

“PROTECTING THE COMMONS”
THE SECOND SUNDAY IN THE SEASON OF CREATION
September 13, 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Marc: We light this candle as a reminder that God is light,
in whom there is no darkness at all.

Jo: When we are grieving or sad,
When we are challenged,
When we need help,
The flame of God’s light
guides us out of the darkness.

Marc: When we are cheerful,
When we celebrate,
When we accomplish a great task,
When we return to a place that makes us happy,

The flame of this light reminds us
to share our happiness with others

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

OPENING WORDS

Marc: In sacred times of word, wonder, and awe,
in ordinary days of work and play:
in every moment, God is with us.

Jo: Whether we are stuck in doubt's mud,
or standing on faith's shoreline:
in every place, God is with us.

Marc: In those who teach us and those who trouble us;
in those who surprise us, and those who forgive us:
in every person, God is with us.

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

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

Jo: Here is God's good kin-dom!

Marc: Today is not like any other day,
and this hour not like any other hour.

Jo: Each is unique and unrepeatable;
we will not be able to visit it again.

Marc: Therefore let us delight in this opportunity,
explore its dimensions,
and find in its depths
the God who is perpetual love, mercy and peace.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

From September 1 to October 4, the Christian family observes "Creation Time". As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common role as caretakers of God's creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with its wellbeing. We rejoice in this opportunity to care for our common home and the siblings who share it.

During the Season of Creation, the world's 2.2 billion Christians will come together to pray and take action for our common home.

We will give gratitude to our Creator and ask for guidance as we work to change our ways and to live as God wants us to live.

Together, we will pray for creation and for our sisters and brothers, siblings all, that we all find the courage to live more in communion with creation.

This year, the theme for the season is "Jubilee for the Earth".

This particular year, the need for just and sustainable systems has been revealed by the far-reaching effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the next few weeks we will consider the integral relationship between rest for the Earth and ecological, economic, social and political ways of living.

In the hope born of grace, we pray that the One who is our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer will touch our hearts and that of the human family this Season of Creation.

PRAYER *adapted from prayers by Bruce Prewer and Thom Shuman*

Jo: Let us pray.

Holy One, Cloud of Glory,
 You stretched out your hand,
 parting a way through chaos,
 so your goodness might come forth.

Marc: You looked, and laughed out loud,
 as seas ran forth in joy,
 mountains played leapfrog,
 and hills hopscotched with valleys.

Jo: Creation became a sanctuary
 for those created in your image.
 But we decided to live for ourselves,
 every day becoming one in which
 we could turn your dreams to ashes,
 your overflowing love into
 dust bowls of despair.

Marc: Out of pity, you sent the prophets,
 those pillars of faithfulness,
 but we wrangled with their gentle words.
 So, you sent Jesus,
 to lead us through evil's deeps,
 to that freedom found only
 in your kingdom of life.

Jo: When we were weak in faith,
 he came to strengthen us
 with your everlasting hope;

Marc: When we were slaves to sin,
 he came to lead us into
 the promised land of mercy;

Jo: When our hearts became like flint,
 he softened them with compassion;

Marc: When we could only focus on ourselves,
 he sacrificed himself for us.

Jo: Dear God, how do you keep track of us all?

 So many people, some many needs,
 so much suffering!

 Yet you love each
 like the most generous of fathers,
 and feel their pain
 like the most devoted of mothers.

Marc: Help us to be inclusive in our loving like you are.

Jo: We pray for the suffering
 and those who ease their pain...
the sorrowful
 and those who try to comfort their grief...
the diseased
 and those who work for their healing...

Marc: We pray for the abused
and those who seek justice for them,
the weak and heavy laden
and those help to shoulder the load...

Jo: We pray for the misunderstood and those who listen,
the timid and those who speak up for them,
the lost and those who will suffer
to see their recovery;

Marc: We pray for the strong
and those who keep them gentle,
the wise and those who keep them humble,
the kind and those who shield them
from over-stretching themselves...

Jo: We pray for the violent
and those who must restrain them,
the cruel and those who must contain them,
the corrupt and those who must pass judgement
on them...

Marc: We pray for the strong in faith
and those learn from them,
the battlers and those who affirm them,
the happy and those who rejoice with them...

Jo: We pray for peacemakers and those who trust them,
the leaders and those who vote for them,
the influencers
and those who are swayed by them...

Marc: Compared with you, Holy Friend,
our compassion is miserly and our circle of care
is most meagre.

Nevertheless we want to be more like you,
asking that you will conscript our prayers and actions
into the work of your reign.

Through Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen!

WE HEAR AND REFLECT ON THE GOOD NEWS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE READING

The first passage of Exodus recalls the parting of the Red Sea and the Hebrew people walking on dry land. God saves the people from slavery and saves them from the pursuit of their enemies, a story they will tell and retell and sing about for ages to come. The impossible has become the possible, the impassible the passible

READING Exodus 14:10-15:21 *Contemporary English Version (CEV)*

Jo: ¹⁰As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back,
and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In
great fear the Israelites cried out to God.

