

# Multi-faith Earth Day Worship 2025

"Rooted in Place Together"

5pm The Nature Place - Marshview Room

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## WELCOME | Rev. Kathryn Thompson | Lutheran Campus Ministry

- Welcome to worship
  - Welcome to worship today! We are glad you are here.
  - The co-creators and co-sponsors of this experience today include Lutheran Campus Ministry, Viterbo University, Franciscan Spirituality Center, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse.
- Hospitality
  - Bathrooms
  - Treats
  - Bulletins
  - Leaf for later in worship
- Explanation of worship:
  - Worship will be grounded with 4 rituals to reflect the 4 elements of earth, air, water, and fire. Those rituals will be interspersed with music, readings, and reflections.
  - At times, the worship will be interactive and participatory. We ask that you take good care of yourself and participate as you feel welcome, safe, and comfortable.
- Hopes for worship
  - Our hope for worship today is to bring together the La Crosse Area Community around a central value: care for the earth. When we join around a central value, we connect in humanity with one another and acknowledge our shared responsibility in caring for our home. Today, we do that through a multi-faith worship experience, welcoming the expansive traditions, cultures, and religions found in the Driftless region and beyond. We celebrate the plurality of religious and spiritual practice and seek to honor and celebrate this plurality today. We hope you will leave this community time and worship feeling inspired to care for the earth we call home, as we are rooted together here, in place.

## FIRE RITUAL | Dr. Sylvester Sullivan | Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, La Crosse

*Note: We are unable to have an open flame in the Nature Place. Please use your imagination to honor this element as we light battery-powered lanterns for today's worship.*

We light this chalice for the Earth  
Of which we all are part;  
We pledge to care for what it needs  
And hold it in our heart.

## **GREETING EARTH AND EACH OTHER** | Sister Meg Earsley | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

We gather today to acknowledge that we are part of this great Creation, which is in us, beyond us, and with us. Today, let's name that which we see and experience around us in this gathered place. Let's take time to explore what is around us, particularly anything that catches your attention or that you feel connected to. We'll take a few minutes to let our senses explore creation around us: notice what you see, hear, taste, feel, and smell. Then we'll come back together and acknowledge the land. Pay attention to flora and fauna, animals, earth and sky, weather, etc. Tell whatever you experience in this place "hello!" and "peace" and try to call it by name, if you can.

*Take time here to explore and greet the land.*

Now, let's turn toward one another in greeting and say "hello" and "peace" and try to call each other by name. Introduce yourselves to others if you don't know them and ask them what they greeted in creation today.

## **AIR RITUAL** | Beth Piggush | Fransiscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

We invite the element of air into this space through a grounding breath practice. In offering our breath to creation, to remember that we breathe out carbon dioxide. In return, trees and plants receive our offering, process it, and return to us oxygen as their own offering. We remember that we are so intertwined with creation that we offer each other what we need to survive and thrive.

For this ritual, we will breathe in and out together. We'll say these mantras to ground ourselves and invite harmony with air:

In Breath: We are rooted here.

Out Breath: We harmonize with creation.

## **SONG** | Wake, Now, My Senses by: Thomas Jarl Sheppard Mikelson

## 298 Wake, Now, My Senses

♩ = 108 Unison

Words: Thomas J. S. Mikelson, 1936-

Music: Traditional Irish melody, harmony by Carlton R. Young, 1926-  
renewal © 1992 Abingdon Press

SLANE  
10.10.10.10.

4 Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy guide;  
join with all people whose rights are denied;  
take not for granted a privileged place;  
God's love embraces the whole human race.

5 Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;  
brighten my pathway with radiance here;  
mingle my calling with all who will share;  
work toward a planet transformed by our care.

## **WATER RITUAL | Chaplain Emily Ronsberg | Emplify Health System**

Praise and gratitude to the sacred waters of the world, to the oceans, the mother of life, the womb of the plant life that freshens our air with oxygen, the brew that is stirred by sunlight and the moon's gravity into the great currents and tides that move across the earth, circulating the means of life, bringing warmth to the frozen Arctic and cool, fresh winds to the tropics.

