

Beginning
THE SEASON OF CREATION
September 13, 2026
10:00 AM



“Mní wíchóni (Water Is Life)” by Audrey Kay Dowling. Portage Hill Art Gallery.

A warm welcome to St. John's!

If you are visiting with us, we would like to get to know you better, so please fill out a visitor's card found in the pew and place in the offering plate.

There is no wrong way to worship. We invite you to participate in the way that feels most comfortable and authentic to you. The people's responses are in **bold** and instructions for sitting, standing, and kneeling are in *red italics*. Any illustrations throughout this bulletin are invitations to prayer—feel free to **color** them!

A Liturgy for the Feast of Creation

The people are invited to gather in the Gardens.

Greeting & Call to Worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Come, let us worship God, the Creator of all things, who calls us to dwell in peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings and quiet resting places.

We gather in gratitude for God's creation, longing for justice and peace to abide in the land.

Come, let us follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who reconciles all things and leads us in the way of righteousness, so that the wilderness may become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be deemed a forest.

We come to walk in the footsteps of Christ, seeking healing for creation and peace for all people.

Come, let us move with the Holy Spirit, the breath of life poured out upon us, bringing renewal to the earth and restoring the harmony of creation.

We praise God, who revives the land, and calls us to be peacemakers with all creation.

The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. God of justice and peace, we gather in Your presence, united with all living beings.

We come in hope, worship, and commitment to live as caretakers of Your world.

May our prayers rise like a lifting fog, and our worship be a song of love for all creation.

We thank the Lord for giving life to all creation! We thank God for our neighbors' life—human and non-human alike.

As we gather, we share the hope and the sufferings of our sisters and brothers throughout all creation. In communion with the waves of the sea, and the rustling of the trees, we recite Psalm 139:14 together:

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." We love you, God! Amen.

Confession & Proclamation of Forgiveness

All creation is full of God's praise, and we are called to join in with joy, righteousness, and peacefulness. Yet as we look around us, we see conflict and destruction.

All too often, we fail to live as we are called—to be ambassadors of peace, righteousness, and reconciliation. Let us confess our sins and come before the Triune God, asking for forgiveness and renewal.

Loving God, we have failed You and abused the gift You have given us. We have offended You and defiled what You have made.

Forgive us for betraying Your trust. Forgive us for our greed and arrogance.

Forgive us for what we have done to Your earth, to Your oceans, to Your creatures on the land, in the sky, and in the depths.

Hear, O God of Compassion: The cries of the land have become a desert; lands laid barren through corrupt agriculture, pollution, mining, and deforestation.

The cries of islands drowning in rising seas, oceans swelling with the melting ice.

The cries of Mother Earth in storm and drought.

May our God have mercy on us, forgive us our trespasses, and give us new life.

Indeed, God has promised grace and forgiveness: "My people will abide in peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

Let us rejoice and trust in our calling, to live as we are called—reconciled with the Father, ambassadors for Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 32:14-18

- ¹⁴ For the palace will be forsaken,
the populous city deserted;
the hill and the watchtower
will become dens forever,
the joy of wild asses,
a pasture for flocks;
¹⁵ until a spirit from on high is poured out on us,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.
¹⁶ Then justice will dwell in the wilderness
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
¹⁷ The effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
¹⁸ My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Thanksgiving

God of life, God of love, God of Creation, thank
You for all the wonderful creatures You have made.

**We thank You for the gift to inhabit and enjoy
this world.**

Thank You for forests that provide our air and shade
on hot days.

**Thank You for the sun's shining energy, and the
rains that refresh the earth with their fragrance.**

Thank You for fertile soil that feeds us and sustains
many creatures.

**Help us recognize the earth's community as a
democracy of life, rooted in the local economies
of those who tend the land.**

Give us strength to defend biodiversity and cultural
diversity, putting the common good first, honoring
all beings' right to sustenance.

**Help us value every species, every person, every
culture, knowing each has intrinsic worth.**

Help us walk this world with faith and hope, to be
good caretakers of Your creation—to protect it,
respect its resources, and heed its limits.

**Give us courage to fight for life, resilience in the
face of destruction, and resolve to resist those
who exploit creation for profit.**

Thank You for each life we offer back to You,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The people are now invited to move into the church.



The Word of God

Hymn 596

Judge eternal

Sung by all.

