

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH**

SUNDAY, APRIL 18th, 2021

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Wainfleet: Morgan's Point-Fork's Rd East

Earth Sunday

Caring for creation is something that all the residents of this beautiful, diverse, and breathtaking planet have a stake in. Earth Day, which falls on April 22, is the perfect opportunity to pay respect to the sacred bond between nature and humanity. Many faith traditions emphasize the importance of being stewards for the planet and honoring its life-sustaining blessings. Today we honour Mother Earth.

Offering Prayer

Generous God, we don't give because you make us. We don't give because anyone else is watching. We give because we are grateful and because we want to be part of the work of your world in every way we can. God, receive these gifts we give this morning from the work of our hands and our hearts. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, let us dwell in God's shelter. Let us dwell in God's work of art. Come, because the Earth is the Lord's, And God's Earth is our home. We live in God's World; we are not alone. We share this life with the heavens and the earth, With the waters and the land, With trees and grasses, With fish, birds, and animals, With minerals and creatures of every form, And with all our brothers and sisters. God is good and everything God makes is good. God is love and everything God makes is love's fruit. Let us worship God!

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OPENING HYMN: #291 All Things Bright and Beautiful
[Refrain:]

**All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful:
in love, God made them all.**

1 Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colours,
God made their tiny wings: **[Refrain]**

2 The purple-headed mountain,
the river running by,
the sunset, and the morning
that brightens up the sky: **[Refrain]**

3 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden,
God made them every one. **[Refrain]**

4 The rocky mountain splendour,
the lone wolf's haunting call,
the great lakes and the prairies,
the forest in the fall; **[Refrain]**

5 God gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God our maker,
who has made all things well. **[Refrain]**

OPENING PRAYER

Let us give thanks for the world around us. Thanks for all the creatures, stones and plants. Let us learn their lessons and seek their truths, So that their path might be ours, And we might live in harmony with all of nature for a better life. May the Earth continue to live, May

the heavens above continue to live, May the rains continue to dampen the land, May the wet forests continue to grow, May we continue to respect and take care of God's creation. Amen

ANTHEM

READING: Beatitudes for Earth Sunday By Richard S. Gilbert

Blessed are the heavens,
for they declare the power of creation.
Blessed is the earth, our beloved home,
for she is a planet of plenitude.

**Blessed are the waters thereon,
for they gave rise to living things.
Blessed is the land,
for it is the source of life abundant.**

Blessed is the air we breathe,
for it fires us to life and love.
Blessed are the beasts of the field,
for they are glorious to behold.

**Blessed are the birds of the air,
for they carve a graceful arc in the sky.
Blessed are the mountains and the seas and the valleys,
for their variety makes rich our habitat.**

Blessed are the fields of grain, the orchards of fruit,
for they give sustenance, asking nothing in return.
Blessed are the dwellers on earth,
for they cherish the privilege of living upon it.

**Blessed are they who protect the earth and all her creatures,
from the plants of the field to the trees of the forest,
for their reward shall be harmony with the web of existence.
Rejoice, and be glad,
for the earth and her people are one.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 1:1-12 (NIV)

The Beginning

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. ⁶ And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. ⁹ And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Psalm 65

Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away. You make fast the mountains by your power; they are girded about with might. You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples. Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy. You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth. You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase. You crown the year with your

goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty. May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy. May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.

VIDEO: Love Song to the Earth

CHILDREN'S TIME & MESSAGE: Earth Sunday

Psalm 65 offers a song of praise for our amazing world, a world that provides us with everything we need. We are 93 million miles from the sun, which is exactly the right distance to give us the solar energy and light that provides for all living things. Our globe spins at a rate where we have a length of day and night that results in the balance we need-between dark and light, heat and coolness. We have air with just the right amount of oxygen for all plants and animals. We have a water cycle that moves water from sky to soil to rivers and back to the sky. We have an incredible array of biology, from rain forests and bacteria to whales. We have reason and skill to protect and preserve this amazing world. And yet, we are not preserving and protecting this world, thus we are not fulfilling our role in God's eternal purpose. Fifty-one years ago, in response to many environmental challenges, twenty million North Americans gathered in schools, universities and communities to proclaim the first Earth Day on April 22nd 1970.