We give thanks for the blessed clouds and the rain that brings the gift of life to the land, that eases the thirst of roots, that grows the trees and sustains life even in the dry desert.

We give thanks for the springs that bring life-giving water up from the ground, for the small streams and creeks, for the mighty rivers.

We praise the beauty of water, the sparkle of the sunlight on a blue lake, the shimmer of moonlight on the ocean's waves, the white spray of the waterfall. We take delight in the sweet singing of the dancing stream and the roar of the river in the flood.

We ask help to know within ourselves all the powers of water: to wear down and to build up, to ebb and to flow, to nurture and to destroy, to merge and to separate. We know that water has great powers of healing and cleansing, and we also know that water is vulnerable to contamination and pollution.

We ask help in our work as healers, in our efforts to ensure that the waters of the world run clean and run free, that all the earth's children have the water they need to sustain abundance of life. Blessed be the water. Blessed be the earth and people it nourishes and sustains.

*You are invited to come forward to take a bit of water to bless you or someone around you for whom you have consent to bless. Assembly may say to themselves or someone they are blessing: "May you who are made of water, be blessed."*

## **PRAYER OF THANKS | Rev. Dr. Laura Wright | First Congregational Church**

Water often calls us to wonder and prayer. Let's pray together in community by verbally offering a word or phrase of thanks for something that has given us wonder about creation. I will begin prayer and open for your verbal response, and then I will close prayer.

Leader: Wondrous God, thank you for the awe of your creation. We thank you for that which has brought us wonder. Thank you for...

**[space for all to share]**

We lift these prayers to you with all of creation, Amen.

**READING|** Brother Conrad Targonski, OFM | Viterbo University

Excerpt From Ladauto Si, Pope Francis

**SONG|** Sacred Creation by Rufino Zaragoza, OFM

*Note: Verses sung by St. Francis Choir, Refrain sung by assembly*

**SACRED CREATION**  
*The Canticle of Brother Sun*

Rufino Zaragoza, OFM

Refrain

Sa-cred the land, sa - cred the wa-ter, sa-cred the sky,  
ho - ly and true. Sa-cred all life, sa - cred each oth - er;  
all re - flect God who is good.

1-3 to Verses

Final

good; all re - flect God, all re - flect God.

**READING |** Michael Krueger | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration - Affiliation

“To Praise the Earth”  
by John O’Donohue

Let us bless  
The imagination of the Earth.  
That knew early the patience  
To harness the mind of time,  
Waited for the seas to warm,  
Ready to welcome the emergence  
Of things dreaming of voyaging  
Among the stillness of land.

And how light knew to nurse  
The growth until the face of the Earth  
Brightened beneath a vision of color.

When the ages of ice came  
And sealed the Earth inside  
An endless coma of cold,  
The heart of the Earth held hope,  
Storing fragments of memory,  
Ready for the return of the sun.

Let us thank the Earth  
That offers ground for home  
And holds our feet firm  
To walk in space open  
To infinite galaxies.

Let us salute the silence  
And certainty of mountains:  
Their sublime stillness,  
Their dream-filled hearts.

The wonder of a garden  
Trusting the first warmth of spring  
Until its black infinity of cells  
Becomes charged with dream;  
Then the silent, slow nurture  
Of the seed's self, coaxing it  
To trust the act of death.

The humility of the Earth  
That transfigures all  
That has fallen  
Of outlived growth.

The kindness of the Earth,  
Opening to receive  
Our worn forms  
Into the final stillness.

Let us ask forgiveness of the Earth  
For all our sins against her:  
For our violence and poisonings  
Of her beauty.

Let us remember within us  
The ancient clay,  
Holding the memory of seasons,  
The passion of the wind,  
The fluency of water,  
The warmth of fire,  
The quiver-touch of the sun  
And shadowed sureness of the moon.

That we may awaken,  
To live to the full  
The dream of the Earth  
Who chose us to emerge  
And incarnate its hidden night  
In mind, spirit, and light.

**CHILDREN'S STORYTIME |** Rev. Kathryn Thompson | Lutheran Campus Ministry

People are Wild by: Margaux Meganck

**REFLECTION |** Rev. Kathryn Thompson | Lutheran Campus Ministry

Question: What did the stories/readings help to teach us about Earth and Creation? Or, what have you noticed so far in our collective worship?