Komm

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray. Almighty God, you parted the sea and made a path to freedom, commanding wind and water to serve your purpose. Teach us to see your power in earth, sky, and sea. As we face rising waters and a changing climate, guide us with your light and grace. Deliver us from fear and lead us to action, that we may honour you by protecting your creation: through Jesus Christ our Liberator. **Amen.**

The people are seated.

The First Lesson

Exodus 14:19-31

¹⁹The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 114



¹Hallelujah!

When Israel came out of Egypt, *
the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,

²Judah became God's sanctuary *

and Israel his dominion.

Antiphon

³The sea beheld it and fled; *

Jordan turned and went back.

⁴The mountains skipped like rams, *

and the little hills like young sheep.

Antiphon

⁵What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? *

O Jordan, that you turned back?

⁶You mountains, that you skipped like rams? *

you little hills like young sheep?

Antiphon

⁷Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, *

at the presence of the God of Jacob,

⁸Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water *

and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

Antiphon

The Second Lesson

Romans 14:1-12

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The people stand as able.

Sequence Hymn 674

Forgive our sins as we forgive

Sung by all.

Detroit

The Gospel

Matthew 18:21-35

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The people are seated.

The Sermon

The people stand as able.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,

Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one, Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

- Celebrant Each of us is finally accountable to God. So let us pray, saying, “Lord, we are in need of your mercy; have patience with us.”
- Intercessor We acknowledge that we all sin against our siblings in Christ. Forgive us even as we forgive each other. Help us to be merciful to each other in the Church.
Silence Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**
- Intercessor We acknowledge that we desire to repay violence with violence. Open our hearts to forgive even those who commit evil acts towards us and those we love. Help us to live mercifully in our world.
Silence Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**
- Intercessor We acknowledge we do not always appreciate the diversity of your creation. Teach us to live in peace with each other and with your creation. Help us to live mercifully with our world. *Silence* Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**
- Intercessor We acknowledge that we do not love our neighbors as you love us. Forgive us for placing ourselves as judge over others when judgment belongs to you alone. Help us to accept the great mercy you choose to show others. *Silence* Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**
- Intercessor We pray for those whose lives are broken by evil. Because of your mercy we believe that whatever befalls them, they belong to you; you care for the brokenhearted. Help us to share your love with all those who are hurting. *Invite the congregation to add their petitions and thanksgivings, followed by silence.* Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**
- Intercessor We remember those who died in violence. We remember those men and women of the armed services, innocent bystanders, first responders, and even those we have called enemies. The dead belong to you, O Lord. Even as we seek your mercy for ourselves, judge all those who have died with mercy. *Silence* Lord, we are in need of your mercy;
- People Have patience with us.**

The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.

The Peace

- Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

The people greet each other with a sign of God's peace and are seated.

Announcements

The Holy Communion

The Offertory

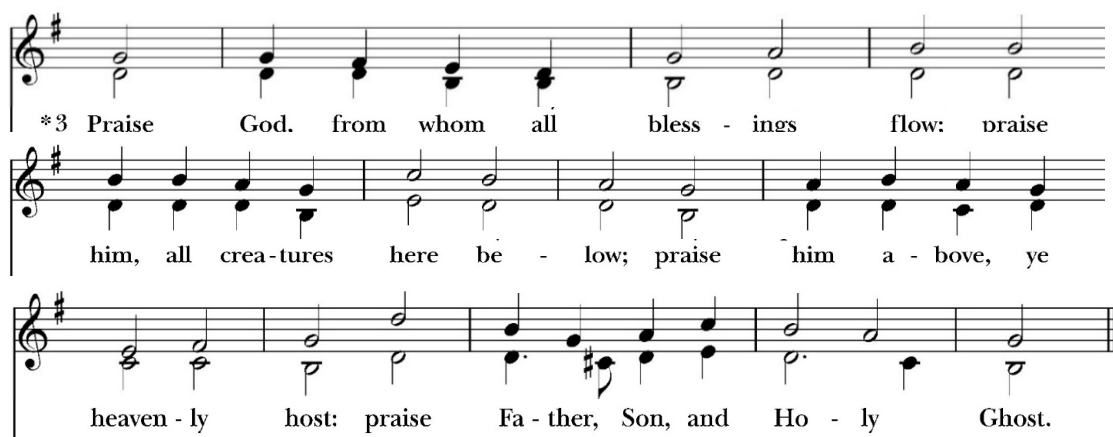
Having listened to the Word of God, affirmed our faith, confessed our sin, and shared in the peace, we now prepare ourselves for the gift of Holy Communion. At the offertory, we humbly offer back to God some of what God has given us, both in the bread and wine, and in the money we give. Money is just one way people choose to share what they have—financial gifts are gratefully received but never required. Here at St. John's, it is tradition that people stand as the elements are brought forward and are seated once the bread and wine are on the altar.