From that...modern environmentalism stepped into the forefront following that first Earth Day. New laws were passed. Businesses and local governments made significant changes. We saw rivers, lakes, drinking water and air quality improvements. Open dumps turned into sanitary landfills. But we have continued to consume resources beyond what our earth can sustainably provide and today's environmental problems are more daunting and complex than those we faced in the sixties and seventies.

Earth Day is a reminder that God values all of His creation. We need to take time to appreciate our planet and the One who created it. First of all I going to play a game with all of you...

GAME of KNOWLEDGE: EARTH DAY TRUE/FALSE TRIVIA

I going to ask all of you to stand up.

Today we're going to see how well you know the planet you live on! I'm going to ask you several trivia questions.

If you think the answer is TRUE, hold out your fist and give it a thumbs-up.

If you think the answer is FALSE, hold out your fist and give a thumbs-down.

If you get it right, stay standing and keep playing.

If you get it wrong, have a seat.

We'll keep playing until we get a winner... or I'm finished asking questions!

1. True or False: The Earth moves around the sun at approximately 67,000 miles per hour. (TRUE)
2. True or False: The Earth is 193 million miles from the sun. (FALSE – it's only 93 million.)
3. True or False: The world's longest mountain range is actually underwater. (TRUE)
4. True or False: The lowest recorded temperature on Earth was minus 128.6 degrees Fahrenheit in Antarctica. (TRUE)
5. True or False: The highest reported temperature was 138 degrees Fahrenheit in the country of Brazil. (FALSE – it was in Libya.)
6. True or False: Earth is the only planet not named after a Roman god. (TRUE)
7. True or False: 80% of the Earth's surface is covered with water. (FALSE – 70%)
8. True or False: The highest point on Earth is Mount Kilimanjaro. (FALSE – Mount Everest)
9. True or False: It takes about 15 minutes for light from the sun to reach the Earth. (FALSE – it's closer to 8 minutes.)
10. True or False: The Amazon rainforest is home to nearly one third of the Earth's land species. (TRUE)
11. True or False: You would weigh more if you lived at the North Pole than you did if you lived at the Equator. (TRUE – a person who weighs 150.8 lbs at the North Pole would only weigh 150 lbs at the Equator because of the gravitation pull at the Earth's poles.)
12. True or False: Lightning strikes somewhere on the Earth 5.2 million times per day. (FALSE – it's actually 8.6 million times.)

13. True or False: The first photo from the Earth taken from space was in 1958. (FALSE – 1968)

14. True or False: The Nile River, the longest on Earth, is 4,160 miles in length. (TRUE)

15. True or False: The Earth is round. (FALSE – it's actually flattened at the poles!)

Great job everyone!

I know some of those questions were pretty hard.

Turns out even though we've lived here our entire lives, we may not actually know a lot about or fully appreciate our home planet.

Maybe that's because we tend to take the earth for granted.

That is what Earth Sunday is about... appreciating our planet and the God who created it.

Many times, we and all people in society take for granted what we have when it comes to the earth and think about this ... the Earth itself might be the gift from God we take for granted the most.

Be honest... when was the last time you simply gave thanks to God for the planet we live on?

For many people, living on planet Earth is something is simply considered a birthright.

After all, it's the only world we've ever known.

We really have nothing else to compare it with.

But when you think about the facts, we learned in our game earlier, and when you really look into the detail and creativity on display on our planet...it might help you gain an appreciation for the Earth.

Now, Earth Day isn't typically celebrated as much as other holidays. Your family probably doesn't have a big Earth Day cookout or get-together.

