

Christ Church Gabriola

Home Church

7th Sunday of Easter

May 24, 2020

10am – Announcements Preparing the space, being intentional
Here, on the 7th Sunday of Easter, I invite you to lean into this ritual of preparing the space for your worship. As we clear a space and set up a focal point, the familiar movements of our bodies remind us what we are preparing for – it helps us bring ourselves more fully to the moment and to the experience. Maybe place a tablecloth down and place a bouquet of flowers and a lit candle; perhaps place with them an object or two that help you open to God's presence (item from nature, Bible, object with personal significance, cross). The intention you bring to your worship is the fertilizer for the richness you experience.

Gathering

"...and you will be my witnesses...When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." (Acts 1:8-9). The account of Jesus' ascension into heaven as reported in Acts is immediately followed by the calling of a new disciple. A call for feet on the ground discipleship. There is work to be done. And, for all who follow Jesus, the call is to create heaven on earth. Ponder the expression "heaven sent" as you prepare for our gathering this morning. Sit quietly for a moment with your feet on the ground. Take a couple of deep breaths as you bring yourself into this moment...and open yourself up to the One who calls. Rest in the presence of the Holy as you ponder what it means to bear witness to the transforming nature of "heaven sent" Compassion at work in us and in all creation.

Opening Prayer and lighting of the Christ Candle:

Edward Hays, adapted

Listen, all you seeds in the Earth, buried in your dark Earthen tombs. As this flame of our spring candle penetrates the darkness, may your young tender stems pierce the Earth to dance in wind and rain...

(candle is lit)

just as this flame, like a tiny sun, now dances before us...

Father of Fire, Mother of Mystery, teach us the lesson of spring as all creation comes alive—tree and bush, flower and plant—in the alleluia richness of the resurrection of creation...

Grant us the gift, O God, to do the same. Amen.

Greeting

The grace of Christ Jesus, the love of God, and the ever-present Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

May Christ's grace and peace be with you.

And may our hearts be filled with joy.

Hymn: "Now the Green Blade Rises" VU#186

- 1 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been:
love is come again, like wheat arising green.
- 2 In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain,
thinking that he would never wake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
love is come again, like wheat arising green.

Prayer of Confession)

John O'Donohue

The state of one's heart inevitably shapes one's life, it is ultimately the place where everything is decided.

A courageous heart will go forth and engage with life despite confusion and fear.

A fearful heart will be hesitant and will tend to hold back.

A heavy heart will make for a gloomy, unlivd life.

A compassionate heart need never carry the burden of judgement.

A forgiving heart knows the art of liberation.

A loving heart awakens the spirit of possibility and engagement with others.

The heart is beautiful precisely because it is where God dwells: the heart is the divine sanctuary.

Silent prayer of confession

God have mercy on us

Christ have mercy on us

God have mercy on us

(S remove screen)

Silence

Words of Assurance:

Joyce Rupp, adapted

Rushing breath of Love, you came into the Upper Room of the disciples long ago, calming their fears, encouraging their vision, and enlivening their ability to be people of courage, compassion, and healing. You come into the Inner Room of our lives today, offering us this same transforming gift. Open what is closed within us. Breathe renewed confidence into our fatigued spirits. Send us forth with a passionate intention to be conveyors of your unconditional love.

Peace of Christ

Christ is with and within each of us – let us share with one another the peace of Christ that rises in us today!

N-Z: The Peace of Christ be with you!

A-M: And also with you!

First Reading

Acts 1:6-14

The Ascension of Jesus: So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up

toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas: Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Gospel Reading

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you

One: The Good News of Jesus Christ according to John.

All: Glory to you, Christ Jesus.

John 17:1-11

Jesus Prays for His Disciples: After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

One: This is the Gospel of Christ

All: Praise be to Jesus Christ

Reflection: Feet on the Ground Discipleship

Silent Reflection

Hymn: "My Life Flows On" VU#716

- 1 My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the sweet, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear the music ringing:
It finds an echo in my soul -
how can I keep from singing?
- 2 What though my joys and comforts die?
My Saviour still is living.
What though the shadows gather 'round?
A new song Christ is giving.
No storm can shake my inmost calm,
while to that Rock I'm clinging:
since Love commands both heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?
- 3 When tyrants tremble, sick with fear,
and hear their death knells ringing:
when friends rejoice both far and near,
how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile
our thoughts to them are winging:
when friends by shame are undefiled,
how can I keep from singing?
- 4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
and day by day this pathway smooths,
since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing:
all things are mine since I am Christ's -
how can I keep from singing?

A New Creed: *Let us affirm our faith . . .*

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People: *From Sandy Brydges*

One:

All:

The Prayer of Jesus: *(A Paraphrase, VU 916)*

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Offering

Thank you for calling each other, for grocery shopping, caring for the church building, doing the business of the church, baking cookies, praying for those on the prayer wheel, leading things online, continuing to knit prayer shawls, contributing to Mid-Week Madness, for tech support, for continuing to gather for worship, for doing the things you would be doing anyway . . . but under more challenging circumstances. Thank you all for your commitment to being church in a new way.

Let us pray:

May we be the face of compassion.
The ears, eyes, and shoulders of compassion.
The heart, hands, and feet of compassion.
May the light of compassion
continue to shine
from each one of us
as we care for creation, and all that exists,
with respect and loving-kindness. Amen.

Reading:

“For Freedom”

John O'Donohue

As a bird soars high
In the free holding of the wind,
Clear of the certainty of ground,
Opening the imagination of wings
Into the grace of emptiness
To fulfill new voyagings,
May your life awaken
To the call of its freedom.

As the ocean absolves itself
Of the expectation of land,
Approaching only
In the form of waves
That fill and pleat and fall
With such gradual elegance
As to make of the limit
A sonorous threshold
Whose music echoes back along
The give and strain of memory,
Thus may your heart know the patience

That can draw infinity from limitation.

As the embrace of the earth
Welcomes all we call death,
Taking deep into itself
The tight solitude of a seed,
Allowing it time
To shed the grip of former form
And give way to a deeper generosity
That will one day sent it forth
A tree into springtime,
May all that holds you
Fall from its hungry ledge
Into the fecund surge of your heart.

Hymn: “Now the Green Blade Rises” VU#186

- 3 Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.
- 4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
 your touch can call us back to life again,
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.

Glory to God **whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

Blessing:

If you are with another person, you're invited to bless each other, taking every other line.

One: The Creator's blessing be yours on your road, on your journey,
 guiding you, cherishing you.

First name N-Z:

*The Son's blessing be yours, wine and water, bread and stories,
 feeding you, challenging you.*

First name A-M:

*The Spirit's blessing be yours, wind and fire, joy and wisdom,
comforting you, disturbing you.*

**All: The Angel's blessing be yours, on your house, on your
living, guarding you, encouraging you. Let us walk together,
a community on a journey, sustained in God's blessing.
Amen!**

One: *Let us go now in peace to love and serve the Lord.*

All: *Thanks be to God.*