

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC



September 4th
Season of Creation
Listen to the Trees of Creation

- Gathering -

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

In the beginning, God created the earth
to bear the abundant fruit of life.

All Creation Sings, telling the story of God.

From the tiny bumblebee bat in its cave,
to the mammoth Blue Whales of the ocean,

All Creation Sings, showing the love of God.

In expansive canyons and on snowy mountain peaks,
In habitats, ecosystems, and biomes across the world,

All Creation Sings, teaching the Word of God

May we be faithful students of Creation,

Listening with hearts open wide.

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the continual Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
of us and all of Creation.

Amen.

Gathered together, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of grace and mercy,
**you entrusted us as stewards of your marvelous creation,
but we confess that we have not honored this responsibility.
In a world of abundance, we have created scarcity.
In a world of change and renewal,
we have dug in our heels and resisted these cycles.
In a world built for community,
We have chosen independence and exerted our own superiority.**

**We have hurt instead of healed,
hoarded instead of helped,
hastened rather than humbled.**

**We come to you this day to offer
our deepest sorrow and most humble repentance,
and ask that you show us again your path of new life.**

Beloved Siblings in Christ, hear the good news:
In the waters of baptism, God washes away all our sin.
Just as the sun brings a new dawn each day,
So too does God's Son offer us endless grace and mercy.
In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
May we use this freedom to grow ever closer
to the Divine Creator of all Creation.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

All Things Bright and Beautiful – UMH 147
verses 1 and 4

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all
And also with you.
Let us pray.
Creator God, who formed the world – you have written your story of love and liberation on every lifeform of creation. May we learn to listen and learn from all that you have created, that we might work together to be stewards of everlasting life in this world. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.

- Word -

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30: 15-20

Today I have set before you life and success, or death and disaster. For today I command you to love YHWH, your God, to follow God's ways and keep the commandments, the laws and customs. If you do, you will live and increase, and YHWH, your God, will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your hearts stray and you do not listen to me, if you let yourself be drawn into the worship of other gods, and serve them, I tell you today, you will not survive. You will not live long in the land which you are now crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, by loving YHWH, your God, by obeying God's voice and by clinging to YHWH. For that will mean life for you, a long life in the land which God swore to give to your descendants Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, and Leah and Rachel and Jacob.

Word of God, Word of Life
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 1

Happiness comes to those
who reject the path of violence,
who refuse to associate with criminals
or even to sit with people who belittle others.

**Happiness comes to those
who delight in the Law of YHWH
and meditate on it day and night,**

They're like trees planted by flowing water –
they bear fruit in every season,
and their leaves will never wither:
everything they do will prosper.

But not wrongdoers!
They're like chaff that the wind blows away.
They won't have a taproot to anchor them
when judgment comes,
nor will corrupt individuals be given a place
at the Gathering of the Just.

**YHWH watches over the steps
of those who do justice;
but those on a path of violence and injustice
will find themselves irretrievably lost.**

Gospel: Luke 14:25-33

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 14th chapter.

Large crowds followed Jesus. He turned to them and said, “If any of you come to me without turning your back on your mother and your father, your loved ones, your sisters and brothers, indeed your very self, you can’t be my follower. Anyone who doesn’t take up the cross and follow me can’t be my disciple.

“If one of you were going to build a tower, wouldn’t you first sit down and calculate the outlay to see if you have enough money to complete the project? You’d do that for fear of laying the foundation and then not being able to complete the work – because anyone who saw it would jeer at you and say, ‘You started a building and couldn’t finish it.’ Or if the leaders of one country were going to declare war on another country, wouldn’t they first sit down and consider whether, with an army of ten thousand, they could win against an enemy coming against them with twenty thousand? If they couldn’t, they’d send a delegation while the enemy is still at a distance, asking for terms of peace.

“So count the cost. You can’t be my disciple if you don’t say goodbye to all of your possessions.”

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Tree of Life & Awesome Mystery – ELW 334
verses 1, 3, and Lent 3

Affirmation of Faith – Gurukul Theological College, India

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common creed:

**We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee,
who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day
God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.
Amen.**

Joys & Concerns

If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.

Prayers of the People

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Loving God, who hears every voice, knows each cry of injustice, and is attentive to the suffering of the earth: teach us to listen. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may listen to the world you have created and not close ourselves off from it. Reveal to us the ways in which we have failed to hear your voice in how we treat the earth.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

We pray for the church around the world and for the mission of the gospel. Refresh the hearts of your people, deepen our understanding of every good thing we share, and strengthen our partnerships in the faith.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

For this community of faith: for all our labors—begun, continued, and ended in you—that they glorify your holy name. Bless your people with the strength to live into their many vocations for the sake of the world

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

For all in need: for those who suffer from disease, who struggle with homelessness or food insecurity, for those whose family life is difficult, and for all in this community who need your care (especially).

