**September 13, 2026 – Order of Service**

**Light Christ Candle** -by *Laura J. Turnbull, The Gathering*
Light creeps into the sky at dawn, illuminating the early morn. A single lamp glows and brightens the room. A flash of lightning across the evening sky brings splendour to the night. The Christ candle burning on the communion table brings radiance and delight to our worship. We remember that Christ is the Light of the World. Thanks be to God!

**Announcements & Welcome** *-from VU # 229*

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| God of the sparrow,<br>God of the whale,<br>God of the swirling stars.<br>How does the creature say awe?<br>How does the creature say praise? | God of the earthquake,<br>God of the storm,<br>God of the trumpet blast.<br>How does the creature cry woe?<br>How does the creature cry save? | God of the rainbow,<br>God of the cross,<br>God of the empty grave.<br>How does the creature say grace?<br>How does the creature say thanks? | God of the ages,<br>God near at hand,<br>God of the loving heart.<br>How do your children say joy?<br>How do your children say home? |

**Call to Worship** *-by Kate Crawford, Huron Shores UC, Grand Bend, ON*
You who created the earth and the air; You who designed the sky and the sea; You who spoke and things were made; You have called us your people and beckoned us here and set a holy longing in our hearts for a world where peace and justice are done and creation is cared for in love. We call you to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Amen.

**Ministry of Music** ***Called by Earth and Sky***

**Gathering Prayer** *-by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), The Brothers Karamazov, adapted*
Lord, may we love all your creation, all the earth, and every grain of sand in it. May we love every leaf, every ray of your light. Love the animals, love the plants, love each separate thing. If you love each thing, you will perceive the mystery of God in all; and when once you perceive this, you will, every day going forward, grow every day to a fuller understanding of it: until you come at last to love the whole world with a love that will then be all-embracing and universal.

**Gathering Hymn** ***Praise the Lord, My Soul***, (Tune: VU # 639, *One More Step Along the World I Go*)

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| Praise the Lord, my soul, for He is good,<br>Praise the Lord, my soul, for He is wise<br>Praise the Lord, oh, praise the Lord!<br>All creation will praise the Lord! | *Refrain*<br>*O God, you gave us all good things.*<br>*Lord, my God, how great you are!* | God created the moon and sun,<br>God made springs to flow and rivers run,<br>Birds to sing, and grass to grow,<br>God created all, you know.<br>*Refrain* | God gave life to humankind,<br>Gave us breath and gave us bread and wine,<br>So, this day, we pause to pray,<br>Thank you, God, on this and ev'ry day!<br>*Refrain* | God saw all that had been made was right,<br>Birds and trees and the day and night!<br>Then God stopped and blessed this day,<br>A day for all to rest and pray!<br>*Refrain* |

**Children's Song** God Made the Whole World, (Tune: *He's Got the Whole World*)
*-lyrics by Susan Bedggood, Brigden UC, Brigden, ON*

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| God made the whole world in six days<br>God made the whole wide world in six days<br>God made the whole world in six days<br>Day seven was the day to rest. | God made the dark and the light on day one<br>God made the day and the night on day one<br>God made it night, then light on day one<br>God looked and said that it was good. | God made the heavens over earth on day two<br>God made the blue sky above on day two<br>God made the clouds, wind, and rain on day two<br>God looked and said it was good. | God made the land and the sea on day three<br>God made plants and trees on day three<br>God made flowers and weeds on day three<br>God looked and said it was good. | God made the sun and the moon on day four<br>God made the stars in the night on day four<br>God made the sun warm and bright on day four<br>God looked and said it was good. | God made the fish and the whales on day five<br>God made the birds flying high on day five<br>God filled the sea and the sky on day five<br>God looked and said it was good. | God made all of the animals on day six<br>God made people in his image on day six<br>God's gift of creation to tend with care<br>God finished and said that it was good. | God made the whole world in six days<br>God made the whole wide world in six days<br>God made the whole world in six days<br>Day seven was the day to rest. |

