

Westminster Presbyterian Church

August 8th, 2021 | 10:00am

Live Streaming | In Person

Sacred Earth, Sacred Work: *The Paths of Life*



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Path I: Recognizing Inherent Goodness

Prelude

Canon in D Major

Johann Pachelbel

Gathering and Welcoming

Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

God is good!

All the time!

And all the time!

God is good!

Expanding Our Attention 360°

Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

**(choir) 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.**

The transforming Spirit of God is with us in all things and witnessed throughout all creation in many languages and by many names. Our Judeo-Christian scriptures point to hundreds of ways people experienced God's incarnate presence. Let us honor Spirit with us as we open our hearts, minds and doors to God's Love coming in many ways. Let us face the East.

ALL: Spirit draw near

In the East, the rising sun and gentle breezes, we honor each new day and new beginnings made possible by the breath of the Creator.

ALL: May the air we breathe be purified and may our lives feel that breath of Spirit anew. May we receive the gifts of dawning insight and inspiration.

We turn to the south.

ALL: Spirit draw near

In the South, place of the desert warmth, we honor the gift of fire and all forms of energy. As the sun in the sky makes life possible on earth, we know that God set that sun and its course, we are children cared for in many ways.

All: May we be open as children to receive and share the gifts of food, learning, and creativity. May we share our play and our work with energy and passion.

We turn to the west.

ALL: Spirit draw near

In the West, in the setting sun and the many forms of water, we welcome the wellspring and flow of God's healing presence.

All: May water be pure and available to all, and may we be sustained and nurtured over the entire face of the earth. May we let go and be cleansed of all that keeps us from living as we were created to be.

Leader: Let us turn and face the North..

ALL: Spirit draw near

In the North, in the mountains and rooted plants, we welcome the wisdom of being present and manifest here on the earth.

All: We welcome those who came before us and the ways of living and spiritual wisdom they shared with us.

Let us turn and face the center as the Christ light comes into our midst.

May we walk good paths, living on the earth in Oneness as siblings, rejoicing in one another's blessings, supporting and caring in one another's sorrows.

All: Teach us to live as spirit in flesh like Jesus. Amen.

**ALL: 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 "Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet" *GTG, 458*

Praying John Still
Guiding God, You who never leave our side in all the paths of life, be with us as we traverse the pain and delight of loving and living so that we might be with others in the seasons of their lives. We praise you for setting in motion the cycles of creation and setting us among it.

And all God's people say, **Amen.**

Path II: Befriending the Dark Places

Listening John Still

Apprehend God in all things,
For God is in all things.
Every single creature is full of God.
If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature—

Even a caterpillar—
I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of
God
Is every creature.
Earth cannot escape heaven,
Flee it by going up,
Or flee it by going down,
Heaven still invades the Earth,
Energizes it,
Makes it sacred.
All hiding places reveal God.
If you want to escape God,
God just runs into your lap.
For,
God is at home.
It is we who have gone out for a walk.
- Meister Eckhardt

Letting Go and Holding with Love

Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

Let us say together

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

. . . .

Each week we will explore a version of the prayer Jesus taught. This week we encounter a version from Hawaiin poet and artist, Kaleo Ching. He starts with the Hebrew words for Father and Mother - Abba, Imma. Let us pray together:

**Abba Imma in heaven, holy be your name.
Your reign come, your yearning be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day the bread we need.
Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors
Guide us through life's trials
Shelter us all from evil
In your Grace, your wisdom, and your love.
Amen.

Path III: Exclaiming the Divine Creative

Bringing Words to Life Psalm 30 John Still & Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

I exalt you, Lord, because you pulled me up;
 you didn't let my enemies celebrate over me.
Lord, my God, I cried out to you for help,
 and you healed me.
Lord, you brought me up from the grave,
 brought me back to life from among those going down to the pit.
You who are faithful to the Lord,
 sing praises to him;
 give thanks to his holy name!
God's anger lasts for only a second,
 but God's favor lasts a lifetime.
Weeping may stay all night,
 but by morning, joy!
When I was comfortable, I said,
 "I will never stumble."
Because it pleased you, Lord,
 you made me a strong mountain.
But then you hid your presence.
 I was terrified.
I cried out to you, Lord.
 I begged my Lord for mercy:
 "What is to be gained by my spilled blood,
 by my going down into the pit?
Does dust thank you?

Musician: Brad Ucci
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

Remember in Prayer

Pray for all those touched recently by violence and natural disasters, the healing of national hostility and mistrust, efforts to feed the poor and provide shelter for the homeless in our area, and the following people:

Jay Carlson, Clare MacDonald's son-in-law, and father of 2 young daughters, suffered a blood clot in his head. He has been released from hospital and is slowly recovering with the help of neuro physical therapy.

Ed Carter (102) is under hospice care in the skilled nursing unit at The Moorings. He is comfortable and appreciates our prayers and in-person visits by Covid-vaccinated friends.

Linda Book continues her battle with multiple myeloma cancer.

Chuck Burton, extended family of Lois Rayner, is dealing with issues related to cancer.

Pauline Cottingham is doing well, despite the general decline in her health.

Peter Cullin, Sue Culin's brother-in-law, is undergoing chemotherapy.

Honey Hill, Sue Cullin's step-niece, is awaiting the results of a biopsy.

Lacey Meade, Betty Pratt's daughter, completed her last round of chemotherapy.

Betty Pratt is feeling better, though she has some memory issues.

Greg Solt, friend of Karen and Glenn Dixon, who has a mass on his pancreas. He and his family appreciate our prayers for their courage, as they confront the likely diagnoses of pancreatic and liver cancer.

Janet Waugaman, Sally Waugaman's daughter, continues to lose mobility due to Multiple System Atrophy.

John Witmer is recovering at home following heart surgery, and is working to regain his strength and energy.

Our church has a prayer chain of members who will pray for any person you ask. Contact Leslie Marsh by phone at 302-542-9927 or email at cmarshjr@verizon.net

Create Your Own Prayer Bead Walking Stick



There are various paths in this world, and many ways in which God moves us through the seasons and cycles of our lives. Our ritual activity this week is creating a string of beads (perhaps four to represent the four paths) that can be attached to a walking stick, or simply pocketed during walks as a touchstone to use in prayer and meditation.

Materials:

- A long stick
- Paint – acrylic paint is good, as it stays on longer
- String
- Beads
- Feathers

1. Get the Stick Ready

Make sure your stick is nice and dry. Break off any protruding branches. It doesn't matter if your stick has lots of bark on it—it adds to the texture and final look.

2. Paint the Stick

If you can, use acrylic paint, or mix some other paint with white acrylic paint to help the paint stay on the stick longer. Let the stick dry fully.

3. Add Prayer Beads

Once the stick has fully dried, add a string of Prayer Beads. You can have them all mixed in rainbow colors or sort them by color to match your stick designs.

5. String the Prayer Beads

Tie your string around your feathers, then add a bead and secure the feathers inside the bead. Add more beads, maybe four in total to represent the four paths.

6. Tie the Knot

Once you have enough, tie your Prayer Bead string to your stick with a simple knot. Make sure it is tied securely so it doesn't slip off your stick.

7. Bead the Other Side

Add four prayer beads to the remaining bit of string and secure the last bead with a knot.