Riverbend United Church
Exploring Faith, Engaging Community

April 21, 2024

Earth Sunday

We Gather Together

Prelude — Kim Cousineau

Welcome and Announcements — Rev. Valerie Oden

Introit — *Behold, I Make All Things New* — MV 115

Call to Worship

One: As the earth unfolds in new life, we gather to worship.

All: We lament, we listen, we sing, we pray. We share as a community of faith, seeking to grow in love.

One: May we dare to be awe-struck by the beauty of creation.

All: And may we dare to respond by being made new.

*Opening Hymn — *For the Beauty of the Earth* — VU 226

Children's Time — The Creation Story from Genesis 1

Children and youth are invited downstairs after this hymn. There is a family room for wee ones behind the piano from which the service can be seen and heard and a volunteer will assist you.

*Children's Song — *One, Two, Three Alleluia*

We Listen for the Spirit Stirring

Contemporary Scripture — Psalm 8 — *(Paraphrase by Nan C. Merrill)*

Anthem — *The Little Things* — *(Clemens & Wright)*

A Liturgy of Lament — *Written by Lindsay Vander Hoek* — (see Insert)

Hymn of Response — *Shadow and Substance* — MV 44

Reflection — Land: Living, Loving, and Listening — Lindsay Vander Hoek

*Hymn of Response — *Each Blade of Grass* — MV 37

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Unison Prayer — Creation's Splendor: A Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer
Written by Steve Garnass-Holmes

Our Mother, our Father, giver of life,
Holiness of Presence;
may our hearts always bow to you.
Your Realm break forth,
your delight blossom among us,
making this earth your heaven.

Give us each moment our life, our breath.
Free us from being judged,
as we free others from our judgments.
Guide us safely past our desires and attachments,
and rescue us from the power of evil.
For the world is yours;
the only real power is yours;
Creation's splendour is yours,
in this present moment
and in eternity. Amen.

We Go Forth to Serve

Stewardship Moment — Living Lighter Tips

Offering our Gifts

Offering plates can be found in the narthex. Electronic gifts are welcome by e-transfer to contactus@riverbendunited.org or on the church website. We give in gratitude for God's grace and in hope that peace may spread to all.

*Closing Hymn *O Beautiful Gaia (Refrain, Verses, Refrain)* MV 41

*Benediction

*Musical Response *All Creatures of Our God and King* VU 217
Verse 2 only

Postlude Kim Cousineau

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denotes you are invited to stand as you are able and inclined

"VU" refers to the red hardback hymnal *Voices United*
"MV" refers to the spiral bound songbook *More Voices*

Welcome to Riverbend United Church. If you're new with us, we would love to meet you. Feel free to introduce yourself to your neighbour in the pew, and/or **fill out a Welcome Card in the pews**. We'd love to know who you are!

Newcomers' Welcome
Today, April 21st at 11:45 a.m.

New to the church in the last year?
Please join us for this introduction to the life
and ministry of Riverbend United Church.
Held in the Chapel, to your left as you exit the sanctuary.

14907 – 45 Avenue NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5K8 Office: 780.430.7275
www.riverbendunited.org contactus@riverbendunited.org

Liturgy of Lament
By Lindsay Vander Hoek

O Creative, Delighting God, Source of life, abundance and beauty:

You have named and made Creation good.
Waters, air, soil, plants, animals, and humans --
we are all connected- as Kin, as family.

We humans- earth creatures- are reliant on the intricate systems you have created,
reliant on the breathing of all creation.

Yet-
Ocean levels are rising, and they are filled with poisons and plastics.
The ice sheets and alpine glaciers are melting at an increasing rate;
we see more droughts and forest fires.

We are sad
sad to see how both greed and woundedness
have created something that is not good.

Those most vulnerable are being displaced
and experience more hunger due to droughts.
Inequities grow as weather patterns become more extreme.

We lament
lament to see how both greed and woundedness
have created something that is not good.

The unique aspen parkland of Edmonton, amiskwaciy-wâskahikan
is slowly being altered and fractured;
trees and many species are at risk, and it is riskier for farmers
to do their work.