**Children's Prayer** *-by* written by *Anne Morrisey*
**Dear God, each day, after you created something else, you said, "It is good!" We couldn't agree more. We love what you created. When we go for walks in the woods, hear the birds chirping, and breathe in the smell of the pine trees, we declare, "It is good!" When we go for a swim in your lakes, we lay on our backs and feel the warmth of the sun on our faces, we declare, "It is good!" When we gaze up at the stars and the moon and feel a sense of awe, we declare, "It is good!" For everything you created, we thank you and declare, as you did, "It is good!" Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**
*Children leave for Sunday School*

**Prayer** *-by David Sparks, Rossland, BC, The Gathering, Weekly Mailing*
L: Joining with light and shade, we will praise our God.
**P: The blue of the sky, the glow of the beckoning dawn, sing God's praises.**
L: With flowing water and pounding seas, we will praise our God.
**P: The mighty ocean, the trickling stream, proclaim their Creator's marvelous power.**
L: With hills and valleys, we will praise our God.
**P: With the dazzling heights, the lowest valleys,**
L: With soaring eagle and busy ant, we will praise our God.
**P: Each bird, each animal, each tiny insect, and each person of humankind makes clear God's creative presence, and so we praise our God.**

**Hymn** ***This is God's Wondrous World***, VU # 296

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| This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears all nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres. | This is God's wondrous world, I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought. | This is God's wondrous world: the birds their carols raise; the morning light, the lily white declare their Maker's praise. | This is God's wondrous world, God shines in all that's fair in the rustling grass or mountain pass God speaks to me everywhere. | This is God's wondrous world: O let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet. | This is God's wondrous world why should my heart be sad? Let voices sing, let the heavens ring. God reigns, let earth be glad! |

**Prayer of Confession** *-by Robin Wardlaw, Glen Rhodes UC, Toronto, ON*
We have not kept covenant with all our hearts and strength. We have treated air and water and soil with disdain. We have taken our communion with all life lightly. We have kept the things that are yours and treated the things that are Caesar's as if they were holy. This we acknowledge before you, Creator God.
(a time of silence)

**Words of Assurance** You were made by Love, for love. The One who made you knows your sin and your goodness. The Spirit gives you power to begin again. Accept this forgiveness and be at peace.

**Hymn** ***We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky***, MVU # 143

We cannot own the sunlit sky,
The moon, the wildflow'rs growing,
For we are part of all that is
Within life's river flowing.

With open hands receive and share
The gifts of God's creation,
That all may have abundant life
In ev'ry earthly nation.

**Offering Invitation & Prayer** God has invited us to eat freely of every tree in the garden except for one, but we take more. With eyes opened, we know how our lifestyle decisions make life more difficult for others. Let us now share our abundance, offering gifts that will enable others to live more fully, and maybe even to know and walk with God.

Holy One, we offer back to you these gifts, and those given already through PAR and online, fruit from the bounty you have given us. Use them to feed those who might otherwise go hungry physically or spiritually. Bless them for the ministries here and for ministries across the world through Mission and Service. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Hymn** ***It's a Song of Praise to the Maker***, MVU # 30

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| It's a song of praise to the Maker, The thrush sings high in the tree. It's a song of praise to the Maker, The gray whale sings in the sea, | Refrain And by the Spirit you and I Can join our voice to the holy cry And sing, sing, sing to the Maker too. | It's a call of life to the Giver When waves and waterfalls roar. It's a call of life to the Giver When high tides break on the shore, Refrain | It's a hymn of love to the Lover; The bumblebees hum along. It's a hymn of love to the Lover; The summer breeze joins the song, Refrain | It's the chorus of all creation; It's sung by all living things. It's the chorus of all creation; A song the universe sings, Refrain |

