

# ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH

## SUNDAY AUGUST 16, 2020

*Growing and Deepening our Spiritual Lives in an Affirming and Inclusive Community*

Series: Sacred Earth: Sacred Work

### **“Creation as Blessing”**

**Lighting the Affirming and the Treaty 7/Metis Candles**

#### **Introduction to Series Four Paths of Creation Spirituality**

Creation Spirituality follows a rhythm of four paths as follows:

- recognizing the inherent goodness of all creation (including our own potential for good)
    - befriending dark places and times in our lives as fodder for new life
    - exclaiming divine creativity and our role in co-creating with God
  - embodying compassion and power to bring more wholeness and justice to the world.
- The worship series incorporates these in four sections of the worship experience.

#### **Path I: Recognizing Inherent Goodness**

*The first path invites us to celebrate! The pulse of creation is singing the goodness of God and God's gift of goodness in all things. We become more aware of the beauty of all that is and tap into gratitude as our first task in creating more goodness in the world.*

#### **Gathering and Welcoming**

God is good!  
**All the time!**  
And all the time!  
**God is good!**

Indeed, we gather to celebrate the goodness of God and all of God's creation. I invite you to stand in body and/or spirit as you are comfortable. Let us give thanks for this opportunity to be together in this time of worship! Share with someone you are with or write down or say aloud WHAT and WHO you are thankful for this morning!

**Expanding Our Attention 360°** (*Call to Worship*)

**Gathering chant**

(adapted from a Chant written by Phil Porter)  
**Gathered now in the mystery of this hour  
Gathered now as one strong body  
Gathered now in the struggle and the power  
Spirit draw near**

To worship is to . . .and seasons of creation,  
constantly moving and growing.

*[Sing this last line two or three times]*  
**Spirit draw near**

When we dare to explore new directions, we discover new perspectives! ....

*[Sing this last line two or three times]*  
**Spirit draw near**

Here we look towards the door at the back of our space. . . Let's take a breath in and then let it out—allowing any worries of what is left undone to be released just for a while.

Let us turn another quarter turn.

*[Sing this last line two or three times]*  
**Spirit draw near**

To come to worship is to bring all our lives. . . Let us complete our turning as we focus on the center of our faith.

*[Sing this last line two or three times]*  
**Spirit draw near**

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

Christ, our Light, is the center of this community! And when we turn to face that light in our midst, we see one another. Creation Spirituality affirms that each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God and so when we see one another, we see more of the Divine shine through.

**Gathering chant  
Gathered now in the mystery of this hour  
Gathered now as one strong body  
Gathered now in the struggle and the power  
Spirit draw near**

And all God's people said, "Amen!"

## **Praising**

In this first week of our series on creation spirituality, we focus on the idea of "original blessing." Creation Spirituality affirms that the universe, and all life within it, is fundamentally a blessing, fundamentally good, and created to flourish—including us.

**"For the Beauty of the Earth" VU, 226**

**For the beauty of the earth,  
for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies.**

*Refrain:*

**[God] of all, to [you] we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the wonder of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flower,  
sun and moon and stars of light,**

*[Refrain ]*

How might moving through our days with an eye for recognizing goodness and blessing transform our experience of life?

**For the joy of human love,  
[sibling, cousin], parent, child  
friends on earth, and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild,**

*[Refrain]*

Being fundamentally blessed.....experience of life?

**For yourself, best gift divine,  
to the world so freely given,  
agent of God's grand design:  
peace on earth and joy in heaven.**

*[Refrain]*

## **Praying**

Creating God,

You who spun the galaxies and breathed into us the breath of life,  
Open us to an awareness of the life coursing through us that is connected to all creation  
so that we might become more tuned in to your life force,  
feeling more vitality in our lives,  
and more loving towards all.