You might think Earth Day to be an odd holiday to celebrate.

But there is something to be said for giving thanks and celebrating the Earth.

After all, the Earth is the first of God's creations we learn about in the Bible, mentioned in the very first verse of the Genesis.

When we dig into the first chapter of Genesis, we're reminded of how all this got here.

We see the importance of giving thanks for God's creation... for the light... and the water... and the sky... and the land... and the animals.

Also...there's a certain line of thinking where people wonder if taking care of the Earth matters at all.

Well, it does. God gave us the job of taking care of the earth.

In Genesis 1:26, God commands human beings to "reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

It's our job to be good stewards of what God has given us. Including the earth.

After all, we want a healthy Earth for ourselves and for generations to come.

So, on Earth Day remember that God values all of His creation. Take time to appreciate our planet, and the One who created it.

HYMN # 187 The Spring Has Come

1 The spring has come let all the Church be part of it!

The world has changed, and God is at the heart of it!

New light, new day, new colour after winter grey.

New light, new day, the spring has come,

let all the Church be part of it!

2 The sun is warm, let all God's children play in it!

The world expands, let's spread the Gospel way in it!

New leaf, new thrust, new greening for the love of Christ.

New leaf, new thrust, the sun is warm,

let all God's children play in it!

3 The spring has come, new people are the flowers of it.

Through wind and rain, new life is in the showers of it.

New bud, new shoot, new hope will bear the Spirit's fruit.

New bud, new shoot, the spring has come,

new people are the flowers of it.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of the universe, we praise your great long work of creation:

the moment of glory when our universe began

the birth and burning of the first brilliant stars,

the stars' explosion in blazing supernovas;

the formation of our sun from scattered bits of dust;
the emergence of Earth, the wonder of water,
and there in the waters the miracle of life.

We praise your great long work of creation:
the unfolding of plant and animal life,
the development of human body and brain
and all the marvels of human creativity;
our rapidly expanding knowledge and technology;
our coming to understand where we have come from
and all that we are intimately part of.

We praise your great long work of creation. God of the universe,
we thank you for your billions of years of making in bringing this to
be. May we live in the awareness of your magnificent and ongoing
creation. May we live in ways that honour your work. May we be
agents of your continuing creation. Blessed be. Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #296 This is God’s Wondrous World

1 This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world; I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought.

2 This is God's wondrous world: the birds their carols raise,
the morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world: God shines in all that's fair;
in the rustling grass or mountain pass, God's voice speaks everywhere.

3 This is God's wondrous world: O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world: why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring: God reigns, let earth be glad!
Amen.

SENDING FORTH

As we go forth from this sacred space,
May we celebrate Earth and our shared lives,
May we recognize our connections to all that is in and on Earth,
May we truly and deeply value the inherent worth of all
In this awesome interconnected web of existence,
May we commit ourselves to a new way,
And may we hold our commitments and each other
in faith and in care in the days ahead. Amen

CHORAL AMEN

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Remember... the Creator is the wind on my face,
the rain in my hair, the sun that warms me.
Creator is the trees, rocks, grass, the majesty of
the sky and the intense mystery of the universe.
Creator is the infant who giggles at me in the
grocery line, the beggar who reminds me how rich
I really am, the idea that fires my most brilliant
moments, the feeling that fuels my most loving
act and the part of me that yearns for that feeling
again and again. Whatever ceremony, ritual,
meditation, song, thought or action it takes to
reconnect to that feeling is what I need to do
today... just Remember.

Announcements

Friday, April 30th: Spaghetti Supper at Hagersville United Church from 4-6pm. Takeout only! Curbside pickup & in-town delivery available. Tickets are \$10/person. Meal includes spaghetti with homemade meat sauce, bun, salad & dessert. To reserve your ticket, please call 905-768-3729.

Please note that during the time we are in lockdown, we will not be hosting coffee time at either church. We look forward to resuming when we are able to.

