

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



September 3rd, 2023

Season of Creation Week One: Waters of Change

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

Touch the Earth Lightly
ELW 739 – 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,
Through the incarnation of your Son, You shared the tears of creation that "groans and suffers the pains of childbirth." You made human fragility your own in climatic injustice, in our fears, and in our worries. When anguish tries to prevail over the oppressed peoples and over us, we ask You to bring Your loving presence to our hearts, in order to rediscover the purpose of our presence in the world.
Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 15: 15-21

YHWH, remember me!
Remember me and help me!
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are slow to anger – do not take me away.
For I suffer insults for your sake.
When your words came, I devoured them.
Your word was my delight
and the joy of my heart.
For I was called by your Name,
YHWH God Omnipotent.
I took no pleasure in sitting with merry-makers;
with your hand on me I sat alone,
choking with the indignation you filled me with.
Why is my pain ongoing,
my wound incurable, refusing to heal?
Why, you're like a spring that dries up when it's needed most,
like waters that can't be relied upon!
Then YHWH answered me:
"If you repent,
I will return you to my service.
If you extract the valuable from the worthless,
you will be my mouthpiece.
Let them come back to you,
but you must not go back to them.
I will make you a bronze wall
fortified against this people.
They will fight against you
but they will not overcome you.
For I am with you,
to save you and deliver you –
it is YHWH who speaks.
I will free you from the hand of the evildoer,
and rescue you from the clutches of the violent.

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

Psalm 26:1-8

Do me justice, YHWH!
For I have walked in integrity
and I have trusted in you without wavering.
**Search me, YHWH, and test me;
examine my heart and my mind.**
For your love is before my eyes,
and I will walk in your truth.
**I don't sit with deceitful people,
nor do I consort with hypocrites.**
I avoid places where troublemakers gather,
and have nothing to do with violent people.
**I wash my hands in innocence
and minister at your altar, YHWH,**
giving voice to my praise
and recounting all your wondrous deeds.
**YHWH, I love the house in which you dwell,
the dwelling place of your glory.**

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 16th chapter.

From that time on, [after his identity as the Messiah had been revealed] Jesus began to explain to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars, and that he must be killed, and on the third day raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Rabbi!" he said. "This will never happen to you!"

Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get yourself behind me, you Satan! You are trying to make me stumble and fall. You're setting your mind not on the things of God, but of mortals."

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very selves, take up the instrument of your own death, and begin to follow in my footsteps.

"If you would save your life, you will lose it; but if you would lose your life for my sake, you will find it. What profit would you show if you gained the whole world but lost yourself? What can you offer in exchange for your very self?"

"The Promised One will come in the glory of Abba God accompanied by the angels, and will repay all according to their conduct. The truth is, some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the coming of the Promised One's reign."

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Waters of Change
Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
UMH 480 – verses 1-3

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 of steadfast love, renew the earth by your Spirit, that lands and oceans reveal the beauty of your creation. Challenge us to live humbly and peaceably as part of your world.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

God of life, your words are the joy at the heart of your church. Draw the seeker to you, place messages of hope and healing in the mouths of your witnesses, and open your children to your truth when we stumble.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

God of patience, lead those who govern to hold fast to what is good. Guide them to show honor to the people in their care. Overcome evil in all nations and grant peace to peoples and places mired in conflict

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

God of deliverance, remember all who are suffering, lonely, and in pain. Liberate your people being insulted, persecuted, or in the grasp of the ruthless. Give endurance to workers who persevere on this Labor Day and insure fair wages and safe working environments.

God of all Creation,
Receive our prayer.

God of justice, equip this congregation to boldly follow you in uncertain times and to remain faithful in prayer when facing challenges. Show us how best to love and care for one another and our communities.

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:

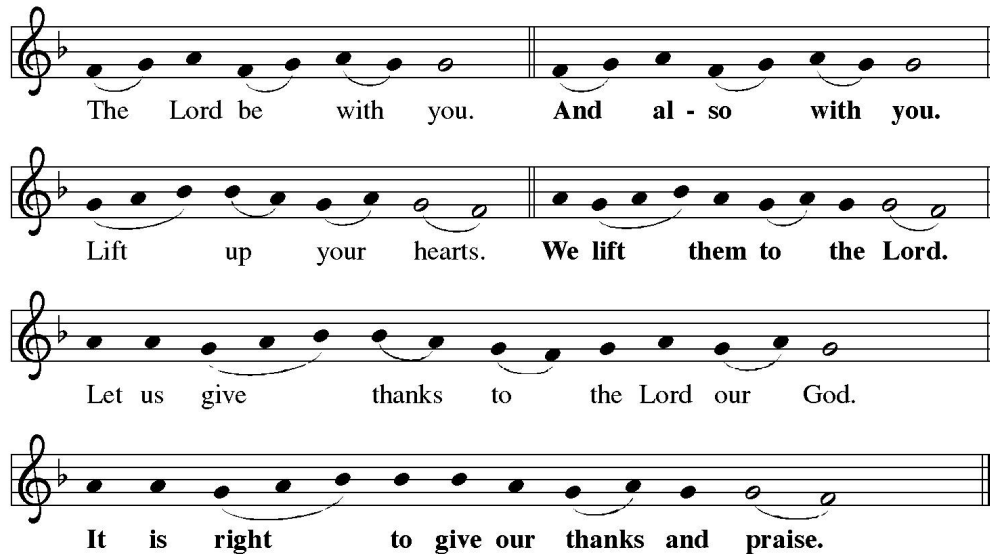
[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

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

Dialogue & Preface



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

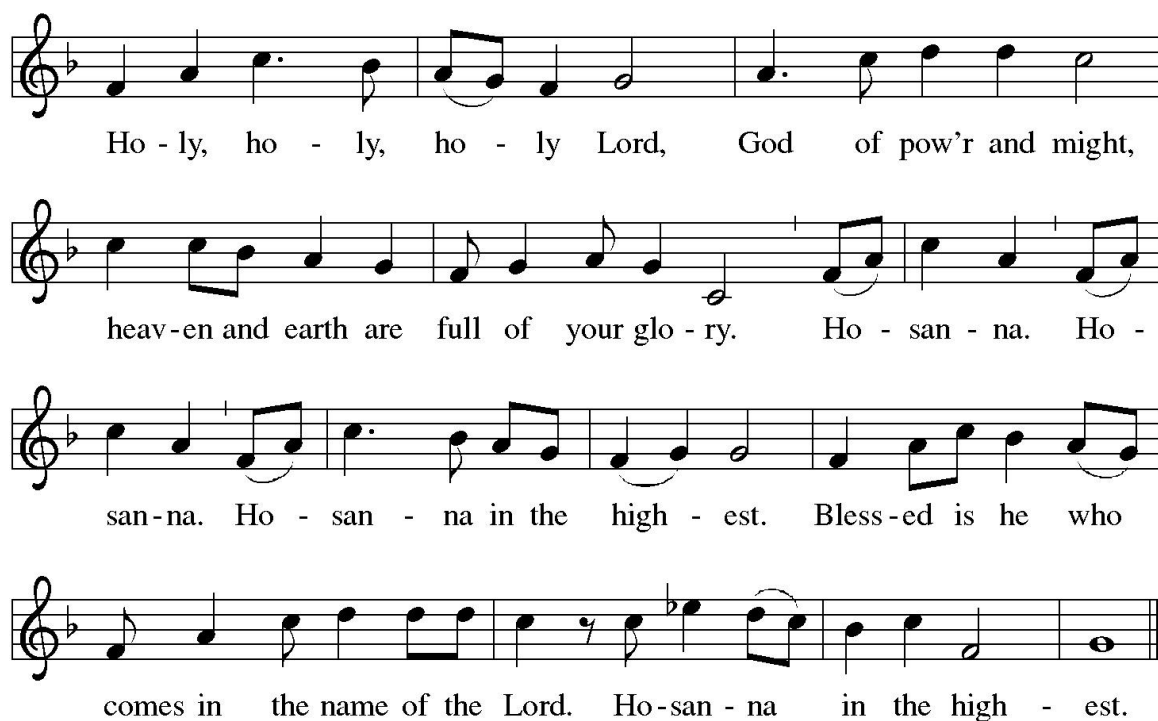
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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:



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

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.

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.

For the parents, grandparents, and all in this community that help to care for our young people, we pray:

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.

For the teachers who serve in our schools and in this community, who have answered the calling to transform the lives of students, we pray:

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.

For the students of our community, who are growing and learning with each passing day as they discover the wonders of God's creation, we pray:

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.

Sending Song:

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

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 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
Prayer of the Day – Originally written in Italian by Miriam Resta Corrado, Laudato Si' Animator. Supersano, Puglia, Italy. Taken from the Laudato Si' Movement Prayer Book. Adapted by Rev. Bermes-Goller
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