

**EARTH DAY VESPER SERVICE**

Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO June 25, 2021 6:00 PM

**GATHERING MEDITATION**:

*Let the Earth breathe!*

*Let its heart beat,*

 *pulsing and firing the fruit of its seed.*

*Let four winds tease,*

 *air bright and clean.*

 *converging and swirling through life’s mystery.*

*Let waters wreathe.*

*Let rivers be,*

 *pristine and free from deep valleys to seas.*

*Let singing streams*

 *stir slumbering leagues,*

 *awakening the dreamer and changing the dream.*

 *Let mountains rise!*

 *Let forests thrive—*

 *primal communities birthed to survive.*

 *Let kindred be wise,*

 *not compromise*

 *their courage and care for greed’s beckoning lies.*

*Let oceans race!*

*Let new waves chase*

 *ancient tides washing ashore cosmic grace.*

*Let rhythms of peace,*

 *still conflict’s pace,*

 *emerging, connecting in trust’s healing place,*

*bold creatures revealing hope’s eternal face,*

*beloving, one dwelling, in Earth’s sacred space.*

**GATHERING MUSIC**  John Puterbaugh

**WELCOME** Ellie Stock

We gather as part of our emerging 13.8 billion year old Universe, a Solar System given life by Sun, on the edge of the Milky Way Galaxy, co-residents of the pale blue marble in space, Earth, and all that is in it—animal, vegetable and mineral, remembering all that has been part of it from the dawning fire light to fountains of water, from the four winds to fertile soil, from micro-organisms to plants, from fish to great dinosaurs and birds in flight, from frogs and giraffe to butterflies.

We gather this evening in the season of Spring, on land that is part of the Missouri and Mississippi Watersheds and Bioregion, inhabited or transited by the Woodland, Mississipia, Missouria, the Cahokia, Osage, Ioway, the Otoe, Chickasaw, Shawnee, the Lenape, Algonquin, Kaskaskia, the Cherokee, Illineweh, Oneata, the Sac, Fox, Quapaw, and Kickapoo—Original Nations of this part of Turtle Island who knew much about living harmoniously with Earth and all that is in it.

We gather around the fire of Spirit: the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Life and a symbol of Oneness in a time and in a civilization and world that longs for healing and peace and also celebrates the Beauty and healing power Earth. And so we join with Original Nations of this land in a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer for healing, balance and restoration.

***Now I Walk in Beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

[Now I Walk In Beauty Libana- Fire Within - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0hZujNbYg8)

**OPENING Prayer to The Seven Directions [People are invited to stand and face directions]**

***(Face East)*** Great Spirit of Light, come to me out of the East with the power of the rising sun. Let there be light in my words, let there be light on my path that I walk. Let me remember always that you give the gift of a new day. May I have eyes as sharp as ours, so I am able to see Truth and Hope on the path I have chosen. Guide my step and give me courage to walk the circle of my life with honesty and dignity. And never let me be burdened with sorrow by not starting over again.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

***(Face South)* Great Spirit of Creation**, send me the warm and soothing winds from the South. Comfort me and caress me when I am tired and cold. Unfold me like the gentle breezes that unfold the leaves on the trees. As you give to all the earth your warm, moving wind, give to me, so that I may grow close to you in warmth. Be with me. Help me to remember to love and feel compassion for all humanity. Help me to walk my path with joy and live for myself, for others for the four legged, the winged ones, the plants and all Creation upon Mother Earth. Show me it is right for me to make decisions with my heart, even if at times, my heart becomes hurt.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

***(Face West)* Great Life-Giving Spirit**, I face the **West**, the direction of sundown. Bring healing to the people I love and to myself. Bring into balance the physical, mental and spiritual, so I am able to know my place on Earth, in life and death. Heal my body, heal my mind and bring light, joy and awareness to my spirit. Let me remember every day that the moment will come when my sun will go down. Never let me forget that I must fade into you. Give me a beautiful color, give me a great sky for setting, so that when it is my time to meet you, I can come with glory.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

***(Face North)*** **Great Spirit of Love**, come to me with the power of the **North**. Make me courageous when the cold wind falls upon me. Give me strength and endurance for everything that is harsh, everything that hurts, everything that makes me squint. Let me move through life ready to take what comes from the north. As each day passes, help me surrender, with grace, the things of my youth. Help me to listen to the quiet, and find serenity and comfort in the silences as they become longer. Give me Wisdom so I am able to make wise choices in all things which are put in front of me; and, when time for my change of worlds has come, let me go peacefully, without regrets, for the things I neglected to do as I walked along my path.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

