

**THE 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER AND
CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY
A Service of the Word**

The 3rd Sunday of Easter and Celebration of Earth Day

*But we have only begun to love the Earth.
We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life.
How could we tire of hope? So much in the bud.
How can desire fail? We have only begun to imagine justice and mercy,
Only begun to envision how it might be to live as siblings
With beast and flower, not as oppressors.*

— “Beginners” by Denise Levertov

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day, the day of Christ’s resurrection

Prelude

Dr. Patricia Snyder

Introit — “Simple Gifts” Shaker Tune arr. by Copland

Jonah Garcia, soloist

‘Tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free,
‘Tis the gift to come down where you want to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right.
‘Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain’d,
To bow and to bend we will not be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning we come ‘round right.

The earth is our Mother and the fullness thereof,
Her streets, her slums, as well as stars above.
Salvation is here, where we laugh, where we cry,
Where we seek and love, where we live and die.
When true liberty is found,
By fear and by hate we will no more be bound.
In love and in light we will find our new birth,
And in peace and freedom redeem the Earth.

Welcome

Acclamation & Greeting

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: **And also with you.**

O Great Mystery

One: Oh Great Mystery
We give thanks for the natural world we see:
All the creatures, stones, and plants
Who show us how to be.
We learn their lessons, seek their truths,
Return our loving praise,
We honor the peace they show us,
Which guides our human ways.
We ask that we may become like them, living in harmony,
And deep within our heart of hearts, Know the Sacred Mystery.

Call to Worship

One: Creator God, your Spirit moves over the face of our planet earth, our oceans and rivers. You are the one who gathers the seas in their places, and with your hands created the courses of the rivers. You bless the planet with rain maintaining the waters of life.

Many: **We thank you, Creator Spirit, for these gifts.**

One: Redeemer God, who even in the most critical moments of our history preserved the human race and the animal world,

Many: **You offer to your people, in the midst of our lack of care, the hope of a new world and a new tomorrow.**

One: Your promises are the hope of the world. Along with your Son, Jesus, we are your heirs, daughters and sons of your promises. We are most blessed.

Many: **We thank you, Holy One, for your love and mercy.**

One: God, preserver and sustainer of all creation, keep us in your Spirit grateful for clean air and water, animals, flowers and trees.

Many: **Day by day, keep us thankful, keep us committed to do justice not only for the planet, but also for all your people who live on it, near and far.**

One: At every sunrise, every day, guide us in a way where we live life to the fullest, in harmony with our neighbors and our environment.

Many: **At every sunset, in the quietness peacefulness, and beauty, let us give thanks for the beauty of the earth. Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

One: Have mercy on us, O God, with the love that shaped all creation,

Many: **for we confess that we have been the ones who made endangered and extinct - creatures of air and land by destroying their habitats.**

One: If there is any clean water left, wash us,

Many: but only after the creatures of the oceans and lakes and rivers return and are healed.

One: Melting your glaciers, we sin, and we have done what created harm.

Many: Wildfires rages across California, Australia, and the Amazon rainforest – the fox and koala and ocelot judge us by their death.

One: Let us not be clean,

Many: but dirty in a community garden,

One: and wet with sweat,

Many: because we have walked and biked and carpoled, washed only with quick showers.

One: Most of all, let our hearts be stirred not by what makes us wealthy in money but what makes us wealthy in our future generations.

Many: Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew in us the Spirit that hovers over your creation.

One: Then we will let our children teach us, honor sacred lands of indigenous peoples,

Many: Open our lips for national parks and our mouths for wildlife refuges.

One: Deliver us from being destroyers, Holy One,

Many: And give us tongues that call for change.

One: For you have no delight when we pile abundance on abundance.

Many: The gift that pleases you is one pollinator saved – butterfly and bee, O God, is our acceptable prayer. Amen.

Hymn — “For the Beauty of the Earth”

this bulletin, pg. 9

Soul of our Souls

One: Divine Air – bring imagination and creativity to the world. Like the far-seeking hawk,
May we see this situation as the whole complex tapestry that it is, and be inspired with fresh and virgin weavings.
Like the unfettered winds,
May we be freed from old assumptions and patterns in how we respond, and breathe in new possibilities.

Divine Fire – bring clarity and compassionate passion to the world. Like the bright light of the sun,
May we see clearly the way forward of “what is necessary” for all life, And the time to come. Like the transforming flames,
May our grief, fear, and rage be transformed into compassion for all – All victims and perpetrators alike.

Divine Water – bring yielding and wisdom to the world. Like the gentle erosion of water upon stone,
May we release our personal and cultural biases,
And acknowledge the “wrong-thinking” that we may harbor. Like the deepening twilight upon the earth, May we remember the lessons of the past, And contemplate their meanings for the future.

