

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself.

– *Isaiah 43*

Dear Friends,

Earth Sunday this year is the Sunday after Easter, April 24th. Each year we focus on a theme that helps us learn more about our sacred earth and how we might partner with God to help protect it. This year our focus will be on the earth's water.

We know that water is central to our existence and our health. It is also central to our spiritual lives and helps us to connect with God. From bathtubs to rivers, drinking glasses to waterfalls, and baptismal fonts to expansive seas, water is a gift from God.

John writes, “Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’” To have a resource so sacred requires acknowledgement of its importance and of our responsibility to ensure those long after us can access and experience this life-giving element.

As a way to focus on God's precious gift of water, during our Earth Sunday worship service we will be giving out small bottles to each family.

- ◆ Use this bottle to collect water from a place that has special meaning to you like a local park, while on vacation, etc.
- ◆ If possible, take a photo of the place or as you collect the water to be shared on Water Sunday and via social media. Email your photo to emanuelhighchurch@gmail.com . Use the subject line “Water Sunday” and include your name, place of water collection, and any notes about the water's meaning to you.
- ◆ Bring the bottle to worship on Sunday, January 15, 2023 when we celebrate the Baptism of Christ. If possible, drop the card attached to the bottle off at the Church Office before January 15. If not possible, bring it with you on that Sunday.
- ◆ We will bring our bottles during the worship service to be blessed as our holy water for the upcoming year.

On Earth Sunday, April 24th, dress casual for church, bring a sandwich along for lunch, and any gardening gloves or tools you have and stay to help for our annual spring clean-up outdoors.

We all can benefit from clean water and a well-maintained church. Please join me as we celebrate and steward God's precious gifts.

Blessings abound!

Pastor Gaye