

# Rangeley Congregational Church

## Order of Worship – April 18, 2021

### Third Sunday of Easter ~ Celebration of Earth Day

#### Basho ~ 16<sup>th</sup> century poet

- I. *There is nothing  
you can see  
that is not a flower;  
there is nothing  
you can think  
that is not the moon.*
- II. *The temple bell stops  
but I still hear the sound  
coming out of the flowers.*

#### Hokushi ~ 17<sup>th</sup> century poet

*Experimenting...  
I hung the moon  
on various branches  
of the pine.*

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: Christ Is Our Peace  
Music: Nancy Raabe, Words: Shirley Elena Murray

CALL TO WORSHIP

Officiant & Liturgist

Officiant: In the beginning, the Spirit of God moved over the waters.

Liturgist: **... and God said "unbind creation and let her out!"  
And God declared it to be Good!**

Officiant: God said, "let there be light!" and called the light "day"  
and the darkness "night."

Liturgist: **God spoke the word to call the land from the water, pulling  
Rangeley Lake down to the troughs among the hills and  
Saddleback Mountain high above the waters!  
In God's eyes, it was good; it was Very Good!**

Officiant: God's word called to life the vegetables and flowers growing in our  
season, our moose and bobcats, our Chickadees, our bats, our  
Pileated Woodpeckers, our very own lemmings, our black racers,  
our earthworms, and yes, even our cursed black flies and  
mosquitoes! God, you made them all! We bless you for your gifts...

**Liturgist:** ... our dolphins, seals and whales, ~ all of them ~ the honey bees, the howling coyotes, our bears, yes... even the microbes and the forest floor bacteria!

**Officiant:** Even when we find them troublesome, God's heart saw them all to be Good!

**Liturgist:** Then, God spoke a final time, making creatures who carry God's divine image: us. God gave us the task of caring for each one of them for the work each one is assigned to do.

**Officiant:** God formed humans for the holy work God expected us to do: to tend and steward all God had made.

**Liturgist:** And God saw that it was all Good. Very Good!

**Officiant:** And God declared that it is all Very Good.

**Liturgist:** And, .... on the seventh day, God rested.

**Officiant:** And on this seventh day, we come to worship and remember our role as God's partners in creation.

## INVOCATION

**Liturgist**

Great Creator and Sustainer, we love to hear the story of how you created the universe. We thank you for the beauty of our part of the earth, here in north western Maine; so many of us have returned to the beloved slopes of Saddleback this winter, while others of us have continued to ski and snowshoe through the trails and hike along the overlooks nearby. We give thanks for all those who grow and tend the gardens that supply local farmers' markets and our own tables to bring beauty and nourishment to our bodies, our homes and our worship settings. We are especially grateful, O Lord, for animals you guided us to bring back from the brink of extinction to fill our country's landscape again in recent decades: the bald eagle, the trumpeter swan, the fisher, the peregrine falcon. Yet, still there are 26 birds & wildlife critters on Maine's 'Endangered Species' list and 25 on Maine's 'Threatened Species' list. These reminders, all around us, tell us that these tender creatures are your gift to us here on our small orbiting island home we share. You have made it our work to care for them. Lovingly.

As Christ rose on Easter, help us to resurrect the harmony you intended for all you have made and ~ that you have left in our humble care. It is through the hope and vision of Jesus Christ that we pray this day. Amen.

Prayer of Chief Seattle

**Officiant**

OPENING HYMN: Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One!

Music: G.F. Handel, Words: Edmond Budry

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Liturgist**

Our beautiful blue and green home is an awesome and amazing gift. Yet we trade clean air for the power of convenience, clean water for easy waste disposal, and wilderness for our own desire for elbowroom.

We marvel more at our inventions than over your creations, O God. Share your wisdom, Holy One; teach us how to protect your creation, and restore your rivers and mountains, seas and prairies, wetlands and forests. Guide us, Great and Holy Spirit, to live sustainably, to be satisfied that “enough” is enough of a feast, and not to consume more than we need. May you guide us to repair and replace your “Very Good” to honor our habitat, our climate, and our food web. We pray that you will send your spirit over the waters again. Stir us to action, help us to seek justice, and to make wise choices. We pray you will guide us to be a part of bringing back all of creation to your vision of glory and peace.

