

**A "VIRTUAL" SERVICE TO UNITE US IN SPIRIT
FOR SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2021
(SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST)
(and a daily prayer)**

[Click Here](#) for a PDF of this Bulletin

*Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison WI*



The Community Gathers

Lighting of the Candle

Welcome

Announcements, Joys & Concerns

♪Prelude

Gathering Prayer

*Pastor: In the beginning, the Spirit of God moved over the waters, and God said
“unbind creation and let her out!”*

All: and God declared it to be good.

*Pastor: God said, “let there be light” and called the light “day” and the darkness
“night.” God spoke the word to call the land from the water, pulling Lake Monona
down to the depths and raising Timms Hill above the waters,*

All: and in God’s eyes they were good.

*Pastor: God’s word called to life the soybean and the milking cow, the cardinal and
the earthworm, the honey bee and the gray wolf, the microbe and the muskie,*

All: and God’s heart saw them to be good.

Pastor: *God made creatures who carry the divine image: us. Forming humans by holy word,*

All: **God made us to tend and steward all that God has made.**

Pastor: *And God saw that it was all very good. And then God rested. And on this seventh day*

All: **we come to worship and remember our role as partners in creation.**

♪Hymn of Praise *Morning Has Broken*

Morning has broken, like the first morning. Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird. Praise for the singing. Praise for the morning. Praise for them springing, fresh from the word.

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven, like the first dew fall, on the first grass. Praise for the sweetness, of the wet garden, sprung in completeness, where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight. Mine is the morning. Born of the one light, Eden saw play. Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's re-creation, of the new day.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (from the New Zealand Prayer Book)

Pastor: *Let us pray...to whom we pray in the way Jesus taught us:*

Pastor: *Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,*

All: **source of all that is and that shall be,**

Pastor: *Father and Mother of us all, Loving God in whom is heaven.*

All: **The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!**

Pastor: *The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the earth!*

All: **Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

Pastor: *Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.*

All: **With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

Pastor: *In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.*

All: In times of temptation and test, spare us.

Pastor: *From the grip of all that is evil, free us.*

All: For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Sung Prayer Response #775

**And God will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of God's hand.**

The Community Shares God's Word

Scripture Readings:

Job 12:7-8

But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

Romans 8:18-25

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Sermon

♪Hymn of Response No. 564 *We Are Not Our Own* (verses 1-2, 4, 6)

We are not our own earth forms us, human leaves on nature's growing vine, fruit of many generations, seeds of life divine.

We are not alone earth names us, past and present peoples near and far, family and friends and strangers show us who we are.

Therefore let us make thanksgiving, and with justice willing and aware, give to

earth and all things living, liturgies of care.

Let us be a house of welcome, living stone upholding living stone, gladly showing all our neighbors, we are not our own.

The Community Responds to God's Word

Offering

Thank you for your electronic offerings, or for mailing in your offerings for the ministry and mission of this congregation. Through your generosity, we are doing God's work in the world.

Thank you for all you are doing to help keep all in community safe, including getting vaccinated (if safe for you), wearing of face masks, physically distancing, and hand washing.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Pastor: *Thank you, ever gracious God, for surrounding us with gifts of beauty, diversity, and power.*

All: **Thank you for calling us to be stewards and caretakers of our amazing and fragile pale blue dot.**

Pastor: *In response to your gracious care, we offer our gifts to steward the work of this congregation*

All: **in service to our ongoing shared work with you, O Holy One.**

Pastor: *Every part of nature is connected. Every gift we receive comes from you. Every moment of time is pregnant with new creation.*

All: **We give thanks, in wonder and in awe. Amen.**

The Community Goes Forth

♪ Sending Hymn No. 556 *God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens*

God who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place, flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space. We your children in your likeness share inventive powers with you, great creator still creating show us what we yet may do.

We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race, known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space. Probed the secrets of

the atom yielding unimagined power, facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.

As each far horizon beckons may it challenge us anew, children of creative purpose serving others honoring you. May our dreams prove rich with promise each endeavor well begun. Great creator give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.

Benediction and Sending Prayer

Pastor: *We are children of God who walk in the assurance of*

All: **God's presence with us and love for us always!**

Pastor: *We go forth, walking with the living Christ.*

All: **We go forth, in faith and hope and joy!**

Pastor: *Love to you, from God our Creator. Peace to you, from the one who shows us all that we can be. Grace to you, from the Spirit who blesses you, now and always.*

All: **Our worship has ended, our service begins, as we take God's light out into the world with us!**

♪Postlude

Pastor: Rev. Leslie Schenk

Accompanist: Lyle Anderson

Ministers: All the people of Plymouth Congregational UCC

Parts of today's liturgy and the thoughts to ponder and morning prayer come to us from the Creation Care Working Group of the Wisconsin Conference, and the liturgy for Earth Day 2017

Thoughts to Ponder

"Hope has never trickled down. It has always bubbled up." - Studs Terkel

"Because we care for and love the earth, we can't but cry out in lament and despair for the earth. Because we care for our families, our children, and children everywhere, we can't help but despair over the state of the earth and the future of the world we are passing on to them. Unless that kind of grief and lament and anger is put to speech, it can never become energy. Laments are all an expression of grief, but they are also an expression of hope. Hope is an insistence that things cannot remain this way and they must be changed." - Walter Brueggemann

“Hope means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope. To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable. Anything could happen, and whether we act or not has everything to do with it.” - Rebecca Solnit

“Our task is to embrace our generation’s challenge at this moment. God’s helping presence is everywhere, and at every turning point. The gifts of the Creator’s Spirit empower us to accomplish more than we could ask or imagine. As urgent as our crisis is, God offers us the courage we need to address the greatest moral challenge humanity has ever faced. When we work together, with the Creator’s sustaining and creative power, there is hope. We can do this.” - Rev. James Antal, former Conference Minister to the Massachusetts Conference UCC

And a daily (morning) prayer to center yourself for this week (source: Kairos Team, Wisconsin Conference UCC, liturgy resources for Earth Day 2017 [Creation Care Worship Resources - Wisconsin Conference UCC \(wcucc.org\)](#))

A Sioux Prayer from Chief Yellow Lark (1887)

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds,
Whose breath gives life to the world, hear me.
I come to you as one of your many children.
I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom.
May I walk in beauty.
Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made,
and my ears sharp to your voice.
Make me wise, so that I may know the things you have taught your children,
The lessons you have written in every leaf and rock.
Make me strong, not to be superior to my brothers,
but to fight my greatest enemy: myself.
Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes,
So that when life fades as the fading sunset,
May my spirit come to you without shame.
Amen.