

Westminster United Church

Order of Worship

Sunday, April 28, 2019

**We Celebrate the Earth on
the 2nd Sunday of Easter**



Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

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

Entry Into Earth Sunday Worship and Celebration

On this second Sunday of the Easter Season,
we have come to this place
made sacred by our presence.
May we greet one another
with open hearts and minds.
And may we inspire each other
to consider new questions,
to seek deeper meaning,
and to cultivate both wisdom and compassion.

Quiet Reflection

May this time together empower us
to take some new steps
so that all our living is transformed –
and transforming –
and the yearnings of our hearts become reality...

The singing bowl is sounded three times



An Act of Awareness for the Easter Season

(George Stewart/uusf.org, *adapted*)

The chorus of suns and planets
announces the beginning of a new day.

**Each morning births new possibilities,
and beckons fresh challenges.**

The cycle of morning music
and starry silence promises second chances.

**Each day provides new vistas
and promotes new exploration.**

The laughter of oceans and the wailing of winds
reflect the human condition.

**Each week declares we are in the world,
and determines we are of the world.**

Quiet Reflection

Opening Prayer

On this second Sunday of Easter
we give thanks for the signs
of Resurrected Love and Ongoing Creativity
that surround us and bless us.

**Love's Risen Presence is all 'round us,
and we respond in awe and wonder.**

May it be so.

★Opening Hymn VU 217

*"All Creatures
of
Our God and King"*



A Creation and Creativity Refrain for Our Time

“ *With Heat and Light* ” (JCH., public domain, *adapted*)

We find ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery
 – a world of living things, diverse and interdependent
 – a world of complex patterns of growth and evolution
 – of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls...

(*Song of Faith*, United Church of Canada, *adapted*)

Quiet Reflection

In the beginning,
 with heat and light the Great Radiance blazed forth.

And God saw that it was good.

With heat and light,
 the ancestral stars fused atoms,
 exploding in awesome power.

And God saw that it was good.

With heat and light,
 the fire on our Ancestors’ hearth cooked their food.

And God saw that it was good.

With heat and light,
 modern scientists harnessed new energy sources.

And God saw that it was good.

With heat and light,
 we look toward a sustainable future.

And God knows that is good...

(JCH, Public Domain, *adapted*)

Quiet Reflection

★Hymn VU 296 “ *This Is God’s Wondrous World* ”

A Contemporary Celebration of Faith

(Amanda Udis-Kessler, *adapted*)

A planet is born, a spark ignites,
 something completely new comes into being.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of life.**

A waterfall descends,
 a rainbow arcs through the sky,
 the ocean opens to an endless horizon.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of beauty.**

The stars pierce our hearts,
 peace envelops us, we are blessed.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery & miracle of awe & wonder.**

In the midst of pain,
 we find our way to hope and restoration.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of healing.**

In the midst of fear, we do what is right,
 and speak our truth in faith.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of courage.**

In our aloneness, we see someone in greater need,
 and offer ourselves to them.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of compassion.**

We gather in community, in friendship,
 and cherish each other.

**We give thanks
 for the mystery and miracle of love...**

*Moments of Quiet Contemplation...***Sharing the Peace**

We know God is Love, and Love is our only hope.

**Love lies at the very heart
of the Easter Season;
and Risen Love shows us how to live.**

May a heart of peace rest with you.

And also with you.

Choral Response VU 180

“ Christ Is Risen, Yes, Indeed ”

READINGS FOR THE 2nd SUNDAY IN EASTERFrom the New Testament

Romans 8: 19-23 (An Environmental Mantra)

From the ‘ Now Testament ’ (Responsively)

“ Beatitudes for Earth Sunday ” (Richard S. Gilbert)

One: Blessed are the heavens,

People: For they declare the power of creation.

One: Blessed is the earth, our beloved home,

People: For it is a planet of plenitude.

One: Blessed are the waters thereon,

People: For they gave rise to living things.

One: Blessed is the land,

People: For it is the source of abundant life.

One: Blessed is the air we breathe,

People: For it fires us to life and love.

One: Blessed are the beasts of the field,

People: For they are glorious to behold.

One: Blessed are the birds of the air,

People: For they carve a graceful arc in the sky.

One: Blessed are the mountains and the seas
and the valleys,

People: For their variety makes rich our habitat.

One: Blessed are the fields of grain,
and the orchards of fruit,

**People: For they give sustenance,
asking for nothing in return.**

One: Blessed are the dwellers on the earth,

**People: For they cherish the privilege
of living upon it.**

One: Blessed are they who protect the earth
and all her creatures
– from the plants of the field
to the trees of the forest
– for their reward shall be harmony
with the web of existence.

**All: Rejoice and be glad,
for the earth and her people are one!**

From the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament)

Isaiah 35 – selected verses

(Isaiah the Prophet’s Vision of Future Glory)

Exodus 3: 1- 5

(Standing on Holy Ground)

Reflections on Today’s Readings

(Responsive)

May the readings we’ve shared renew our hope

And restore us in faith...

Choral Response “ Take Off Your Shoes ”

Refrain - sung twice (lyrics: D. Stewart, music W. Lamb-Stewart)

Take off your shoes! Take off your socks!
Walk barefoot on holy ground.
Take off your shoes! Take off your socks!
Walk barefoot on holy ground.

Centering Silence

Now let the silence of this place gently enfold us...

Silence

In this day made fresh,
 In the chorus of birds,
 In the scent of flowers,
 We embrace this day in hope...

*Silence***Sermon** “ *God Is Green* ” Rev Del Stewart**★Hymn VU 229** “ *God of the Sparrow* ”**Prayers for the Easter Season****The Lord’s Prayer****Presentation of Our Gifts and Offerings****★Offertory Hymn VU 542***“ We Give You But Your Own ”***Offertory Prayer****★Closing Hymn VU 333***“ Love Divine, All Loves Excelling ”***★Parting Words**

The time has now come
 for us to leave this sacred space.
 As we depart, let us resolve to embrace
 the challenges of our lives and the world...

Quiet Moments

May the skies – the heavens,
 galaxies and spaces between the stars
 – fill you with awe and wonder.
 May clouds shade you,
 rain refresh you, stars guide you,
 and angels laugh your good intentions into action.
 And may the sun shine its warm, fierce love upon
 you so that you may live in joy
 and abundance of spirit,
 grow in grace and compassion,
 and envision a bright future knowing you are loved.

*(Bronwyn Angela White, 2007, adapted)**The singing bowl is sounded three times***★A Responsive Blessing for the Easter Season**

During this Season of Resurrection,
 let us resolve to love deeply the earth
 that gives us air to breath,
 water to drink,
 and food to sustain us.
 May we remember that life is begotten
 from stardust, radiant in light and heat.

We are all one – all that now live
– all that have ever lived.

Remember, we are all connected
through the great web of creation.
Remember too,
we are part of the great mystery of resurrection.

With God's help, we shall remember...

★Choral Response VU 586

“ We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection ”

Postlude

*Lectionary Readings for Sunday, May 5
~ Third Sunday of Easter ~*

Acts 9: 1-6, (7-20)

Psalm 30

Revelation 5: 11-14

John 21: 1-19

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