¹¹They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no
graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in
the wilderness?

What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?

¹²Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let
us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’?

For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

¹³But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that God will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴God will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

¹⁵Then God said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. ¹⁶But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground...

²¹Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. GOD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.

²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.

²⁴At the morning watch God in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic.²⁵God clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty.

The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for God is fighting for them against Egypt.”

²⁶Then God said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.”

²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth.

As the Egyptians fled before it, God tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰Thus God saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

³¹Israel saw the great work that God did against the Egyptians. So the people feared God and believed in God and in God’s servant Moses.

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

WE REFLECT

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION “Dancing With God”

(George Stuart, adapted)

- Marc: Our energy level is high when we start;
We quickly discover the dance in our heart;
- Jo: For God is within and between and beyond;
With movement and rhythm we love to respond.
- Marc: Come and try; don't be shy;
- Jo: We are given the chance
To be free...
- Marc: ...and with glee
To be part of the dance;
- Jo: The rhythm of life has a wonderful beat;
God's life is indwelling and deems all complete.
- Marc: Some steps are familiar but some are quite new;
- Jo: Some easy to learn and some harder to do;
- Marc: Life's beat is amazing; we truly are blest;
With God as our partner we dance at our best.
- Jo: Come and try; don't be shy;
- Marc: We are given the chance
To be free...

Jo: ...Come! Agree
To be part of the dance;

Marc: The rhythm of life is a rhythm so strong;
In God we keep dancing; in God we belong.

Jo: Sometime we're exhausted, our eagerness gone;
We wish to slow down but the dance hastens on;

Marc: With God dwelling in us we dance the last mile;

Jo: In God we can finish and do it in style.

Marc: Come and try; don't be shy;

Jo: We are given the chance
To be free...

Marc: ...constantly
To be part of the dance;

Jo: This rhythm of life in the depths of our soul
Is God's gracious gift;
it declares we are whole. (GStuart)

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

AN INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Marc: God's faithfulness is great indeed. God makes a path
for us, when there was none before.
God leads us when we are hopelessly lost.
God makes room for us, when we feel pushed aside.
God helps us to find meaning and purpose in life.

Jo: We have been living through difficult and challenging times, where things have seemed uncertain, and we were not always sure what to do, but God has been with us, and helped us find our way through.

Marc: As we move forward into a murky future, let us remember the words of Helen Luke who said, "Wisdom consists in doing the next thing that you have to do; doing it with your whole heart and finding delight in doing it. And realizing that this delight is the sense of the sacred.

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT Thom Shuman, adapted

Marc: Holy One, when we look over our shoulders
at fear shadowing us today,
you go before us into tomorrow,
making a path through
the sea of yesterday's doubts.

Jo: When our legs tremble
from the effort of standing up
for what you hope for all creation,
you are at our side,
offering your heart's strength.

Marc: And so, Cloud of Grace,
we offer our love to you.

Jo: God, when we turn our hearts
into deserts of stony bitterness,
you transform them into oases of joy.

Marc: When we come up
with all sorts of rules
for those who come to us
seeking to find you,
you tear up the list,
stretching wide your arms in welcoming grace.

Jo: And so, Servant of all,
we offer our lives to you.

Marc: Blessed One, when we would clasp
old worries to our hearts,
you open our eyes to that hope
which paves the path ahead of us.

Jo: When we spend each day
consumed with doubts and fears,
you remind us that this day
is the time to honour you,
by serving all your Creation.

Marc: And so it is, Mist of Mercy,
that we offer our hearts to you.

Jo: God in Community, Holy in One,
as you are all to us,
so we would offer all we are to you,
even as we pray as Jesus taught us,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, (and Mother) 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 AFFIRMATION *Alla Renee Bozarth, adapted*

Jo: The small plot of ground
 on which we were born
 cannot be expected to stay forever the same.

Earth changes,
 and home becomes different places.

We took flesh from clay
 but the clay
 did not come
 from just one place.

To feel alive,
 important, and safe,
 we must know our own waters
 and hills, but know still more.

We have stars in our bones
and oceans in our blood.

We have opposing
terrain in each eye.

We belong to the land
and sky of our first cry,
We belong to infinity.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

WORDS OF BLESSING AND SENDING

FINAL WORDS

Marc: Go with the God who can part
the troubled waters of your life
and lead you through to dry ground.

Jo: Go with the God who can scatter and subdue
all that hinders you on your journey.

Marc: Go forth in God's strength and carry with you
the overflowing promise
of this ancient benediction:

Jo: The love of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The peace of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all, now and evermore. **Amen!**

POSTLUDE