



Environmental Justice Sunday
April 28, 2024 10:30 a.m.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

A Buddhist Prayer

Ron Zimmer, reader

I vow to myself and to each of you: To commit myself daily to the healing of our world and the welfare of all beings. To live on Earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products, and energy I consume. To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future generations, and my brothers and sisters of all species. To support others in our work for the world and to ask for help when I need it. To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart, and supports me in observing these vows.

PRELUDE

"For the Beauty of the Earth"
Handbell Ensemble

Arr. Jason W. Krug

LITANY OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Randy Hall, reader

(adapted from the Episcopal Church: Resources on the Doctrine of Discovery)

O Great Spirit, God of every people and every tribe,
we come to you this day as guests on the land of Missouri Indian tribes forcefully removed, asking for your forgiveness and guidance.

Forgive us for the colonialism that stains our past, the ignorance that allowed us to think that we could claim another's home for our own.

Heal us of this history.

Remind us that none of us were discovered since none of us were lost, but that we are all gathered within the sacred circle of your community.

Guide us through your wisdom to restore the truth of our heritage.

Help us to confront the racism that divides us as we confess the pain it has caused to the human family.

Call us to kinship. Mend the hoop of our hearts and let us live in justice and peace, through Jesus Christ, the One who came that all people might live in dignity.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

adapted from a Hindu Prayer

One: May the waters flow peacefully;

All: May the herbs and plants grow peacefully;

One: May all the divine powers bring unto us peace.

All: May the rain come down in the proper time,

One: May the earth yield plenty of corn,

All: May the country be free from war.

One: The supreme Lord is peace.

*GATHERING HYMN "God, Creation Sings Your Praises"

(tune: "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending")

God, creation sings your praises; mountains echo from afar.

All your blessings here amaze us; hills rejoice how great you are!

In the whole of your creation, in each sea and wood and glade,

We are called to have dominion over all that you have made.

We've ignored your wise instruction to take care of what you give.

For our greed has caused destruction and your world cries out to live.

Though you've given us your bounty by your kind and loving hand,

In the search for power and money, we've abused sea, sky and land.

God, you give to us a vision of this world we're called to seek,

Where creation joins in singing, where the strong protect the weak,

Where your people serve each other, wanting only what is best.

May we work with one another till creation so is blessed.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of all Creation, at the beginning of time you placed a single mandate on humankind:

To be stewards of Creation, to replenish and nurture all generations of what you have made.

We kneel today amid that same Creation—a world that is, in many ways, more splendid than ever, but, in too many ways, scarred beyond recognition.

Turn us from our unmindfulness. Help us renew the world that supports us, So we may once more know Creation as it was in the beginning.

(moment of silent confession)

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Believe the Good News! God has gifted us not only the wonder of Creation, but the wonder of grace!

Thanks be to God!

RESPONSE OF PRAISE #236 New Century Hymnal *(repeat once)

Halle, halle, hallelujah. Halle, halle, hallelujah.

Halle, halle, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah!

PASSING THE PEACE

HANDBELL ANTHEM "Be Thou My Vision" Arr. Jason W. Krug

CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN: Environmental Justice

A Jewish Prayer (adapted)

Robbie Van Nest, reader

Grateful, we are, to You, Source of Life: For Earth's intricate, interconnected, interdependent biosphere. For the marvelous riot of flora and fauna filling every niche. For the diversity of life, among millions of species; and for the diversity of humanity, each of us a unique reflection of Your image. For the gift of Existence, which we must never take for granted!

Grateful, we are, to You, Source of Connection: For our humble, critical place in Your world. For relationships between people; among all peoples; among all creatures; and with You, Holy Blessed One. For the first enduring covenant You made – not with one group or one species but with all life.

Grateful, we are, to You, Source of Purpose: For setting the very first human mission to serve and to guard the ecosystem within which we are one beautiful part. For guiding us to pursue justice, for all Your children. For implanting within us awareness, intelligence, wisdom, and goodness, by which we make meaning for our own lives, and contribute to the good of all.

CHORAL ANTHEM "Song for the Earth" Words by Charlotte Lee;
Music by Natalie Sleeth

LISTENING

God speaks to us in the Word proclaimed.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Genesis 1:1-28

Pew Bible p.1

A Word of God that is still speaking, **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

SILENT MEDITATION

HYMN OF REFLECTION: "We Have a Common Calling"

(tune: "The Church's One Foundation")

**We have a common calling, O God of love and grace —
to care for your creation, to tend what you embrace.
We have one home, one future; we're not in this alone.
We're called to work together for this our common home.**

**You call us to be partners — to notice and to care;
you make us loving stewards of land and sea and air.
We see our climate changing; God, show us what to do
to care for your creation, to heal the earth with you.**

**O God, as congregations, we don't act out of fear;
our moral obligations will motivate us here.
We seek a blest tomorrow; our voices rise above.
May we, today, be faithful in this great work of love.**

*CREATION JUSTICE COVENANT

Gail Geisel, reader

In affirming the divine gifts of creation and in affirming our connection to God, each other, and the world around us, we at Hope United Church of Christ in Saint Louis, MO unconditionally commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to the intertwined responsibilities of caring for creation and seeking justice for the oppressed.

