

**\*Hymn #108 (in Sing!)**

*Send Your Spirit to Set Us Free*

**Touching Ground**

**Invocation**

**A Sioux Prayer from Chief Yellow Lark (1887) – (unison)**

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds,  
Whose breath gives life to the world, hear me.  
I come to you as one of your many children.  
I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom.  
May I walk in beauty.  
Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.  
Make my hands respect the things you have made, and my ears sharp to your voice.  
Make me wise, so that I may know the things you have taught your children,  
The lessons you have written in every leaf and rock.  
Make me strong,  
Not to be superior to my brothers, but to fight my greatest enemy: myself.  
Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes,  
So that when life fades as the fading sunset,  
May my spirit come to you without shame.

**Words of Assurance**

**Hymn of Praise**

*Beautiful Things*

*You make beautiful things; You make beautiful things out of dust.  
You make beautiful things; You make beautiful things out of us.*

**A Moment for Our Blessed Community**

**Choir Anthem**

*The Drinking Gourd*

arr. André Thomas

**Scripture**

**Genesis 1:20-31**

**Luke 12:22-28**

**Sermon**

A Part of Nature

*Plastic Jesus*

*(by Alyssa Creasy, John Creasy, Ken Medema, Andra Moran, Bryan Sirchio, Beverly Vander Molen)*

*There's no plastic Jesus who can teach us how to turn money-changers' tables over now.  
Give us Jesus, flesh and bone who understands our fear; let there be no plastic Jesus here!*

**\*Hymn #101 (in Sing!)**

*Make Us One*

**Prayers of the People**

**Our Lord's Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book – (unison)**

Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all.

Loving God, in whom is heaven.

The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the earth!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

**Sung Response**

*Love, Take a Walk with Me*

*Love, take a walk with me. Love, take a walk with me.*

*O Love, take a walk with me. O Spirit, guide my feet.*

**Offertory**

*He Gives Us All His Love*

Randy Newman

**\*Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*Blessing Our Offerings**

**\*Hymn #354**

*Guide My Feet*

**Our Commission (unison)**

*Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage,  
hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil,  
strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak,  
help the afflicted, honor all people, love and serve the Lord,  
caring for God's earth and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum*

Claude Debussy

\*Please rise in body and/or spirit.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- This month's **Communion offering** is designated for The One Great Hour of Sharing. Please make checks payable to Second Cong. Church with OGHS on memo line.
- Fellowship Luncheon is April 24<sup>th</sup>. It's not too late to sign up in Webster Hall or to just show up on Wednesday. This will be an opportunity to say farewell to Jane Norrie too.
- Spring flowers remind us of God's creating in nature. On Sunday April 21, we will have an afternoon **walk in the Mile-Around-Woods** (best local place for wildflowers) in North Bennington. Our leader, Nancy Felix, has detailed knowledge of wildflowers and other plants. Earth Advocates will provide a lunch after worship and before we leave for the walk, so we ask you to sign up for lunch and/or the walk. Signup sheets are on the folding doors and on the right-hand side of the refreshments table.
- Sign up for **silk painting workshop** on May 4 with Cindy H-K by May 1st. See Open Door for details.
- **Sunday Supper** today at 4:30 pm.



**Welcome to Second Congregational Church! We are an Open and Affirming, Green Justice Congregation of the United Church of Christ. We welcome to our worship and to our membership all people of faith, or in search of faith, without regard to age, race, gender, economic condition, ability, sexual identity, gender identity, or citizenship; and we affirm all persons beloved children of God. We invite all to share in the worship, full life, leadership, and employment opportunities of the church.**

Call to Worship by Rev. Tracey Howe Wispelwey

Prayers of the People by Jessica Bwali from Zambia, published in Creation Justice Ministries Earth Day 2024 resources.

Creating, Restoring and Sustaining Transformative Relationships with God and All Creation.

## **SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, U.C.C. BENNINGTON, VERMONT**

Sunday April 21, 2024  
Caring for God's Earth Sunday

**Rev. D. Mark Blank, Pastor**  
**Matt Edwards, Music Director**  
**Ernie Lafontaine, Liturgist**



*Altar flowers this week provided by Norma McShane*

### **Welcome and Introductions**

One: Whoever you are, or wherever you are on life's journey,  
All: **You are welcome here!**

**Prelude** *Dance of the Penguins* Fiona Joy Hawkins  
**Call to Worship**

One: The Earth is beautiful, and bright, and kindly, but that is not all. *(Ursula K. Le Guin)*

All: **God's presence and power are in every corner of the universe!**

Creation [is] God's presence in creatures. *(Wendell Berry)*

All: **Praise God all creatures of the earth!**

All the stones that are around here, each one has a language of its own.

Even the earth has a song. *(Wallace Black Elk)*

All: **Let the stones sing their songs to God!**

It is only the infinite mercy and love of God that has prevented us from tearing ourselves to pieces and destroying God's entire creation long ago. *(Merton)*

All: **God's mercy and love are unending!**

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. *(Rachel Carson)*

All: **Let us see and proclaim the beauty of the Living God!**