

Plymouth Congregational Church
May 11, 2025 – Mother Earth Sunday

Chiming the Trinity

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Charles

- Bible Study: Tuesdays, 9:00 am, Fireside Room.
- Liturgist sign-up sheets in the narthex.
- Chime choir – Tuesdays, 1:30 pm, sanctuary.
- Friday, May 16 – United Way is having a Spirit of Service Day picnic, and they need volunteers to set-up, light grills, and serve 140 volunteers between noon and 3pm. Please let me know.
- I will be on vacation May 20 – June 8.
 - Rev. Su Debree will provide pulpit supply on June 1.
 - Rev. Sarah Branom will be providing pulpit supply on June 8.

Invitation to Worship *adapted from Psalm 19* Frank Kromkowski

One: The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

All: And, also with you!

One: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

All: Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

One: There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

All: Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Nurturing Soil

Lynn Bolin

Today, we recognize our mothers. We remember loving embraces and kisses on our cheeks. We remember nutritious food and a safe place to sleep. We remember love and joy and encouragement. We remember belonging, shared experiences, and reconciliation.

And, in all of the love that so many of us feel for our mothers, we acknowledge the pain of those who have lost their mothers. We acknowledge the sadness of those who have never known their mothers. We acknowledge the difficulty of those who have complicated relationships with their mothers.

We remember that no matter what our relationship with our mothers was or is like, we were all given life from our mothers. And, we remember that our Creator God, is Mother to us all, for she is the Great Nurturer and Caregiver.

Just as we were all nurtured in our mother's wombs, so too does Mother Earth nurture all life.

With the soil of her body, living, breathing, changing, growing, she provides for every living being on this planet.

The Earth is God's creation, a reflection of God's nurturing and life-giving spirit. This is the place where God planted the spark of life, breathed into it, and gave it form.

Gathering Hymn

NCH 426

O God, Whose Steadfast Love (verses 1,2 & 4)

Unison Prayer

Pastor Charles

God Who Is Still Speaking, Spirit of Motherhood, Protector and Truth-Bringer, help us to hear your still small voice. Help us to listen to your message and to share your love with the world. You bless us with the glory and majesty of your presence. Your love reassures us, and gives us strength. Your goodness bolsters our faith. As you are giving, let us be giving. As you are loving, let us be loving, and help us to be your ambassadors of grace and goodwill to the world.

[We invite you to rest in this brief moment of silence to listen for God's loving message for you this day.]

Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Frank Kromkowski

People of God, hear the Good News! As our mothers' love ushers us into the world, so too does the love of God welcome all new life.

Flowers burst forth in the spring, filling the world with scent and color, food for birds and insects, and the potential for new life. We, too, are meant to make the world a more colorful place, and we, too, are meant to nurture all of the life around us. Through our mothers, God has imbued us with all of the potential for the goodness of humanity. Let us praise God, and remember that we are God's children.

Amen.

Congregational Response*God, Bless Our Home*

NCH 429

Life-giving Water

Jeanne Wolf

Like a mother who provides her children with water to quench their thirst, so too does our Mother Earth send us life-giving rain.

The rain falls equally upon all, a gift to all, a gift from God. The waters of the Earth are her lifeblood, connecting all parts of the world together, just as our own blood connects the different parts of our bodies. These waters of life distribute nutrients, regulate temperature, and allow all living things to grow. Let us remember the importance of the waters, and the water in our bodies, that connects us to every other living thing in this world.

Prayer of Illumination

Al Simons

Loving God, open our hearts and our minds to hear your voice in the words written in our scriptures, and to find ways to reflect and respond as your children. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

New Testament Reading

Acts 8:26-31

Al Simons

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So, he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then, the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."

So, Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And, he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

Musical Interlude

Plymouth Hand Chime Choir

This is Our Father's World

Second New Testament Reading Acts 8:32-39 Rev. Dr. Tony Clark

Now the passage of the scripture that [the eunuch] was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

Then, Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing.

Reflection

Musical Reflection

Prayers of the People

Pastor Charles

Maker of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, Maker of the Earth and the Wind and the Waves, we thank you for the wonders of your beautiful creation. We thank you for the gift of life, and for the abundance that surrounds us. We thank you for the diversity in the world, and the endless vistas, ideas, and wonders for us to discover. Give us the strength and the courage to explore it. Give us curiosity to learn from it. Give us the heart to love it and protect it. Give us the humility and compassion to live in relationship with it and with each other.

Mother and Father of us all, we ask that you be with all of those for whom no one ever prays, and we ask you to be with those who are in recovery, those who are experiencing war, those who are experiencing hunger and cold. We lift up those who don't have a place to call home, those who are lonely or scared. Let your compassion blossom within us so that we can be the care-givers that you need us to be.

Special Prayers: Ann Chivlicek, Maxine Ferguson, Art Gilreath, Loraine Hopgood, Doris Powell, Marlyce Taylor, and Giles Walker. All those who are experiencing the horrors of war and natural disasters.

Medical Treatment: Greg Bolin, Gus Byrom, Brian Coplin, Kathy Field, Karen Mills, Kelly Murphy, Phyllis Weaver.

The Lord's Prayer

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;
The way of your justice be followed by the people of the world,
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, strengthen us.

From trial too great to endure, 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.

~ New Zealand Prayerbook

Tithes and Offerings

Donations can be made at our website, which you can reach with
this QR code:



Doxology

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

Prayer of Dedication

Pastor Charles

Departing Hymn

Touch the Earth Lightly

NCH 569

Charge & Benediction

Rev. Dr. Tony Clark

Congregational Blessing

Go Out Now in Peace

Sing! 212

Postlude

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

~ Corrie ten Boom