



# First Congregational United Church of Christ

September 24, 2023

---



Photo by Juli Kosolapova

---

## 3rd Sunday of the Season of Creation

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Karina Roth

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Ann Russ

Liturgist: Carol Winter

---

---

**Gathering Music**  
**Words of Welcome**  
**Prelude**

**Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 104)**

People who go camping: **Bless the LORD, O my Soul, O LORD, you are very great. You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills.**

People who go hiking: **Giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.**

People who bird watch: **You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart.**

People who gather mushrooms and blueberries: **Oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart. The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.**

**Opening Hymn #3** Wakantanka Taku Nitawa (Many and Great, O God) ([here](#))

**Blessing of the Earth** - Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon of St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord, All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings. To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,

Who is the day through whom You give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,

Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,  
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,

And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,

by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,

So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire,

through whom You light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister,

Mother Earth

who sustains and governs us,

producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon for love of You and bear sickness and trial.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death,

from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will.

No second death can do them harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks,  
And serve Him with great humility.

---

---

## 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.

### Enter Wild Nature

by Greg Gaul

Come enter the wild as nature's first child,  
shed ancient Godly fears that could be quelled.  
Leave your mind behind, your savage self mild -  
feel life, land, waters where spirits are held.

In wilderness touch the odd, even grand,  
searching still through this world and all its ills;  
no overlord will wave his heavy hand.  
It is too tough to bend bent human wills.

Arriving amidst nature's tangled twigs;  
surely see each branch through this moral maze.  
Peer deeply in between where no one digs,  
be careful of judgments that this might raise.  
Though the wild order may seem strictly raw -  
its bewildering beauty brings us awe!

## Passing of the Peace

**Hymn #433** In the Bulb There is a Flower ([here](#))

## Scripture Readings

**1st Scripture** Isaiah 40:1-5, 21-26 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)

**1** Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

**2** Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her  
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

**3** A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a  
highway for our God.

**4** Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

**5** Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

**21** Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

**22** It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who  
stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to live in;

**23** who brings princes to naught and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

**24** Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

*continued on next page*

---

---

**25** To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

**26** Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them,  
calling them all by name; because he is great in strength,  
mighty in power, not one is missing.

## **2nd Scripture** Matthew 3:1-6; 13-4:11

**3** In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, **2** “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” **3** This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’”

**4** Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, **6** and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

**13** Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. **14** John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” **15** But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. **16** And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. **17** And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

**4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. **2** He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. **3** The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” **4** But he answered, “It is written,

‘ One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

**5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, **6** saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’  
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

**7** Jesus said to him, “Again it is written,

‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

**8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, **9** and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” **10** Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”

**11** Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

---

---

**Children's Message** Who are our relatives?

**Choir Anthem** Land on the Shore

**Message** Wilderness or Home

**Musical Reflections**

**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 #557** Pray for the Wilderness ([here](#))

**Benediction**

**Sending Music**



First Congregational United Church of Christ

300 West 2nd Street

P.O. Box 95

Grand Marais, Minnesota 55604

[grandmaraisucc.org](http://grandmaraisucc.org) // (218) 387-2113 // [office@grandmaraisucc.org](mailto:office@grandmaraisucc.org)

## Opening Hymn #3 Wakantanka Taku Nitawa (Many and Great, O God)

Dakota -

1. Watanka taku nitawa  
tankaya qa ota;  
Mahpiya kin eyahnake ca,  
maka kin he duowanca,  
Mniowanca śhbya wanke cin,  
hena oyakihi.

2. Woehdaku nitawakin he  
minagikin qu wo;  
Mahpiya kin iwankam yati,  
wicowašte yuha nanka,  
Wiconi kin he majaqu nun,  
owihanke wanin.

1. Many and great, O God, are your works,  
Maker of earth and sky;  
Your hands have set the heavens with stars,  
your fingers spread the mountains and plains.  
Lo, at your word the waters were formed;  
deep seas obey your voice.

2. Grant unto us communion with you,  
O star abiding One.  
Come unto us and dwell with us;  
with you are found the gifts of life.  
Bless us with life that has no end,  
eternal life with you.

[Click Here to Return to Bulletin](#)

*Dakota hymn, Joseph R. Renville, 1842  
Paraphr. by R. Philip Frazier, 1929; alt.  
Native American melody (Dakota)  
Adapt. Joseph R. Renville, 1842  
Harm. James R. Murray, 1877  
One-License No. A-738474*

## Hymn #433 In the Bulb There is a Flower

1. In the bulb there is a flower;  
in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise:  
butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter  
there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

2. There's a song in every silence,  
seeking word and melody;  
there's a dawn in every darkness  
bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future;  
what it holds, a mystery,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

3. In our end is our beginning;  
in our time, infinity;  
in our doubt there is believing;  
in our life, eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection;  
at the last, a victory,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.

[Click Here to Return to Bulletin](#)

*Natalie Sleeth, 1985*  
*Copyright 1986 by Hope Publishing Co.*  
*One-License No. A-738474*

## Closing Hymn #557 Pray for the Wilderness

1. Pray for the wilderness, vanishing fast,  
pray for the rain forest, open and vast;  
pray for the people who live in the trees,\*  
pray for the planet brought down by degrees.

2. Learn from the elephant, eagle and whale,  
learn from the dragonfly, spider and snail;  
learn from the people in neighboring lands,  
learn from the children who play in their sands.

3. Work for the justice created things need,  
work for the health of each plant and seed;  
work for the creatures abuse has betrayed,  
work for the garden God's wisdom once made.

4. Trust that God's Christ over came nails and wood,  
trust that earth's people will turn to good;  
trust that creation forever will grow,  
trust that God's goodness to us overflows.

5. Pray for the atmosphere, pray for the sea,  
learn from the river, the rock and the tree;  
work till shalom is full harmony rings,  
trust the connection of all living things.

[Click Here to Return to Bulletin](#)

*Dan Damon, 1989; rev. 1994*

*Lee Yu San, 1967*

*Words Copyright 1991 by Hope Publishing Co.*

*Music Copyright 1967 Korean Hymnal Society*

*One-License No. A-738474*