

ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH SUNDAY OCTOBER 24 2021

*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 Region 3 Candles

We light the Affirming candle to celebrate the beauty of diversity inherent in the Divine design of life. As an affirming faith community, we value and uphold, and we see you the LGBTQa2+ and the glorious humanity you add to the beauty and wonder of creation.

We light the Treaty 7/Metis 3 Region candle and lovingly acknowledge the land and territory that this congregation worships, prays, and lives out its faith. We acknowledge and pray for the peoples, ancestors, and presence of the Indigenous peoples of Treaty 7 and the Métis Nation Region 3. We light an orange candle as a visible sign of our church's commitment to walk with the Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit of Turtle Island seeking reconciliation, equality, and healing.

Introduction to worship

Greetings my friends! Welcome to the 5th week of our worship series honoring the season of green and creation.

This series is built on the four paths of Creation Spirituality that affirms God's declaration that creation is 'supremely good' and that we are called to be that goodness in and for the world. Perhaps the most important of the paths is path four:

embodying compassion and power to bring more wholeness and justice to the world. Today in worship we acknowledge divine compassion is alive in all of life and it is in us to share to create justice and right-relationships among this world's people.

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 Phil Porter*)

Gathered now in the mystery of this hour
Gathered now in one strong body
Gathered now in the struggle and the power
Spirit draw near

To worship is to heighten and expand our attention to God, to others, and to the world around us. Each week we face all directions to honor the different perspectives of life and to honor the gifts of each direction. When we dare to explore new directions, we discover new perspectives! Let us now welcome the gifts of the four directions, east, west, north, and south aware of life all around us and aware that our lives are a part of the cycles and seasons of creation, constantly moving and growing. As people who worship an incarnate God, we recognize we, too, are spirit in flesh. We give thanks for the beauty of creation and our place in it.

We turn to face the East.

Spirit of the East we honor the dawn of new beginnings, and the renewing breath of life. Every day begins with the dawn of new life.

May we be bearers of God's light and share messages of hope.

We turn to the south.

We ask Spirit of the South to stir compassion in us and help us to know the power of transformation possible through open hearts that love without condition and through the power of divine compassion.

With open hearts, we pray for the energy to share God's compassion with others each day.

We turn to the west.

This direction is most often associated with summer, sweetness, and the variety of emotions we experience. In this direction we honor the Source of all Being for the waters of our body (rivers tend to run south) and the earth.

Wellspring of divine Wisdom satisfy our thirst in the parched places in our lives and in your world. May we be filled up with your loving presence so it can spill over into the world.

We turn to the north

In Native Spirituality the north is the direction of the ancestors and the wisdom of the elders (both alive and deceased). The realm of the great return to spirit. We look to the north for inner healing and insight from those who have walked before us. We are grateful for the 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 acknowledgement of God's inclusive presence and turn to face the Christ candle.

The Christ, our Light, is the center of this community! And when we face that light in our midst, we see one another.

In lighting the 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**

(When the round is finished)

And all God's people said, "Amen!"

[Musical introduction to Opening Hymn underscoring]

Praising

On this fifth 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.

Anthem

The Song that Nature Sings Ruth Elaine Schram

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 see that in others,
and honor your holy presence in all things.
We praise you for this place, this day, this 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.

Singing bowl is sounded

We open this section with a quote from mystic theologian Jurgen Moltmann

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)

(Prayers of the People interspersed with the Chant "Breathe in the Pain")

[The music for "Breathe in the Pain" begins and the choir sings through twice]

**Breathe in the pain
Breathe on out the love
May my heart be the place
Where this world is changed forever. [repeat]**

I invite you to make a fist with your hands and imagine in those clenched fists is all that you are holding tightly: fear, anxiety, worry, grief, loneliness, helplessness.

[pause - singing bowl continues]

Now I invite you to slowly open your fists and imagine a letting go into the loving embrace of the Spirit who transforms all things. As we let go and open up your fists, we see that now our hands and hearts are more open to pray, with love, our prayers for all life.

Great Spirit God, we give you thanks for another day on this earth.

[pause - singing bowl continues]

Prayers of the People

[After the prayers the music for “Breathe in the Pain” begins and the choir sings through twice]

**Chant
Breathe in the pain
Breathe on out the love
May my heart be the place
Where this world is changed forever. *[repeat]***

Each week we say a different version of the prayer Jesus taught. This first week we encountered a translation directly from the Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. This week we encounter a version from 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 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
(You can include what scripture you wish to use)**

**This is a Word of God.
Thanks be to God.**

All creation is a word of God.
All creation speaks volumes of God.

Sermon (focusing on compassion)

Hymn

Christ of compassion

(Tune: VU #307)

(Words by Rev. McDonagh)

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.

Offering

I have asked people to include in their worship space a special collection or offering dish. Each Sunday during the series I invite people to put something in that offering dish and at the end of the series to send your dedications offerings to St. David's. Thanks

Song of Dedication of Offering 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.

Spiritual practice: It is through the work of spiritual practice that we move beyond fear into compassion and discover our deep and true selves that draws 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

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.**