

ST. MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Pastor Chris Heavner, Interim Pastor
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The Earth on Which We Live

Pre-Worship Thoughts:

God made us from the same dirt used for the rest of creation.

God cares - even about dirt! God loves dirt!

God has invited us to be stewards - to step into a role sometimes referred to as "created, co-creators"

Our journey takes us to that place where we live in greater harmony with the wind and the rain and the rivers and the seas.

Prelude

Welcome

Opening Hymn: All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.

- 1 Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors,
God made their tiny wings. Refrain
- 2 The purple-headed mountains,
the river running by,
the sunset, and the morning
that brightens up the sky. Refrain
- 3 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden,
God made them ev'ry one. Refrain
- 4 God gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty,
who has made all things well. Refrain

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818-1895, alt.

This Evening's Drawing

Litany

(Your response: "And God saw that it was good.")

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light....

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.'

And God saw that it was good.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.'

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.....

And God saw that it was good.

As we seek to relax our grip so that the earth, our fragile sister, might rest from our labors, help us to see our world more vividly than we have done in the past....

And God saw that it was good.

As we seek to be wise stewards of the gifts of the earth in timber and oil, coal, and gas, help us to know your world more humanely than we have in the past...

And God saw that it was good.

Draw us to contemplation and silence so that we might see, in wonder, our lives intertwined with the squirrels and the cardinal, the creatures great and small, the beauty of each season. Help us to see the birth, growth, death, and rebirth so as to give us courage in the ongoing creation of our Creator..

And God saw that it was good.

Deepen our faith and enliven our thinking, nourish our bodies and strengthen our souls, that we may be your message in the world, your servants for the common wellness of the earth. Make us weavers of a new order, crafters of a new earth...

And God saw that it was good.

Grant us grace through the Christ of the Cosmos. Call us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, in the love with earth, and with our brothers, and sisters. Give us a measure of the Spirit that these commitments we make before you might make our work holy...

And God saw that it was good.

Let us go forth from this sacred ark with a steady hand, an up lifted heart, with clear eye and alert mind, with firm step, and willing hands. May we arrive at fresh springs of renewal through God's holy Word, in our communities of faith, and in deep solidarity with all creation...

And God saw that it was good.

Amen. Let all the creation hear and bear witness.

Amen

Let us Pray:

"The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great-and for destroying those who destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:18)

Amen.

Song: This is My Father's World

- 1 This is my Father's world,
and to my list'ning ears
all nature sings, and round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world;
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
his hand the wonders wrought.

- 2 This is my Father's world;
the birds their carols raise;
the morning light, the lily white,
declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world;
he shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear him pass;
he speaks to me ev'rywhere.

- 3 This is my Father's world;
oh, let me not forget
that, though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world;
why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is king, let heaven ring;
God reigns, let earth be glad!

Readings:

"For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land." (Psalm 95:3-5)

"You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing." (Psalm 65:9-13)

"Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:7-10)

"He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke. By his power he churned up the sea.... By his breath the skies become fair.... And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! How then can we understand the thunder of his power?" (Job 26:7-9, 11-14)

"You shall not pollute the land in which you live.... You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the Israelites." (Numbers 35:33-34)

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9)

"Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away." (Psalm 148:1-6)

Homily:

Prayers:

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Your gift of grace is for all people. Give confident faith to all the baptized, that they may follow you wholeheartedly. Give new believers joy in your promises; give hope and courage to those who suffer for their faith. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All the ends of the earth worship you. From galaxies to microorganisms, preserve your creation. Teach humanity to wonder at your works and to join you in tending to creation's well-being. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Teach us how to live in harmony with our planet and reduce our waste. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In Jesus you joined humanity in suffering and death. Reveal to all the depth of your love shown on the cross. Accompany all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Restore all who are sick or grieving. Bring vindication for victims of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. We pray for our sisters and brothers in need of your aid... Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You made Abraham and Sarah the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Bless grandparents, parents, and foster parents, and the children who look to them for care and guidance. Console those who deal with infertility, parents who have entrusted their children to adoption, and children longing to be adopted. Equip ministries and services to families. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. In our prayers we recall our sister Joyce Tucker, and rejoice in her rebirth to eternal life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the members of our Call Committee: Marie, Jessica, Cindy, Mike, Shannon, and Warren. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Protect those who serve as members of the military, police, first responders, and all who enhance community life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
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.

Parting Thoughts

Benediction:

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. Amen.

Sending Song: For the Beauty of the Earth

- 1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Refrain
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.
- 2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light: Refrain
- 3 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: Refrain
- 4 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild: Refrain
- 5 For each perfect gift of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n: Refrain