

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
September 18, 2022 – Season of Creation (Flora & Fauna Sunday)
Marking the National Day of Truth & Reconciliation
(Orange Shirt Day)

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 18.

Email sketchingalong4@gmail.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: VU 312 *Praise with Joy the World's Creator, vv. 1 & 4*

1. Praise with joy the world's Creator,
God of justice, love, and peace,
source and end of human knowledge,
God whose grace shall never cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory,
power to rescue and release.

4. Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit,
one God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
This the world shall see reflected:
God is One and One in Three.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's worship. Those at home or if you are new here, please note the credits at the end of this worship on screen with contact information – Facebook, our website, email, and our phone number. You can contact us in many ways to say hello and allow us to get to know you. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time is tonight at 7:00 with hosts Bev and Diane. Diane's email is also in the credits so you can request your Zoom link to Zoom Social Hour. Please join us. We'd love to see you there.

Inviting Holy Light

We prepare ourselves for worship. Over these past few weeks, we have been connecting, grounding ourselves, within Creation. What an awe-inspiring world this is – God created it, and saw that it was good. Oceans, the Cosmos. Today, I want you to imagine with me walking in the bush. The sun shaded by the canopy of trees, right now many of the leaves changing colours. The ferns, the critters scurrying around, their ancestors have lived here long before people.

We are woven into the fabric of Creation. Feel that connection. We invite Holy Light in, the Creation, Christ and Spirit playfully moving in our midst, calling us to open our hearts and minds.
[lights candle]

Sung Response: *Our Voices Have Been Silent for Too Long, vs. 1*

1. Our voices have been silent far too long;
just listening in worship felt so wrong.
God's people need to shout their praise,
to celebrate God's wondrous ways,
to pray, lament and grieve
when things go wrong –
God's people need to lift their hearts in song.

Nurturing Safe Space

We are all children of God. All are welcome in worship here – all backgrounds, gender identities – this space is open to all.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Here we are worshiping on the traditional land of the First Peoples. Across Turtle Island, Treaties were made between colonizers and those who had lived on the land for millennia. Here at St. Andrew's, we give thanks to the Wahnapiatae First Nation and to the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, this land where the Robinson Huron Treaty was made in 1850, and never honoured by Canada.

We have a responsibility implied by those ancient and sacred Treaties to share the caretaking of this land with Indigenous neighbours. We give thanks for the current and historic contributions that First Nations and Métis people have made.

May we journey and act together towards reconciliation.

Marking the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Orange Shirt Day, we remember the child, Phyllis Webstad, and the stolen childhood of all the children forcibly raised by church-run institutions, known as residential schools. We lament how these institutions stole from children the opportunity to grow in a safe and loving environment, stole from Elders the opportunity to share their teachings and wisdom with younger generations; and stole from communities the opportunity to live intergenerationally.

**We mourn the children who never made it home,
the communities that were destroyed,
the broken hearts, the stories never shared, and
the shattered relationships.**

Christ Child, as you grew, you reminded us to always welcome and care for children.

We remember your children today.

**We lament and acknowledge the sinful ways that colonial powers tried to eradicate
Indigenous cultures within Canada,
breaking Indigenous families,
removing children from their homes while destroying communities.**

**We pray for healing, so that we who live together
in this country can also work together to build a better future
where all children are cherished, beloved,
and given what they need to thrive.**

Call to Worship

As you hold that sprig of cedar in your hand, smell it. What place does it remind you most of? Of course, we are in building, but I want you to imagine that you are there, in that spot where the cedar tree or bush is.

In the name of the Creator of all the creatures of the earth, of all the plants and trees that fill our lives with wonder; I invite you to proclaim with me:

Holy! Holy! Holy! The trees, and plants, and all the Earth's creatures are filled with God's presence.

Christ, we come into your presence today,
to worship in this sanctuary Earth,

Holy! Holy! Holy! The trees, and plants, and all the Earth's creatures are filled with God's presence.