PASTOR’S PRAYER

Traditional First People’s Prayer

*...time for silent prayer...*

WORDS OF ASSURANCE OF LOVE

Officiant

SCRIPTURE ~ A Collection of Passages throughout The Bible

Genesis 1:28

Revised Standard Version

Officiant

<sup>28</sup>And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Genesis 2:15

Revised Standard Version

Liturgist

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took them and put them in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Leviticus 25: 1 – 55

Revised Standard Version

Officiant

The Sabbatical Year

**25** The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, <sup>1</sup>“Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; <sup>3</sup>but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. <sup>4</sup>What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. <sup>5</sup>The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you; <sup>6</sup>for your cattle also and for the beasts that are in your land all its yield shall be for food.

<sup>19</sup>The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell in it securely. <sup>20</sup>And if you say, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?' <sup>21</sup>I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, so that it will bring forth fruit for three years. <sup>22</sup>When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating old produce; until the ninth year, when its produce comes in, you shall eat the old. <sup>23</sup>The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me.

Numbers 35:33-34

Revised Standard Version

Liturgist

<sup>33</sup>You shall not thus pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it. <sup>34</sup>You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell in the midst of the people of Israel."

Psalms 24:1

Revised Standard Version

Liturgist

24 The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof,  
the world and those who dwell therein;  
for he has founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.

Job 12:7-10

Revised Standard Version

Officiant

<sup>7</sup>"But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
<sup>8</sup>or the plants of the earth,<sup>9</sup> and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
<sup>9</sup>Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the LORD has done this?  
<sup>10</sup>In his hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of all mankind.

Isaiah 24:4-6

Revised Standard Version

Officiant

<sup>4</sup>The earth mourns and withers,  
the world languishes and withers;  
the heavens languish together with the earth.  
<sup>5</sup>The earth lies polluted

under its inhabitants;  
for they have transgressed the laws,  
violated the statutes,  
broken the everlasting covenant.  
<sup>6</sup>Therefore a curse devours the earth,  
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;  
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched,  
and few are left.

Jeremiah 2:7                      Revised Standard Version                      Liturgist

<sup>7</sup>And I brought you into a plentiful land  
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.  
But when you came in you defiled my land,  
and made my heritage an abomination.

Revelation 11:18                      Revised Standard Version                      Officiant

<sup>18</sup>The nations raged, but thy wrath came,  
and the time for the dead to be judged,  
for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints,  
and those who fear thy name, both small and great,  
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

Revelation 4:11                      Revised Standard Version                      Liturgist

<sup>11</sup>"Worthy art thou, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor and power,  
for thou didst create all things,  
and by thy will they existed and were created."

Luke 24:36-48                      New Revised Standard Version                      Officiant

Jesus Appears to his Disciples

<sup>36</sup>While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."<sup>37</sup> They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself.

Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.<sup>b1</sup> <sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence.

“Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah<sup>e1</sup> is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses<sup>d1</sup> of these things.

## SERMON

### HYMN OF RESPONSE I Am a Child

Bruce and Cheryl Harding

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Officiant & Liturgist

Please offer the names of those whom you would like added to our Prayer time this morning.

(As you name a joy or concern later in the prayer, please finish by saying “This is my prayer.” The church family responds by saying “This is our prayer.”)  
We pray for: Marcia Baker, Paula Hatfield's sister and her family on the death of their son, Thomas Yoder, Mike and Marley Cerminara and family on the passing of Mike's mother Angelina Cerminara, Janet House, Becky and Dave Walker, Carol Ellinwood Judy Wicken and her family on the loss of her father John Sheeler, Sandy Reynolds' and her family on the loss of Rick Lewis to Covid, Patrick Egan, Sam Meehan's Mom and her husband Nicole & LeRoy Hileman, Erin Smith, Tony McNaughton, Scott and Janet Wilson and Janet's father John Owens, Marcia Baker's niece, Kris Nozal, Dave Walker's brother, Peter Walker, Haelyn Vorous, the Daileys' son Rob, and our Members in Discernment Becky Walker and Scott Hatfield. Our law enforcement personnel, medical personnel and first responders, and our military personnel worldwide, and all those who serve our country. We pray for the people around us this day for those who are upon our hearts and minds because of a need that they have...

Let us pray for our Earth and all creation which God created:



*no more flyways.  
Treat each animal as sacred,  
each minute our last.  
Ghost hooves. Ghost skulls  
Death rattles and  
dry bones  
Each bear walking alone  
in warm night air.*

## BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Revive Us Again  
John J. Husband / Arr. Mark Hayes

Special thanks to Mary Richards for being our Liturgist, Dave Walker for leading the singing and for the PowerPoint slideshow presentation and Sam Meehan for setting up the Zoom live stream so we can worship together.

Deacon of the Month: Claire Chase (207) 712-0490