



First Congregational United Church of Christ

September 10, 2023



Photo by NASA

1st Sunday of the Season of Creation

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Francie Beaster

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist:

Gathering Music
Words of Welcome
Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 139:13-18)

People who feel the ground: **For it was you, O LORD, who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

People who hug the trees: **I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.**

People who swim the waters: **My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

People who gaze upon the heavens: **How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast the sum of them! I try to count them – they are more than sand; I come to an end – I am still with you.**

Opening Hymn - SONG OF EARTH

1. Hail the Earth that first appeared. Alleluia!
When a word from God was heard. Alleluia!
Let the Earth arise and be. Alleluia!
Filled with living mystery. Alleluia!

2. Hail the rainbow flying high. Alleluia!
Spun by God across the sky. Alleluia!
Giving Earth a solemn word. Alleluia!
Never to unleash a flood. Alleluia!

3. Hail the planet blue and green. Alleluia!
Where the face of God is seen. Alleluia!
Glory filling all the Earth. Alleluia!
Celebrating every birth. Alleluia!

4. Hail our body made with clay. Alleluia!
Given breath to praise and pray. Alleluia!
Clay God honored by God's birth. Alleluia!
As a human life on Earth. Alleluia!

5. Hail the groans of Earth in pain.
Alleluia! From the weight of human sin. Alleluia!
Longing for the Christ who died. Alleluia!
All creation to revive. Alleluia!

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peacemakers as a Just Peace Church.

Morning Poem by Mary Oliver

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange
sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again

and fasten themselves to the high branches ---
and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted islands

of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away along the soft trails

for hours, your imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it

the thorn
that is heavier than lead ---
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging ---

there is still
somewhere deep within you
a beast shouting that the earth
is exactly what it wanted ---

each pond with its blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and answered
lavishly,
every morning,

whether or not
you have ever dared to be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to pray.

Passing of the Peace

Scripture Readings

1st Scripture Genesis 2:4b-22 (The Schoken Bible: Volume 1)

4 At the time of *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH), God's making of earth and heaven, 5 No bush of the field was yet on earth, no plants of the field yet sprung up. For *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) had not made it to rain upon earth, and there was no human/*adam* to till the soil/*adama*- 6 But a surge would well up from the ground and watered all the face of the soil.

7 Then *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) formed the human, of the dust from the ground, he blew into his nostrils the breath of life and the human became a living being. 8 Then *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) planted a garden in Eden/*Land of Pleasure* in the east, and there he placed the human whom he had formed. 9 *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) caused to spring from the soil every type of tree, desirable to look at and good to eat, the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the

Tree of the Knowing of Good and Evil. 10 Now a river flowed out of Eden, to water the garden, and from there it divides and became four stream-heads. 11 The name of the first one is Pishon/*Spreader* - that is the one that circles through the whole land of the Havilah, where gold is; 12 the gold of that land is good there too are bdellium and the precious stone carnelian. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon/*Gusher*— that is the one that circles through the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Hiddikel/Tigris—that is the one that goes to the east of Assyria. And the fourth river- that is Perat/Euphrates.

15 Then *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) took the human and set him in the Garden of Eden in order to work it and watch it. 16 Then *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) commanded concerning the human saying: "From every (other) tree of the garden you may eat, yes, eat, 17 but from the Tree of the Knowing of Good and Evil you are not to eat from that. For on that day you eat from it, you must die, yes, die.

18 Then *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) said, "It is not good for the human to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." 19 So *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) had formed from the soil every living-thing of the field and every fowl of the heavens, and brought them to the human to see what he would call it; and whatever the human called it as a living being, that was its name. 20 The human called out names for every herd-animal, and for the fowl of the heavens and for every living-thing, of the field; but for the human there could be found no helper corresponding to him. 21 So, *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) caused a deep slumber to fall on the human, so that he slept; he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 *Adonai Elohim* (YHWH) built the rib that he had taken from the human, into a woman. And brought her to the human.

2nd Scripture John 1:1-18 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Children's Message Stories of How We Got Here

Message Creation

Musical Reflections

Communion Hymn #341 Great Spirit God (verses 1, 2, & 4) ([click here](#))

Creation Prayer

Jesus Christ, teach us to empathize with Earth. Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the land, the seas and the skies. Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit in creation, groans of longing for a new creation. Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of celebration from the sea, the forest and the air. Christ, teach us to care. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

One: The Creator be with you and all creation.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Open your hearts.

Many: **We open them to our Creator.**

One: Let us give thanks to our Creator.

Many: **It is right to join creation in thanking God.**

One: It is right to give you thanks, loving Creator. Your Word is the impulse for all things to be, for space, stars and stardust to appear, for Earth to emerge from the deep, for life to be born of Earth and for humans to be born of Earth and the Spirit. You chose to be born a human being, to become a part of Earth, to suffer, die and rise from death to redeem humankind, renew creation, and affirm all born of Earth and the Spirit. Your presence is the living impulse in all things, the Christ deep among us, filling Earth—land, sea and air; filling every element and place; filling the grain and the grape we share with you this day. Therefore with angels and archangels, ancient voices in the forest, high voices from the sky, deep voices from the sea and the whole company of creation, we proclaim your presence among us.

Many: **Holy, holy, holy, God of all life, Earth and sea and sky are full of your presence and glorify your name. Amen.**

Words of Institution

Invitation

One: Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table with all your kin and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in doubt, and the gift of hope for those in tears.

Many: **May we who share these gifts, share Christ with one another and all our kin.**

Lamb of God

Many: **Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against God, have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against Earth, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away all sin from the world, receive our prayer.

Distribution

Blessing

One: Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind and your body to heal your wounds and through you to bring healing to Earth. In Jesus' name. Amen

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Mother God, 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, forever. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

Closing Hymn #556 God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens ([click here](#))

Benediction

Sending Music



Communion Hymn #341 Great Spirit God (verses
1, 2, & 4)

1. Great Spirit God, the things which are yours are numerous and great.
The heavens above you set in their place, and earth received its form by your hands.
The ocean depths respond to your will, for you can do all things.

2. Your will, mysterious and so strong, brings growth to all the earth.
Food for our souls and clothing to wear, are like your cup that blesses and fills.
Provide for us each day of our lives sufficient for our needs.

4. That day you came to dwell on the earth, bringing us all great joy!
The nations scattered over the world, to them you gave the light of all life.
O Jesus, O compassionate One, we offer praise to you.

Dakota hymn, Joseph R. Renville, transl. Sidney H. Byrd, 1993
Tune: adapt. Joseph R. Renville, 1842, harm. J.R. Murray, 1877
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Closing Hymn #556 God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

1. 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.

2. 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, yielding unimagined power,
Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.

3. 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.

Words: Catherine Cameron, 1967.

Tune: William Moore, 1825.

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