

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Worship Bulletin
October 1, 2023 – 10AM
“Season of Creation: Forest Sunday”

Prelude Susan Berg, Piano

Announcements

Welcome and Introduction Gloria Miller

Opening Songs – praise band

Gathering

In the name of the Creator, the fountain of life,
the name of Christ, the pulse of life,
and the name of the Spirit, the breath of life. Amen.

Holy Holy! Holy! Earth is filled with God’s presence.

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

**A planet filled with your presence, quivering in the forests,
vibrating in the land, pulsating in the wilderness,
shimmering in the rivers.**

God, reveal yourself to us in this place
and show us your face in all creation.

Holy! Holy! Holy! Earth is filled with God’s presence.

Call to Worship

We invite the forests to worship with us:

**Mountain ash and eucalypts,
quivering ferns and glistening moss!**

We quiver with the trees as they shake before God:
when tempests and tornadoes hit, and raging winds invade the forest.

We invite tall trees to celebrate life:

**Huon pines and ironbark,
tall timber where lizards and lichen find their home!**

We invite the forest night-life to sing:

Green tree frogs and timid moths, ancient owls and swirling bats!

We join with the fauna of the forest in praising God:

Lyrebirds and black cockatoos, platypuses, pythons and butterflies!
We celebrate the song of the forest!
Sing, forest, sing!

Remembering

We remember the first garden, when God planted a forest of trees.
We remember the gardens and the forests of our childhood,
the places where we played in the past, when we felt close to Earth and to
trees.
We remember and rejoice.
Thank you, God, for trees, for forests filled with mysteries!

Confession and Absolution

As I hold this symbol aloft, we remember and confess that we have become
alienated from Earth and that we have violated the forests in our garden planet.
We are sorry.
We have been thoughtless and greedy.
We have ignored the destruction of our forests, the death of old-growth giants
and species breathing their last.
We are sorry.
We are sorry. We are sorry.
Christ hears your confession from the cross and forgives your sins against the
forest.
Christ, teach us to love Earth and return to Earth as our home.
I speak for Christ:
I invite you to come home to Earth by rejoicing in the forest.
Shalom! Shalom! We are coming home!

Prayer for the Day

God, our Creator, whose glory fills our planet, help us to discern your vibrant
presence among us, especially in the mysteries of the forest. Help us empathize
with your forest creatures who are suffering. Lift our spirits to rejoice with the
forest and all the creatures of the forest. In the name of Christ, who reconciles
and renews all things in creation. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 2:4-22

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Another Account of the Creation

In the day that the LORD^[a] God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground^[b] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, ¹²and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man^[c] there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

SECOND LESSON

Acts 17:22-28

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor^[a] he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God^[b] and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we, too, are his offspring.'

GOSPEL

John 3:1-16

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”^[b] ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You^[c] must be born from above.’^[d] ⁸ The wind^[e] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you^[f] do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[g] ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[h]

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Presentation

“Let the Land Produce Vegetation”

Steve McQuillan

Scripture Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

Forgiveness is the greatest gift you can give yourself. —Maya Angelou

Forgiveness is in the air. Global Forgiveness Day was observed in July. National Day of Forgiveness was September 27 — just a few days ago. And then there's National Forgiveness & Happiness Day observed this coming Saturday, October 7. This day was established by Robert Moyers (also known as Mr. Happy) and the World Forgiveness Alliance.

According to the website, this day is set aside to celebrate “forgiveness and the amount of happiness it can bring to one's life. While many people hold on to grudges and fantasize about revenge, studies have revealed that the best way to heal is to actually forgive the person who hurt you. And no, forgiving someone does not make you weak. Instead, it contributes to the creation of a much more successful and happy you.”

So, what does Jesus say about forgiveness? Here are a few representative quotations:

“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven.” —Luke 6:37

“Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.” —Luke 17:4

“When you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.” —Mark 11:25

“Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.” —Part of *The Lord's Prayer*, Matthew 6:12

Clearly, Jesus was a strong proponent of forgiveness, and you might recall that even during his brutal execution on a Roman cross, he said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

If Jesus understood the power of forgiveness, perhaps we should pay attention. Here is some advice:

Let go of grudges (forgiveness makes you happier and healthier).

Forgiveness relieves stress (the stress we feel from anger, resentment and bitterness lessens and even fades entirely).

Forgiveness helps us to close a wound (when we forgive, we give ourselves permission to heal).

When we forgive, we give ourselves permission to stop living in the past.

And finally, forgiveness increases compassion (it makes us more understanding and helps mend relationships). —Timothy Merrill.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, create in me a heart to forgive. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith together.

**We believe that God creates all things,
renews all things and celebrates all things.**

**We believe Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God's presence,
a home for us to share with our kin.**

**We believe that God became flesh and blood,
became a piece of Earth, a human being called Jesus Christ,
who lived and breathed and spoke among us, suffered and died on a cross
for all human beings and for all creation.**

**We believe that the risen Jesus is the Christ at the core of creation,
reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.**

**We believe the Holy Spirit renews life in creation, groans in empathy with a
suffering creation and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.**

**Together We believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will
celebrate a new creation.**

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, you are, indeed, a God of order. The creation story makes that clear. After creating the earth, you made the rain to fall and the plants to produce. Then you put Adam in the Garden of Eden to till the land. You gave him a helpmate to fill his life with balance and with the ability to be fruitful. Our lesson from Acts further describes God's plan for "*men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation.*" **Lord in your mercy...**

