



*Ascension* by Jan Richardson

## Grace Episcopal Church

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 24, 2020 | 9:30am

Ministers | All of Us

Rector | Wren Blessing

Music | Martin Cockroft

### **Sheltered in Place**

You watch your boy struggle with giving up the turtle, returning it to the pond where he'd found it on a walk—first time you'd all been out in days.

How thoughtful he thought he'd been, making it a home in the home where the family sheltered in place. How he cared for his armored friend.

Having picked flowers, knowing they'd die, you understand the urge to pluck the exotic, the beautiful—any diversion from fear, which is in itself a disease.

That morning, you helped your boy give up the idea of living forever.

~ Richard Levine © 2020

# Prelude | Be Thou My Vision *Flute solo by Beatrix Cockroft*

Music: Slane, Irish ballad melody

*A bell rings. We listen to the longing in our hearts.*

## Gathering Song | Can't Be Long *Led by the Webb Family*

by Barbara Hall



1. Well I think I'll go down\_\_\_ to the ri- ver\_ and let that wa-ter wash o-ver me,\_\_\_  
Yes I think I'll go down\_\_\_ to the ri ver\_ and let that wa-ter wash o-ver me,\_\_\_  
'Cause it can't be long,\_\_\_ no it can't be long,\_\_\_ un-til my Lord\_\_\_ re-mem-bers me.

2. Well I think I'll go into the forest and let that darkness rush over me.  
Yes I think I'll go into the forest and let that darkness rush over me.  
'Cause it can't be long, no it can't be long until my Lord remembers me.
3. Well I think I'll go into the mountains and let that cold wind cut through me.  
Yes I think I'll go into the mountains and let that cold wind cut through me.  
'Cause it can't be long, no it can't be long until my Lord remembers me.
4. Well I think I'll go into the valley and let that green grass grow over me.  
Yes I think I'll go into the valley and let that green grass grow over me.  
'Cause it can't be long, I hope it won't be long until my Lord remembers me.  
'Cause it can't be long, I hope it won't be long until my Lord remembers me.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

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*After the gathering song, we stand and sing.*

Cantor



Al-le - lu - ia Al-le - lu - ia Al-le - lu - ia..

People



Al-le - lu - ia Al-le - lu - ia Al-le - lu - ia..

The Officiant proclaims

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We remain standing and sing together

## Opening Song | My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep from Singing)

Words & Music by Robert Lowry



1 My life flows on in end-less song, a-bove earth's lam-en-ta-tion.  
2 Through all the tu-mult and the strife, I hear that mu-sic ring-ing.  
3 What though my joys and com-forts die? The Lord my Sav-ior liv-eth.  
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun-tain ev-er spring-ing!



I catch the sweet, though far off hymn that hails a new cre-a-tion.  
It finds an ech-o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?  
What though the dark-ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he giv-eth.  
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

### Refrain



No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.



Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?

# The Collect

Officiant     The Lord be with you.

People        **And also with you.**

Officiant     Let us pray.

Holy One, you care for us and we cast our anxiety upon you. In the power of your Spirit refresh and strengthen us to rejoice in your mercy, to hope in your promise, to seek and find our home in you.

**Amen.**

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## WE TELL THE STORY

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*We are seated for the reading.*

### **The First Reading** | Acts 1:6-14

When the apostles had come together, they asked Jesus, “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.”

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.

*After the reading, the reader will say*

The Word of the Lord.

**All     Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm | 68:1-10,33-36

*We say the Psalm.*

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered;  
let those who hate him flee before him.

**Let them vanish like smoke when the wind drives it away;  
as the wax melts at the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;  
let them also be merry and joyful.

**Sing to God, sing praises to his Name;  
exalt him who rides upon the heavens;  
YAHWEH is his Name, rejoice before him!**

Father of orphans, defender of widows,  
God in his holy habitation!