We grieve
grieve to see how both greed and woundedness
have created something that is not good.

Fossil-fuel dependency of many societies- including ours,
continues to cultivate a need for more, and fear of not enough -
creating a confusion in how to share.

We are burdened
burdened to see how both greed and woundedness
have created something that is not good.

Quiet (take a deep breath of silence)

Holding Sadness, Lament, Grief
shows us that something is off balance,
and that there is something better to hope for and move toward.

We know we each play a role, as partners and co-creators
toward good and balanced relationships
with God and all members of creation.

Tips for Living Lightly from A Rocha, Canada
See arocha.ca for many more tips for living lightly.

A Rocha is an international Christian organization which, inspired by God's love, engages in scientific research, environmental education, community-based conservation projects and sustainable agriculture.

Living Lightly at Home

1. Reduce waste wherever possible – recycle, compost food waste, avoid bringing anything disposable into your home.
2. Clean your home of chemicals! Buy environmentally friendly cleaning and body care products that are biodegradable, safe for the water, and better for your health.
3. Eat well! Buy local and organic food products. Choose food that is in season. Buy whole foods that have less processing and packaging. Learn where your food comes from.
4. Green your yard! Grow some food or herbs. Avoid using chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Reduce the area of high-maintenance lawn in your yard – replace it with native species of trees, shrubs, or grasses, which will require less watering. Choose species that will attract birds and butterflies.
5. Look around your home and think about how to slow the energy flow. Clothes can be hung to dry, lights can be turned off, appliances can be unplugged when not in use. Always choose high-efficiency appliances when buying new.
6. Renovate only when necessary and not just for cosmetic reasons. When renovating, consider finding recycled materials. Paint fumes, fiberglass insulation, and carpet glue can be hazardous to your health. Environmentally friendly alternatives are available for all of these and more.
7. Maximize household efficiency: dust light bulbs, clean fridge and freezer condenser coils, remove dryer lint, fix cracks in walls and door frames, and close the fridge door!
8. Involve the kids. Give each child a special responsibility or chore so they can take action on a regular basis. Let them inspire you – learn to see the awesomeness of creation through their eyes.
9. Here's another idea from RUC member Lindsay Vander Hoek: Volunteer or donate or just be aware of the work of supporting Conservation Easements through organizations like the Edmonton & Area Land Trust: ealt.ca

Riverbend United Church, Edmonton, AB April 21, 2024

Living Lightly at Church

1. Make Sunday a true day of rest. Take a Sabbath from driving and shopping.
2. Begin with worship – choose songs and prayers that celebrate God's creation (living lightly).
3. Celebrate Earth Day or plan an Environment Sunday. Take the church service outside! Host a "Prayer Walk for God's Creation" at nearby ravines, forests, etc.
4. Consider how your church can reduce waste. Stop using disposable dishes and cups (especially Styrofoam), use less paper and photocopying, and provide recycling bins. These steps can also save money! (If possible, conduct an environmental/ energy audit for the church facilities.)
5. Inspire a creation care/green committee or focus group to lead the congregation.
6. Get the youth involved – they will have ideas for greening the church, and also the energy to see it through!
7. Make the churchyard a living witness to creation care; do away with high-maintenance grass and pesticides. Plant native species. Create a vegetable garden and donate the produce to a food bank or shelter.

Living Lightly in your Neighbourhood

1. Get outside – meet your neighbours. Who are the people, plants, and animals that live in your neighbourhood?
2. Organize a block party, giant yard sale, or street celebration. Have a party in a local green space.
3. Initiate or join a local land stewardship group. The possibilities for action are endless: from organizing a group to pick up trash, to planting trees along the riverbank, to monitoring wildlife in the local parks or the ravines.
4. Fight against municipal use of pesticides, fertilizer, and other harmful chemicals in parks and greenways.
5. Grow food! Vacant lots and unused church yards are great locations for community garden plots.
6. Start a "tool co-op," which allows neighbours to share tools and maintenance equipment like ladders, lawn mowers, saws, and garden tools. This will save everyone money and stimulate a sense of neighbourhood cooperation.