

ZOOM Worship and Worship at Home for April 18, 2021  
Earth Sunday

If you are reading this service only, you may focus on scriptures or hymn words, reflection or prayers, or simply read the document from beginning to end. If you are participating in the ZOOM call, you might print this as your bulletin for the service.

*Words printed in Italics would traditionally be spoken by the entire congregation. If your microphone is muted please feel free to speak those words along with our readers, and of course sing along with the hymns!*

**Please make sure your microphones are muted during the service.**

**If you have called in on your phone, press \*6 to mute or un-mute yourself.**

To participate in the ZOOM worship over your telephone, call 647-374-4685 or 647-558-0588, and when asked enter this meeting id: **893 0928 0459** and this pass code: **271814**. You will hear the service and even be able to speak when it is appropriate.

In the Spirit

Rev. Joanne

Sunday, April 18  
Earth Sunday

Welcome and Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee, and later the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nations.

The territory is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Announcements

Centering Music:      Duet      "God Who Made the World"

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer:

One: Like the unexpected warmth of the sun on a early spring day  
*Two: you bring warmth to our spirits, God.*  
One: Like the rain showers that allow the grass to grow and become green,  
*Two: you bring new life to our hearts, God.*  
One: Like the tiny buds forming on trees and bushes,  
*Two: You bring hope to our lives God.*  
One: Holy Creator, as we celebrate Earth Sunday,  
remind us of your touch in all that grows, in all that breathes,  
but also in mountains and prairies and rivers and oceans.  
You created all and saw that it was 'good.'  
Remind us of our place in your good web of creation,  
so that we can truly celebrate, protect, preserve and care  
for air and land and creature and plant.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to  
observe the sparrow and the mustard seed,  
and to find you on the mountaintop and at the lakeshore.  
Amen

Opening Hymn: "It's A Song of Praise to the Maker" MV 30

It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
the thrush sings high in the tree.  
It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
the gray whale sings in the sea,

and by the Spirit you and I can  
join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a call of life to the Giver  
when waves and waterfalls roar.  
It's a call of life to the Giver  
when high tides break on the shore,

and by the Spirit you and I can  
join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
the bumblebees hum along.  
It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
the summer breeze joins the song

and by the Spirit you and I can  
join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

It's the chorus of all creation;  
it's sung by all living things.  
Its' the chorus of all creation;  
a song the universe sings,

and by the Spirit you and I can  
join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

Scripture Readings: Psalm 95:1-7 *The Inclusive Bible*

Come, let us sing joyfully to God!  
Raise a shout to our rock, our deliverance!  
Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving,  
and sing our praises with joy.  
For YHWH is a great God,  
the great Ruler, above all gods.  
O God, in your hands are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks are yours.  
Yours is the sea, for you made it.,  
the dry land as well, for your hands formed it.  
Come, let us bow down in worship;  
let us kneel before YHWH, our Maker.  
For you are our God,  
and we are the people you shepherd,  
the flock under your care.

*Luke 24:36-48 The Inclusive Bible*

While they were still talking about this, Jesus actually stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

In their panic and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them, "Why are you disturbed? Why do such ideas cross your mind? Look at my hands and my feet; it is I, really. Touch me and see—a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as I do." After saying this, Jesus showed them the wounds.

They were still incredulous for sheer joy and wonder, so Jesus said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" After being given a piece of cooked fish, the savior ate in their presence.

Then Jesus said to them, "Remember the words I spoke when I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the psalms had to be fulfilled."

Then Jesus opened their minds to the understanding of the scriptures, saying, "That is why the scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In the Messiah's name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of all this.

Choir: "With Respect in Creation"

Reflection:      Rooted in Reality, Soaring with Faith

Hymn: "All Things Bright and Beautiful" VU 291

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful:  
in love, God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,  
Each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colours,  
God made their tiny wings.

The purple headed mountains,  
The river running by,  
The sunset and the morning  
That brightens up the sky.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful:  
in love, God made them all.

The cold wind in the winter,  
The pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden,  
God made them every one.

The rocky mountain splendour,  
the lone wolf's haunting call,  
the great lakes and the prairies,  
the forest in the fall.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful:  
in love, God made them all.

God gave us eyes to see them,  
And lips that we might tell,  
How great is God our maker,  
who has been all things well.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful:  
in love, God made them all.

Virtual Offering:

One: We are the grateful recipients of your gifts, O God.

Two: *Rocks and trees and air to breathe,  
food to sustain our bodies and our faith.*

One: We offer what we can in these restricted times –  
our hearts, our minds, our support for one another  
and our support for your church.

Two: *Thoughtfully, prayerfully, we offer ourselves.*  
*Amen*

Sung Response: "Know that God is Good" MV 104  
Know that God is good, know that God is good,  
know that God is good, God is good, God is good!

Prayers of the People: Video reflection "Hope for Creation"

The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 959  
Our Father, in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,

Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power and glory are yours  
now and forever.

Closing Hymn: "Called by Earth and Sky" MV 135

Called by earth and sky, promise of hope held high.  
This is our sacred living trust, treasure of life sanctified,  
called by earth and sky.

Precious these waters, endless seas,  
deep ocean's dream, waters of healing,  
rivers of rain, the wash of love again.

Called by earth and sky, promise of hope held high.  
This is our sacred living trust, treasure of life sanctified,  
called by earth and sky.

Precious this gift, the air we breathe;  
wind born and free. Breath of the Spirit,  
blow through this place, our gathering and our grace.

