

In her recent book, “The 7 Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism”, Carter Heyward names the sixth sin, “Domination of the Earth and Its Creatures”, and roots this sin (both collective and corporate) in a theology that insists that humankind is to have dominion over the earth and its creatures, “a gross misreading of Genesis 1.26”. Being an Earth Care Congregation is an opportunity to address this “gross misreading”, and to name stewardship of the earth and its resources as a priority in our ministry and mission. Several ways in which we live into this priority involve conscious choices and practical actions that affect our daily and weekly life together – the use of biodegradable paper goods and cleaning supplies, energy-efficient lighting and HVAC units.

These choices and actions flow from our worship emphasis every September: Immanuel celebrates “A Season of Creation” – each week celebrating the presence of the Holy in the midst of the created order. This year the Season begins on September 1 with a Celebration of the Gift of Creation. The overall theme for 2024 is “To Hope and Act with Creation”, inspired by Romans 8.19-2. The weeks that follow will include Climate Sunday, Solar Sunday, Atmosphere Sunday, and we will conclude the Season with Rainbow Covenant Sunday. Music, prayers, affirmations, and liturgical art will reflect the themes each week; opportunities for prayer and meditation and other educational resources and projects are available each week during the month.

In January, 2024 Immanuel was host to (a first ever) Interfaith Montgomery Service of Silence, Prayer and Song; a liturgical display offered a garden theme – with a variety of plants and flowers, stones and leaves and mosses, symbolizing both our unique identities and our shared call to honor the One who created earth and sea and sky. Leaders and participants represented the three Abrahamic traditions – Jewish, Christian and Islamic, as well as the Unitarian Universalist, Bahai, Hindu and Seventh Day Adventist communities. Offerings of non-perishable food items were distributed through a local shared food ministry in Montgomery. To care for the earth is also connected to a concern for the poor.

Care of the earth and care of the poor specifically flow into Immanuel’s outreach and mission through our designated monthly offerings which include Living River, and the PCUSA offerings, Living Waters for the World, and in November, the Alabama River Alliance, to name a few.