Divine Earth – bring greening and surety to the world. Like the stretching branches of the tree, May we stretch ourselves
Into the life-affirming paths of reconciliation and healing. Like the deep peaceful dome of night,
May we stand firm in the Goddess and the God,
Through this “dark night” of confusion and fear, and false “stars.”

Many: **May our souls be strong, steady, and revealing.**
May our spirits be enlightened, faithful, and sure.
May our choices be wise and enduring, for the generations to come.
By all that is Sacred and True, Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

Refrain — “Alleluia”

CELTIC ALLELUIA

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading — Psalm 104

Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

Early Word

The “Alleluia” refrain (music above) is repeated.

Sermon — “Keepers of the Earth”

Rev. Dr. Debra Pallatto-Fontaine

Our Planet- In This Together

RESPONSE

We begin our lives of responding to the gospel in prayer and offering

Call to the Offering

Many: God of Beauty, can a generous prayer be lifted up to you this Eastertide? Can these gifts, given with love, be further transformed like echoes of grace, delighting all who receive their blessings?
May it be so, through the surprising power of your Holy Spirit, and may our lives speak of a loving and merciful God, full of Easter surprises. Amen.

Responding with our Gifts

During the offertory music, while reflecting on the gifts we have to offer, those participating via Zoom are welcome to submit prayer petitions—joys and concerns—via the “Chat” feature in Zoom. These petitions will be collected together and transmitted to Pastor Debbie for inclusion during the time for prayers of the people. To protect privacy, surnames will not be used.

OFFERTORY MUSIC — “Simple Song” from MASS by Bernstein

Jonah Garcia, soloist

Sing God a simple song: Lauda Laudē...
Make it up as you go along: Lauda, Laudē...
Sing like you like to sing. God loves all simple things,
For God is the simplest of all,
For God is the simplest of all.

I will sing the Lord a new song to praise Him to bless Him, to bless the Lord.

I will sing His praises will I live all of my days.

Blessed is the man who loves the Lord,
Blessed is the man who praises Him. Lauda, Lauda, Laudē...
And walks in His ways.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence comes my help.

I will lift up my voice to the Lord singing Lauda, Laudē.
For the Lord is my shade, is the shade upon my right hand,
The sun shall not smite me by day, nor the moon by night.

Blessed is the man who loves the Lord, Lauda, Lauda, Laudē,
And walks in His ways. Lauda, Lauda, Laudē,
Lauda, Lauda di da di day.
All of my days.

The Prayers of the People, *ending with* The Lord's Prayer

Many: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

For the Lord's Prayer, we invite you to use the language most comfortable for you: "Our Father/ Mother/ Creator/ Holy One..."

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us forth in mission for the world

News from our Life Together

Hymn — "All Creatures of Our God and King" *verses 1-3, 6*

this bulletin, pg. 10, 11

Benediction - Thanks to the Great Spirit

One: Now is the season of growing things;
Now we give thanks to our Creator, the Great Ruler, the Great Life, the Great Spirit;
Now He listens to the words of the people here assembled
We give thanks for the return of the planting season.
We give thanks again that we are permitted to take part in this ceremony.
We give thanks for the earth Our Mother, from whose breast all things grow.
We give thanks to Him for the seed to give back to our mother.
We give thanks for rivers and waters that flow,
For herbs and plants and all fruit-bearing trees and bushes that grow.
We give thanks that our supporters of life – corn, beans, and squash, fail us not.
That famine is not permitted to enter our lodge doors.