**Prayer of Illumination** *-by Beverly Brazier, MacDermott UC, Pool's Cove, NL*
O Great Dreamer, you dreamed up the stars in the sky. You dreamed up that magic baby smell and the way cream sinks into coffee. You dreamed up the crunch of fall leaves and jazz music. You dreamed up wisteria and evergreen and the pure magic that is a six-foot-tall sunflower. And in the midst of all of that, you dreamed up a dream for your people – a dream of hope and justice, a dream for hearts wide open both to the world's suffering and to the world's beauty. So today, as we read scripture, we ask that you would plant that same dream in us. Pour out your Spirit on our hearts and minds so that we may notice what you notice and dream what you dream. Gratefully, we pray. Amen.

**Scripture Reading**

*Genesis 1:1–2:4 (*The Message*)*

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: "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: "Sky! In the middle of the waters; separate water from water!" God made sky. He separated the water under sky from the water above sky. And there it was: he named sky the Heavens; *It was evening, it was morning - Day Two.*

God spoke: "Separate! Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!" And there it was. God named the land Earth. He named the pooled water Ocean. God saw that it was good. God spoke: "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: "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 he 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: "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: "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: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflect 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; he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. 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 he 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 his work. *On the seventh day he rested from all his work.* God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day. Because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done.

*This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.*

**Hymn** ***I Sing the Mighty Power***, VU # 231

*I sing the mighty power of God*
*that made the mountains rise,*
*that spread the flowing seas abroad,*
*and built the lofty skies.*
*I sing the wisdom that ordained*
*the sun to rule the day,*
*the moon shines full at God's command*
*and all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the One*
*who filled the earth with food,*
*who formed the creatures with a word,*
*and then pronounced them good.*
*O God, your wonders are displayed*
*Where'er I turn my eye,*
*if I survey the ground I tread,*
*or gaze upon the sky!*

*There's not a plant or flower below*
*but makes your glories known,*
*and clouds arise, and tempests blow,*
*by order from your throne,*
*while all that borrows life from you*
*is ever in your care,*
*and everywhere that I may be,*
*You, God, are present there.*

**Reflection** *-by Kim Inglis, Belwood-Metz PC, Belwood, ON*

Creation . . . The very beginning, where it all began, where there was nothing before something would become something. We are surrounded by all creation. We are, in fact, God's creation. But what if it didn't happen. What if God had not created? Put yourself in a comfortable, quiet position while we go through the un-creation.

On the seventh day, God rested. God took pleasure in all God has created and knew it was and is good. Imagine this peace, this creation from love. Feel the earth beneath you and the gentle breeze that is blowing. Take pleasure in this blessing of abundance and beauty. Simply feel the words of the psalm: "Be still and know that I am God."

On the sixth day, God created us, you and me, in God's image. Though we fall way short here, God saw it as good. Imagine just being created and you have just opened your senses to all that is around. On that day, God also created the animals that share this earth with us: the sheep, the pigs, the cattle, the horses. God created the rabbits and the chickens and all the wonderful animals that provide for us. God created the cats and the dogs, at least their predecessors, that are companions for us. Now imagine that this is no more: no animals to sustain us, no dogs or cats as companions, no chickens to lay eggs, no sheep to provide wool or meat, no ants or beetles to help regenerate to the land. Imagine no us; yes, no us. Imagine that!

On the fifth day, God created the creatures that fly in the sky and swim in the waters. Place yourself among the trees and listen to the birds call. Watch them fly from branch to branch. Pay attention. Take time to notice their songs and how they are different. Do we wonder what they are singing for? Do we wonder how they fly? Now imagine that song is gone. No more, only silence in the morning. No birds flying among the trees. No chirping. No movement. Just silence. Imagine.

On day four, God created a sense of time. God placed the sun, the moon, the stars in the skies, separating day from night. We now have seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn in our part of the world. But imagine if there were no sun to warm us, no moon to light the evening sky, no seasons. Just vegetation and waters, and one single continuous day. No sense of time: what would that be like? What would that feel like? Imagine.