Offertory Anthem

Creation will be at peace

Anna Laura Page

Doxology



*3 Praise God. from whom all bless - ings flow: praise
him, all crea-tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heaven - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Celebrant It is truly right to glorify you, heavenly Father, Creator of the Universe through Jesus Christ your only Son. Through your Word all things came to be. At the dawn of creation, your Spirit hovered over the waters. You brought forth life in forms innumerable, including this our fragile earth, and we amongst its inhabitants.

You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might guard and serve our fellow creatures.

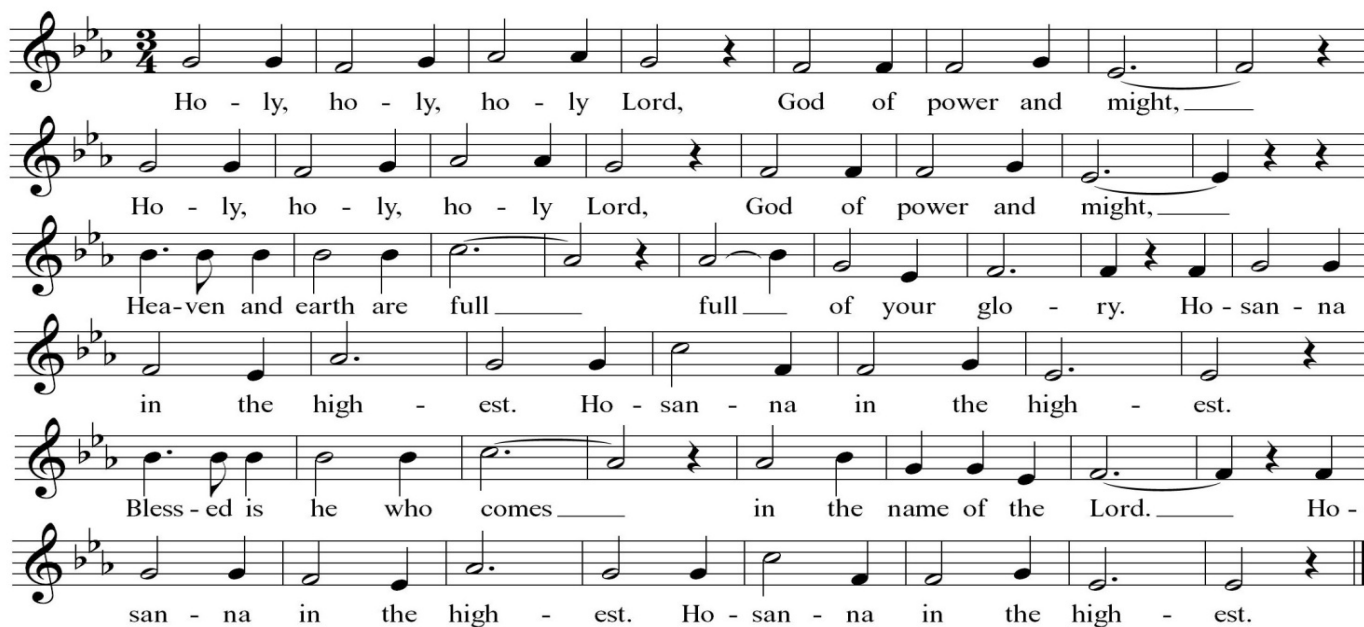
Through our rebellion we alienated ourselves from your presence, breaking our harmony with you and all created order. But you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help. In the new covenant, you gave us your Son, the firstborn of creation, to show us the way of righteousness. By his Passion and cross, we are lovingly redeemed; and through your grace we work with Christ in renewing the life of the Earth.

Celebrant And so in harmony with the cosmos, we join our voices to the songs of praise of all your creatures both in heaven and on earth in one great act of awe and adoration:

Together

Sung by all.

Schubert



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, _____
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, _____
Hea-ven and earth are full _____ full _____ of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na
in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes _____ in the name of the Lord. _____ Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The people kneel or stand as able.

