

**Gethsemane Lutheran Church
September 13, 2020**

CALL TO WORSHIP

This we know, the earth does not belong to us:
we belong to the earth.

This we know, all things are connected:
like the blood which unites one family.

For we did not weave the web of life:
we are merely a strand of it.

Whatever we do to the web,
we do to ourselves.
Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we confess that we have lost our connection to our local habitat—to the names of the birds of the air, and the fish of the waters, and every crawling thing that you have created.

We confess that we have lost our connection to the dirt under our feet. The very substance into which you breathed life. Transform us, O God, and give us roots.

Empower us to reconcile with all children of God who called this place home, and to honor their care for the land. Help us to learn the seasons of this sacred place—to learn the native flowers and trees, native birds and wildlife.

Open our eyes to the intentional care you have taken in crafting our habitat. May we be rooted and grounded in the family of God in our midst. Amen.

ASSURANCE

There is nowhere that we can run to escape God's love and compassion. In the generous gift of Jesus Christ, we have been forgiven. As children of God, we are invited into the meaningful work of following faithfully after Jesus here, in this place.
Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Creator God, teach us to respect the fragile balance of life and to care for all the gifts of your creation. As you have called us to tend and keep the garden of your creation, give us wisdom and reverence for all your plants and animals who share this planet with us and whose lives make possible our own. **Amen.**

READING Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8

2 ^{4b} In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶ but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

3:¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. ⁸ They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

SERMON

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,

died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Creator God, you call us to love and serve you with body, mind, and spirit through loving your creation and our sisters and brothers. Open our hearts in compassion and receive these petitions on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.

A brief silence.

Lord God, bless the church and its ministries: where we have made mistakes, bring repentance; where we are divided, bring reconciliation; and where we are reticent, make us bold in our witness to your love and grace. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, bless the good creation that you have made: make us better stewards of the earth; bring healing to damaged places; and open our eyes to see the beauty of all that you have made. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, bless the nations and their leaders: grant humility and wisdom to presidents and prime ministers; grant compassion in our justice system; and shower your peace upon areas of conflict. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, bless health care workers and all who provide comfort and healing: keep these workers safe in their vocation; grant wisdom and insight to those working for cures; and bring healing and wholeness to all. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, bless our congregation: strengthen our ministries; deepen our relationships; and turn us ever again towards you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Lord God, bless and keep those who have gone before us in the faith: keep us steadfast in your word; lift up examples of just and faithful living; and unite all your saints in life eternal. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards of the fragile bounty of this earth so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus spreads a table of blessing before us and feeds us with his very presence.

In the night in which he was betrayed
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

The body of Christ given for you.
The blood of Christ shed for you.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Faithful God, you have graciously fed us at this table. Send us out in peace, that we may testify to your goodness and share the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

Go in faith to renew the whole creation.
And may the goodness of God's creation
be found in the little and the least,
Christ be present in the longings in the face of our neighbor,
and the Spirit show us the way toward true peace. Amen.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon, Australia

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Love and care for God's world.
Thanks be to God.

Call to Worship: Chief Seattle, *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, Wild Goose Publications, 2017, p. 171
Prayer of the Day: adapted from the National Council of Churches [NCC] Earth Day Sunday 2001 resource packet.

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