



*“For this is what the Lord says— God who created the heavens, only God is God; God who fashioned and made the earth, God who founded it; God did not create it to be empty but formed it to be inhabited— God says: ‘I am the Lord, and there is no other.’”*

Isaiah 45:18

This Earth Week, let us renew our vision within creation and see both the beauty and responsibility of being human in God’s world. The abundance of the Earth is a reflection both of the complexity of God’s being and the generosity of God’s grace. Our call is to live into honouring creation’s abundance with reverent celebration, rather than seeing it as resources exploit. EcoJustice and Climate Justice are part of God’s calling to the United Church, and particularly, we are called to witness the injustice in the ecosystems within which we make our lives.

Faithful witness to this injustice inevitably leads to the discipleship of deep questions and envisioning broad journeys. We must not lose heart in the face of steep climbs or clouded paths, we must begin. We are called to be in community with creation and with one another, we are called to begin where we are with what we have. We are called to be resourceful, intentional, connected, and both inward- and outward-looking: let us live into this calling together.

### **Gathering and Approach (responsive)**

WL: Greetings, and welcome to this place of worship and connection in the name of Christ. As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional and ancestral territory of the (please identify upon whose territory you are gathering, and say their name here. If you don’t know, you can find information at <https://native-land.ca/>), the sacred guardians of this place since time immemorial. This land acknowledgement is a reminder of our intention and investment in living into right relations with Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

**All: We gather together to open our hearts to one another, and to lift our hearts toward God. We gather to proclaim that all are welcome, \*\*and to publicly, intentionally and explicitly affirm that people of all genders and sexualities are vibrant parts of God’s image in which we are all lovingly created.**

### **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

WL: There once was a man called Jesus, who did such amazing things and said such wonderful things that people followed him. We rekindle this flame of love, hope, peace and

joy to call out to our Lord, and to remind us of Jesus' own words: "I am the way, the truth and the life." May the blessing of this light shine upon us and through us today and always. Amen

### **Call to Worship (responsive)**

WL: Come! Let us worship our God! The God who created the heavens and the earth, the God who knows each blade of grass, each hair on our heads, each bird in the sky.

**ALL: We come together to sing praise, to turn our faces toward God, and toward one another. Like spokes in a wheel, as we move closer toward God at the centre, we move closer toward one another. Let us worship our God!**

### **Sharing the Peace of Christ**

**Gathering Hymn:** Called by Earth and Sky

MV# 135

### **Opening Prayer**

Hildegard of Bingen

WL: The earth is at the same time mother,  
she is mother of all that is natural,  
mother of all that is human,

**All: She is the mother of all,  
for contained in her  
are the seeds of all.**

WL: The earth of humankind  
contains all moistness,  
all verdancy,  
all germinating power.

**All: It is in so many ways  
fruitful.  
All creation comes from it.**

WL: Yet it forms not only the basic  
raw material for humankind,

**All: but also the substance  
of the incarnation  
of God's son.**

### **Assurance of God's Grace**

Adapted from Antoinette Adam

How shall the mighty  
 river reach the tiny seed?  
 See it rise silently  
 to the Sun's yearning,  
 sail from a winter's cloud  
 flake after silent flake  
 piling up layer upon layer  
 until the thaw of spring  
 to meet the seedling's need.

So too does God see you, and reach toward you with love and grace as the mighty river reaches the tiny seed. However you come to God this day, God embraces you with an infinite love, that both patiently waits for you and urgently seeks you. No matter your path, your past, your doubts, your deeds, your circumstances, or your circles, you are loved. You are cherished here in this sacred space, you are celebrated in this sacred community

**All:     Make tender, Lord, my heart  
           release through gentleness  
           Thine own tremendous power  
           hid in the snowflake's art.**

**HYMN:** Holy Spirit, You're like the Wind

**MV#5**

**Prayer of Illumination:**

Creator God, loving source of all that is and all that isn't, we pray that you would help us to open our hearts to the still small voice that is yours, to the nudgings of the Spirit, and to your presence in the Word.

**Scripture readings**

**Isaiah 45: 5-8, 18-19**

- 5** I am the Lord, and there is no other;  
 besides me there is no god.  
 I arm you, though you do not know me,  
**6** so that they may know, from the rising of the sun  
 and from the west, that there is no one besides me;  
 I am the Lord, and there is no other.  
**7** I form light and create darkness,  
 I make weal and create woe;  
 I the Lord do all these things.
- 8** Shower, O heavens, from above,

and let the skies rain down righteousness;  
 let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,[b]  
 and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also;  
 I the Lord have created it.

**18** For thus says the Lord,  
 who created the heavens  
 (only God is God!),  
 who formed the earth and made it  
 (God established it;  
 God did not create it a chaos;  
 God formed it to be inhabited!):  
 I am the Lord, and there is no other.

