

# Westminster United Church

Order of Worship

April 15, 2018

*Easter 3*

## Celebrating the Earth

(\*invites people to stand as they are able; people's part in **bold type**)

**Gathering Music**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Entry Into Celebration** (Minister)



We come together from our separate lives,  
each of us bringing our concerns,  
our preoccupations, our hope and our dreams.

(Silence)

It is early in the day, and we are not yet fully  
present – the traffic, the last minute cooking, the  
final details still cling to us. Our bodies hold the  
rush of the last few hours.

(Silence)

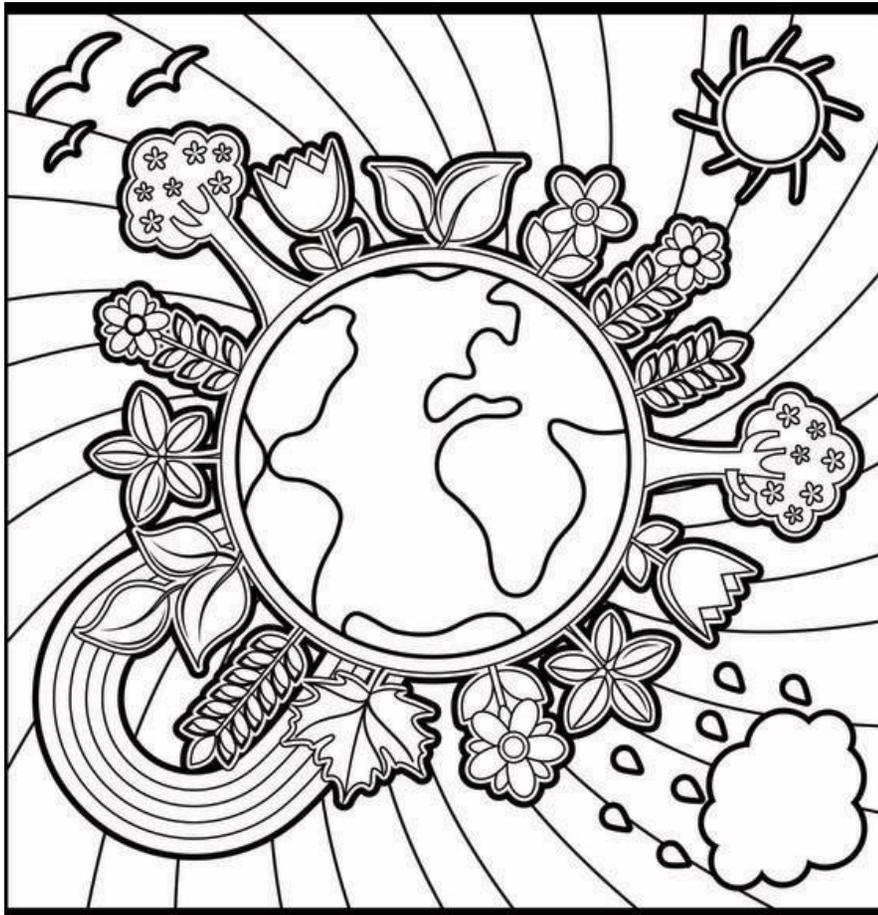
It is now time to let go of these pressures and  
really arrive. So, at this time, take a few moments  
to quiet your mind and calm your soul; and when  
you are ready, silently say to yourself  
“ Here I am, Lord ”, which is a term in the Hebrew  
Scriptures signifying being present in body, mind  
and spirit. These words also mean ‘settling into  
where you are’ and simply being ‘here’.

(Silence)

**Communal Centering Reflections** (Responsive)

We gather here as the human ones of creation.

**We name ourselves as threads  
in the web of life.**



**Sunday, April 15, 2018**

We give thanks for connection –  
that we are all part of one another.