Celebrant Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these earthly gifts of bread and wine, so that they may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and gave you thanks. He blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

In the same way Jesus took the cup of wine and gave you thanks. He blessed it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Together

Christ as died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Celebrant

Therefore, Heavenly Father, as we raise up to you the fruits of your creations, this bread and this cup, we celebrating the memorial of our redemption; recalling Christ's death, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand.

Graciously accept, we pray, the offering of your Holy Church, and grant that we who are nourished by the body and blood of Christ may be empowered for works of justice and restoration, and strengthened in our commitment to care for your creation.

May we be reconciled with creation so that the whole earth, our common home, may be filled with the knowledge of your glory as the waters cover the sea.

By whom and with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all that has been, is, and will be in your universe, we worship you, God of all in songs of everlasting praise now and forever.

People

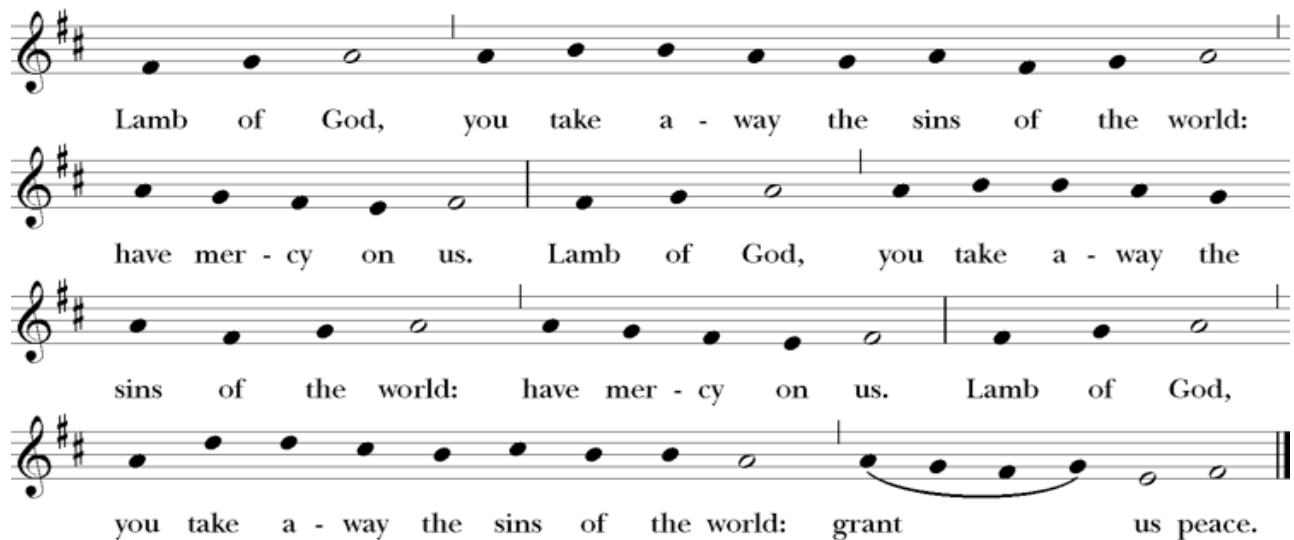
AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
Together **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.**

The Fraction Anthem

Sung by all.



Invitation to Communion

All who seek God and a deeper life in Christ are welcome to receive Holy Communion. While we believe that it is most meaningful when done as a baptized Christian, no one will ever be turned away from God's table.

If you would like to come to the altar for communion:

Ushers will let you know when it is your turn to come forward. When you get to the altar, you may stand or kneel. If you would like to receive the bread (we use wafers), you may extend your hands and eat what is given to you. If you would like to drink the wine, the server will bring the chalice (silver cup) to your lips. Please help guide the cup and take a sip. The server then wipes the rim and rotates the cup. Wine is not required--receiving the bread only is full participation in the Eucharist.

To decrease the spread of germs, the priest is the only person who dips the wafer into the wine. If this is how you would like to receive communion, please tell the priest.

Gluten-free wafers are available; please tell the priest at the altar.

If for any reason you prefer to receive a blessing instead of receiving the bread and wine, please cross your arms across your chest. The priest will ask if she can touch your forehead with her thumb for the blessing. Touching the forehead is not required—you can say no!

We are delighted to bring Holy Communion or a blessing to folks in the pews—please tell an usher, and they will make sure the priest comes to you.

Post Communion Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

People **God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all creation in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

The Blessing

Celebrant May God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters at creation, guide your steps.

