WATERFORD UNITED CHURCH
September 13, 2026
Worship Leader: Rev. Kellie McComb
Music: Chris Savory
SACRED EARTH: SACRED WORK
"CREATION AS BLESSING"

Path I: Recognizing Inherent Goodness

The first path invites us to celebrate! The pulse of creation is singing the goodness of God and God's gift of goodness in all things. We become more aware of the beauty of all that is and tap into gratitude as our first task in creating more goodness in the world.

GATHERING AND WELCOMING

CALL TO WORSHIP:
God is good!
All the time!
And all the time!
God is good!
Indeed, we gather to celebrate the goodness of God and all of God's creation. I invite you to stand in body and/or spirit as you are comfortable. Let us give thanks for this opportunity to be together! Tell your neighbor WHAT in creation you are thankful for!

LEADER: To worship is to heighten and expand our attention to God, to others, and to the world around us. We open all our senses in a special way–seeing the Divine in all things and in every direction. We are used to looking to the front of our space during worship–just as we often limit our perspectives in life. We will open our worship in this series by symbolizing our willingness to become more aware of life all around us and aware that our lives are a part of the cycles and seasons of creation, constantly moving and growing. I invite you to a quarter turn to your right.
ALL: Spirit draw near
LEADER: When we dare to explore new directions, we discover new perspectives! Look to your right and left and see the people who are seated in front and behind you.
ALL: Sometimes we only see our own slice of reality and don't open to really experience other's points of view. To gather as community is to delight in the unique contributions of each one!
LEADER: Now I invite you to turn another quarter turn to face the back.
ALL: Spirit draw near
LEADER: Here we look towards the door at the back of our space. This is where we came in from the different rhythms of our lives (and if you didn't come in there, think of it as a symbol of wherever you came in) … Some came from laid back rhythms, some hectic and harried.
ALL: But now we are here together and we take a moment to simply tune into the rhythm of this body, this community, this moment with God. Let's take a breath in and then let it out–allowing any worries of what is left undone out there to be released just for a while.
LEADER: Let us turn another quarter turn.
ALL: Spirit draw near
LEADER: To come to worship is to bring all of our lives.
All: We face this fourth direction and know that all aspects of life–the good, the difficult, the things we are thankful for and the grief and fear that we may be facing–are ALL welcome here. Nothing is hidden from God and God welcomes it all to be transformed this day.
LEADER: Let us complete our turning to face the center of this room where the Light of Christ is coming into our midst.
ALL: Spirit draw near

LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE

Christ, our Light, is the center of this community! And when we turn to face that light in our midst, we see one another. For each one is created in the image and likeness of God and so when we see one another, we see more of the Divine shine through. Gathered here in the mystery of this hour, gathered here in one strong body, gathered here in the struggle and the power. Spirit draw near.

And all God's people said, **"Amen!"**

PRAISING

HYMN: For the Beauty of the Earth VU #226

LEADER: (*Synopsis of Week 1)* In this first week of our series on creation spirituality, we focus on the idea of "original blessing." The universe, and all life within it, is fundamentally a blessing, fundamentally good, and created to flourish–including us. This doesn't prevent hardship and difficulties, but it does strengthen us as we go through tough times. It allows us to deepen in faith and spirituality without fear. Life in all its joys and struggles is a blessing–which means, it is something worth sharing. How might moving through our days with an eye for recognizing goodness and blessing transform our experience of life?

ALL: For yourself, best gift divine, to the world so freely given, agent of God's grand design: peace on earth and joy in heaven.

PRAYING

LEADER: Creating God, You who spun the galaxies and breathed into us the breath of life. Open us to an awareness of the life coursing through us that is connected to all creation so that we might become more tuned in to your life force, feeling more vitality in our lives, and more loving towards all. We praise you as the One in whom we have life and being. And all God's people say, **Amen.**

HYMN: He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole wide world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got you and me brother in His hands
He's got you and me sister in his hands
he's got you and me brother in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands

He's got you and me, mother in His hands
He's got you and me, father in His hands
He's got you and me, mother in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the little tiny babies in his hands
He's got the little tiny babies in his hands
He's got the little tiny babies in his hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

YOUNG AT HEART: "Partners" from Does God have a Big Toe, by Marc Gellman and Oscar de Mejo

Path II: Befriending the Dark Places

This second path recognizes with open hearts the pain that coexists with goodness and gratitude. We listen to the groans of the world and the Spirit helps us to grieve and to intercede on behalf of all those who suffer, letting go of our fear that can make things worse at times.

LISTENING

Singing Bowl

"When Christ was in pain we were in pain. All creatures of God's creation that can suffer pain suffered with him. The sky and the earth failed at the time of Christ's dying because he too was part of nature." - Julian of Norwich

Letting Go and Holding with Love

I invite you to make a fist with your hands and imagine in those clenched fists is all that you are holding tightly: fear, anxiety, worry, grief, loneliness, helplessness. It may be a specific circumstance that has you tied in knots at the moment.

Singing Bowl

Now I invite you to slowly open your fists and imagine a letting go into the loving embrace of the Spirit who transforms all things. As we let go and open up, we see that now our hands and hearts are more ready to hold, with love, the concerns of others and the pain of the world.

Breathe in the pain
Breathe out the love
May my heart be the place
Where this world is changed forever.