**And we give thanks that we are part of  
The Sacred.**

**\*Opening Hymn VU 672 “ Take Time to Be Holy ”**

### Conversation

**Hymn MV 18 “ Lord, Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary ”**

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,  
pure and holy tried and true;  
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

**A Litany for the Easter Season:  
Celebrating the Earth**

We remember the richness of Planet Earth –  
the land, the sea and the sky.

**We remember mountains unfolding  
to desert and plain,**

We remember seas  
swaying to the rhythm of tides,

**And skies reflecting the colours of light.**

We remember the creatures of the Earth –  
creatures of land, air and sea –  
horses running for the joy of living,  
blue jays noisily chattering on rooftops  
and in tree branches,

**Gigantic whales and playful dolphins  
leaping from sea to sky.**

We remember the fruits of the land –  
grasses bursting with nourishing grains,  
flowers exuding colour and fragrance,

**And trees renewing the sweetness of the air.**

We remember all humanity,  
especially sages and prophets.

**Through them we recall the power of love.**

Through them we reclaim the spirit of compassion.  
**Through them we embrace the Earth  
and each other.**

(Silence)

**Sharing the Peace** (Responsive)

May a heart of peace rest with you.

**And also with you...**

*Peace*

**Hymn MV 14 “ Where Two or Three Are Gathered ”**

**Readings for the Season of Easter**

From the New Testament

Luke 24: 36b - 48

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Luke 24:45  
Jesus  
opened their minds  
to understand  
the scriptures.

A 21st Century Exploration of Psalm 1

by Rev. Francis Macnab

(In **A Fine Wind is Blowing**, p. 2)      Responsive

Leader: There are many pathways in front of us.  
We see some people take pathways that turn out  
to be destructive and unhealthy.

**All: But our happiness and well-being  
depend on us taking pathways that keep us  
connected with the best purposes and  
with the best spirit.**

Leader: Look carefully at the tree that flourishes  
beside the river – its leaves are healthy and it  
bears fruit in season. We can be like that tree.

**All: But we can forget all that and become like chaff blown in all directions by the wind.**

Leader: God-of-All-Life has created in us a desire to be the best we can be. When we follow that desire, our whole being is strongly affirmed.

**All: But when we become indifferent to that desire, we lose our connection with the best purposes and the best spirit.**

A Contemporary Reading for the Easter Season

“God is Conceived in Good Will”

by Michael Benedikt

(in the book **God is the Good We Do, Theology and Theopraxy** p. 6)

**Praying This Morning’s Readings**

Let us recognize the seeds of wisdom in all these readings.

**May those seeds of wisdom be planted in the fertile soil of our hearts and minds.**

May it be so.

**Amen.**

**Sermon** “ *New Possibilities of the Easter Season* ”  
Rev Del Stewart

**Pastoral Prayers** (sung) **VU 670**

“ *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* ” by Thomas Dorsey

**The Lord’s Prayer** (spoken)

**Presentation of Our Gifts and Offerings**

**\*Offertory Hymn VU 537**

“ *Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands* ”

**\*Offertory Prayer** (Minister)

**\*Closing Hymn VU 675** “ *Will Your Anchor Hold* ”

**\*Parting Words** (Responsive)

The time has come for us to prepare to leave this place made sacred by your presence. As you depart, remember that you are in the story of the world. In fact, you are an integral part of the world coming to know itself.

**May we trust that everything we say and do belongs in the story of the world.**

**\*Words of Blessing** (Responsive)

In the love of God,  
may you be warmed and welcomed.

In the joy of Jesus,  
may you be strengthened and made whole.

In the breath of the Spirit,  
may you be both challenged and blessed.

**May it be so.**

Amen.

**\*Choral Sending Forth MV 209**

“ *Go, Make a Diff ’rence* ” Refrain

**Departing Music**

*Lectionary Readings for Sunday, April 22, 2018*  
~ *Fourth Sunday of Easter* ~

Acts 4: 5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3: 16-24

John 10: 11-18