Lutherans Restoring Creation

www.LutheransRestoringCreation.org

Lutherans Restoring Creation is a grassroots movement promoting care for creation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We accomplish this by cultivating a community of dedicated stewards of earth and neighbor who proclaim God's promise of hope and healing for all.

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning and for supporting us in this important creation-care work.

GATHER

Prelude **Dale Niehaus**

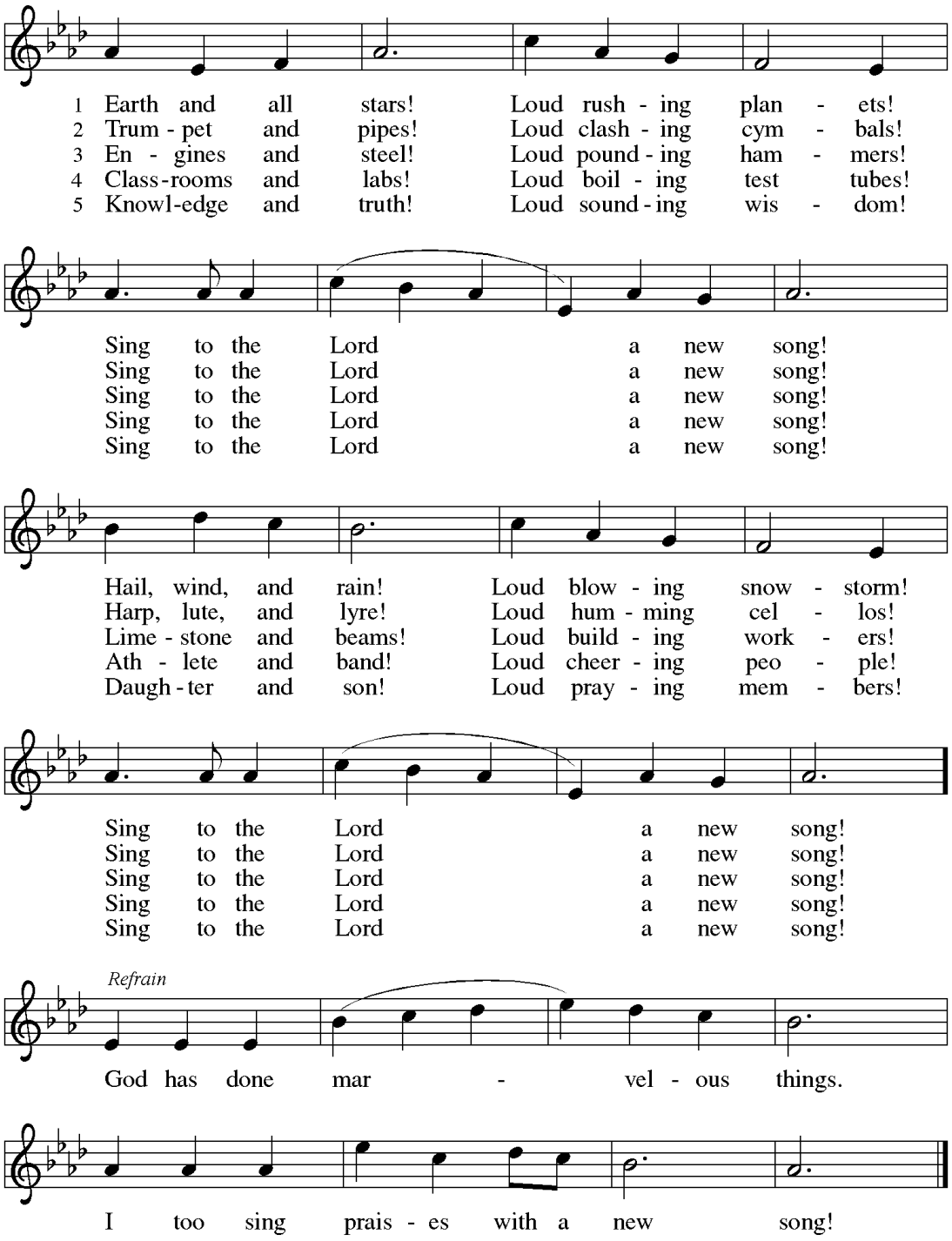
Welcome **Phoebe Morad**

Call to Worship **Rev. Adrienne Strehlow**
Rev. Vera McEwen

We enter the song of Creation!
Earth cradles our ancestors, birthing new life.
We enter the prayer of Creation!
Sky brings darkness and light, holds storms and the stars.
We enter the praise of Creation!
Mountains peaked with snow, hills swaying with grasses.
We enter the silence of Creation!
Humanity between the ground and the heavens.
We come here, humbly, as one earthly family to worship our Creator: the giver of form, the maker of space.
Amen.