We invite our animal family to worship with us,
**All our kin living on this planet,
from the busiest bee to the tallest giraffe.**

We remember our animal relatives who have become extinct,
**From Dinosaurs to the Black-footed Ferret of the Canadian West.
From the Dodos to the Eastern Elk of Ontario.**

We invite the forests to worship with us:
**mountain ash and vibrant maples,
quivering ferns and glistening moss!**

We invite tall trees to celebrate life:
**to lift green leaves in the breeze
and sing their oxygen into the air.**

Creator, Christ, Spirit One, we come into your presence
to worship in this sanctuary, but surrounded by Creation's wonder;
**a planet pulsating with your presence,
a presence quivering in the forests,
a presence vibrating with the growl of cougar and bear,
a presence pulsating in the wilderness,
a presence shimmering in the rivers.**

With Creation, we praise you, God.
**Let us raise your voices to the skies, we praise you Creator God,
in a family festival of praise.**

Opening Prayer Seeking Grace

Let us pray, Creator God, we are awed by the creation you have made –
the plants and animals (including humans) that you have placed within this world. In this time of
worship, may we be aware of the gifts of flora and fauna to Creation, and all created things.

The Prayer Jesus Taught

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom come, Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn: VU 226 *For the Beauty of the Earth, vs. 1*

1. For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Time up Front: "God's Wonder World" by Donna Scorer

Snails and wombats,
Beetles and bees.
Horses, fishes,
And tiny fleas.
Stars and sunshine,
Raindrops and snow.
White clouds and rainbows
And moonlight glow.
Beans and grasses, bushes and thorns.
Flowers and seaweed, oaks and acorns.
Tall people, short people, big people, small.
Old people, young people, babies who crawl.

God made a world full of wonder and love.
Wiggily, jiggily, dabbily, dove!

What is your favourite animal that you would find in the bush or forest?
How can help those wild creatures?
Touching them? Catching them?

No, leaving them alone. Taking picture of them.
The same for plants and trees – to not pull branches off.
To appreciate them.

This is a repeat after me prayer:
Today, God, we thank you for creatures in the wild.
We thank you for the sounds in nature.
Birds, frogs, crickets
It is a song to you.
We say thank you, too.
For the shade of trees,
The plants and flowers.
Help us to be friends of animals and trees and plants.
Creation is awesome, God.
Thank you.

Hymn: VU 226 *For the Beauty of the Earth, vs. 2*

2. For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light,
God of all, to you we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.

Scripture Reading (*Freda Wilson*)

Psalm 104:14-23, 31 – Common English Bible

You make grass grow for cattle; you make plants for human farming
in order to get food from the ground, and wine, which cheers people's hearts, along with oil, which
makes the face shine, and bread, which sustains the human heart.

The Lord's trees are well watered—the cedars of Lebanon, which God planted, where the birds
make their nests, where the stork has a home in the cypresses.

The high mountains belong to the mountain goats; the ridges are the refuge of badgers.

God made the moon for the seasons, and the sun too, which knows when to set.

You bring on the darkness and it is night, when every forest animal prowls.

The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they gather
together and lie down in their dens. Then people go off to their work, to do their work until evening.

Let God's glory last forever! Let the Creator rejoice in all God has made!

Luke 12:22-31 – Common English Bible

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you will
eat, or about your body, what you will wear. There is more to life than food and more to the body
than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither plant nor harvest, they have no silo or barn, yet

God feeds them. You are worth so much more than birds! Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life? If you can't do such a small thing, why worry about the rest?

"Notice how the lilies grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these. If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, how much more will God do for you, you people of weak faith! Don't chase after what you will eat and what you will drink. Stop worrying. All the nations of the world long for these things. God knows that you need them. Instead, desire God's kingdom and these things will be given to you as well.

Let us pray: Creating God, we stand in awe of how everything connects through the webs of life. Through the wilds, we learn so much about you and each other. We praise you for what you have created and pray we will enjoy it with honour and respect. Amen.

Message: *Getting Low Enough to See*

The Message will be posted on the website when it is available.

Guided Meditation (forest sounds)

Close your eyes and picture your favourite spot among the trees or in the grasses of a grand meadow. Find yourself surrounded by all that God has made. It can be a place that you know well or a place that you have only visited once. It is a place that makes you feel peace, deep peace at the harmony of all things working together. Find yourself fully present to this place.

Is it cool? Or is it warm? What does it smell like? What do you hear? Where is the sun in the sky? Or can you not see the sun? Can you only see the stars above? Breathe deeply in this place as you feel fully present to Creation. God is good. God is good here.

Feel the wind on your cheeks. Take off your shoes and place your feet on the ground. God is here in this place. You knew this before your feet even touched the ground. God is here.

You can feel that truth resound in this place. It is in the peace you felt when you first came here, and it is here now. Breathe that wonder in.

Take another breath and look with your mind's eye. Look around this place so full of harmony. Where do you see God? Is God in the animals you see underfoot or flying above your head? Is God far off in the distance, hiding among the trees and grasses? Or is God brushing up beside you in the flowers kissing your ankles?

