

# *Spirit of Grace* ELCA UMC



September 24th, 2023

*Season of Creation Week Four: Waters of Renewal*

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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

Take My Life, That I May Be  
*ELW 583 – verses 1-4*

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, your boundless gift of grace offers endless opportunities for renewal – for a return to life abundant for us all. Soften our hearts, and remind us that your grace is out of our hands – and that is indeed good news for us all. In the name of Christ and through the Holy Spirit we pray.

**Amen.**

First Reading: Jonah 3:10-4:11

God saw [the people of Nineveh's] efforts to renounce their evil behavior. And God relented by not inflicting on them the disaster that threatened them.

But Jonah grew indignant and fell into a rage. He prayed to YHWH and said, "Please, YHWH! Isn't this exactly what I said would happen, when I was still in my own country? That's why I left and fled to Tarshish: I knew that you were a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness, relenting from violence. Now, YHWH, please take my life! I'd rather be dead than keep on living!" Then YHWH said, "What gives you the right to be angry?"

Jonah then left the city and sat down to the east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat down under the shade to see what would happen to the city. Then YHWH God sent a castor oil plant to grow up over Jonah to shade his head and soothe his indignation. Jonah was delighted with the castor oil plant. But at dawn the next day, God sent a worm to attack the castor oil plant and it withered. And after the sun had risen, God sent a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he was overcome and begging for death, and said, "I'd rather be dead than keep on living!"

God said to Jonah, "Who gave you the right to be upset about the castor plant?"

He replied, "I have every right to be angry, to the point of death!"

God replied, "You feel sorrow because of a castor plant that cost you no labor, that you did not make grow, that sprouted in a night and that perished in a night. Is it not right, then, for me to feel sorrow for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, to say nothing of all the animals?"

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 145:1-8

I will extol you, my God, my Ruler,  
and I will bless your Name forever and ever!  
**Every day will I bless you,  
and I will praise your Name forever and ever!**  
Great you are, YHWH, and greatly to be praised,  
your greatness is unfathomable.  
**Generation after generation praises your works  
and proclaims your mighty deeds;**  
they'll speak of your splendor  
of your glorious majesty,  
and I will meditate on your wondrous acts.  
**They'll discourse of the power  
of your awesome deeds,  
and I will declare your greatness.**  
They'll celebrate the fame  
of your abundant goodness,  
and I will joyfully sing of your justice.

**YHWH, you are gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love.**

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 20th chapter.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like the owner of an estate who went out at dawn to hire workers for the vineyard. After reaching an agreement with them for the usual daily wage, the owner sent them out to the vineyard.

“About mid-morning, the owner came out and saw others standing around the marketplace without work, and said to them, ‘You go along to my vineyard and I will pay you whatever is fair.’ At that they left.

“Around noon and again in the mid-afternoon, the owner came out and did the same. Finally, going out in the late afternoon, the owner found still others standing around and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

“‘No one has hired us,’ they replied.

“The owner said, ‘You go to my vineyard, too.’

“When evening came, the owner said to the overseer, ‘Call the workers and give them their pay, but begin with the last group and end with the first.’ When those hired late in the afternoon came up, they received a full day’s pay, and when the first group appeared they assumed they would get more. Yet they all received the same daily wage.

“Thereupon they complained to the owner, ‘This last group did only an hour’s work, but you’ve put them on the same basis as those who worked a full day in the scorching heat.’

“‘My friends,’ said the owner to those who voiced this complaint, ‘I do you no injustice. You agreed on the usual wage, didn’t you? Take your pay and go home. I intend to give this worker who was hired last the same pay as you. I’m free to do as I please with my money, aren’t I? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

“Thus the last will be first and the first will be last.”

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

*Waters of Renewal*  
Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Still Waters  
*Lyrics on Screen*

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.*

God who is gracious and merciful, teach your church to invite and welcome all. Lead us to be grateful for the blessing of community. Challenge your church to choose equity and compassion over judgment.

God of all Creation,  
**Receive our prayer.**

God who sends the wind and the sun, you know every worm and bush by name. Help us remember that even the humblest parts of creation are precious to you. Show us how best to care for the earth and its creatures.

God of all Creation,  
**Receive our prayer.**

God who is ready to relent from punishing, impart your compassionate wisdom to legislators, judges, members of the military, and law enforcement. Give them courage to serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion.

God of all Creation,  
**Receive our prayer.**

God who saves, direct your people who are tempted by evil ways. Protect your children from calamity and disaster. Strengthen all who are incarcerated. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind.

God of all Creation,  
**Receive our prayer.**

God who is slow to anger, may we boast about the goodness of Jesus with the confidence of Paul in prison. Inspire us to find abundance in whatever vocation we are called to in the world and in service to our congregation.

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 give you thanks for the gifts you have given us,  
that we might return them to you  
as we live out your word.

Form us into the body of your Beloved,  
Jesus Christ, and strengthen us  
in service to your Work in this world.

**Amen**

## Remembering & Honoring Our Baptismal Promise

Blessed be the holy Trinity,  
one God,  
the fountain of living water,  
the rock who gave us birth,  
our light and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water is poured into the font.*

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and placed us in a well-watered garden. In the desert, you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock.

When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you washed us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere – for the Hood River, the Columbia River, the great Pacific Ocean, and all other local bodies of water that nourish and sustain our ecosystems.

*Other bodies of water may be named at this time,*

Blessed are you, Creator God,  
who in Christ, the living water of salvation,  
blessed and transformed us.  
May we be reminded of the power  
of our baptismal promise and covenant  
with you, through the Holy Spirit,  
whenever water touches our weary flesh.  
May we draw water from the springs of salvation.  
and continue to walk together in the new life we received at  
Baptism.

May Christ, the living water,  
through us, continue the work of  
cleansing, refreshing, and making all things new.  
**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.**

Sending Song:

Sent Forth By God's Blessing  
*UMH 664 – 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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**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**

Tuesday 10-1

**Attributions**

Call to Worship – posted on Third Space: [third-space.org.uk](http://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