**God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners into freedom;  
but the rebels shall live in dry places.**

O God, when you went forth before your people,  
when you marched through the wilderness,

**The earth shook, and the skies poured down rain,  
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,  
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

You sent a gracious rain, O God, upon your inheritance;  
you refreshed the land when it was weary.

**Your people found their home in it;  
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.**

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;  
sing praises to the Lord.

**He rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;  
he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice.**

Ascribe power to God;  
his majesty is over Israel;  
his strength is in the skies.

**How wonderful is God in his holy places!  
the God of Israel giving strength and power to his people!  
Blessed be God!**

*We are seated for the second reading.*

## **The Second Reading** | 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

*After the reading, the Reader will say*

The Word of the Lord.

**People**        **Thanks be to God.**

# Gospel Song | I'm Here in the Heart of God (chant) *by Chandra Rule*

*Martin leads and we sing the bolded sections.*

I am here in the heart of God. **I am here in the heart of God.**

God is here in the heart of me. **God is here in the heart of me.**

Like the wave in the water and the water in the wave.

**Like the wave in the water and the water in the wave.**

I am here in the heart of God. **I am here in the heart of God**

I am here in the breath of God. **I am here in the breath of God.**

God is here in the breath of me. **God is here in the breath of me.**

Like the wind in the springtime and the springtime in the wind.

**Like the wind in the springtime and the springtime in the wind.**

I am here in the breath of God. **I am here in the breath of God.**

I am here in the soul of God. **I am here in the soul of God.**

God is here in the soul of me. **God is here in the soul of me.**

Like the flame in the fire and the fire in the flame.

**Like the flame in the fire and the fire in the flame.**

I am here in the soul of God. **I am here in the soul of God.**

I am here in the mind of God. **I am here in the mind of God.**

God is here in the mind of me. **God is here in the mind of me.**

Like the earth in my body and my body in the earth.

**Like the earth in my body and my body in the earth.**

I am here in the mind of God. **I am here in the mind of God.**

*The Officiant then introduces the Gospel by saying*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**People**      **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

## **The Gospel** | John 17:1-11

Jesus 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.”

*After the Gospel the Officiant will say*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**People**      **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

# OUR RESPONSE TO THE STORY

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## The Homily

### Affirmation of Faith

*We stand and say*

**We believe in God above us,  
maker and sustainer of all life,  
of sun and moon,  
of water and earth,  
of all humanity.**

**We believe in God beside us,  
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,  
born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor,  
he was tortured and nailed to a tree.  
Knowing full passion and deep sorrow, he died forsaken.  
He descended into the earth to the place of death.  
On the third day he rose from the tomb.  
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,  
and his Kingdom will one day be known.**

**We believe in God within us,  
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,  
life-giving breath of the Church.  
She is the Spirit of healing and forgiveness,  
source of resurrection and of life everlasting. Amen.**

We gather in prayer.

## The Prayers of the People

Please add your intentions to our prayers by including your concerns or thanksgivings in the chat window at each bidding.

*Ann Strickland, from John 14:27*

4 My peace I leave with you my peace I give you. My peace I leave with you my  
7 peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid, do not  
10 let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not  
be a-fraid. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid.

*Silence*

Leader God, you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom. We pray for people around the world who are far from home; for refugees, for those who struggle with addiction, and for anyone who does not have a safe place to rest.

*We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly or aloud.*

Leader God of life,  
**People hear our prayer.**

Leader We pray for this and all communities of faith around the world. Unite us in service and in hope. Make us one as you are one.

*We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly or aloud.*

Leader God of life,  
**People hear our prayer.**

Leader We pray for people in our midst who are afraid or sick, and for those who know anxiety, fear, or loneliness. Meet us where we are empty. Strengthen us to receive and serve our neighbors with love.

*We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly or aloud.*

Leader God of life,  
People **hear our prayer.**

Leader Give peace to nations, peoples, congregations, and families who are in conflict. Guide leaders in government to strengthen the vulnerable and to protect the earth that sustains us.