Notice and give thanks for the ways that God is working and moving in this place. Notice how God causes the grasses to grow and give praise. Notice how the trees have been watered abundantly by an unseen hand and whisper thanks. Notice even the creeping things on the ground and marvel at these tiny wonders at your feet. God is in all these things, and it is good. It is very good.

You have come to this place to remember that deep peace. It is not where you work, nor probably even where you live. That place is somewhere else, maybe far away from this place of deep peace and harmony. The psalm pushes us away from places like these among the trees and grasses. It pushes us to labour until evening in other places, but what if your work was here in this place of deep peace? What might you do in this place that is needed? How might you labour with God in this place already so full of harmony? How do you fit into this place?

Listen for what God might be telling you through the trees and in the wind. Listen for the Flora and Fauna to teach you what it needs from you.

Allow these questions to hang in silence before seeking to respond together. You might even opt to increase the volume of the natural sounds and let these have the last word before responding.

Choir Anthem: MV 37 *Each Blade of Grass*

1. Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,
the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

2. Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.
Each fire-brimmed star,
ev'ry outstretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

3. Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.
Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

Offering Moment

Your donations will help St. Andrew's to partner with people who help the most vulnerable downtown. Giving to the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service allows us collectively to reach out to Ukraine and other places needing love and community. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and treasures.

Offering Hymn: VU 537 *Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands*

1. Your work, O God, needs many hands to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve unless our gifts we share.

Dedication Prayer

Gracious God, when you created the world, you dedicated us to be part of the balance of all good things. Today, we commit ourselves anew to this purpose and ask your blessing upon our renewed commitment.

Help us to continue to delight in the glory of the plants and animals you have given us to share life. And lead us in the ways of life, in communion with all Creation. Amen.

Prayers of Community & Creation

Wisdom, whose joy gives us the day's feast and whose discernment seeks justice for all, we thank you for the goodness of Creation.

You have connected us in ways we could not have imagined or sought ourselves. When we feel isolated, you remind us we are not alone and prod us to be better members of this blessed family of Creation.

In silence we life up to you, God, the names of people we know of who find themselves on the fringes: those who have fallen ill, those who are weakened by hunger, debt, and hopelessness.
(*silence*)

In silence we offer to you those we know who are experiencing grief, addiction, or being ignored and isolated without community. (*silence*)

In silence we name for you, God, those who are held captive by the delusion of power, those who seek profit and esteem for themselves and out of connection with nurturing community. (*silence*)

Whispering Wisdom, you weave us into the tapestry called Creation, a wonder to behold and you saw that it was Good, that we were indeed good. Mend the loose threads of this web of life, Weaver, and tighten the bonds that bring us into loving relationship with one another, and with all of creation, particularly the plants and flowers and trees, and our animal sisters and brothers. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 229 *God of the Sparrow*, vv. 1, 3, 5, 6

1. God of the sparrow, God of the whale,
God of the swirling stars.
How does the creature say Awe?
How does the creature say Praise?
3. God of the rainbow, God of the cross,
God of the empty grave.
How does the creature say Grace?
How does the creature say Thanks?
5. God of the neighbour, God of the foe,
God of the pruning hook.
How does the creature say Love?
How does the creature say Peace?
6. God of the ages, God near at hand,
God of the loving heart.
How do your children say Joy?
How do your children say Home?

Blessing

May the God who is above all, and through all, and in all, fill us with the knowledge the Divine in us and in Creation. May we feel the pulsing of Christ in Earth and the dream of the Spirit that all will be reconciled, renewed, and restored. Will you listen each day for the call of Christ to serve with love and compassion, and to protect God's Creation?...

We will care for all creatures!

We will nurture our planet!

We will sustain our endangered kin.

**The Spirit of God, fill us with Holy Wisdom,
and the pulsing of Christ deep within us.**

We go in peace.

Look to your neighbour and say:

The peace of Christ pulse within you.

Amen.

Amen.

Blessing Hymn: MV 40 *Never Ending Joy*

Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy.

1. God of every tribe, every language,
God of every river and sea,
God of every mountain and island,
you bring joy to me.

Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy.

3. God of every song, every story,
God of every captive set free,
God of every dance, every footstep,
you bring joy to me.

Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy.

Postlude

Call to Worship and **Blessing** adapted from both seasonofcreation.com and *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Flora & Fauna Sunday. ©2022 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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