

Earth Day Service
“Honoring the Web of Life”

Service Leaders: Carol Holmgren, Jane Ellen Nickell, Karen Schreiber

The ambassador wildlife participating in the service are visiting from Tamarack Wildlife Center.

Musicians: Paul Groh, Sharon Kaplan, and the UUCM Choir

Gathering within the Web of Life

As we gather, you are welcome to place on the altar any natural items you have brought from time you spent in nature, or to light a candle of joy or sorrow.

PRELUDE “Unexpected Joys” by Paul Groh

INVOCATION “Fire Chant by The Singing Witches” arr. Reash, UUCM Choir

CHALICE LIGHTING “Children of the Earth and Sky” by Alice Berry, revd. (Jane Ellen)

**Children of the Earth and sky,
we are nurtured, sustained, and given warmth and light from above and below.
Supported by earth’s strong, firm crust and warm embrace,
all creatures are our sisters and brothers.
When we open ourselves and seek to be aware,
we find holy light in blossom, birdsong, sky, and human faces.
Then Earth is truly our home,
and we are one with all Earth’s creatures,
parents of Earth’s children yet to be.**

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY NEWS Jane Ellen Nickell

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE Carol Holmgren and Jane Ellen Nickell

OPENING WORDS “To Look at Any Thing” by John Moffitt (Jane Ellen)

To look at any thing,
If you would know that thing,
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say,
“I have seen spring in these
Woods,” will not do – you must

Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves,
You must take your time
And touch the very peace
They issue from.

*AFFIRMATION OF COVENANT, MISSION, AND VISION (Jane Ellen)

Our COVENANT is to be a loving, joyful community that nurtures spiritual growth, promotes compassion, social responsibility, and service in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Our MISSION is to be a faith community devoted to love and respect, reason and justice.

Our VISION is to be a dynamic community supporting the spiritual health of Meadville and the surrounding area.

*WELCOMING EACH OTHER AND NONHUMAN NATURE (Jane Ellen)

You are invited to acknowledge the other beings who are present in worship.

*HYMN #92 "Mysterious Presence, Source of All" (Jane Ellen)

READING "The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry (Karen)

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

JOYS AND SORROWS

Karen Schreiber

A time to share briefly key milestones in our lives. Please refrain from political announcements or events, and speak directly into the microphone.

READING "Climb the Mountains"

by John Muir (Karen)

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

Offering Gratitude for the Interdependent Web

STORY FOR ALL AGES

"Goldfinches"

by Mary Oliver (Karen)

[GREETINGS TO THE NATURAL WORLD](#)

Carol Holmgren

Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwèn,
or "Words That Come Before All Else"

*Oral tradition from the Six Nations
Mohawk version from the Six Nations
Indian Museum*

SILENT REFLECTION

(Carol)

During the silence, you are invited to reflect on our place in the web of life. On the slip of paper provided, you may write an aspect of nature that you wish to honor.

READING "I Am In Love with This World" by John Burroughs (Lew Trumble)

I am in love with this world. I have nestled lovingly in it. I have climbed its mountains, roamed its forests, sailed its waters, crossed its deserts, felt the sting of its frosts, the oppression of its heats, the drench of its rains, the fury of its winds, and always have beauty and joy waited upon my goings and comings.

OFFERTORY

"King Of Trees"

Cat Stevens (Jane Ellen)

We now offer our financial gifts to sustain this church and its work in the community. Our Share-the-Plate recipient is Meadville Area Free Clinic.

RECEIVING THE OFFERING

(Jane Ellen)

We give to remind ourselves how many gifts we have to offer.

We give to remember that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

We give because we believe in music and sacred space and children and all who enter this sanctuary.

We give with the faith that together we have abundance.

Going Forth with Care and Commitment

READING "This Grand Show" by John Muir (Cena Knoebel)

This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls.

RECOMMITTING TO CARE FOR THE EARTH (Jane Ellen)

Music by Paul Groh: composed about the expression of gratitude

During this musical selection, you may come forward, name the part of nature that you are honoring, and place the paper in the bowl of water, as an act of recommitting yourself to care for the natural world. The water will be poured on our garden as a blessing as the growing season begins.

*RESPONSIVE READING #550 "We Belong to the Earth" attrib. Chief Seattle (Karen)

*CLOSING HYMN #100 "I've Got Peace Like a River," vv. 1, 3, 5, 6 (Karen)

*EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE AND CLOSING WORDS by Susan Karlson (Carol)

We leave blessed by our connections to one another, to the spirit of life.

Walk lightly, that you see the life that is below your feet.

Spread your arms as if you had wings and could dance through the air.

Feel the joy of the breath in your lungs and the fire in your heart.

Live to love and be a blessing on this earth.

PLEASE BE SEATED FOR THE POSTLUDE

POSTLUDE Green (Bein' Green)

Joe Raposo

INVITATION TO COFFEE HOUR