

Caring for Creation  
in the Voices of the  
First Nations



August 4, 2024  
St. John's Church  
Powell, WY

## Welcome

Today we begin a five-week series of liturgy and preaching that connects us to the care of creation and to the voices of Indigenous people. While there are hundreds of different Native American tribes with different cultures and beliefs, a common belief they share is to understand themselves to be part of the earth. Their caretaking practices are based on these values and include:

- Living in harmony: Many Indigenous peoples strive to live in harmony with nature and the rhythms of local ecosystems.
- Sustainability: They practice sustainability and minimize their impact on the environment.
- Preserving knowledge: They preserve and pass down knowledge that protects natural resources.
- Gratitude for life: They feel a deep connection with the rhythms of nature and are grateful for life and the entire created world.

## Turtle Island

Many Indigenous peoples in North America refer to the continent as Turtle Island, a name that comes from Algonquian- and Iroquoian-speaking peoples. The name comes from Indigenous oral histories that tell stories of a turtle carrying the world on its back, which symbolizes life, the earth, and Indigenous identity.

## Hymn: Mother Spirit, Father Spirit

We will be singing a most haunting hymn as part of our gathering rite. Both its melody and lyric work together to create an air of mystery, wondering, and mysticism. It is the plaintive call of the seeker, questioning everything but finding solace in each other. It is a hymn suited for this series – it is theism and humanism, nature and community, all rolled into one.

## Listen to This

Other music for this series will come from an album “Climate Vigil Songs” that highlights God’s heart for creation and our responsibility to care for it. Created by The Porter’s Gate Worship Project, in partnership with several Christian nonprofits, the album is an expression of the Climate Vigil movement, which calls on Christians and people of goodwill to gather in local communities to bear witness to our climate crisis – and take action to end it.

## First Nations Version of the New Testament

Many First Nations tribes communicate with the cultural and linguistic thought patterns found in their original tongues. The First Nations Version (FNV) recounts the Creator's Story—the Christian Scriptures—following the tradition of Native storytellers' oral cultures. This way of speaking, with its simple yet profound beauty and rich cultural idioms, still resonates in the hearts of First Nations people.

The FNV is a dynamic equivalence translation that captures the simplicity, clarity, and beauty of Native storytellers in English, while remaining faithful to the original language of the New Testament.

It's a startlingly beautiful translation. For example, the word "God" is often translated "the Great Spirit" or "Creator." The word "gospel" is translated as "the Good Story." Abraham is called "Father of Many Nations," **Jesus's name is translated "Creator Sets Free,"** and the city of Rome is called "the City of Iron."

Here are the Beatitudes:

Creator's blessing rests on the poor, the ones with broken spirits. The good road from above is theirs to walk.

Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk a trail of tears, for he will wipe the tears from their eyes and comfort them.

Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk softly and in a humble manner. The earth, land, and sky will welcome them and always be their home.

Creator's blessing rests on the ones who hunger and thirst for wrongs to be made right again. They will eat and drink until they are full.

Creator's blessing rests on the ones who are merciful and kind to others. Their kindness will find its way back to them—full circle.

Creator's blessing rests on the pure of heart. They are the ones who will see the Great Spirit.

Creator's blessing rests on the ones who make peace. It will be said of them, 'They are the children of the Great Spirit!'

## Other Sources

This service is adapted from the Liturgy of St. John's, Red Lake, MN by the Worship Committee at St. John's: Tim Glatzer, Diana Anderson, Susan McEvoy and Meg Nickles.

