**SEEKING GOD**

**WHEN PLANS FOR OUR CHILDREN UNRAVEL**

**The Eighth Sunday After Pentecost**

**July 26, 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.*

***OPENING PRAYER***

 As we hear your word read, O God,

 By your Spirit, tug on our hearts,

 like a child tugging a parent’s sleeve,

 Whisper in our ear,

 like a child sharing an important secret,

 Clamour for our attention,

 like a young one who can’t wait any longer,

 Redirect our sights,

 like a child pointing out a wonder we almost missed.

 Don’t let us miss your Word to us this day,

 we pray. Amen.

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

***AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING***

*In a move that may be familiar from current political and social contexts, a new leader builds up fear about the foreigners and strangers in their midst. It is claimed that they might unite with enemies of Egypt in war – though the story contains no evidence of this, so it may be a projection of the Pharaoh’s thinking, or a tension used for political ends. That fear leads to oppression, while also using the Israelite people to further promote the Pharaoh’s position by building cities for him.*

*As this oppression appeared to backfire, an alternative strategy is tried. Shiprah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives, are asked to collude with their oppressors, and kill any infant boys. The midwives ignore this instruction, because they fear God. And in fact, they are able to hoodwink the Egyptian authorities by lying about birth practices amongst Hebrew women. So the Pharaoh then engages all his people in the oppression – by asking all his people to kill infant boys.*

*Into that context, a particular baby boy is born to Levite parents, and a very practical mother recognizes when she can no longer hide him, and places him in a well-prepared basket, watched by his sister at the riverbank. The daughter of Pharaoh, who presumably knew the orders, chooses to ignore them, rescues the boy and, after being raised further by his mother, he is adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter.*

***A READING*** Exodus 2:1-10

**2**Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. **2**The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. **3**When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. **4**His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

**5**The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. **6**When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. ‘This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said.

 **7**Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ **8**Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Yes.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother.

 **9**Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed it.

**10**When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOB28:12-28;MARK5:1-20;JOHN4:1-29;EXODUS1:22,2:1-10&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-1565a)] ‘because’, she said, ‘I drew him out[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JOB28:12-28;MARK5:1-20;JOHN4:1-29;EXODUS1:22,2:1-10&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-1565b)] of the water.’

***WE REFLECT***

*Moses is born into a world of genocide, a world where his life should end just as swiftly as it had begun. But his mother and sister plot a plan for his survival, placing him in the river near Pharaoh’s daughter. Their plan succeeds, as Pharaoh’s daughter has mercy on the child and unknowingly returns him to his mother to be nursed. When Moses grows up, his mother returns him to Pharaoh’s daughter to be adopted. Moses’ mother unravels her hopes and dreams as a mother, enduring great sacrifice in order for her child to live. And yet, Pharaoh’s daughter unravels her own father’s plans by adopting Moses as her own.*

***WE RESPOND IN FAITH***

***AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP***

It has been said that:

 Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime;

 therefore we must be saved by hope.

 Nothing which is true and beautiful or good

 makes complete sense

 in an immediate context of history;

 therefore we must be saved by faith.

 Nothing we do, however virtuous,

 can be accomplished alone;

 therefore we are saved by love.

In our time and place we are invited to be like the midwives and fear God not human beings and do the right thing

 in the context where we are.

We are to have the courage to act,

 trusting that God will use our actions

 which seem so helpless and weak

 in the face of political, military, social, or economic power.

Trusting the God of grace will shine through

 our weakness and helplessness.

***A READING*** Romans 12:9-18, 21

Let love be genuine;

 hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

 love one another with mutual affection;

 outdo one another in showing honour.

Do not lag in zeal,

 be ardent in spirit,

 serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope,

 be patient in suffering,

 persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the saints;

 extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you;

 bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice,

 weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with one another;

 do not be haughty,

 but associate with the lowly;

 do not claim to be wiser than you are.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil,

 but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

If it is possible, so far as it depends on you,

 live peaceably with all….

Do not be overcome by evil,

 but overcome evil with good.

***PRAYER*** *(Marian Wright Edelman, and others, adapted)*

O God, help us to recover our hope for our children’s sake.

Help us to recover our courage for our children’s sake.

Help us to recover our discipline for our children’s sake.

Help us to recover our ability to work together

 for our children’s sake.

Help us to recover our values for our children’s sake.

Help us to recover our faith for our children’s sake.

Call us together as your people;
 transform us with your love.

Transform our hearts,
 that we may love generously.

Transform our eyes,
 that we may see your grace.

Transform our hands,
 that we may serve others.

Transform our spirits,
 that we may be the body of Christ,
 gathered to worship
 and sent out to serve.

Give us the courage to resist oppression.

Help us protect the world from evil.

Give us the wisdom to see ourselves as we truly are.

Give us the vision to see you and hear your voice.

Give us the courage to answer your call

Grant us the endurance to use our gifts
 for the purpose of your realm.

Work your transforming love within us
 that we may know your will
 and serve you with joy.

***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***

 May the God of hope fill you

 with all joy and peace in believing,

 so that you may abound in hope

 by the power of the Holy Spirit.

 May God be in your heads and in your understanding.

 May God be in your eyes and in your beholding.

 May God be in your mouths and in your speaking.

 May God be in your hearts and in your loving.

 May God be in your hands and in your serving.

 May God be at your end and at your departing. Amen.