Called by earth and sky, promise of hope held high.  
This is our sacred living trust, treasure of life sanctified,  
called by earth and sky.

Precious these mountains, ancient sands;  
vast fragile land. Seeds of our wakening,  
rooted and strong, Creation's faithful song.

Called by earth and sky, promise of hope held high.  
This is our sacred living trust, treasure of life sanctified,  
called by earth and sky.

Precious the fire that lights our way,  
bright dawning day. Fire of passion,  
sorrow undone, our faith and justice one.

Called by earth and sky, promise of hope held high.  
This is our sacred living trust, treasure of life sanctified,  
called by earth and sky, called by earth and sky,  
called by earth and sky.

Commissioning and Blessing:

One: This we know: the earth does not belong to us,  
we belong to the earth.

Two: *This we know: all things are connected,  
like the blood that unites one family.*

One: This we know: we did not weave the web of life,  
we are merely a strand in it.

Two: *This we know: whatever we do to the web of life,  
we do to ourselves.*

One: Let us give thanks for the gift of creation,  
let us give thanks that all things hold together in Christ.

*Iona Community*

One: So go from the space and time of worship  
to continue to sing with God in creation,  
go to sing your celebration of Jesus, God's love song to all,  
go with an open heart to receive the Spirit's song of love.  
Amen

Rev. Joanne's Reflection

I do love a mystery – as many of you do, I know. Following clues, looking for physical evidence, sometimes a suspicion of the supernatural, and the inevitable reveal at the end of the story are all elements that can make a mystery enjoyable – and there is a sense of satisfaction when everything is explained at the end.

I don't know if you have ever looked at the Easter story as this kind of mystery, but many of the same aspects of a good thriller are included in Luke's telling of Jesus' reappearance after his resurrection. The mystery begins with a missing body and the physical evidence of an empty tomb as observed by the women. The mystery deepens when the disciples initially cannot believe that Jesus' missing body means he has risen from the dead. It continues as a stranger is encountered on the road to Emmaus. Jesus appearance among the disciples is first believed to be a ghost, and in the end all is revealed as the disciples' minds are opened to the scriptures.

What I find notable in reading Luke's gospel through this lens is the importance of the physical, the real and normal and rooted-in-reality aspects of Jesus' return. He walks the road with Cleopas and his companion; he talks with them, and breaks bread with them. In our passage today, he appears among

the disciples as they had been discussing the Emmaus road encounter, and he is a real, physical presence that they can touch and feel – he even asks for food and eats some fish as they watch. The Risen One is not distant, not a figure of their imaginations, but a real presence among them – doing what Jesus had done with them so often in their journey together – talking, eating, touching and allowing others to be reassured by his touch.

On this day when we mark Earth Sunday, and remember our relationship to all creation, perhaps we can remember that the stories of our faith are rooted in what can be experienced, what can be heard and felt and seen and touched, the same way we experience and are part of God's creation. We are connected to the reality around us, just as Jesus remained connected to the real and physical world around him. He often taught through the examples of living and growing things, and seemed to expect that those who heard him would understand the seasons of sowing and harvest or have observed the rhythms of creation in their time and place. We can also take this time to be aware, not just of seasons and growth, but of the state of the world around us that we can see and touch and experience.

Those disciples who experienced the very real and physical Jesus in that first Easter season were filled with “sheer joy and wonder” we are told. Their faith was able to soar – and it carried them as they shared their lives and their stories well beyond their community. How do we find that rootedness today, how can our faith and our spirits soar? We do not have the opportunity to see Jesus with our eyes, hear him with our ears, or touch him with anything but our hearts.

Yet we are surrounded by creation that reminds us – especially in this spring season, of life rising from the darkness of the winter soil, of trees that looked dead and barren returning to fullness and life. We can hear the returning birds singing their joy, and feel the sun's returning warmth and the renewing spring rains. God has provided for us the rhythms of life that can help our spirits to soar, and our faith to be replenished. Our care and concern for creation can be an act of faith, a recognition that we are not separate from the soil, the plants, the water and air, the creatures with whom we share this world of wonder. Many who still cultivate gardens or who have cultivated them in their lives, or those who fight for climate justice and responsible use of the earth's resources, or those who work to heal the harms that humankind has brought to creation find that their spirits can soar when they tend to creation's needs.

We can see God-in-Christ in the vulnerable ones around us who are especially impacted by climate change, by the pollution of the air and water and land. We can hear God's voice in the cries of an overburdened ecosystem and in the voices of those who call for change; we can feel the touch of God in a gentle breeze or when our hands are covered in garden dirt, and we can let our spirits and our faith soar as we make decisions that help all of creation to thrive.

It is not a mystery that God is with us, that God loves us – even though it may seem mysterious. It is not a mystery that we are called to be in right relationship with creation, although we do not yet have all the answers to how we can truly accomplish that ongoing task. It is not a mystery that our world, our climate, our lives are changing, although sometimes we act as if these issues are unsolvable.

Let us go forward seeking rootedness in the reality of God's amazing creation, and God's amazing love. Let us go forward anticipating that our spirits will soar, our faith will deepen, and like the growing things around us we will grow towards God's light In Jesus.

A Prayer:

May this eternal truth be always on our hearts,  
That the God who breathed this world into being,  
Placed stars into the heavens  
And designed a butterfly's wing,  
Is the God who entrusted his son  
to the care of ordinary people,  
became vulnerable that we might know  
how strong is the wonder of Love.

A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.

A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

*from [faithandworship.com](http://faithandworship.com)*