## Ministers of the Liturgy

Altar Guild	Barb Roberts
Sound	Oscar Trevino
Liturgy Greeter	Doug Ramier
Hospitality Greeter	Susan McEvoy
Worship Leader	Mary Dillivan
Reader	Mark Smith
Preacher	Diana Anderson
Intercessor	Jessica Smith
Presider	Megan Nickles
Communion Server	Laura Greathouse
Communion Server	Steve Nickles
Communion Bread	Susan McEvoy
Coffee Hour	The McKeens

## Prayer Concerns

Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Episcopal Church in the Philippines  
Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: Diocesan Standing Committee, Diocesan Staff;  
Katharine Jefferts Schori, Assisting Bishop;  
Thomas the Apostle Center

Andre & Syd; Bob & Charlotte; Kenny & Michael; Richard & Jennifer; Nelson & Nancy; Carolyn & Family; Lee & Kelly; Hunter, Charlotte & Mike; Hugh B. & Marge; Tim & Alex; Margie & Josey; Tim & Lynnae; Bobbi & Bentley	Mary, Katy, Tuti Rosita, Marlynn, Martha, Douglas, Mickey, Mike G., Cynthia, Carra, Don, Rob R., Kathy E., Tammy, Rob K., Bobby B., Larry, Irene, Nancy, Alan, Sue, Kahli, Ron and Jane  Bennett, Daryn, Justin, Jacob, Patrick, Reece, Coleman, and Bryce who are serving in the military.
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## Celebrations

Birthday: Rowene Weems—8<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary: Mark & Jessica Smith—9<sup>th</sup>

## Prelude

“Shining Mountains,” R. Carlos Nakai.

## Prayer of Four Directions

We greet you, O Spirit of the East. You usher in the dawn on your breeze; you stretch forth your fingers and paint our skies. The spiritual gifts of wisdom and prophecy are nourished in the headwaters of the Atlantic by our Powder, Tongue, Cheyenne and Niobrara rivers. Let them flow with vigor.

**We honor you for your presence.**

We greet you, O Spirit of the West. Creator, you gave us the spiritual gifts of love and understanding. Our Snake River rises from the mountain to feed the Pacific and to see the last light of day. Fill us with your peace as you enfold us with your great mystery of night and its gifts of rest and contemplation.

**We honor you for your presence.**

We greet you, O Spirit of the North. When the cold winds fall upon us, keep us warm with your spiritual gifts of strength and endurance. Your crystal cold prepares us for what is harsh, what stings, even as the frozen snow prepares us to be transformed into new water and new life.

**We honor you for your presence.**

We greet you, O Spirit of the South. You thaw and soften the coldness of our world; and nudge the seedlings to break through the soil to light. We remember the Green and Little Snake rivers, headwaters for the people of the south who bring us the spiritual gifts of renewal and knowledge in the warmth of your creation.

**We honor you for your presence.**

We greet you, Great Spirit of the Sky. Thank you for the light of day, warmth of sun, the stars, and the moon. We thank you for the accumulation and dissipation of water in the beautiful canopy of clouds, and for the spiritual gifts of teaching and vision.

**We honor you for your presence.**

We greet you, Great Spirit of the Earth. Teach us to walk softly on your lands, to use with care your gifts. And when the day comes you call us back to yourself, help us to return to you as a friend, to find ourselves embraced, encircled, enfolded in your arms.

**We honor you for your presence this day.**

## Prayer of the Day

Creator, we give you thanks for all you are and all you bring to us for our visit within your creation. In Jesus, you place the Gospel in the center of this Sacred Circle through which all of creation is related. You show us the way to live a generous and compassionate life.

**Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment as we grow in your Spirit, for you are God, now and forever. Amen.**

## Hymn

*♩ = 72 Unison*

1. Moth-er Spir - it, Fa - ther Spir - it, where are you?  
2. Man - y drops are in the o - cean, deep and wide.  
3. I am emp - ty, time flies from me; what is time?  
4. Moth-er Spir - it, Fa - ther Spir - it, take our hearts.

In the sky song, in the for - est, sounds your cry.  
Sun - light bounc - es off the rip - ples to the sky.  
Dreams e - ter - nal, fears in - fer - nal haunt my heart.  
Take our breath and let our voic - es sing our parts.

What to give you, what to call you, what am I?  
What to give you, what to call you, who am I?  
What to give you, what to call you, O, my God?  
Take our hands and let us work to shape our art.

Words and Music: Narber F. Capek, 1870–1942, trans. By Paul and Anita Munk, © 1992 Unitarian Universalist Association, harmony by David Dawson, 1939–

## Scripture

*We sit.*

Creator Sets Free (Jesus) said, "Listen with your hearts and understand what I tell you." A reading from Colossians.

