

ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY OCTOBER 17 2021

Growing and Deepening our Spiritual Lives in an Affirming and Inclusive Community

Sacred Earth: Sacred Work

We should serve divinity in every human being. We should be watchers. Learn to see the divine in everyone and do good things that manifest the divine in us. Anonymous

'Glorious Diversity

**Lighting the Affirming and the Treaty 7/Metis Region 3 Candles
Introduction to Worship**

Anthem

For the Autumn Sky Ruth Elaine Schram

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 within all created and evolving life.
.....and for the inclusion that connects us to all life.

Expanding Our Attention 360° (Call to Worship)

Gathering chant

(adapted from a Chant written by Phil Porter)

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

To worship is to heighten and expand our attention to God,.....

Let us turn to face the east

The East is the direction of new beginnings, a time of birthing. We give thanks in joy as we begin this day, with you and with each other, O Great Sustainer of Life.

Bless the glorious diversity of life and bless our gathering into being. We honor your breath of new life and open our hearts to let it move through us restoring our kindness and courage. Be welcome always.

Let us turn and face the South

The South is the direction of discerning fire, a time of compassionate understanding. Forgive our brokenness and help us to walk in kindhearted ways with all people and with Mother Earth, O Creator God.

Bless the glorious diversity of life and bless our gathering with renewal. We honor your energy of heat and warmth and open our hearts so that these can move through us igniting our stamina and courage. Be welcome always.

Let us turn and face the West

The West is the direction of new hope, a time of finding your name written upon our hearts and upon the hearts of others, O Great Mystery.

Bless the glorious diversity of life and bless our gathering with hope. We honor your energy of hope and open our hearts so that it can move through us inspiring resilience and courage. Be welcome always.

Let us turn and face the North

The North is the direction of wisdom and respect, of living in respectful ways with all our relations, with each other and with you, O Lover of All. We sing praise to you in the ways that we walk together caring and loving one another fully and without ill will.

Bless the glorious diversity of life and bless our gathering with renewal. We honor your energy of coolness and wakefulness and open our hearts so that these can move through us igniting our strength and courage. Be welcome always.

Let us turn and face the center as the light of Christ comes into our midst.

Lighting the Christ Candle

The Christ, our Light, is the center of our own essence! Jesus called himself the "Light of the World," not to draw attention to himself but to suggest that when we truly see him, how his love changed lives, we begin to see like him and love as he did. And when we acknowledge the Christ of Divine Love, within ourselves we can see the Christ of Divine Love in others.

Bless Creation's glorious diversity and bless our gathering with love. We honor your light of inclusiveness and open our hearts so that this grace can move through us feeding our faith and compassion.

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**

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

Praising

We affirm this day that every person, with all our particularities, is beautifully made and wonderfully loved. We are all Beloved of God, with our own inner and outer beauty and divine value. Each one of us must play a part in the building of a human community of care, a community that dares to risk speaking against wrongs done within in the human family. May we make this world a more hospitable, safe, and just place for all people.

The Creator calls us to flourish with compassion, courage, and gratitude. Our humanity and faith require of us to mend divisions, dismantle injustice, and seek healing and wholeness.

Hymn

Praise with Joy Life's Inspiration ...tune: VU #232
(...words adapted: Ian Lawton)

Praise with joy Life's inspiration, Source of justice, love, and peace,
well-spring for all human knowledge, forging fullness without cease,
Celebrating nature's patterns, tides which move with constant ease.
Praise with joy Life's inspiration, Source of justice, love, and peace.

Creation Spirituality rejoices inWhat do we lose when we privilege dominant voices and limit perspectives? Diversity is another name for God and should be celebrated!

Hymn continues

Praise the Spirit all around us, liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race and gender, age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate our spirit's yearning, justice that all powers defied.
Praise the Spirit all around us, liberating truth from pride.

Praise the source of Sun and Spirit, One God in community,
Calling people to embody oneness in diversity.
Thus, the world shall yet discover, all of life in sanctity.
Praise the source of Sun and Spirit, One God in community.

Praying

All-encompassing God,
bursting forth in every kind and variety of species,
creating us in your image.
We thank you for the astonishing variety
of races and cultures, gender and sexuality, shapes and sizes, and abilities in this
world.
Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of friendship,
and show us your presence
in those who differ most from us,

until our knowledge of your love is made perfect
in our love for all earth's human and non-human life.
**May we open the eyes of hearts to see the incredible and intentional diversity of
your presence in all creation,
so that we might come to love it all, honor it all, care for all.**

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.

We open this section with a quote from one of William Cleary's prayers (adapted).

"Persuade us to be worthy inheritors
of the astonishing evolving reality in which we live:
reverent caretakers of our generous green earth,
respectful of everything alive –
especially of our fellow humans
in all their bewildering diversity."

Letting Go and Holding with Love

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

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

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 our 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.

**We give you thanks for this day to enjoy the compassionate goodness of you, our
Creator.**

**We acknowledge with one mind our respect and gratefulness to all the sacred
cycles of life.**

**Bind us together in the circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and
one another.**

(source: Gichi Manidoo, Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Liturgies, prepared for the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Anaheim, California, July 2009)

During the bidding prayer,
Each time you hear the words 'God, Giver of Life'
The response is: **Hear our prayer**

Let us enter into prayer.....

**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 week we encounter a version by from the Maori and Polynesian people Let us pray together

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trial too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.**

Path III: Exclaiming the Divine Creative

This third path creates space to explore how God is working in and through us and all of 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 of life

Isaiah 45:15-20

Quote by Max de Pree, American Author
Quote by Dr. Wendy Farley, *Beguiled by Beauty*

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

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

Reflection

Diversity, in all its beauty

Hymn

Justice-love (Tune: #387)

(Text by Rev. Peggy McDonagh)

God of Courage, God of Wisdom,
through your grace we long to see
how to love each other fully,
honor life's diversity.

Hurtful power, hate-filled living,
break the soul and rend the heart.
Move us God from toxic action,
fear and tyranny depart.

Justice-love, the power within us,
hallows God-blessed human life.
Justice-love and honest action
bring an end to human strife.

Life is sacred, life is precious,
life of each, a gift of grace.
God's own beauty finds expression
in each precious human face.

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 for your generosity.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Loving Creator, we present our offerings recognizing that life is a gift and a joy to be lived in all its richness

This offering is an outward expression of our thanks.

We recognize the incredible beauty of the earth.
and that we need to care for it for future generations.

We recognize that we are lucky enough to share this planet with a wonderful and diverse array of other living beings who are also entitled to lives of dignity and fulfilment.
This offering is an outward expression of our thanks. Amen.

Holding On and Go for it! (Spiritual Practice)

Benediction

(Written by Clare McBeath and Tim Presswood)

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.**