*We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly or aloud.*

Leader God of life,  
People **hear our prayer.**

Leader We cast our anxieties upon you because you care for us. We pray for the concerns that each one of us carries, and for those on our prayer list.

*We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly or aloud.*

Leader God of life,  
People **hear our prayer.**

4 My peace I leave with you my peace I give you. My peace I leave with you my  
7 peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid, do not  
10 let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not  
be a-fraid. Do not let your hearts be trou-bled, do not be a-fraid.

Officiant      Let us pray.

**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, and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Offertory

*While we cannot gather in person, we make our weekly offerings online here: <https://www.gracehere.org/online-giving/>.*

## The Blessing

*The Officiant offers a blessing.*

The God of all grace restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. The God of all hope lead you to dream dreams and see the world ablaze with blessing.\* And the blessing of God, the love of Christ, and the friendship of the Spirit rest upon you and remain with you now and always. **Amen.**

*\* from "Stay" by Jan Richardson*

# Closing Song | Sunflower *Offered by Matt & Molly Perri*

by Deborah Talan & Steve Tannen

When the sky is gray  
Hope just hides away  
I'll be your sunflower

When you can't stand up  
Even love is not enough  
I'll be your sunflower

Oh oh oh oh  
I shine for you  
Oh oh oh oh  
You know I'd do  
Anything for you

When you're in the dark  
And you need a spark  
I'll be your sunflower

A flint of yellow light  
Take me in at night  
I'll be your sunflower

Oh oh oh oh  
I shine for you  
Oh oh oh oh  
You know I'd do  
Anything for you  
Anything for you  
Anything for you

A little smile, but your mouth is tight  
Gentle petals crowd around your eyes  
I wanna be the company you keep  
I wanna be the one you come to when you fall  
asleep

If there's a place to go  
In your heart, let me know  
I'll be your sunflower

Oh oh oh oh  
I shine for you  
Oh oh oh oh  
You know I'd do  
Oh oh oh oh  
I shine for you  
Oh oh oh oh

You know I'd do  
Anything for you  
Anything for you  
Anything for you  
Anything for you  
When the sky is gray  
Hope just hides away  
I'll be your sunflower

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

*Using the Zoom chat window, please share a milestone that we can recognize together.  
We will sing, "God Grant Them Many Years."*

## The Peace

*We conclude with the sharing of God's peace.*

Officiant      Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Now the peace of the Lord be always with you.

All              **And also with you. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

## **A Measuring Worm**

This yellow striped green  
Caterpillar, climbing up  
The steep window screen,

Constantly (for lack  
Of a full set of legs) keeps  
Humping up his back.

It's as if he sent  
By a sort of semaphore  
Dark omegas meant

To warn of Last Things.  
Although he doesn't know it,  
He will soon have wings,

And I, too, don't know  
Toward what undreamt condition  
Inch by inch I go.

~Richard Wilbur from *Anterooms* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010)

*Please stay online to join in a small group for a coffee hour conversation.  
Families with children at home are invited to join in this Zoom gathering:  
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76283360201>*

## Stay

### *A Blessing for Ascension Day*

I know how your mind  
rushes ahead  
trying to fathom  
what could follow this.  
What will you do,  
where will you go,  
how will you live?

You will want  
to outrun the grief.  
You will want  
to keep turning toward  
the horizon,  
watching for what was lost  
to come back,  
to return to you  
and never leave again.

For now  
hear me when I say  
all you need to do  
is to still yourself  
is to turn toward one another  
is to stay.

Wait  
and see what comes  
to fill  
the gaping hole  
in your chest.  
Wait with your hands open  
to receive what could never come  
except to what is empty  
and hollow.

You cannot know it now,  
cannot even imagine  
what lies ahead,  
but I tell you  
the day is coming  
when breath will  
fill your lungs  
as it never has before  
and with your own ears  
you will hear words  
coming to you new  
and startling.  
You will dream dreams  
and you will see the world  
ablaze with blessing.

Wait for it.  
Still yourself.  
Stay.