

Welcome

Prayer of Belonging:

Loving God, you invite all people to the table and into a sacred community of belonging. All are invited into this time together to breathe, pray, wonder, and connect. Thank you for the life we have in you, with one another, and for the hope of our world. Amen

Worship in Song:

Poem:

This Place That You Belong To
—by Wendell Berry

It is hard to have hope. It is harder as you grow old,
for hope must not depend on feeling good
and there is the dream of loneliness at absolute midnight.
You also have withdrawn belief in the present reality
of the future, which surely will surprise us,
and hope is harder when it cannot come by prediction
any more than by wishing. But stop dithering.
The young ask the old to hope. What will you tell them?
Tell them at least what you say to yourself.

Because we have not made our lives to fit
our places, the forests are ruined, the fields eroded,
the streams polluted, the mountains overturned. Hope
then to belong to your place by your own knowledge
of what it is that no other place is, and by
your caring for it as you care for no other place, this
place that you belong to though it is not yours,
for it was from the beginning and will be to the end...

Found your hope, then, on the ground under your feet.

Your hope of Heaven, let it rest on the ground underfoot. Be it lighted by the light that falls freely upon it after the darkness of the nights and the darkness of our ignorance and madness. Let it be lighted also by the light that is within you, which is the light of imagination. By it you see the likeness of people in other places to yourself in your place. It lights invariably the need for care toward other people, other creatures, in other places as you would ask them for care toward your place and you.

No place at last is better than the world. The world is no better than its places. Its places at last are no better than their people while their people continue in them. When the people make dark the light within them, the world darkens.

Worship in Song

Passing the Peace (embodied)

-Please Stand-

(place palms over your heart)

Leader: God makes peace within us.

All: Let us claim it.

(bind opposite hands together)

God makes peace between us.

All: Let us share it.

The peace of God is here to stay.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

(extend palms out as a blessing to all)

Community Announcements

Sacred Readings:

A reading from Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*:

The Community Concept

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. Their instincts prompt them to compete for their place in that community, but their ethics prompt them also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for). The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. This sounds simple: do we not already sing our love for and obligation to the land of the free and the home of the brave? Yes, but just what and whom do we love? Certainly not the soil, which we are sending helter-skelter downriver. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species. A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources,' but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state. In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for their fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such. In human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating. Why? Because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows, *ex cathedra*, just what

makes the community clock tick, and just what and who is valuable, and what and who is worth less, in community life. It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves.”

— A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There by Aldo Leopold

Let us open our hearts, souls, bodies, and minds to receive what the Spirit is inviting us to from the book of Leviticus 25.

God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai: “Speak to the People of Israel. Tell them, When you enter the land which I am going to give you, the land will observe a Sabbath to God. Sow your fields, prune your vineyards, and take in your harvests for six years. But the seventh year the land will take a Sabbath of complete and total rest, a Sabbath to God; you will not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Don’t reap what grows of itself; don’t harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land gets a year of complete and total rest. But you can eat from what the land volunteers during the Sabbath year—you and your men and women servants, your hired hands, and the foreigners who live in the country, and, of course, also your livestock and the wild animals in the land can eat from it. Whatever the land volunteers of itself can be eaten.

For the Word of God in Scripture

For the Word of God among us

For the Word of God within us

ALL: Thanks be to God!

Reflection: *The Land Ethic*

Communion

Worship in Song:

Doxology

Please make a circle around the sanctuary

Blessing and Sending

