

ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH

SUNDAY AUGUST 23, 2020

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

Series: Sacred Earth: Sacred Work

“Spirit of Compassion”

Lighting the Affirming and the Treaty 7/Metis Candles

Introduction to worship

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 as 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 . . . constantly moving and growing.
(Turn to the East as we sing "Spirit draw near.")

[Sing two or three times]
Spirit draw near

In this direction we honor the dawn of new beginnings, and the renewing breath of life.
Every day begins with the dawn of a new day.
May we be bearers of God's light and share message of hope.

(Turn to the south as we sing "Spirit draw near.")
[Sing two or three times]
Spirit draw near

We ask Spirit of the south to stir compassion. . . through the power of divine
compassion
**With open hearts, we pray for the energy to share God's compassion with others
each day.**

(Turn to the west as we sing "Spirit draw near.")
[Sing two or three times]
Spirit draw near

This direction is most often associated with summer. . . waters of our body and the earth.
**Wellspring of Wisdom satisfy our thirst in the parched places and in our lives and
in your world. May we be filled up with your loving presence so that it can spill
out into the world.**

(Turn to the north as we sing "Spirit draw near.")
[Sing two or three times]
Spirit draw near

In Native Spirituality the north is the direction. . . firm foundation of our Creator's
unconditional love.
**As spirit-in-flesh beings, we pray for insight to live God's love to bring healing
and renewal.**

Lighting the Christ Candle

We complete our 360-degree expansion of God's inclusive presence and turn to face
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.
In light this candle,
**we affirm 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.
Garden of Grace, your gifts abound, the sacred signs of your presence are all
around. Help us to remember the whole earth is holy ground.**

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 second week of our series we focus on the idea of "compassion as a blessing."
We affirm this day that the universe, and all life within it, is fundamentally a blessing,
fundamentally good, and created to flourish—including us.
We flourish with compassion, courage and gratitude.

Hymn
"Love Divine, All Love's Excelling" VU #333
**Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, though art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love though art,
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.**

It is through the work of spiritual practice that we move beyond fear into compassion
.....What practices in your life draw you closer to your true essence and closer to
compassion for others?

**Come, Almighty to deliver;
let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more they temples leave.
Thee we should be always blessing,
serve thee as they host above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.**

Praying
Compassionate God,
**You who know our hearts and love us without condition,
create in us desire to see your essence within us**

**so that we might experience you in others,
and honor your holy presence in all things.
We praise you for this place, this day, these people, this planet.
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.

The opposite of poverty isn't property. The opposite of both poverty and property is community. For in community we become rich: rich in friends, in neighbors, in colleagues, in comrades, in [siblings]. Together, as a community, we can help ourselves in most of our difficulties. For after all, there are enough people and enough ideas, capabilities and energies to be had. They are only lying fallow or are stunted and suppressed. So let us discover our wealth; let us discover our solidarity; let us build up communities; let us take our lives into our own hands, and at long last out of the hands of the people who want to dominate and exploit us."

- Jurgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*

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 say a different version of the prayer Jesus taught. The first week we encountered a translation directly from the Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke.

This week we encounter a version from the writer Parker Palmer. Let us pray together:

**Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come,
We pray that your good will be done,
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need,
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence**

**Beyond the evil of our days —
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory
and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One. Amen.**

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 Mark 12: 28-34

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

Hymn

Love Knocks and Waits vs. 1 & 4 MV #94

**Love knocks and waits for us to hear,
to open and invite;
Love longs to quiet every fear and seeks to set things right.**

**Love knocks and enters at the sound of welcome from within;
Love sings and dances all around,
and feels new life begin.**

Sermonizing: Compassion, it is in us to live

Hymn

Christ of compassion (Tune: VU #307)

Christ of compassion, Spirit amongst us,
our hearts embrace your comfort and care.
Love's living presence, Spirit of Sharing,
nourish and strengthen the faith that we bear.

Love for our neighbor, friend to the stranger,
gently we open a place in our heart.
Peace to the fearful, hope to the lonely,
spirits renewed through the love we impart.

Love from the heart, the sweetest expression,
tells of the Spirit alive in this place.
Spreading that love to people around us,
touching our living, with honor and grace.

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.

Making Something New

As Brent plays you are invited to write on one side of the paper heart what you do to fill your hearts, and on the other side, what you do to give your (compassion) ‘neighbor-directed love’ away.

Offering and Song of Dedication VU #538

**For the gift of creation, the gift of your love,
and the gift of the Spirit by which we live,
We thank you and give you the fruit of our hands.
May your grace be proclaimed by the gifts that we give.**

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.

Go for It!

Spiritual practice: It is through the work of spiritual practice that we move beyond fear into compassion and discover our deep and true selves. Engaging in spiritual practices—whether that looks typically religious (like praying) or not (like walking) have intentionality in common. They draw us closer to the Creator and who we were created to be—free and compassionate beings. This week engage in one spiritual practice that draws you closer to your true essence and closer to compassion for others.

Benediction and sending out

As we leave this worship time, I invite you to remember that.....

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.**