*After the Reading*

Creator's Word never fades away.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

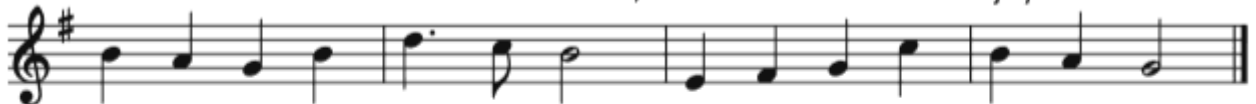
**Hymn** *Verses 1-3. We repeat the refrain the last time through.*



1. For the beau - ty of the earth, For the glo - ry of the skies,
2. For the beau - ty of each hour Of the day and of the night,
3. For the joy of hu - man love, Broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
4. For your Church, that ev - er - more Lifts its ho - ly hands a - bove,
5. For Your - self, O Gift Di - vine To our world so free - ly giv'n,



1. For the love which from our birth O - ver and a - round us lies:
2. Hill and vale, and tree and flow'r, Sun and moon, and stars of light:
3. Friends on earth and friends a - bove; For all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
4. Of - f'ring up on ev - ery shore A pure sac - ri - fice of love:
5. For that love from which will shine, Peace on earth and joy in heav'n:



- 1-5. Lord of all, to you we raise This our hymn of grate - ful praise.

Text: 77 77 77; *Lyra Eucharistica*, 1864; Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835–1917, alt. Music: Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872; adapt. by William H. Monk, 1823–1899.

## Prayers of the People

Creator and Redeemer, as we approach you in prayer, help us to walk in beauty and balance; help us to walk with open hearts and minds; help us to walk the road of love. In peace, we pray to you, saying, O Great Spirit,

**Teach us and show us the way.**

*The Intercessor continues, closing with the following.*

Creator, you made the world and declared it to be good: the beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass speak to us; the mountain peaks, the radiant stars, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the waters speak to us. But above all, our hearts soar, for you speak to us in Creator Sets Free, Jesus the Christ, in whose name we offer these prayers.

**Amen.**

## Confession

Creator of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of Your people, turn us from the wrong paths to live for you alone. Give us your Spirit that we may confess our wrongs, receive Your forgiveness, and grow in your Son, our Brother Jesus.

Let us confess those things we have done wrong in the presence of Creator and one another.

**Creator, Have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have turned from you and, too often, we have given ourselves into the power of wrong.**

**We are truly sorry and humble ourselves before you.**

**In your compassion forgive us our wrongs, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do.**

**Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus, our brother and Savior.**

Creator, rich in mercy, loved us even when we walked the wrong path and made us alive with our brother Jesus.

By Creator's love, we have been saved.

Our wrongs are forgiven and Creator strengthens us with power through His Spirit.

**Amen.**



## The Peace

*We stand.*

The peace of Christ be always with you

**And also with you.**

## Announcements

### Offertory

Walk the road of love, following the path of the Chosen One, who loved us and offered up his life to the Great Spirit like the smoke of burning sage.

### Music

“Lord, Have Mercy,” The Porter's Gate.

### Great Thanksgiving

God the Creator is here.

**God's Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them to God the Creator**

Let us give thanks to God

**It is right to offer our thanks and praise.**

God the Creator, our Spirit, from the depths of our hearts we give you thanks. We say thank you, now and forever. From the place of the rising sun in the East, to the South where the warm winds blow, from the West where the soft rain comes, to the coldness of the North. We unite with all creation from the four directions to join in the everlasting thanksgiving and praise for the gift of Jesus Christ. With hearts lifted, we join with the angels, the guardian spirits, the saints, and all our ancestors as we say

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

O Spirit, our Creator from whom all holiness comes, we come before you again today. Just as in generations past, like our grandmothers and grandfathers, we come to worship you and acknowledge your greatness. We marvel at your creation. You sent Jesus into creation because people had turned away from you and no longer loved each other, bringing death and destruction. Sharing our living and dying, Jesus opened our eyes and our hearts to understand that we are all relatives and that you are our Great Spirit the Creator. Stretching out his arms upon the cross, he became a perfect offering for all, uniting in beauty all that is, with all that has been, and with all that ever will be.

