



Environmental Justice Sunday
April 27, 2025 10:30 a.m.

GATHERING

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

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

PRELUDE "For the Beauty of the Earth" Conrad Kocher;
Setting by Clay Christiansen

LITANY OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

(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**

One: We walk in wonder beneath the sun and stars.

All: Creation is God's masterpiece and we are blessed to share it.

One: We give thanks for the air, the land, and the water.

All: and for all the creatures joined together in the web of life.

One: Beauty is before us, around us, over us and beneath us.

All: We join our hearts, minds, and spirits as one in thanks and awe.

***GATHERING HYMN** "For the Beauty of the Earth" #28 *New Century Hymnal*
(For full music, the *New Century Hymnal* is located in each pew rack) vv.1-3

**For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the wonder of each hour, of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
God of all to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,
God of all to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

***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 “For the Beauty of the Earth” v.4**
For the good that love inspires, for a world where none exclude,
For a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed,
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

PASSING THE PEACE

CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

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

LISTENING

God speaks to us in the Word proclaimed.

PRAAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 148 Pew Bible p.508
A Word of God that is still speaking, **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

SILENT MEDITATION

HYMN OF REFLECTION: “We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky” #563
New Century Hymnal
(For full music, the New Century Hymnal is located in each pew rack)
**We cannot own the sunlit sky, the moon, the wildflowers growing,
 For we are part of all that is within life’s river flowing.
 With open hands receive and share the gifts of God’s creation,
 That all may have abundant life in every earthly nation.**

**When bodies shiver in the night and, weary, wait for morning,
When children have no bread but tears, and warhorns sound their warning,
God calls humanity to wake, to join in common labor,
That all may have abundant life in oneness with their neighbor.**

**God calls humanity to join as partners in creating
A future free from want or fear, life's goodness celebrating.
That new world beckons from afar, invites our shared endeavor,
That all may have abundant life and peace endure forever.**

RESPONDING

We respond to God's Word through our prayers and our gifts.

*CREATION JUSTICE COVENANT

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

SENDING

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

*COMMISSIONING HYMN: "God, Who Stretched The Spangled Heavens"#556
(For full music, the New Century Hymnal is located in each pew rack)

**God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place,
Flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space;
We, your children, in your likeness, share inventive powers with you;
Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.**

**We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race;
Known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space;
Probed the secrets of the atom, each endeavor, well begun;
Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.**

**As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew,
Children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor, well begun;
Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.**

*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

Prayers and responses adapted from www.wcucc.org/creation-care-worship-resources

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***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 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.*

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Thanks for your
contribution to the
ministries of Hope UCC!

Adopted by Hope UCC Congregation August 29, 2010