

Faith United Church of Christ

*“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.
A place to make a difference.”*

April 22, 2018

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 AM

*Earth Day / Integrity of Creation Sunday
Emphasizing Environmental Justice for Watersheds*

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God’s grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life’s journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Welcome and Announcements

*Please sign the registration pads at the ends of the pews on the center aisle.
We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship
in Romig Hall (lower level of elevator or stairs).*

** = You are invited to stand as you are able*

Prelude

Keep us Lord, By Thy Word

D. Buxtehude

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst *(acolytes light altar candles)*

We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love’s light is brought into our awareness. The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.

Affirming God’s Presence in Us All

“You Matter!”

Sharing Christ's Peace

As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."

***Hymn for a Sustainable World**

see yellow insert

"We Live in the Fullness of God's Whole Creation"

***Centering Our Souls**

Loving God, help us to turn our lives around to be people of restoration.

Help us build just relationships among human beings and with the rest of creation.

Help us to live sustainably, rejecting consumerism and the exploitation of creation.

God of justice, give us courage and persistence to work for justice for those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change.

God of all wisdom, give wisdom to the leaders of all the world's nations.

Give them the determination to find a just solution that protects the people who are most vulnerable in our world, and protect our creation.

Creator God, give us your Spirit to work together to restore your creation so that food can be abundant for all people.

Let our care for other people be our act of worship and obedience to you. May it be so.

-- from Australian Lutheran World Service

Our Stories of Random Acts of Kindness & Intentional Deeds of Compassion

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Choral Anthem The Earth Is the Lord's by Carl J. Nygard, Jr.

A Time for All God's Children

Prayers

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

A Ute Prayer ***"Earth, Teach Me"***

Earth teach me quiet ~ as the grasses are still with new light.

Earth teach me suffering ~ as old stones suffer with memory.

Earth teach me humility ~ as blossoms are humble with beginning.

Earth teach me caring ~ as mothers nurture their young.

Earth teach me courage ~ as the tree that stands alone.
Earth teach me limitation ~ as the ant that crawls on the ground.
Earth teach me freedom ~ as the eagle that soars in the sky.
Earth teach me acceptance ~ as the leaves that die each fall.
Earth teach me renewal ~ as the seed that rises in the spring.

***Hymn for Earth Caring**

“Touch the Earth Lightly”

#569

Scripture Lesson

I John 3.16-22

Message

“Love That Takes Action on Behalf of Others”

Ecological Affirmations of Faith

We stand with awe and gratitude as members of God’s bountiful and good creation.

We rejoice in the splendor and mystery of countless species, our common creaturehood, and the interdependence of all that God makes. We believe that the Earth is home for all and that it has been created intrinsically good (Genesis 1).

We lament that the human species is shattering the splendid gifts of this web of life, ignoring our responsibility for the well being of all life, while destroying species and their habitats at a rate never before known in human history.

We believe that the Holy Spirit, who animates all of creation, breathes in us and can empower us to participate in working toward the flourishing of Earth’s community of life.

We believe that the people of God are called to forge ways of being human that enable socially just and ecologically sustainable communities to flourish for generations to come. And we believe in God’s promise to fulfill all of creation, anticipating the reconciliation of all (Colossians 1:15), in accordance with God’s promise (II Peter 3:13).

We lament that we have rejected this vocation, and have distorted our God-given abilities and knowledge in order to ransack and often destroy ecosystems and human communities rather than to protect, strengthen, and nourish them.

We believe that, in boundless love that hungers for justice, God in Jesus Christ acts to restore and redeem all creation (including human beings). God incarnate affirms all creation (John 1:14), which becomes a sacred window to eternity. In the cross and resurrection we know that God is drawn into life’s most brutal and broken places and there brings forth healing and liberating power. That saving action restores right relationships among all members of “the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

We confess that instead of living and proclaiming this salvation through our very lives and worship, we have abused and exploited the Earth and people on the margins of power and privilege, altering climates, extinguishing species, and jeopardizing Earth’s capacity to sustain life as we know and love it.