We praise you as the One in whom we have life and being.  
And all God's people say, **Amen.**

### **Path II: Befriending the Dark Places**

*This second path recognizes with open hearts the pain that coexists with goodness and gratitude. We listen to the groans of the world and the Spirit helps us to grieve and to intercede on behalf of all those who suffer, letting go of our fear that can make things worse at times.*

#### **Listening**

**You are invited to settle yourselves for the depths of stillness and prayer with the sound of the singing bowl. We open this section with a quote from a mystic theologian.**

*“When Christ was in pain we were in pain. All creatures of God’s creation that can suffer pain suffered with him. The sky and the earth failed at the time of Christ’s dying because he too was part of nature.” - Julian of Norwich*

#### **Letting Go and Holding with Love**

*(Prayers of the People interspersed with the Chant “Breathe in the Pain”)*

**Breathe in the pain  
Breathe on out the love  
May my heart be the place  
Where this world is changed forever.**

Each week we will explore a version of the prayer Jesus taught. This first week we encounter a translation directly from the Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke.  
Let us pray together:

**O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,  
Focus your light within us – make it useful:  
Create your reign of unity now  
Your one desire then acts with ours,  
As in all light, So in all forms.  
Grant us what we need each day in bread and insight:  
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,  
As we release the strands we hold of other’s guilt.  
Don’t let surface things delude us,  
But free us from what holds us back.  
From you is born all ruling will,  
The power and the life to do,  
The song that beautifies all,  
From age to age it renews.  
I affirm this with my whole being.  
Truly power to these statements –**

**may they be the ground from which all my actions grow. Amen**  
- Aramaic Lord's Prayer by Douglas-Klotz'

### Path III: Exclaiming the Divine Creative

*This third path creates space to explore how God is working in and through us and all of the universe to renew each day every direction. Each moment offers opportunity to express our God-gifted creativity. We hear messages—ancient and new—that express and affirm the Divine at work and encourage us in our creative collaboration with the Divine.*

#### **Bringing Words to Life**

Dramatic Reading of Genesis 1 - 2:4 (*adapted from The Message*)

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.....Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail.

By the seventh day  
God had finished God's work. **[Whew!]**  
On the seventh day  
God rested from all this work. **[Yes!]**  
God blessed the seventh day.  
God made it a Holy Day  
Because on that day God rested from the work,  
all the creating God had done **[and it was so very good]**.  
This is the story of how it all started,  
of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

This is a Word of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**  
All creation is a word of God.  
**All creation speaks volumes of God.**

#### **Hymn**

All Praise to You VU #297 vs. 1  
All praise to you, O God of all creation:  
You made the world, and it is yours alone.  
The planet earth you spun in its location  
Amid the stars adorning heaven's dome.  
We lease the earth but for a life's duration,  
Yet for this life it is our cherished home.

#### **Sermonizing**

## Path IV: Embodying Compassion and Power

*The fourth path will lead us out. We pray for movement within our own hearts to embody peace and passion—compassion and power—on behalf of spreading goodness throughout the week. We are not at the mercy of “the way it is,” we can claim our agency to be fully present and fully active in the world into which we now go.*

### **Hymn**

God's creation (Tune VU #240)  
(Text by Rev. Peggy McDonagh)

**Praise the birth of God's creation,  
full of wisdom, power and peace:  
nature lifts the human spirit,  
peace so true it shall not cease.  
Celebrate creation's living,  
giving hearts a glad release.**

**Praise with gladness God's creation,  
Filling hearts with hope and worth:  
nature calms the pain and sorrow,  
gives the soul renewing birth.  
Celebrate creation's goodness,  
changing fears to wondrous mirth.**

**Praise with gladness God's creation,  
grace to face despair and need:  
love that blesses hearts in action,  
joy infusing all our deeds.  
Celebrate the gift of nature,  
make it our most valued creed.**

### **Holding On**

Before we head out, I invite people to find opportunities this week to hold onto our connection to each other and compassion for the world. Think about good things that you see happening around you or in the world and share them with others.

### **Go For It!**

*Spiritual practice: Letting Go of Negativity for a day. For your spiritual practice this week I invite you to challenge yourself to go through the entire day without watching or listening to the news or reading the newspaper. For one entire day let go of the outside world and concentrate on your own world and your own self health. Fill that time with reading, talking with a friend, listening to music, going for a walk, etc.*

*(Benediction and sending out)*

As we leave this worship time, I invite you to spend some time with creation during the week.....

**Benediction Song VU #884**

*"You Shall Go Out with Joy"*

**You shall go out with joy  
And be led forth with peace.  
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.  
There'll be shouts of joy  
And the trees of the fields  
will clap, will clap their hands.**

**And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
While you go out with joy.**