Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Call to Worship

The Earth speaks:

Hear me, Lord! Turn Your ear in my direction.
Come quick! Save me!
Be my rock, my shelter,
my fortress of salvation!
Save me from the snare that has been secretly set out for me,
for You are my protection.

Show me Your grace, Eternal One, for I am in a tight spot.
My eyes are aching with grief;
my body and soul are withering with miseries.
My life is devoured by sorrow,
and my years are haunted with mourning.
My sin has sapped me of all my strength;
my body withers under the weight of this suffering.

To all my enemies I am an object of scorn.
My neighbors especially are ashamed of me.
My friends are afraid to be seen with me.
When I walk down the street, people go out of their way to avoid me.
I am as good as dead to them. Forgotten!
Like a shattered clay pot, I am easily discarded and gladly replaced.
Creator, Your overflowing goodness
   You have kept for those who live in awe of You,
And You share Your goodness with those who make You their sanctuary.
Be strong, and live courageously,
   all of you who set your hope in the Eternal!

Gathering Song
   “All Things Bright and Beautiful”
   Amelia Lloyd, vocalist

Gathering Prayer
   Living Psalm 31: 9-16
   Be gracious to the earth, O God, for it is in distress;
   the ice caps melt away from the warming
   of rampant industrialization,
   the soul of the trees of the field,
   which once clapped their hands, are scattered
   and the bodies of creatures are endangered.
   On the streets or in the sky —
   those who monitor carbon emissions
   long to flee, but there is nowhere to go.
   The earth has passed out of mind of the wealthy.
   They take the life of the earth,
   which has become a broken vessel.
   But we trust in you, O God, and know that you trust in us.
   Our times are in your hands, and your times are in our hands.
   Deliver us from all who scheme destruction or allow apathy.
   Let your light shine upon us and teach us to be savers for you,
   to become the doers of your steadfast love.
   Inspire us to justice and peace.
   Amen, and Amen.

Children’s Time

Scripture Reading
   Genesis 9:1-3, 7-17 (Inclusive Bible)
   God blessed Noah and his family and said to them, “Bear fruit and be many, and fill the earth. Now, however, all the earth’s wildlife, all the birds of the air, and all that crawls on the ground or swims in the sea, will be afraid of you. But remember that they are your responsibility: they are in your hand. You may now eat anything that moves and lives, just as it had been with the green plants: I now give them all to you.”...
   “Now go, bear fruit and be many - abound on the earth and increase your numbers!”
   God then said to Noah and his family, “I hereby establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you - birds, cattle, and the earth’s wildlife - everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I hereby establish my covenant with you: All flesh will never again be swept away by the waters of the flood; never again will a flood destroy all the earth.”
   God said, “Here is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature for ageless generations: I set my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, my bow will appear in the clouds. Then I will remember the covenant that is between me and you and every kind of living creature, and never again will the
waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. Whenever my bow appears in the clouds I will see it, and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all living things on the earth.”

Music for Reflection

Message


Prayers of the People/Lord’s Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kindom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kindom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Song of Response

“We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky” #563 vv. 1 & 3

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

Come to this table
because you want to celebrate
care in the midst of destruction,
comfort in sorrow,
healing beyond curing,
peace in forgiveness,
hope in times of fear or threat.
Come to this table
because you claim your abundance,
as culture defines it
or as your heart knows it.
Come to this table
because you have discovered
your own generosity
and need to start giving.
Come to this table
because you are willing
to be welcomed,
even when that is awkward,
and willing to welcome
to the limit of your resources,
and even to offer welcome
knowing it may be rejected.
Come to this teeter-totter table,
where the bakers and the starving,
touch elbows and hearts.
Blessing

Gentle Host,
rest upon us as you rested upon water and light,
earth and creatures,
human beings,
all in your image.

Send your Spirit of life and love,
power and blessing upon your children
that this bread may be broken and gathered in love
and this cup poured out to give hope to all.
Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you.

Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.
We pray in your spirit, Amen.

“Come to the Table”
Amelia Lloyd, vocalist

Words of Institution

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Spirit of the Living God, we give thanks for this grace.

Wrap your hopeful presence around all
whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing or hope,
and let us become your movement toward wholeness in, through and around our Earth.

May we be lifted up to serve you and all your children
as we meet your sunrises and sunsets each of our days. Amen.

Breathing in God’s Blessings

Blessing and Commissioning

Sending Forth Song

“Touch the Earth Lightly” #569 vv. 1 & 4

Sources:

The Call and Gathering Prayer are adapted from Living Psalm 31: 9-16 for Passion Sunday was written by The Rev. Maren Tirabassi. www.ucc.org/worshipways

Communion Liturgy is adapted from Rev. Maren Tirabassi, at www.ucc.org/worshipways.
563

We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky

John 10:10

Ruth Duck, 1984; rev. 1989

1. We cannot own the sunlit sky, the moon, the wildflowers
   growing, for we are part of all that is without
   in life's river flowing.

2. When bodies shiver in the night and, weary, wait for
   morning, when children have no bread but tears, and
   war-horns sound their warning, With open hands receive and share the gifts of God's creation, that
   that

3. God calls humanity to join as partners in creating.
   a future free from want or fear, life's
every earthly nation.
   good-ness celebrating. That new world beckons.
   invites our shared endeavor, that
   that
   in one-ness with their neighbor.
   all may have abundant life and peace endure forever.
Touch the Earth Lightly

Shirley Erena Murray, 1992

1 Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
   nourish the life of the world in our care:
   Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
   trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

2 We who endanger, who create hunger,
   a gentleness of death for all creatures that live,
   We who would foster clouds of disaster—
   God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

3 Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
   water that blesses, and air that is sweet,
   Health in God’s garden, hope in God’s children,
   us ing us gently, and making us one.

4 God of all living, God of all loving, God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,
   We who would beget, forever in love—
   Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
   regeneration that peace will complete.

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Shirley Erena Murray’s notes on this hymn state that the title line is borrowed from an Australian Aboriginal saying. The “clouds of disaster” mentioned in stanza 2 refer to nuclear testing by France, which New Zealand has protested at the United Nations many times.

Tune: TENDERNESS 5.5.10.D.
Colin Gibson, 1992

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