

# GREAT and **WIDE** Strengthen the Church



*O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom have you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
Here is the sea, great and wide,  
which teems with creatures innumerable,  
living things both small and great.  
There go the ships,  
and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.*

Psalm 104

## **Flicker Wild Church**

How does the UCC support emerging ministries? The Strengthen the Church Offering is a source of funding for Congregational Assessment, Support, and Advancement Grants. One of these grants helped support the new ministry of Flicker Wild Church.

The Rev. Daniel Cooperrider has always had a passion for connecting spirituality and nature. After watching churches during the pandemic years experiment with how to worship outside the context of the church building, he recognized that others shared a hunger for outdoor, nature-based spiritual community. Alongside his spouse, the Rev. Dr. Julia Burkey, Cooperrider responded to the Spirit's call and decided to invite others to join in this yearning. On the Fall equinox in 2023, Flicker Wild Church gathered for the first time.

This community, found in various outdoor landscapes outside of Madison, Wisconsin, embraces the expansiveness of God's presence in creation, and the movement of Spirit in the movement of the seasons. Scripture, poetry, movement, meditation, and song ground their worship practices, with a "wild wander" in place of the sermon. Flicker Wild Church's invitation to worship not just in nature, but with nature and to be in spiritual relationship with the more-than-human world has offered hospitality to those who might be unlikely to step into a traditional church building.

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Your support of the Strengthen the Church offering equips leaders, funds new churches, and fosters innovation. The offering is a celebration of who we are as church together, as money is shared between the National ministries of the United Church of Christ as well as with Conference settings.

[Learn more about the offering at www.ucc.org/stc.](http://www.ucc.org/stc)

### **Wild Church Credo**

I believe in the Land, and in the Sky, and in the Call of Wild Geese;

I believe that matter matters—that what is, is not opposed to God, but of God;

I believe that Jesus meant it, saying “consider the birds of the air, consider the lilies of the fields,” Consider, from the Latin *con-sidere*, to think with the stars...

I believe that the kin-dom of God is among us and within us.

I believe that life is not just life and death, but that life is life and death and new life.

I believe that everything is everything else, that all flourishing is mutual, and that sacred presence flickers in the momentary encounters of life with life.

I believe the human and the more-than-human are co-evolved to participate in the creative impulses of earth’s astonishingly generative cosmic perch.

I believe that prayer has roots, that sacred stories have fur and feathers, that landscape is liturgy and soundscape is praise, that religion is an ecosystem.

I believe in the Communion of the Clouds, the Forgiveness of the Fungi, the Resurrection of the Leaves, and the Earth Everlasting.

*Written by Daniel Cooperrider, Convening Pastor  
Flicker Wild Church*