Turn to someone next to you and talk for 3-5 minutes about what you heard and what you learned.

**SPECIAL MUSIC |** Part of It by Lea Morris and Adam Podd

*Sung by St. Francis Choir.*

**EARTH RITUAL |** Alysa Remsburg | Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse

Today we gather in worship. Worship is a way that we ascribe worth to God, to us, and to the whole environment around us, stretching out to include the entire 'very good' cosmos.

I invite you to stretch with me to invite earth into this space. You can stand or sit for this ritual. Stretch toward any part of creation that you can envision, that you can see or that you cannot see. Stretch your body or mind toward the sky, toward the trees or landscape, toward a body of water you can think of. Reach for it, stretch for it.

As we stretch, we invite the element of earth and welcome Mother earth into this space of worship. We see out the windows, we feel through the grounding of our feet, we hear the rustling of moving bodies, all of which connect us to the element of earth.

Now imagine that part of creation stretching back toward you. Imagine invisible chords stretching from you, stretching from creation and meeting together, intertwining. Now stay there for a moment, stretched out, enjoying the connection between you and creation.

Take a big breath, release your stretch, and bring your attention back to this space. Then, take another deep breath.

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE | Rev. Mary Runyon | United Campus Ministry**

*U.N. Environmental Sabbath Service, Earth Day 1990*

To bring new life to the land To restore the waters To refresh the air  
**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To renew the forests To care for the plants To protect the creatures  
**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To celebrate the seas To rejoice in the sunlight To sing the song of the stars  
**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To recall our destiny To renew our spirits To reinvigorate our bodies  
**We join with the earth and with each other.**

To recreate the human community To promote justice and peace To remember our children  
**We join with the earth and with each other.**

We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.  
**We join with the earth and with each other. Amen.**

#### **RITUAL OF HOPE | Jean Pagliaro | Franciscan Spirituality Center**

As we come to the end of our service, we have traveled through celebrating our natural world with Water, Fire, Air and Earth.

Our last ritual for worship today is a ritual of hope. As a community, gathered together to honor the Earth, we name our hopes and wishes for the earth and join them together in this beautiful art. We acknowledge our shared roots of place, and we give thanks for the ecosystem within the roots of trees that reflects our interdependence with one another and all of creation.

I invite you to take a piece of paper from this basket and write a hope for the future of the earth. After the last blessing, you are invited to bring it up to the front tree and pin it on

as a sign of what has grown out of our time together, our rootedness in this community, and our shared love of Earth.

I invite you to a brief time of silence for reflection on what your paper will symbolize in hope.

**BLESSING** | Dr. Sylvester Sullivan | Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse

“Blessing with Roots” by Jan Richardson

A Blessing with Roots

Tug at this blessing  
and you will find  
it is a thing  
with roots.

This is a blessing  
that has gone deep  
into good soil,  
into the sacred dark,  
into the luminous hidden.

It has been months  
since the ground  
gathered the seed  
of this blessing  
into itself,  
years since the earth  
enfolded it.

Sometimes  
that's how long  
a blessing takes.

And the fact  
that this blessing  
should finally show  
its first fruits  
on the day  
you happened by—

well, perhaps we shall  
simply call the timing  
of this ripening  
a mystery  
and a sweet grace.

Take all you want  
of this blessing.  
Take every morsel  
that you need for

the path ahead.  
Let its fruits fall  
into your hands;  
gather them into  
the basket of  
your arms.

Let this blessing  
be one place  
where you are willing  
to receive  
in unmeasured portions,  
to lay aside  
for a moment  
the way you ration  
your delights.

Let yourself accept  
its inexplicable plenitude;  
allow it to give itself  
to sustain you

not simply for yourself—  
though on this bright day  
I might be persuaded  
to think that would  
be enough—

but that you may  
gather its seeds  
into yourself  
like the ground  
where this blessing began

and wait  
with the patience  
of seasons  
and of years

to bear forth  
in the fullness of time  
a stunning harvest,  
a plenteous feast.