



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
CONGREGATIONAL
SUFFIELD, CT

AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 21, 2024

Order of Worship

GATHERING MUSIC

LIGHTING OF PEACE CANDLE

FIRST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

As disciples of Jesus and stewards of God's creation, we joyfully worship, faithfully serve, and generously give so lives may be transformed.

PRELUDE

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint and Conrad Kocher, arr. Sinwoong Kim

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: "O God, our God, the majesty of your name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens."
We gather to praise you!

All: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."

One: "O God, our God, the majesty of your name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens."
We gather to celebrate you!

All: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...And God saw that it was good..."
We gather to celebrate our God.

One: "O God, our God, the majesty of your name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens."
We gather to worship you!

All: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...*And God saw that it was very good...*" *We gather to worship our God! All praise, honor, majesty and power belongs to our Creating God! Amen*

OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, words are not enough to express Your awesomeness, Your majesty, Your holiness. Our highest expressions of theology are but baby talk next to You: Your creation, Your very self. Make us aware, through Your Holy Spirit, that You are here among us. May this awareness lead us to approach this hour more carefully.

The words we speak, the tunes we sing, the thoughts we think, the joy and sadness we feel, may these be pleasing to You. For in spite of the inadequacy of our words, this worship is addressed to You. Make it complete, whole, full to overflowing, O God, our rock, and our redeemer. In Christ we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen: You place us in your creation, and you command us to care for it. Your works declare glory and splendor, and you call us to praise and reverence. Where we have degraded or destroyed earth's bounty, forgive us. Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us.

Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet, grant us your peace. Renew us in the waters of baptism, refresh us with the winds of your spirit, and sustain us with the bread of life. In the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the new creation, we pray. Amen.

***HYMN**

[*For the Beauty of the Earth*](#)

The New Century Hymnal #28

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER (Debts)

I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

John Rutter
Chancel Choir

Revelation 4:11

***Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me:
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.***

*OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit one. Amen.**

God of Creation, we are thankful for your awesome work in creation, you have weaved all of life together, and it is very good. We are grateful for all that protects and cares for your good works: the sunlight and water that sustains life, the earth that grounds and nourishes life, and the earth-beings that care for and protect life.

We ask your blessings on the actions we offer here and on the actions of those across the church and beyond as we care for the bountiful Earth you have provided us. God of Creation, together we are stronger.

The New Century Hymnal #569, verses 1, 3, and 4

BENEDICTION

African-American spiritual, arr. Joel Raney

(During the Postlude, you may use the time for personal reflection, greet your neighbor, or exit for coffee time in the Ebenezer Gay Room.)

The chancel flowers are given to the glory of God!

Join us in the Gay Room following worship for our Coffee & Conversation time.

Our Going the Extra Mile Mission Offering for the month of April is Revitalize Community Development Corporation (RCDC). RCDC works with homeowners, community members, and city officials to renovate, repair, and modify unhealthy homes to improve the wellbeing of our neighbors, providing free critical repairs, modifications, and rehabilitation on the homes of low-income families with children, the elderly, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

Continue Scrolling for hymns and additional worship information

Today's Worship Leaders:

The Rev Diann H. Bailey, Senior Minister
Ali Hager, Seminarian Associate
Amy Pott, Director of Worship Arts
Kaylon Hall, Lynnae Labato, Lisa Nappi, and Rowan Pott, Section Leaders
Carolyn Blighton, Lay Leader
Nancy LaPlante, Message for All Ages
Cyndie DeMur, Deacon Greeter & Chancel Guild
Marcia Soucie & Lisa Kucia, Ushers
Zak Wosko, Video and Audio Technician
Amber Dawne Bigley, Office Manager


Notes about our worship service:

- *(Asterisk) Please stand together in body or in spirit.
- Words in **Bold**, we speak together as a congregation.
- Our order of worship, hymn lyrics, unison readings, prayers and responses are projected on the monitors.
- Gifts of offering can be mailed to the church or placed in the collections baskets at the front or back of the Sanctuary; utilize online-giving through the church giving site.
- Thank you to Don DaRos for our Hebrew Scripture Introduction.
- Thank you to Nancy LaPlante, Amanda Rogers and Grace Sauer, Caeden Walton, Riley Walton, Kate Remington and Layla Sales, our Hands on Faith Volunteers.
- First Church is a *Green Church*. We encourage use of electronic bulletins via the QR code and virtual giving!



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For the Beauty of the Earth


*St. 1-3, Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1864; alt.
St. 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993*




1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the splen-dor of the skies,
2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
4 For the good that love in-spires, for a world where none ex-clude,




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,
Friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild,
For a faith that nev-er tires, and for ev-ery heart re-newed,



Refrain



God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.



Folliott S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, penned these verses near his native city of Bath, England, on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.

Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7. with refrain
Conrad Kocher, 1838
Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861

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Unison
Brightly

1 Touch the earth light - ly, use the earth gent - ly,
 * 2 We who en - dan - ger, who cre - ate hun - ger,
 3 Let there be green - ing, birth from the burn - ing,
 4 God of all liv - ing, God of all lov - ing,

*The second verse only may be sung in A minor, omitting the sharps except where indicated in parentheses.

nour-ish the life of the world in our care:
 a - gents of death for all crea - tures that live,
 wa - ter that bless - es, and air that is sweet,
 God of the seed - ling, the snow, and the sun,

Gift of great won - der, ours to sur - ren - der,
 We who would fos - ter clouds of dis - as - ter—
 Health in God's gar - den, hope in God's chil - dren,
 Teach us, de - flect us, Christ re - con - nect us,

trust for the chil - dren to - mor - row will bear.
 God of our plan - et, fore - stall and for - give!
 re - gen - er - a - tion that peace will com - plete.
 us - ing us gent - ly, and mak - ing us one.

Shirley Erena Murray's notes on this hymn state that the title line is borrowed from an Australian Aboriginal saying. The "clouds of disaster" mentioned in stanza 2 refer to nuclear testing by France, which New Zealand has protested at the United Nations many times.

Tune: TENDERNESS 5.5.10.D.
 Colin Gibson, 1992

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Works Cited:

Call to Worship: ~ written by Joan Stott, and posted on the **Geelong City Parish UCA** website. http://www.wesleychurchgeelong.net/w_resources.htm
 Opening Prayer: posted on My Redeemer Lives website. <http://www.myredeemerlives.com/prayers.html>
 Prayer of Confession: — written by Rev. Ken Carter, pastor of Providence United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. Posted on the website of the North Georgia United Methodist Conference.
 Pastoral Prayer: Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918)
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