Opening Hymn **Martin Luther Lutheran Church**

Earth and All Stars!



Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926
Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922–1987
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Confession & Forgiveness **Rev. Patricia Wolf Hughes**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + One God, who calls forth Creation, evokes praise from Creation, and stirs life in Creation.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God, Creation, and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of righteousness and justice,
You have made the Earth and all that is in it, but we have failed to honor your good work. We do not recognize your presence among us, and our hardened hearts do not hear Creation's cry. We have made your good land a desolation, and we dishonor your image in our neighbors. Forgive us, in your steadfast love, O God, for trampling your vineyards and polluting your sky. On your holy mountain, call us again to be stewards of your Earth and to join all Creation in songs of praise. Amen.

Rejoice, for the Incarnate Word has come to you. Laying aside all heavenly glory, the Servant of all is obedient unto death to make of you and all the Earth a new Creation.
Rejoice, for Christ, from whom nothing can separate you, + forgives you all your sins.
Rejoice, for the One whose name is majestic in all the Earth raises you up to newness of life.
Amen.

Prayer of the Day **Rev. Dr. Niveen Sarras**

Sovereign of the universe, your first covenant of mercy was with every living creature. When your beloved Son came among us, the waters of the river welcomed him, the heavens opened to greet his arrival, the animals of the wilderness drew near as his companions. With all the world's people, may we who are washed into new life through baptism seek the way of your new creation, the way of justice and care, mercy and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

First Reading: Acts 4:5-12 (NRSV) **Rev. Kelsey Brown**

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly

family. When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is
‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
it has become the cornerstone.’
There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

Psalm 23 (Inclusive Bible) **Rev. Christyn Koschmann**

YHWH, you are my shepherd -
I want nothing more.
You let me lie down in green meadows;
You lead me beside restful waters:
You refresh my soul.
You guide me to lush pastures
For the sake of your Name.
Even if I'm surrounded by shadows of Death,
I fear no danger, for you are with me.
Your rod and your staff -
They give me courage.
You spread a table for me
In the presence of my enemies,
And you anoint may head with oil -
My cup overflows!
Only goodness and love will follow me
All the days of my life,
And I will dwell in your house, YHWH,
For days without end.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:16-24 (NRSV) **Rev. Cindy Jacobson**

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before

God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Gospel: John 10:11-18 (NRSV) **Deacon Sarah Bowers**

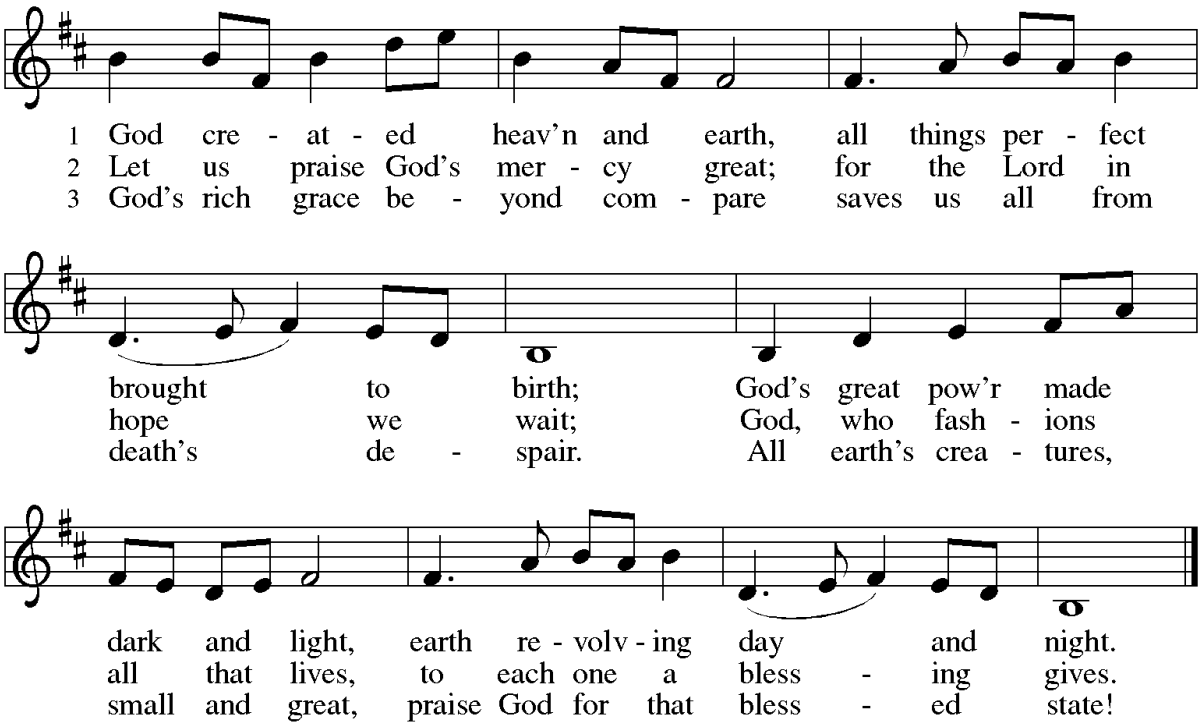
“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Children’s Sermon **Rev. Harold Vanicek**