We at Hope UCC recognize that the impacts of environmental exploitation, degradation, and global climate change disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities, especially people of color.

As followers of Christ, we have a calling and a responsibility to work on behalf of all those who face issues of environmental injustice and oppression.

With purposeful resolve, we at Hope UCC commit ourselves with an awareness of how the abuses of creation may cause suffering and of how factors such as race and inequality inevitably cause some to suffer more than others.

We understand our responsibility as a church to care for creation and to help heal and restore it. We affirm that this deeply felt commitment will be reflected in the following aspects of our church life:

Preaching: Our worship leaders will regularly weave issues of environmental justice, climate justice, renewable energy, water resources, and food justice into the worship experience.

Studying: We will engage in Biblical reflection and find our role in faithfully responding to environmental injustice.

Engaging: We will actively participate in the spiritual outreach work of caring for God's creation by reducing our ecological footprint and addressing local policies impacting creation. We will work on behalf of those facing environmental injustice and oppression.

NAMING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY "This Is My Father's World" Franklin L. Sheppard;
Arr. Harold DeCou
(A QR code at the end of the bulletin is available for online giving.)

* RESPONSE OF PRAISE (tune: "Lasst Uns Erfreuen")

**Praise God, the Giver and the Gift,
Hearts, minds and voices now uplift, Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the breath of glad surprise, Freeing, uplifting, opening eyes.
Three-In-Oneness, Love Communing, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

A Pawnee Prayer

Aubrey Mees, reader

*Oh, Eagle; come with wings outspread in sunny skies.
Oh, Eagle, come and bring us peace, thy gentle peace.
Oh, Eagle, come and give new life to us who pray.
Remember the circle of the sky; the stars, and the brown eagle,
the great life of the Sun, the young within the nest.
Remember the sacredness of things.*

*COMMISSIONING HYMN: "At the Dawn of Your Creation"

(tune: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee")

**At the dawn of your creation, God, you spoke, "Let there be light!"
You divided earth from heaven, you created day and night.
You made sunbeams dance with shadows, you created energy!
Peaceful evenings, bright tomorrows, all began with "Let there be..."**

**By your word, you formed creation: dry land, water, ocean breeze.
Soon there burst forth vegetation — plants with fruit, majestic trees.
Rain and snow and changing seasons, creatures filling land and sea —
God, your very good creation all began with "Let there be..."**

**When you made us as your children, sending us throughout your lands,
You commanded, "Have dominion — care for earth; it's in your hands."
Yet we hurt this world you've given; we harm earth and sky and sea.
We forget it's your creation — you, who once said "Let there be..."**

**At this joyful celebration, may we hear your word anew:
May we care for your creation, knowing it's a trust from you.
Just as daily there's a dawning, bringing light to all we see,
So we daily hear your calling — you, who once said, "Let there be..."**

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION: INTERFAITH CLIMATE PRAYER**

We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.

We hold all species that suffer.

We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life.

We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions.

We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community.

We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities,

so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say,

we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children.

May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life.

Amen!

POSTLUDE "All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding" Herbert Howells;
Setting by David Christiansen

SENDING

With God's blessing, we are sent forth to follow Christ in the world.

Thanks to God, we at Hope United Church of Christ have good news to share. And we should feel compelled to share it, because there are people in St. Louis who are looking for a progressive and loving faith community. When we share Hope, we make it easier for them to find us!

Prayers and responses adapted from www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/faithclimateactionweek/prayers-and-climate-blessings

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com

New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com/

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April 28, 2024 Worship Leaders

Pastor: Sarah Fredriksen McCann

Organist: Jim Threlkeld

Liturgist: Sue Rainer

Worship leaders: Members of the
Environmental Justice Ministry Team

Ushers: Members of the Special Events
Ministry Team

YouTube: Andy Karcher

Tech team: Jim Richmann, Jack Jennings,
Ron Geisel,

Kristine Wentzien, Kathleen Mees

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*Thanks for your contribution to the
ministries of Hope UCC!*

***Hope United Church of Christ Statement
of Welcome and Mission***

*No matter where you are on life's journey, you are invited to enter the big red doors of Hope United Church of Christ. We are an open and affirming congregation. We believe that every person is a child of God and all are welcome, regardless of race, economic background, marital status, gender, gender identity(ies) / expression(s), sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, nationality or faith history. It is our mission, inspired by God's Holy Spirit, to engage persons in living out the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Please come, for all things are ready.*

Adopted by Hope UCC Congregation August 29, 2010