Voice 1: God, we read that people in the past believed in you;
and you apparently gave them
the strength they sought.

So why are you so distant now?

Voice 2: There have been times when we
have reached out to you,
but you looked the other way!

Voice 3: Our disillusionment comes under criticism
from so many people.

And those people we thought were our friends,
fail to support us.

Voice 4: Truth is, in our heart of hearts,
we know that you gave us life at the beginning,
and we felt you cared for us.

Voice 5: But now we need you to be closer to us,
because nothing makes much sense anymore,
and there are so many huge problems
gathered around us.

Voice 6: In all this tale of misery,
we are talking to you because you know
our feelings and failings.

Voice 7: And you will save us –
even from our own negative thoughts.

- Voice 8:* Even now, we continue to believe in your Presence
which is more powerful
than we can really understand.
- Voice 9:* You have planted within us the awareness
of a love which is eternal,
yet very important and personal.
- Voice 10:* We continue to believe that people are valued by you,
even when they fall away from you.
- Voice 11:* You let that happen:
but you go on feeling the pain
and you are ready to support them
in their difficulties.
- Voice 12:* You are the Eternal God of us all:
and we ourselves anew to you.
- Voice 13:* Regardless of our feelings of insignificance
and inadequacy,
we are in awe as we try to find a way
to worship you.
- Voice 14:* One thing we can do--
we can be carriers of your love
to people all around us.
- Voice 15:* O light come down to earth,
be praised.

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Marc: The question of suffering may absorb the minds of theologians and philosophers, but it is not an issue to be debated. Nor is it a problem to be solved.

Rather, suffering is a reality to be entered into with compassion and mercy

When we encounter those who suffer, the Gospel calls us to give our lives and resources to serve and heal.

And when we are faced with suffering of our own, the Gospel gives us the assurance of God's presence and grace, and a community of companions to journey with us.

When we recognize that our love and faithfulness to God must overflow into love and faithfulness to each other, we are able to open ourselves to the presence and strength of God that sustains us, and we are able to enter all of our relationships with the self-giving of Christ, and with the intentionality to commit, to connect, and to grow into deeper intimacy and faithfulness together.

PRAYER *Thom Shuman, Bruce Prewer, adapted*

Voice 1: Gracious God:
when we cannot see you,
you look in compassion upon us;

When we cannot speak a word,
you hear the sighs of our hearts;

When we are falling apart,
you hold us together with your grace.

Voice 2: You reach out to take away all
which distracts us from discipleship;

You challenge us to give away everything
which keeps us from following you;

You surround us with people, even strangers,
who enfold us with your love and hope.

Voice 3: When we are too weary to put
one faltering foot in front of the other,
you carry us in your strength;

as we seek to challenge
the unfairness of our world,
you stand beside us in your justice;

when we are afraid to come near,
you bear our prayers to the seat of grace.

Voice 4: Our world is ever-turning, ever-changing.

What we know today we did not always know,
and what comes tomorrow
may completely surprise us.

Help us to be open to the movement of Your Spirit
in our lives and in our world.

Voice 5: May our hearts be open to love,
and our minds be open to change.

Help us not to look back in fear,
but to look forward with hope,
knowing that You have caused the world to turn,
so You are always calling us to a new place,
a new time, a new point of view.

May we be open to your people,
and may we be open to You.

Voice 6: We thank you for the compassion
you have placed within our hearts,
for our ability to empathize with those who days
are fraught with struggle and pain.

If the magnitude of the world's needs
seem overwhelming,
save us from closing our minds
and hardening our hearts.

Let us put our trust always in you.

Voice 7: We pray for those who sufferings
seem to be the result of their own folly or sin.

Those who try our patience
and maybe offend our sensibilities.

Please bless them, with our help or without it,
as you think best, for you understand them
with a love which never wearies.

Voice 8: We pray for those whose misery
is the result of the wilfulness and sin of others.

The victims of hatred and violence,
war and persecution, crime and apathy,
greed and exploitation,
road rage, or drugs and alcohol.

Please bless them, with our help or without it,
according to your overriding wisdom and love.

Voice 9: We pray for those who are on the front line.

Police officers and social workers,
overseas aid workers and peace keepers,
nurses and doctors,
first responders and counsellors,
pharmacists and parents,
teachers and magistrates.

Please bless them, with our help or without it,
that they may be kept from chronic weariness
or cynicism.

Voice 10: We pray for those who work hard
to keep the church wide open,
both to the Gospel and to the world's needs.

Please bless them, with our help or without it,
that the witness to the word and way of Christ
may never be dimmed.

Voice 11: We pray for those among us
who feel burdened or distressed today.

Any who are dealing with bad news, poor health,
tense relationships, suffering, sorrow
or any other hardship.

Please bless them, with or without our help,
that they may find the extra resources
and guidance that they need.

Voice 12: Most holy Friend,
we thank you that our prayers are heard
before we even express them.

May our deeds embody our prayers,
and our prayers become more aware
because of our deeds.

Through Christ Jesus our teacher and liberator,
we pray, saying together the words he taught us:

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

FINAL WORDS

Marc: It's time to start moving back along
those separate paths from which we have come.

None of us can predict what this week may bring,
but there is one certainty:
the resources of the God,
who engineered the whole universe,
will be there for us.

We may be tested, we may suffer,
we may waver and become weary,
but we will not finally be overcome.

God is our strength and salvation.

So let us go from this place, to sit at the side
of those forgotten by the world,

Let us go with our hunger, and be fed;

Let us go with our brokenness, and be healed;

Let us offer ourselves, and be accepted by the Spirit,
who lives and works in every person we meet.

And may the blessing of God all-loving,
be with us today and evermore. **Amen!**