Sermon **Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Eaton**

Hymn of the Day **St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

God Created Heaven and Earth



Text: Taiwanese traditional; tr. Boris Anderson, b. 1918 and Clare Anderson, b. 1923
Music: TŌA-SIA, Pin-po melody, from Taiwanese Seng-si
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Statement of Faith **Rev. Ben Sheets**
Keith Keel
Lynette Todd

We believe in God who creates all things to live in harmony –
Heaven and Earth, Sea and Sky,
Sun and Moon, Fish and Birds,
Mountains and Valleys, Forests and Deserts,
All animals great and small, all human beings –
and cares for all creation as our perfect, loving parent.
We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,
Who came to reveal the depth of God's love for all creation,
and teach us to live under God's reign of justice, mercy, and compassion.
Who suffered death on the cross to save creation from oppression, violence, and hatred,
and free us from brokenness, sin, and self-conceit.
Who raises us with him into new life
to experience joy, peace, and unity with God and all creation.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
Who calls, equips, empowers, and helps us
to reject hatred, oppression, and violence against anyone,
and to extend justice and mercy, love and compassion
to all created things – Earth, Creatures, and Humans –
regardless of how similar or different we are from one another.
Amen.

Sharing of the Peace **Lutherans Restoring Creation Board**

Offering

Thank you for your continued support of Lutherans Restoring Creation and your local congregation. For more information on how to give online, please go to **LutheransRestoringCreation.org** *and click "Donate." Or send donations to LRC c/o Phoebe Morad, 22 Waldron Road, Braintree MA 02184.*

Offering Prayer **Rev. Sarah Locke**

Loving Creator,
you brought us forth from the very earth itself. We share with others what you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, and compel us to use them not only to serve our human neighbors, but also to serve our sister sky, our brother mountain, our mother earth, and all our family in Creation. We pray this in the name of the Word that dwells among us. Amen.

Intercessory Prayers **Revs. Chelsea & Mandy Achterberg**

O God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen:
Your great love has placed us in your creation, and you commanded us to care for it.
Your works declare glory and strength, and you call us to praise and reverence.
Where we have degraded or destroyed earth's bounty, forgive us.
Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us.
Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet, grant us your peace.
Creator God,
hear our prayer.

As we join together in celebration of the Earth, we know that there are many things that thwart our efforts and our responsibilities to your creation. The issues of the environment and conservation are often associated with differing political views. For the openness to learn about environmental issues and concerns, we pray:
Creator God,
hear our prayer.

In such a great and complex world, we often feel so small and helpless, as if what we do has no impact on the rest of your creation. Yet we know that because we are created in your image, we are connected with the entirety of creation, just as you are. For an awareness of how our own lifestyles can be modified to help protect the environment, we pray:
Creator God,
hear our prayer.

In an environmental catastrophe, the people who suffer first and greatest are often the poorest of the poor. Yet we rarely hear their voices, silenced as they are by the realities of global life. For those who live in poverty and suffer the devastating effects of flooding, drought, and other environmental issues, we pray:
Creator God,
hear our prayer.

In recent days, even the ground under our feet has begun to tremble, reminding us that we live together in a fragile community of life. For our own community, our city and state, we pray:
Creator God,
hear our prayer.

As members of this creation, we live and die according to the cycle of life that is common in all the world. For those in our midst who suffer from sickness and death, we pray:

Creator God,
hear our prayer.

God of the sun and the moon of the mountains, deserts and plains;
God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams;
God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air;
God of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth,
We are formed by Christ into your people,
called to bring the world into your marvelous light.

As the Body of Christ, we are messengers of ecological vocation.
We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which you have created.
Help us to love and respect it, to repair what we have damaged,
to care for what you have made good and holy.

Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our mind, our hearts, and our ways.
Let us be the change we pray for, bringing about ecological conversion which grows and spreads to every corner of the Earth, for our sake now and for every generation which is to come.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer **Deacon Darcy Mittlestaedt**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

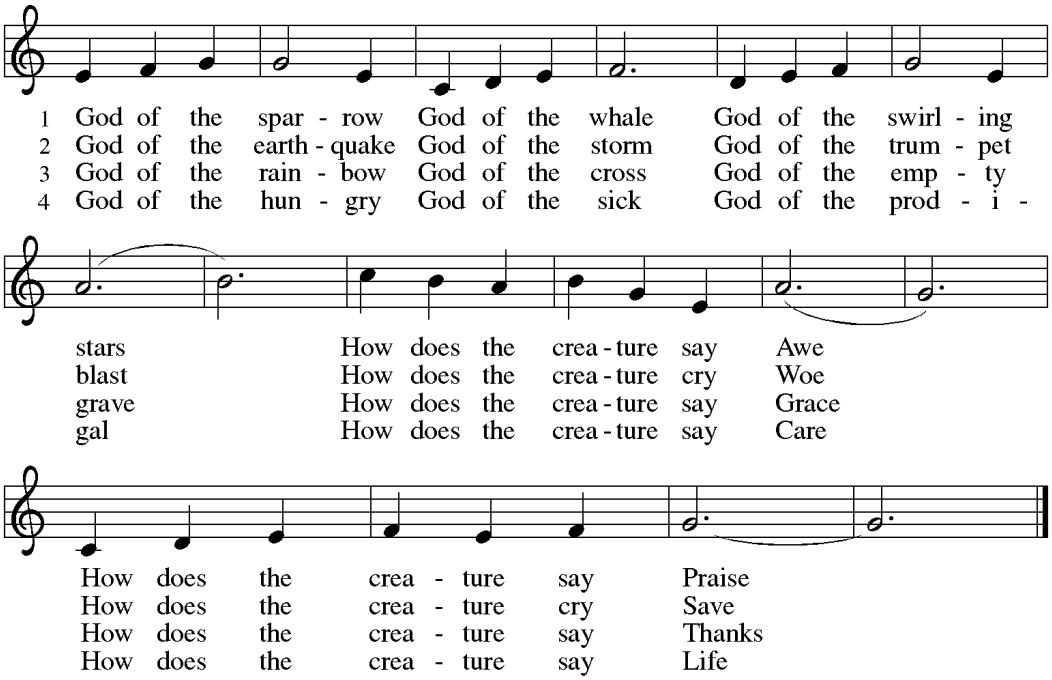
SEND

Benediction **Wes Koschmann**

The God of all creation:
Of flowers and trees, of butterflies and bees, of squirrels and mountain lions,
bless you, keep you, and strengthen you
for the work of loving all Creation.
In the name of the + Triune God. **Amen**

Closing Song **Rev. Emily Meyer**

God of the Sparrow



5 God of the neighbor
God of the foe
God of the pruning hook
How does the creature say Love
How does the creature say Peace

6 God of the ages
God near at hand
God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy
How do your children say Home

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Music: ROEDER, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
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Dismissal **Phoebe Morad**

Go in peace. Care for Creation.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Thank you to those whose efforts made this worship service possible, especially:

Dale Niehaus, organist at Ascension Lutheran Church in Paradise Valley, AZ

The Reverend Adrienne Strehlow, pastor at Ocean Park Lutheran Church in Ocean Park, WA

The Reverend Vera McEwen, pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church in Bush Prairie, WA

Bob & Theresa Kaat-Wohlert, members of Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Lee's Summit, MO

The Reverend Patricia Wolf Hughes, pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Salem, OR

The Reverend Doctor Niveen Sarras, pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church of Wausau in Wausau, WI

The Reverend Kelsey Brown, pastor at Jehu's Table in Brooklyn, NY

The Reverend Cindy Jacobsen, pastor at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Woburn, MA

Deacon Sarah Bowers, member of the South Carolina Synod of the ELCA from Pomaria, SC

The Reverend Harold Vanicek, pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Marble Falls, TX

The Reverend Doctor Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Cantor Tony Cruz and the choir and ringers at St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, FL

The Reverend Ben Sheets, pastor at Lanai Union Church in Lanai City, Hawaii

Keith Keel and Lynette Todd, members of St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baltimore, MD

The Reverend Louis Tillman, pastor at St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baltimore, MD

The Reverend Chelsea Achterberg, pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church in Aurora, CO

The Reverend Mandy Achterberg, pastor at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Northglenn, CO

Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt, Bishop's Associate for the Southwestern Texas Synod

Wes Koschmann, member of Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Lee's Summit, MO

The Reverend Emily Meyer, pastor at The Ministry Lab in Saint Paul, MN

The Reverend Carrie Nettles, chaplain at Julie Valentine Center in Greenville, SC

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