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

God of peace, we pray for victims of war and violence across the world. Send your Spirit to show us how to turn swords into plowshares, that nations might work together to create a culture of peace.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

- Meal -

Offering

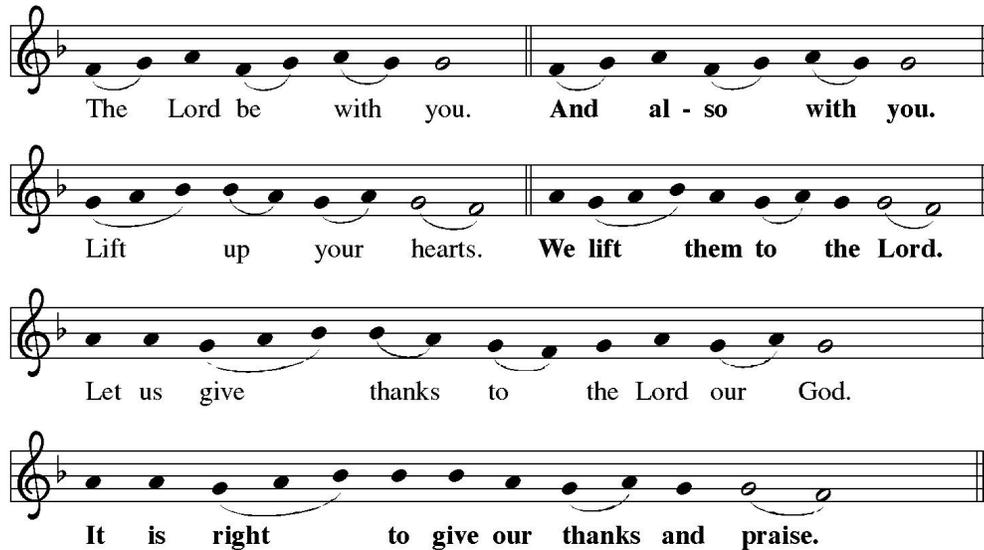
At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry. Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031. Online Donations can be made through the link below:
[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

Offering Prayer

God of goodness and growth,
all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure.
Word and water, wine and bread:
These are signs of your abundant grace.
Receive these gifts we bring,
and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love
in our communities and in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.
Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Dialogue & Preface

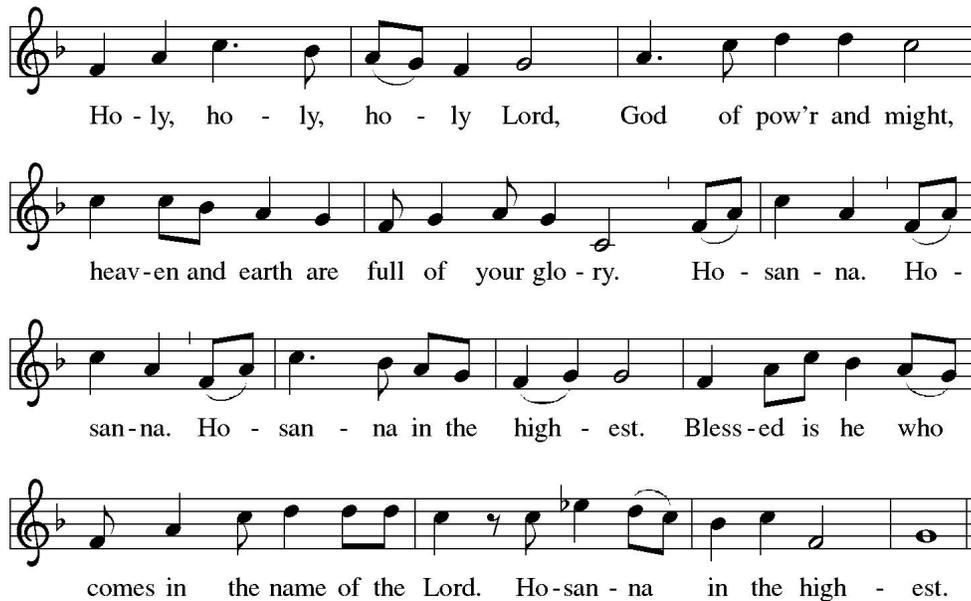


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table & Words of Institution

