

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



September 17th, 2023

Season of Creation Week Three: Waters of Forgiveness

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

O Divine Voice,

You sing and the universe comes into being;

O Divine Breath,

You breathe and all things spring to life;

O Divine Word,

You call and creation is sustained;

O Divine Flesh,

You are born among us,

and the Creator is clothed in creation;

O Divine Spirit,

You fill all that has been formed;

O Divine Life,

You are the pulse of all that is.

In amazement and awe,

in wonder and celebration

we marvel at this mystery:

In you all things live and move and have being.

And so we join with creation

in the eternal song of worship and wonder.

Hymn of the Season

Water, River, Spirit, Grace
TFWS 2253, sung three times

Litany of Repentance & Forgiveness

God of light and life and love,
God of land and sea and sky,
Who called creation into existence
and wove it into a rich tapestry, a web of life
Your Spirit hovered over the face of the primordial waters,
And was breathed into humankind
after You made us equally in Your image.
Your Word was made flesh
and embodied Your divine love
as it took root and bore fruit in us,
restoring our relationship with You.

**Yet we have not honored this relationship
with You and the rest of Your Creation.
We have disrespected the web of life
We have devalued the fine ecological tapestry
that You wove with so much love.
We have uprooted Your tree of life and sold it as logs.
We have polluted Your oceans and rivers;
oceans that cry for justice
and rivers that call to righteousness.
Instead of everything that has breath praising You,
all creation groans in pain from our desire for more,
and our care for less.**

The consequences of our ecological sin are all around:
In bitter winters and scorching summers
Through endless droughts and raging wildfires
In contaminated water, polluted air, rising temperatures –
Yet we refuse to see.
Creation roars in pain
Yet we refuse to hear.
You call us in Christ, to speak truth to power and peace to
this planet, our common home
Yet we refuse to speak out.

God of hope and healing
May your Rivers of Righteousness
Wash away our apathy, our greed, and our selfishness.
Nourish us with the water of life that restores,
turning deserts of despair into oases of hope.
May the waves of Your embrace
Transform us back into guardians of Your creation.
May the currents of Your justice
Carry us to Your lagoon of peace
Where all creation may enjoy
Life in abundance

Silence for reflection

Beloved Siblings in Christ
in God there is endless forgiveness.
in Christ we will find our resurrection,
and through the Spirit we will be reconciled
to one another, to all of Creation, and to the Divine.
May it be so among us.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

Come to the Water
W&S 3114 – verses 1+2

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, your rivers of grace and fountains of forgiveness are neverending for your people. Help us to open our hearts to the true power of forgiveness, and allow your cleansing and restorative waters to revive our weary souls. In the name of Christ and through the Holy Spirit, we pray.

Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

Pondering their father's death, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph is angry with us and repays us for all the wrong we did him?" So they approached Joseph, saying: "Before Jacob died, he said to us, 'You must say to Joseph: I beg you, please forgive your brothers their crime and their sin and all the wrong they did you.' Now, therefore, we ask you, forgive the crime of us who are faithful to the God of your parents." Joseph wept when he heard this. Then the brothers wept also, and fell down before him, saying, "We present ourselves before you, as your attendants." Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid; is it for me to put myself in God's place? You planned evil for me, but God planned it for good, as it has come to pass this day – to bring about the survival of many people. So you need not be afraid. I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this manner he assured them with words that touched their hearts.

Word of God, Word of Life

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:1-13

Bless YHWH, my soul!
All that is in me, bless God's holy Name!
**Bless YHWH, my soul,
and remember all God's kindnesses!**
The One who forgives all your sins
is the One who heals all your diseases;
**the One who ransoms your life from the Pit
is the One who crowns you with love and tenderness.**
The One who fills your years with prosperity
also gives you an eagles' youthful energy.

How you love justice, YHWH!
You are always on the side of the oppressed.
You revealed your intentions to Moses,
your deeds to Israel.
**You are tender and compassionate, YHWH –
slow to anger, and always loving;**
your indignation doesn't endure forever,
and your anger only lasts for a short time.
**You never treat us as our sins deserve;
you don't repay us in kind for the injustices we do.**
For as high as heaven is above earth,
so great is the love for those who revere you.
**As far as the east is from the west,
that's how far you remove our sins from us!**
As tenderly as parents treat their children,
that's how tenderly you treat your worshippers, YHWH!

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 168h chapter.

Peter came up and asked Jesus, “When a sister or brother wrongs me, how many times must I forgive? Seven times?”

“No,” Jesus replied, “not seven times; I tell you seventy times seven. And here’s why:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a ruler who decided to settle accounts with the royal officials. When the audit was begun, one was brought in who owed tens of millions of dollars. As the debtor had no way of paying, the ruler ordered this official to be sold, along with family and property, in payment of the debt.

“At this, the official bowed down in homage and said, ‘I beg you, your highness, be patient with me and I will pay you back in full!’ Moved with pity, the ruler let the official go and wrote off the debt.

“Then that same official went out and met a colleague who owed the official twenty dollars. The official seized and throttled this debtor with the demand, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’

“The debtor dropped to the ground and began to plead, ‘Just give me time and I will pay you back in full!’ But the official would hear none of it, and instead had the colleague put in debtor’s prison until the money was paid.

“When the other officials saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and went to the ruler, reporting the entire incident. The ruler sent for the official and said, ‘You worthless wretch! I canceled your entire debt when you pleaded with me. Should you not have dealt mercifully with your colleague, as I dealt with you?’

Then in anger,

the ruler handed the official over to be tortured until the debt had been paid in full.

“My Abba in heaven will treat you exactly the same way unless you truly forgive your sisters and brothers from your hearts.”

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Waters of Forgiveness
Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Where Charity and Love Prevail
ELW 359 – verses 1, 3, 4, 5

Affirmation of Faith: adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.
You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
God made flesh,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are our God. We worship you.**

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

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Remember us, Creator God, according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

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](#)

Offertory Prayer

God of abundance, God of plenty,
all things belong to you.
We bring your gifts to the table,
that all of creation might be fed
through your mercy and grace.
Form us into the body of your Beloved,
Jesus Christ, and strengthen us
through this meal, in service to your Work.
Amen

The Great Thanksgiving

Preface - TFWS 2257-a

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty (almighty God), creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day
when justice shall roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,
when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus - TFWS 2257-b

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.

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

Blessed be your name, O God,
for we have feasted on your Word,
Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.
Strengthened by this food,
send us to gather the world to your banquet,
where none are left out and all are satisfied.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Sending Song:

Freely, Freely
UMH 389 – verses 1+2

Benediction

May we be blessed to open our hearts to receive
the living waters of God's justice and peace within us:

Amen.

May we be blessed to share the living waters of God's
justice and peace with our suffering siblings
and creatures all around us:

Amen.

May we be blessed to walk together
with all people of good will
so that the many streams of
God's living waters of justice and peace
may become a mighty river all over the Earth:

Amen.

And may God bless us on this journey,
+ in the name of the Creator, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Dismissal

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

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

M-Th 9-1, or by appointment

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Tuesday 10-1

Attributions

Call to Worship – posted on Third Space: third-space.org.uk accessed via re-worship.blogspot.com

Litany of Repentance & Forgiveness – Rev. James Shri Bhagwan, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, adapted by Rev. Bermes-Goller

Prayers of the People – copyright 2023, Augsburg Fortress, adapted by Rev. Bermes-Goller

Benediction – Fr Joshtrom Kureethadam, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, adapted by Rev. Bermes-Goller