God also set boundaries before Adam and Eve to keep them safe and holy. But they had free will, and made the wrong choice about the one forbidden tree in the Garden: The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sin entered their lives and their innocence died. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world. We pray for this congregation as we share the love of Jesus. Show us how to love another, respect our differences and work together for the good of our forests and trees. We name those among us who have asked for prayers. And for what else do the people of God pray or praise? **Lord in your mercy...**

Lord, show us how to honor the earth and its produce, the trees that provide shade, nourishment and products that we use every day. Protect our forests from misuse and exploitation. God also placed an emptiness in each person's heart "*that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him.*" To those who do find God, His promise is sure: "*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*" Thank you, Lord God, in Jesus' mighty name, we pray. Amen. CAROLYN T. LINN



Prayer Concerns

Members in Need of Prayer:

Sue Hays & Family on the passing of her Uncle Bill Essman.
 Yvonne Smith
 Mona White
 Neil and Verna Walden
 Robert Harris
 Jackie Miller
 Mary Schmidt
 Liz Smith
 Bill Biggs
 Arlene Robbins
 Mary Norris & Family
 Connie Alvarado
 Susan Berg
 Irene Pierini
 Jocelyn Miller
 Kirsten Linder
 Jim Thompson

Family and Friends:

Loren Gaither (Vonny)
 Russel DiGirolamo
 Blaise (Linn)
 Kevin & Collee (Pastor)
 Brad, Sam, & Luke Kossow
 Janet Sharp (Fake)
 Karl & Pauline Ritterbush (Fake)
 Art & Children (Anderson)
 Debbie West's Daughter, Christine
 Bill, Wife & Sons (Julie)
 Belinda Zavala (Norris)
 Renee Family on her passing. (Norris)
 Dan Fey & Family (Norris—No Relation)
 Jennifer Wenzel (Wilk)
 Bob Knous (Anderson)
 Melissa (Sandy T.)
 Joy Kensinger (Miller)
 Jenna Vance (Kossow)
 Emily Burton (Hays)
 Frank and Anita Porco (Vonny)
 Jim D. (Norris)
 Jade Dixon (Julie)
 Pam (Smith)
 Grace Johnson (Fake)
 Sierra Ramirez (Norris)
 Krystina Ramos (Norris)
 Dora Barraza (Norris)
 Carlos & Anne Cortez (Norris)
 Sandy Robbins (Robbins)
 JJ Werfelmann (Julie)
 Gloria Valdez (Norris)
 Emily & Sawyer Bogart (Anderson)
 Roger Robbins (Robbins)
 Michelle B. (Norris)
 Bonnie Wolfe (Norris)
 Hudson Otten (Anderson)
 Karen Ohanesian (Hays)
 Rosemary (Vonny)
 Nathan Robbins (Robbins)
 Darlee (Norris)



*Lord,
 Hear Our
 Prayer*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom 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 kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13

Special Music	"His Eye on the Sparrow"	Gloria Miller
Communion Hymn	"How Great Thou Art" Song Leaders (Congregation please join)	# (vv.)

Communion Blessing

Now may the penetrating power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind and your body to heal your wounds and, through you, to bring healing to Earth, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Benediction

Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion and to serve Earth by caring for creation. Hold again the fragrant symbol in your hands as you go forth to serve.

We will remember the forest! We will groan with creation! We will sing with the trees!

Will you care for creation?

We will care for creation! We will nurture the forests! We will celebrate life!

Closing Hymn “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

Sending

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all,
fill you with the knowledge of God’s presence in Earth and the impulse of Christ
within you. Go in peace, serving Christ and loving Earth!

We go in peace, serving Christ and tending Earth!

Postlude Susan Berg, Piano

HOME TOUCH® Activity Page

Week of October 1, 2023

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Sunday: 1 Corinthians 5-8
Monday: Ezekiel 37-39
Tuesday: Ezekiel 40-42
Wednesday: Ezekiel 43-45
Thursday: Ezekiel 46-48
Friday: Daniel 1-6
Saturday: Psalms 112-118

Today is World Communion Sunday

World Communion Sunday, first observed in 1936, is celebrated the first Sunday in October. It's a special Sunday when churches around the world give thanks to God for our oneness in Christ, the Prince of Peace, who calls us to serve in the midst of the world of people alienated from him and often estranged from each other. Let's thank God today for God's church, pray that it may be an effective agent for positive change in the world about us, and that many people might hear the Good News of Jesus!

QUOTE FALL

Directions: In the box below is a quotation attributed to Henry Ward Beecher. The quote will "fall" into place as you choose the correct letter from each column. For example, in the first column below, the first letter of the first word will be either an I, W, M or T. The second letter of the first word will be an A, E, T or A. We've dropped the first word for you.

I	A		G	I		P	S	U		W	C	H	H		T	E
W	E	K	E		U	N		B	P	T		H	T	A	W	
M	T		E	S	V	U		T	U		H	A	A	T		
T	A	K	I	S		E	O		R	I	T	W				
I	T															

ODD WORD OUT: Circle the word in each group that does NOT belong with the others.

Group 1: lions, tigers, bears, dogs, giraffes

Group 2: peas, corn, carrots, apples, beans

Group 3: Monday, May, Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday

Quote Fall:

It is not what we take up but what we give up that makes us rich.

Odd Word Out:

Group 1 — dogs;
Group 2 — apples;
Group 3 — May.



J
O
H
N
3
:
1
6

"FOR GOD
so *loved*
THE WORLD
THAT HE *gave*
HIS ONE AND
ONLY *Son*,
THAT WHOEVER
believes
IN HIM SHALL
NOT PERISH
BUT HAVE
eternal life."