O God triune,
how majestic is your name in all the earth.
Over the eons your merciful might
evolved our home, a fragile tree of life.
Here by your wisdom
are both life and death,
growth and decay,
the nest and the hunt,
sunshine and storm,
darkness and light.
Sustained by these wonders,
we creatures of dust
join in the ancient song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune,
you took on our flesh
in Jesus our healer.
In Christ you bring life from death;
we remember his cross,
we laud his resurrection.
Broken like bread, he enlivens our body.
Outpoured like wine,
he fills the earth with goodness.
Receiving this mystery,
we mortals sing our song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

We praise you for the heart of Jesus,
so filled with your love for this earth.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink,
saying: This cup,
is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered around this table,
we your children unite in this song:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune,
you created the worlds,
you uphold the living,
you embrace the dead.
Send forth your Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.
Strengthen us for our journey
with this meal,
the body and blood of Christ.
Give us a future that trusts in you
and cares for your earth.
Empowered by your promises,
we rise from our deaths
to praise you again:
The earth is full of your glory.
The earth is full of your glory.

Amen, and amen.
Amen, and amen.

The Disciple's Prayer

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language or translation that you are most familiar with – the language of your heart. Together, we pray:

**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 the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Instructions for Communion

This table of bread and wine has now been made ready.
So come to this table,
You who have much faith
and you who would like to have more;
you who have been here often
and you who have not been here long
you who have tried to follow Jesus,
and you who have failed;
Come and eat. It is Christ who invites us all to meet him here.

Communion Distribution

Prayer after Communion

Living God,
as the disciples ate and drank with their risen Lord,
We have been nourished with the very presence of Christ.
Through this meal may we be strengthened to keep your word
and to proclaim the power of your love
in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

- Sending -

Blessing of Students & Educators

All students, parents, educators, and those involved in the education of our future generations are invited to stand where they are and receive this blessing

John Wesley lived in a time when education was not available to or even encouraged for all. Yet he believed that education was a universal right based on the Scriptural truth that we are all created in the image of God. We all equally deserve to learn and grow in knowledge, wisdom, and grace.

Martin Luther also argued for education to be available for all people, believing that it was the key to understanding Scriptures and learning our own unique gifts and callings on the path towards our personal vocation. Education is an opportunity to embrace and live our lives to the fullest.

And so today, as we begin a new school year, we take a moment now to recognize and bless our students, parents, teachers, and all those involved in the education of our future generations.

To the parents, grandparents, and all in this community that help to care for our young people, I remind you of these words from Proverbs:

“Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won’t depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

With that responsibility on our hearts and minds, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

O God, our eternal and heavenly parent, bless now these families. Fill their homes with joy and their hearts with love. Give them energy, strength, and discernment as they raise these children. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

To the teachers who serve in our schools and in this community, I remind you that teaching is not only a profession but a calling. It is not simply a skill, but it is prominently featured in Paul's listing of spiritual gifts. John Wesley believed that education was a channel for God's grace and that excellent teachers have the ability to transform the lives of their students.

With this commitment and responsibility on our hearts and minds, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

Holy Spirit, the source of all wisdom, bless now these teachers. Fill their classrooms with learning and their hearts with compassion. Give them focus, patience, and creativity as they educate these children. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

To the students who stand before us today, I remind you of this promise that the Apostle Paul testifies to in the Scriptures:

“The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion...”
(Philippians 1:6)

This means that while you are growing and learning at home and at school, God is working alongside your parents and teachers to form you into the person God sees you can be. God is equipping you and inviting you to be a part of the great adventure of life.

Listen to and respect both your parents and your teachers. At the same time, know that your voice and your point of view matter. The Bible tells us adults not to look down on you because you are young, but to recognize that you can be an example to us in speech, behavior, love, and faith.

In gratitude for all that God will do in and through you this year, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

Lord Jesus, who welcomed the children and held up their faith as an example, bless now these students. Fill their schools with community and their hearts with wonder. Develop within them wisdom, integrity, and maturity as they learn and grow this year. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

Announcements

Sending Song:

Earth and All Stars – ELW 731
verses 1, 4, and 5

Benediction & Dismissal

In the words of Octavia E. Butler,
*“God is change –
seed to tree, tree to forest;
rain to river, river to sea;
grubs to bees, bees to swarm.
From one, many; from many, one.
Forever uniting, growing, dissolving –
forever Changing.
The universe is God’s self-portrait.”*

May we dance in delight of this blessing
God has bestowed upon us;
to be a part of this Divine Revelation.
May we live justly and walk humbly,
as we honor the responsibility this entails.
Amen.

Go in peace, the Spirit of God is alive in you!
Thanks be to God!



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Church Office Hours

Closed on Fridays

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Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Tuesday 10-1

Attributions

Call to Worship: *written by Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller, 2022*

Confession & Forgiveness: *written by Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller, 2022*

Opening Hymn:

Prayer of the Day: *written by Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller, 2022*

Hymn of the Day:

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