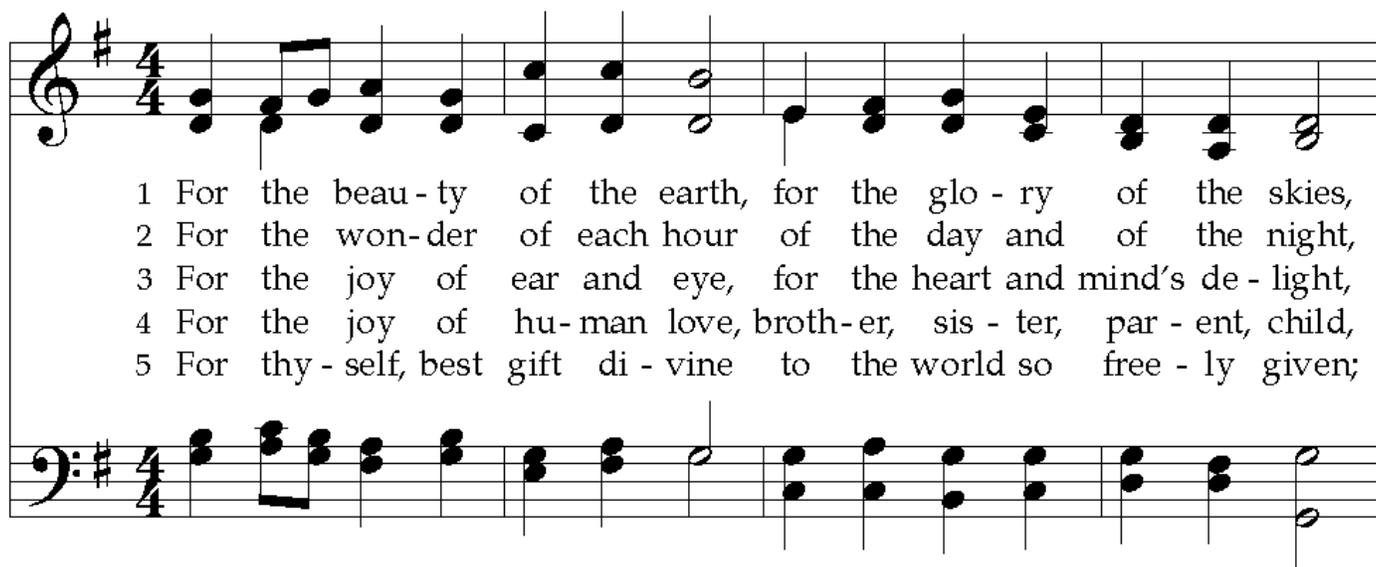
Postlude — "Hornpipe" from *Water Music* by Handel

Dr. Patricia Snyder

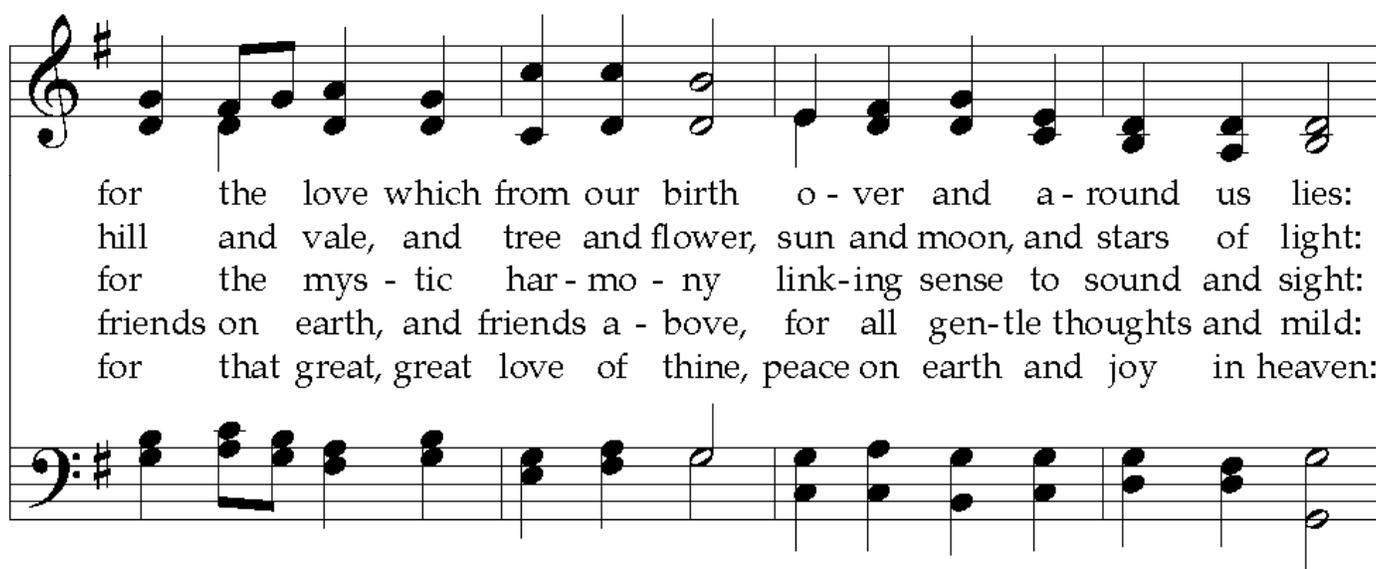
Following the postlude, the Zoom Meeting will remain open *for those who wish to connect and chat—a bring-your-own-coffee “coffee hour”! Depending on the number of participants, we may break people into smaller groups using the “breakout room” functionality. We look forward to connecting with you!*

For the Beauty of the Earth

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1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the glo-ry of the skies,
2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de-light,
4 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
5 For thy-self, best gift di-vine to the world so free-ly given;



for the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies:
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light:
for the mys-tic har-mo-ny link-ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild:
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:

Refrain



Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

15 All Creatures of Our God and King

Unison

1 All crea-tures of our God and King, lift up your voice
 2 O broth-er wind with clouds and rain, you nur-ture gifts
 3 O broth-er fire, so warm and bright, chase off the shad-
 4 All who for love of God for-give, all who in pain

Harmony

and with us sing, Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
 of fruit and grain. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
 ous of the night. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
 or sor-row grieve, Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

Unison

O broth-er sun with gold-en beam, O sis-ter moon
 O sis-ter wa-ter, flow-ing clear, make mu-sic for
 Dear moth-er earth, who day by day un-folds such bless-
 Christ bears your bur-dens and your fears; so, e-ven in

Harmony

with sil - ver gleam, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 your Lord to hear. Sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 ings on our way, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!
 the midst of tears, sing prais - es! Al - le - lu - ia!

Unison

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

5 And you, most gentle sister death,
 waiting to hush our final breath:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Since Christ our light has pierced your gloom,
 fair is the night that leads us home.
 Sing praises! Alleluia!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,
 and worship God with humble heart.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
 and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 Sing praises! Alleluia!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Notes and Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements:

- O Great Mystery – By Native American writer, Jamie Sams, in *God Has No Religion* by Frances Sheridan Goulart
- Hymn – “For the Beauty of the Earth”: Public domain. Reprinted from *Glory to God: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs*, ©2013 Westminster John Knox Press, #14. All rights reserved; reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-719182.
- Soul of Our Souls – Taken from The World Prayers Project in *God Has No Religion* by Frances Sheridan Goulart
- Prayer of Confession - “For the Healing of Nature” based on Psalm 51, adapted by the Rev. Maren Tirabassi
- Refrain – “Alleluia”: Music by Fintan O’Carroll, 1981; harm Christopher Walker, 1985; ©1985 Fintan O’Carroll and Christopher Walker; admin. OCP. All rights reserved; reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-719182. Reprinted from *Glory to God: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs*, ©2013 Westminster John Knox Press, #587.
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- Hymn – “All Creatures of Our God and Kind”: Music from the English Hymnal, 1906. Reprinted from *Glory to God: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs*, ©2013 Westminster John Knox Press, #15. All rights reserved; reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-719182.
- Thanks to the Great Spirit – Adapted from an Iroquois prayer in *God Has No Religion* by Frances Sheridan Goulart.

A Note on Giving: *We welcome and encourage your financial generosity in support of the Storrs Congregational Church UCC! Giving back to God and God’s mission through the life of this church is a part of your gratitude towards God and your faithful stewardship of all that God has entrusted to you.*

- **Mail:** *You can mail your check or money order to us at the church office*
- **Drop-off:** *You can drop off cash, checks, or money orders at the church office during the week.*
- **Online Bill Pay:** *Most banks and credit unions offer an “online bill pay” in their online account access. All you need to do is set up the church as another payee in that system, and your bank or credit union will print a check and mail it to us at no cost—you don’t even need to find a stamp!*
- **Online or text via ACH debit from a checking or savings account:** *By using our website giving portal (go to www.storrsconchurch.org and click the green “Give now...” button), you can make an auto-debit from your checking or savings account. (Note that we are assessed a small processing fee, 1% of the contribution, plus 35¢ per transaction. You will be given the option—and it is optional—when you make your contribution to add a small amount to offset the 1% processing fee.)*
- **Online or text via Debit Card or Credit Card:** *By using our website giving portal (go to www.storrsconchurch.org and click the green “Give now...” button), you can charge your contribution to a debit card or credit card. (Note that we are assessed a small processing fee, 3% of the contribution, plus 35¢ per transaction. You will be given the option—and it is optional—when you make your contribution to add a small amount to offset the 3% processing fee.) If using a credit card, know that we as a church do not want you to add to any debt load in order for you to contribute, as that’s not good stewardship! If using a credit card, please make sure, for your own sake, that it’s a card for which you pay off the balance each month.*

If you have any questions about how to make a contribution, or about your giving history, feel free to contact our Collector, Donna Latincsics (contact info available through the church office).

We envision our community as a welcoming, historic, and progressive Christian community. *We are an Open and Affirming congregation: Believing that each of us is unique and blessed with special talents from God, each a creation of God's love, alike and yet different, we open our doors and our ministry to all. We accept into full participation in the life of this Church: people of any age, economic status, gender, marital status, race, sexual orientation, and physical, emotional and mental capability. As a community, we will work to put aside all prejudices and to affirm and promote the worth and dignity of each person.*

STORRS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

***We share in God's love by growing in faith,
courageously seeking justice, and generously caring for all people.***

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