

**The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation**

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

April 21, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Easter

10:00am

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*

WELCOME AND CONCERNS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

One: All humankind is one vast family, this world, our home.

All: We sleep beneath one roof, the starry sky.

One: We warm ourselves before one hearth, the blazing sun.

**All: Upon one soil we stand, and breathe one air, and drink one water,
and walk the night beneath one luminescent moon.**

One: The children of one God are we, siblings of one blood,
members in one worldwide family of God.

All: Come, let us worship God.

* HYMN

All Creatures of Our God, Now Sing

#51

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Unison)

Rev. Don Remick

Gracious Creator,

As we gather in this sacred space, we come with hearts open to the beauty and abundance of your creation. We come with minds awed by the power of wind and wave that we have seen and felt. We lift our voices in praise and gratitude for the Earth that You have created, our home.

May our worship today inspire us to recognize our interconnectedness with You and all living beings and the responsibility entrusted to us as stewards of this precious gift. Bless our time together, God, and may it deepen our commitment to caring for your creation with love and respect. We pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

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 the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Gracious and loving Creator, as we celebrate our care of creation, we come before you with hearts heavy with the weight of our actions and inactions that have harmed our planet and its inhabitants.

All: **We confess that we have often taken the beauty and abundance of the Earth for granted, exploiting its resources without thought for future generations or the delicate balance of ecosystems.**

One: Forgive us for our silence in the face of environmental racism, economic inequality, and the exploitation of vulnerable populations.

All: **Help us to cultivate a deep reverence for the Earth and all its inhabitants, recognizing that we are interconnected and interdependent.**

One: Grant us the wisdom to live in harmony with nature, respecting its rhythms and limits.

All: **Empower us to be faithful stewards of your creation, working tirelessly to heal the wounds that have been inflicted and to create a more just and sustainable world.**

ONE: In the name of the One who reconciles all things, we pause to bring our silent confessions before you.

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Beloved community, In the spirit of renewal and grace, let us embrace forgiveness for our past actions that have harmed the Earth.

All: **May we find comfort and hope in the promise of redemption and commit ourselves to caring for creation with renewed vigor and compassion.**

One: Receive this assurance of pardon, and may it empower us to be agents of change in the ongoing work of creation care.

All: **Amen.**

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (please join in singing)

**Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Spirit One,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen, Amen.**

LISTENING

MOMENTS WITH CHILDREN

**May you know that you belong here and can always come home.
May you grow, learn, and question.
May you feel the love of God wherever you go.**

*Children will now go to Sunday school;
their families can meet them in the classroom when the service is over.*

* HYMN

All Things Bright and Beautiful

#63

FIRST LESSON

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Read by Ed Jasaitis

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will

put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”

SECOND LESSON

Revelation 21:1-5

Read by Kathleen Jasaitis

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them and be their God;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

ANTHEM

Now Is the Cool of the Day
Senior Choir

Jean Ritchie, arr. Kevin Siegfried

SERMON “What To Do When the World is Ending” Rev. Lindsay Popperson

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

PASTORAL PRAYER

A LITANY FOR CREATION CARE

One: As we gather for this celebration, let us renew our commitment to caring for creation.

All: We commit to cherishing the Earth as a sacred gift from the Creator.

All: We commit to living in harmony with nature, honoring its rhythms and cycles.

All: We commit to advocating for justice and equity for all people and all living beings.

All: We commit to fostering compassion and empathy for all creatures, recognizing our interconnectedness.

One: Together, let us pledge to be faithful stewards of God’s Creation, nurturing its beauty and diversity for generations to come.

All: Amen.

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY

INVITATION

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

Earth Song words and music by Frank Ticheli
Senior Choir

Sing, Be, Live, See...

This dark stormy hour

The wind, it stirs

The scorched Earth cries out in vain:

O war and power,

You blind and blur.

The torn heart cries out in pain.

But music and singing have been my refuge

And music and singing shall be my light.

A light of song, shining strong: Alleluia!

Through darkness, pain and strife, I'll

Sing, Be, Live, See...

Peace.

* DOXOLOGY: #46

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.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

CHORAL RESPONSE

SENDING

* HYMN

For the Beauty of the Earth

#54

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE (please join in singing) *Go with Us, Lord*

#336

Go with us, Lord, and guide the way, through this and every coming day,

That in your Spirit strong and true, our lives may be our gift to you. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Maria vanKalken, *organ*