**19** I did not speak in secret  
 in a land of darkness;  
 I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,  
 “Seek me in chaos.”  
 I the Lord speak the truth;  
 I declare what is right.

### **Epistle Reading**

#### **Romans 8:19-25**

<sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, <sup>20</sup>for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, <sup>23</sup>and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

**Anthem:** Watch Once More the Windswept Storm Clouds

**MV#55**

### **Sermon/meditation:**

Write a sermon here of your own, or use the below meditation as an “experiential sermon”

### **Preparation:**

Adapted from Thich Nhat Hanh

As we are together, praying for the earth and for creation, let us be truly with each other:  
 Let us pay attention to our breathing.  
 Let us be relaxed in our bodies and our minds.  
 Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.

Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves. Let us maintain a half-smile on our faces.

Let us be aware of the source of being common to us all and to all living things.

Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion – towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

Let us pray that all living beings realize that they are all siblings, all nourished from the same source of life.

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other.

Let us plead with ourselves to live in a way which will not deprive other beings of air, water, food, shelter, or the chance to live.

With humility, with awareness of the existence of life, and of the sufferings that are going on around us, let us pray for the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth. Amen.

\*hold a full moment of silence to allow people to calm and settle. You may choose to hold a longer silence and repeat the same meditation again, or you may choose to use the following meditation after the initial preparation.

### **Themed meditation:**

By Pablo Neruda

And now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still...

For once on the face of the earth  
let's not speak in any language;  
let's stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines,  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in the cold sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victory with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
(Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.)

If we were not so singleminded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us  
as when everything seems dead  
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve,  
And you keep quiet and I will go.

\*Hold 3 -5 full minutes of silence for meditation, then close the meditation time with this prayer:

WL: Loving God, with humility and gratitude we thank you for this time of presence with you, through the breath of the Spirit, and through these meditations from many traditions over thousands of years.

**Hymn:** Lord, Your Hands Have Formed

MV#181

**Prayers of the People:**

Creator of all, lover of the earth, the sky, the water, the warmth of the sun, we come to you this day with open hearts, open minds, and spirits lifted in praise, gratitude and need. We offer to you our whole selves, and we hold up to you the names, places, people, events and situations in your world that grieve us, trouble us, and that call out for your healing grace. We name these in our hearts.

\*leave a moment of silence for prayers

**Dedication Prayer: Acting, Learning, and Praying for Climate Justice  
By For the Love of Creation**

Dedication Prayer: Acting, Learning, and Praying for Climate Justice

God of Creation,  
we are thankful for your awesome work in creation,  
you have weaved all of life together, and it is very good.

We are grateful for all that protects and cares for your good works:  
the sunlight and water that sustains life,  
the earth that grounds and nourishes life,  
and the earth-beings that care for and protect life.

God of Creation,  
we give thanks for all whose actions care for your good works!  
And we ask your blessings on the actions we offer here and on the actions of those  
across the church and beyond during this Earth Week.

Together,  
**we are stronger.**  
As we care for your creation,  
provide us with the humility and curiosity needed  
to continually learn about the marvels of your works,  
and to deepen our understanding of how our actions, good and bad, affect all of  
creation.

God of Creation,  
we give thanks for the opportunity to learn and grow with your good works!  
And we ask your blessing on the intentions we offer here today and on the  
intentions of those across the church and beyond during this Earth Week.

Together,  
**we are stronger.**

Although the journey is hard,  
and our hearts might be afraid and filled with doubts,  
may we continue to act and learn towards climate justice,  
with the confidence and strength of your presence guiding us.

God of Creation,  
receive our prayers for the love of your good works.  
And we ask, in your love, to answer the prayers we offer today and the prayers of  
those across the church and beyond acting together during this Earth Week.

Together,  
**we are stronger.**

May we continue to follow in the way that you are leading with hopeful and daring hearts, until we have reached your commonwealth of justice and peace for all.

Amen

**HYMN: Spirit, Open My Heart**

**MV# 79**

**Bringing Forth Our Offerings**

**Offertory Prayer: (unison)**

**We offer our gifts to you, O God, that you might put them to work in your world. That you might use these symbols of our time, energy, love, dedication, and toil to bring forth a new way of living in kin-dom with all of creation. We offer these gifts that they may strengthen our community in amplifying your calls for peace in creation, for care of all of your creation, and for calling people into this circle of care. Amen.**

**Hymn: Like a Healing Stream**

**MV# 144**

**Benediction:**

As we make ready to move back out into the world, may we do so with the blessing of God upon the work of our hands, the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts.

**Commissioning:**

Go into the world knowing that God is with you, and knowing that each small action you take is a drop of water that adds to the rushing of a mighty river. Go knowing that you are beloved, and that you are held in God's grace always.

**Closing Hymn: What Can I Do?**

**MV#191**