We believe that the created world is sacred—a revelation of God’s power and gracious presence filling all things. This sacred quality of creation demands moderation and sharing, urgent antidotes for our excess in consumption and waste, reminding us that economic justice is an essential condition of ecological integrity.

We cling to God’s trustworthy promise to restore, renew, and fulfill all that God creates.

We long for and work toward the day when churches, as embodiments of Christ on Earth, will respond to the “groaning of creation” (Romans 8:22) and to God’s passionate desire to “renew the face of the Earth” (Psalm 104:30).

We look forward to the day when the lamentations and groans of creation will be over, justice with peace will reign, humankind will nurture not betray the Earth, and all of creation will sing for joy.

The Theological Statement on the Environment was drafted in September 2004 at the College of Preachers and finalized February 2005. For information on how you, your congregation, faith group, judicatory, or denomination can affirm this statement visit www.ncccojustice.org or contact Cassandra Carmichael, eco-justice program director, National Council of Churches, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 108, Washington, DC 20002; 202-544-2350 ext. 27; or cassandra@toad.net.

***Hymn for Stewardship**

“We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky”

#563

WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD’S SERVICE
THROUGH FAITHFULNESS

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

“Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing.”

Offertory Organ improvisation

***Song of Dedication** Tune: *Old Hundredth*

O God of Creatures great and small: May we as stewards hear your call!

Let us live with loving grace; With all life on this earthly space.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

Great Spirit, all Earth is a gift; and we are a part of that gift. Bless us to be a blessing by how we give of what we have received. Let our generosity and joy grow in our giving, and may we offer back more than we have taken. Let not the sun rise on our selfishness, nor set on our compassion. Let us be rooted like the sycamore tree in our integrity, and be given the wings of eagles that we may soar with loving-kindness towards all creation. Grant us the endurance of the wind, and constancy of the waves, in our stewardship of all the lands, waters, and skies and all the life they nourish. May the wisdom of all creatures, and our respect and love for them all, inspire us to be the caretakers you have designed us to be: Now and forever.

Encouragement for the Journey

We are called to assist the earth,

to heal her wounds and in the process, heal our own –
indeed, to embrace the whole creation
in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder.
– Wangari Maathai, from her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech

Postlude Postlude in F Major E. L. Ashford

***The Light of Love Goes into the World**

Love's light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!

WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.
Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation Interim Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers
Trustee — Larry Bair Ushers — Larry Bair
Liturgist — Lois Bair

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman
Organist—Mark Ferraguto Choir Director – Mike Dolan
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.

Prayers for healing and wholeness:

Susie Keck, Joann Edwards, Lisa V. (John Vincenti's daughter), the family of Lois Bair, Carlton Miller, Bob Ritzman, the family of June Brown, Lisa B. (JoAnn's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Bunnie Hartswick, Katelynn Wilson, Darlene Ripka, April S., Randy Brown (Aimee's Dad), the Piggot family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew), the Snook family.



Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC! We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and **conversation**. There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

Electronic Giving Options: During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smartphone to be directed to our online donation page.



April Special Offering

Hoffman Homes for Youth serves boys and girls ages 6 to 18 with mental health diagnoses by providing behavioral and cognitive therapy, physical health care services, education, spiritual nurturing and a safe and comfortable home for up to 141 children. Make checks payable to Faith UCC with "Hoffman Homes" noted in the memo line. More at: <http://hoffmanhomes.com/>



- April 29 5th Sunday of Easter, Rev Ann Graves
- May 4 First Friday
- May 6 6th Sunday of Easter
- May 8 Trustees' Meeting, 7 PM

Get In Touch with Us!

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Tel: (814) 237-3904 Websites: www.faihucc.info facebook.com/SCFaithUCC
Church Office Email: faihucc@comcast.net Pastor's Email: revbmyers@yahoo.com

Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays

Pastor Bret's Office Hours: Tuesday 5-8 p.m., Wednesday 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursday 2-4 p.m.
or other hours by appointment.

Appointments are recommended so as to give you the time you need without interruptions. You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472, or email him at revbmyers@yahoo.com.