May Christ, the Living Water, refresh your soul and reconcile your relationships.

May the Holy Spirit flow through you like a life-giving river, bringing healing to people, communities, and the whole creation.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn 410

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

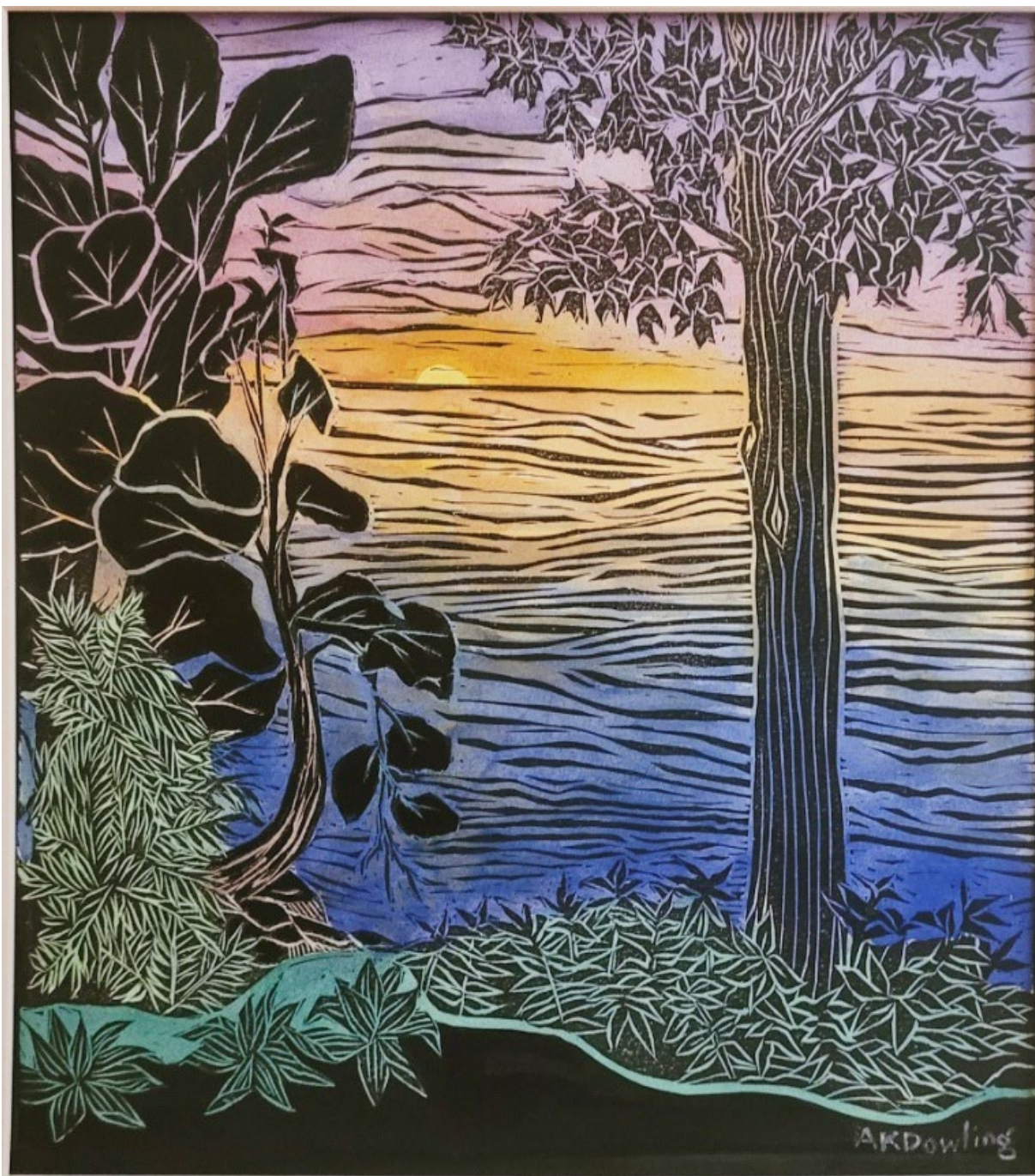
Sung by all.

Lauda anima

The Dismissal

The celebrant dismisses the people who respond,

People **Thanks be to God!**



"Mní wičhóni (Water Is Life)" by Audrey Kay Dowling. Portage Hill Art Gallery.

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