During the meal before he was betrayed, Creator Sets Free (Jesus) took some bread, lifted it up, and gave thanks. He broke it into pieces, gave some to each of his followers and said, "This is my body, my gift to you. Take it and eat it. Do this to remember me."

In the same way, after the meal was over, he took a cup of wine, lifted it up, and gave thanks. He gave it to his followers and said, "This cup of wine is for the new peace treaty. It is my lifeblood poured out for you. Whenever you drink this cup, do it to remember me."

We make known the mystery of the Chosen One:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Spirit, help us now. Come and breathe into these gifts of bread and wine.

As we receive these gifts into our bodies,  
may our breath become the sweet breath of Christ.

As the grain was given by Creator God to all peoples of the world,

**Jesus Christ was also given to nourish and sustain.**

As the fruit of the vine was given by Creator God to all peoples of the world,

**Jesus Christ was also given to bind us to God and one another.**

As the women from many tribes made the bread in holy stillness,  
so the women tended and cared for the broken body of Jesus Christ:

**A sacrifice for us.**

## Lord's prayer

We pray as Jesus taught.

**O Great Spirit, our Father from above,  
we honor your name as sacred and holy.**

**Bring your good road to us,  
where the beauty of your ways in the spirit-world above  
is reflected in the earth below.**

**Provide for us day by day--  
the elk, the buffalo, and the salmon.**

**The corn, the squash, and the wild rice.**

**All the things we need for each day.**

**Release us from the things we have done wrong,  
in the same way we release others for the things done wrong to us.**

**Guide us away from the things that tempt us to stray from your good road,  
and set us free from the evil one and his worthless ways.**

**May it be so!**

## Breaking Bread

*The leader breaks the bread. Silence is kept.*

Within and around the earth,  
within and around the mountains,  
within the bread and the wine,

**Our bodies return to you.**

These are gifts for us, from God.

## Communion

*Please come to the table, whether you are single, married or divorced, drinking, using or sober, abled, disabled, or ill, gay, straight, or discovering, wealthy, getting by or in debt. Christ meets us all.*

*We approach the altar beginning with those sitting in the last rows; they shall be first. Approach the rail from the left aisle and take a cup; used cups go on the tray on the right. You may receive only bread or only wine. Our Eucharistic bread is handmade and robust. If you prefer a wafer, please tell your server.*

*Receiving the bread and wine is a central act of worship in the Episcopal Church.*

## Music

“All Your Works Are Good,” The a Rocha Project.

“When Morning Gilds the Skies,” Dana Cunningham.

## Gratitude

Let us pray.

**Jesus Christ, our leader,  
you are the Son of the Creator.  
Today we became your children;  
today we became your grandchildren.  
We will live as you have taught us.  
We will follow your commandments.**

**Watch over us.**

**Speak to us from the trees, from the grass and herbs,  
from the breeze, from the passing rain,  
from the passing thunder and the deep waters.**

**Before us there is beauty,  
behind us there is beauty.**

**Allow us to walk a long life in happiness  
completed in beauty.**

**Amen.**

Hymn *We repeat verse one the last time.*



1. Let all cre - a - tion praise the Lord  
2. Praise God with ev - 'ry sound you know,  
3. Let all that breathes give praise to God



who made the earth and sea and sky,  
with lute and harp, with trum - pet blast,  
with dance and song, with strings and pipe,



whose great - ness far ex - ceeds them all:  
with tam - bou - rine, with cym - bal clash:  
with purr and chirp, with howl and roar:



let all cre - a - tion praise the Lord!  
praise God with ev - 'ry sound you know!  
let all that breathes give praise to God!

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## Sending

In the name of the Light that came into the world,  
go in peace with love, compassion and honor,  
that we may heal the earth, and heal each other.

**We go in the name of Christ. Alleluia!**

## Postlude

“Here Comes the Sun,” Gabriella Quevedo.