**(*Look toward the sky*) Creator of Father Sky**, the countless stars of the night remind us that we are born of your stars, that the Sun energizes our beings, that we are part of a wonder-filled journey of your Universe, and that you are vast, beautiful and majestic beyond all of our knowing or understanding. Your light shines upon Earth both day and night guiding our steps. We offer our thanks for all the things of Creation, and for being allowed to be part of it. We offer thanks for visions and dreams that help us remember who we are, and why we are here, and ask that all your children be given this gift. We thank you for your wisdom and blessing here today.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

***(Look toward the ground*) Creator of Mother Earth**, our source of life, you support us each day, welcoming our roots deep into your heart. We give thanks for Earth’s beauty, for all we have: our food, water, air shelter, and so many beautiful beings who are our relatives. You nurture and guide us. We ask that we always remain aware that we are all interconnected in the web of Life and acknowledge your patience when our lives are guided by greed and thoughtlessness. We did not create the web of Life, we are but strands in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. We ask for strength to defend Mother Earth and to walk softly. Help us always to feel your heartbeat and to give thanks for and to protect your bounty.

**R: *Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

**(C*ross arms over chest) Creator of our Souls Within***, place of union, love and reverence, we look within, and acknowledge and honor our own spirits. We often don’t consider ourselves to be of value or to be important, but we are. The Creator, the Great Spirit, is in all of us. We are an essential part of life. We are life in action, loving, moving and growing. In our center is the home of our Heart—may we always return to this place, so that we may know the meaning of our journey. From here, the center of our being, we can reach out to all directions, and to all our relations. However, we must always remember to be humble, for we are NOT the center of Creation. We are grateful for this gift of life and for the love that guides our way. We open our hearts and join with all in love. It is begun.

**SONG:** Many and Great

**PRAYER OF AWARENESS**

As light gives way to darkness

and the busyness of day concedes to night’s stillness,

as conscious thought surrenders to dreams

and our bodies long for rest

we pause to listen

for the beat of your Presence in all things

pulsing in the light of distant galaxies

sounding in the depths of our soul

vibrating in each vein of Earth’s body.

On Sound as vast as the Universe

On Universe filled with Presence

One Life within every life.

In the darkness of night

in the stillness that surrounds us

in the unknown depth of our being

we pause to listen.

***Be still and aware***

*Sing to God a new song. Sing to God, all the Earth.* (Psalm 96.1)

*Whoever wants to be first must be last of All and servant of All.*  (Mark 9:35)

*Whichever way you turn there is the face of God.* (Quran – The Cow 2.11.5)

**A TIME OF SHARING REFLECTIONS**

**SONG:** Touch the Earth Lightly

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION: SILENT AND SPOKEN JOYS/CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE**

**PRAYER FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD**

In lives where love has been born this day

***thanks be to you, O God.***

In families where forgiveness has been strong

***thanks be to you.***

In nations where wrongs have been addressed

Where tenderness has been cherished

And where visions for Earth’s oneness have been served

***thanks be to you*.**

May those who are weary find rest this night.

***May those who carry great burdens for their people find strength.***

May the midwives of new beginnings in our world find hope.

***And may the least among us find greatness--***

***strength in our souls***

***worth in our words***

***love in our living.***

**SONG:** Let All Things Now Living

**PRAYER OF BLESSING**

Peace for Earth and its creatures

peace for the world and its peoples

peace for our fathers

peace for our mothers

peace for all our relatives.

The peace of heaven’s vastness

the peace of ocean depths

the peace of Earth’s stillness

to bless us in the night

to bless us this night.

***With beauty may I walk.***

***With beauty before me, may I walk.***

***With beauty behind me, may I walk.***

***With beauty above me, may I walk.***

***With beauty below me, may I walk,***

***With beauty all around me, may I walk.***

***In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,***

***lively, may I walk.***

***In old age wandering on a trail of beauty,***

***living again, may I walk.***

***It is finished in beauty.***

***It is finished in beauty.***

***R: Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.***

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All are invited to stay and enjoy a time of fellowship and making s’mores.

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**Service Notes**:

Thank you to the Earth Care Team for hosting and leading this service, tending the fire, providing food and utensils for making s’mores.

**Instrumentalist**: John Puterbaugh, accordion

**Liturgy:** “Let the Earth Breathe”, Ellie Stock, [2.15.21 Let the Earth Breathe.mp4](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15XF981ii5aQj-kGMY-5WXR92P541obf2/view?usp=drive_web)

Prayer of Seven Directions, Lakota, adapted;

Prayer of Awareness, Prayer for the Life of the World, Prayer of Blessing (1st), *Praying with the Earth,* John Philip

 Newell

Blessing (2nd), Navajo “Night Chant”