We remember and hold with love…
Waterford United Church, Waterford Community and all concerns for others around the world……

We also remember and hold with love these things lifted aloud from this gathered body…
names of people……

I invite you to place your hands now on your heart. In this silence we lift up all those things difficult to put into words, but felt in the depths of our hearts…

Breathe in the pain
Breathe out the love
May my heart be the place
Where this world is changed forever.

LEADER: Each week we will explore a version of the prayer Jesus taught. This first week we encounter a translation directly from the Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. Let us pray together:

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos, focus your light within us – make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, So in all forms. Grant us what we need each day in bread and insight: Loose the cords of mistakes binding us, As we release the strands we hold of other's guilt. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back. From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do, the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews. I affirm this with my whole being. Truly power to these statements – may they be the ground from which all my actions grow. Amen

- *Aramaic Lord's Prayer by Douglas-Klotz'*

Path III: Exclaiming the Divine Creative

This third path creates space to explore how God is working in and through us and all of the universe to renew each day every direction. Each moment offers opportunity to express our God-gifted creativity. We hear messages–ancient and new–that express and affirm the Divine at work and encourage us in our creative collaboration with the Divine.

BRINGING WORDS TO LIFE

Genesis 1 - 2:4 *(adapted from The Message)*

Narrator: First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke (Kellie) **"Light!"**
And light appeared. God saw that light was good and separated light from dark. God named the light Day, he named the dark Night. It was evening, it was morning—Day One.

God spoke: (Kellie and Cori) **"Sky! In the middle of the waters; separate water from water!"**
God made sky. God separated the water under sky from the water above sky. And there it was: God named sky the Heavens; It was evening, it was morning—Day Two.

God spoke: (add Choir) **"Separate! Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!"**
And there it was. God named the land Earth. God named the pooled water Ocean. God saw that it was good.

God spoke: (Kellie, Cori and Choir) **"Earth, green up! Grow all varieties of seed-bearing plants, every sort of fruit-bearing tree."**
And there it was. Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties, and fruit-bearing trees of all sorts. God saw that it was good. It was evening, it was morning—Day Three.

God spoke: (add left side) **"Lights! Come out! Shine in Heaven's sky! Separate Day from Night. Mark seasons and days and years, Lights in Heaven's sky to give light to Earth."**
And there it was. God made two big lights, the larger to take charge of Day, the smaller to be in charge of Night; and God made the stars. God placed them in the heavenly sky to light up Earth
And oversee Day and Night, to separate light and dark. God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—Day Four.

God spoke: (add Right Side) **"Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life! Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!"**
God created the huge whales, all the swarm of life in the waters, and every kind and species of flying birds. God saw that it was good. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean! Birds, reproduce on Earth!" It was evening, it was morning—Day Five.

God spoke: (Everyone) **"Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds."**
And there it was: wild animals of every kind, cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug. God saw that it was good.

God spoke: (Everyone) **"Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."**
God created human beings; God created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. God created them [in gender-diversity].
God blessed them:
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

Then God said,
"I've given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth and every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food. To all animals and all birds, everything that moves and breathes, I give whatever grows out of the ground for food." And there it was.

God looked over everything God had made; it was so good, so very good! It was evening, it was morning—Day Six.

Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail.

By the seventh day God had finished God's work. **[Whew!]**
On the seventh day God rested from all this work. **[Yes!]**
God blessed the seventh day. God made it a Holy Day because on that day God rested from the work, all the creating God had done **[and it was so very good].**
This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

This is a Word of God.
Thanks be to God.
All creation is a word of God.
All creation speaks volumes of God.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: Never Ending Joy MVU #40

MESSAGE: *"What a Wonderful World"*

HYMN: It's a Song of Praise to the Maker MVU #30

OFFERING
Offertory: For the Gift of Creation VU #538
For the gift of creation, the gift of your love, and gift of the Spirit by which we live, we thank you and give you the fruit of our hands. May your grace be proclaimed by the gifts that we give.
Dedicating Prayer

<u>Path IV: Embodying Compassion and Power</u>
The fourth path will lead us out. We pray for movement within our own hearts to embody peace and passion–compassion and power–on behalf of spreading goodness throughout the week. We are not at the mercy of "the way it is," we can claim our agency to be fully present and fully active in the world into which we now go.

HYMN: This is God's Wondrous World VU #296

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

BENEDICTION SONG: You Shall Go Out with Joy VU #884
You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy and the trees of the fields will clap, will clap their hands.
And the trees of the fields will clap their hands, the trees of the fields will clap their hands,
The trees of the fields will clap their hands, while you go out with joy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAGIC NICKEL will be reintroduced during the last Sunday of every month beginning September 27 in support of The Little Pantry. Start saving your change!

INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF ERIE on Wednesday, September 16 at Waterford United Church from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Guest speaker is The Very Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, former moderator of the UCC. RSVP to the office at 519-443-5261 or to Randy MacKenzie at 519-753-9887 or randy_mackenzie@hotmail.com More information is posted on the bulletin board.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS for God Sighting pictures is
waterforducnew@gmail.com

Today we are gathered in the traditional territories of several indigenous nations with gratitude. As settlers, we take on the responsibility of learning about historic and current relationships, and our desire to engage in building right relations. We are also mindful of broken covenant, and the need to commit ourselves to deep reconciliation and healing.

The Waterford United Church is a place where everyone is welcome regardless of their ability, age, class, ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation.

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