On day three, God created dry land and from that land comes vegetation. Think on the very beauty of flowers. Imagine the trees bearing fruit and nuts, shelter, wood, and bark. Now reflect on what it would like here without trees, without fruit, without seedlings growing into food. Imagine no dry land, just water and sky. There is only water, endless water with the sky above. Nothing else exists. Imagine.

On day two, God created what we now think of as space. God separated the waters above from the waters below and forms the sky. Imagine the sky. Sky and water, no dry land. Just a vast expanse of sky. Now imagine the sky is gone. There is just water, water everywhere, above below. But really there is no dimension, no depth, no earth no sky. Imagine.

On day one, God separated the light from the dark. God created a balance of day and night. Imagine the light that now illuminates and warms. Imagine the darkness that cradles and provides rest. Now imagine the light gone, the dark gone, the balance gone. Imagine.

Now we are before the beginning, where there is nothing. We have un-created what God created. No humans, no animals, no sun, no land, no trees, no time. Only watery chaos. This isn't good. All is gone. Only chaos, a formless void. Imagine.

And then, the Spirit wind blows over the waters of the deep and hope begins anew . . .

Now we are back to this time, a time when we are blessed with God the Creator and can experience how awesome that is. It is God's abundance; God's creation is all around us. Do we see it? Do we hear it? Do we smell it? Do we feel it? Do we taste it? Do we understand our place in it?

**Hymn** ***O Beautiful Gaia***, MV 41

Refrain
O beautiful Gaia,
O Gaia, calling us home.
O beautiful Gaia,
Calling us on.

Soil yielding its harvest,
O Gaia, calling us home.
Soil yielding its harvest,
Calling us on.
Refrain

Waves crashing on granite,
O Gaia, calling us home.
Waves crashing on granite,
Calling us on.
Refrain

Pine bending in windstorm,
O Gaia, calling us home.
Pine bending in windstorm,
Calling us on.
Refrain

Loon nesting in marshland,
O Gaia, calling us home.
Loon nesting in marshland,
Calling us on.
Refrain

**Prayers of the People** *-by Leean Steinthorson, Trinity UC, Ingersoll, ON*

Creative God, we are people who seek you in the beauty of this world, in our neighbours and friends, our pets, our gardens and forests, and your sunsets. For all the gifts of Creation, we give thanks. *(Silent prayer)*

Along with that beauty come our own concerns for friends, family, and this world in which we live. *(Silent prayer)*

We pray for creation. Show us how we can effect changes to make our world healthier and greener. *(Silent prayer)*

We pray for all those whose health is suffering, all who are ill, all those in hospital, and all who are suffering in any way in body, mind, or spirit. *(Silent prayer)*

We pray for peace and the return of hope to all who live in the midst of violence in this world. We ask for the provision of food and shelter for any who are in need. *(Silent prayer)*

We take a moment now to lift to you in silent prayer those who are on our minds. *(Silent prayer)*

God of grace and love, thank you for receiving our prayers, which we offer in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Parting Hymn** ***It Only Takes Our Awe*** (Tune: VU # 289, It Only Takes a Spark) *-lyrics by Carol Kilby, Beach UC, Toronto, ON*

It only takes our awe to change life forever
And soon all that's around
Deserves our love and wonder.
That's why it is we sing and dance,
Paint and write, act and sow.
The earth's our home, our only home,
We want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is fall
When all the leaves are turning
The hills to gold and red,
Fat bears to dens for sleeping.
That's how it is with earth's dance;
Once you've experienced it,
You age, let go, rest to grow,
That's how we pass life on.

What wonder is in winter
When all the world lies fallow.
The dance and songs are stilled,
The striving it is over.
That's how it is with Gaia;
There's death, there's dying.
We give our hearts, we do our part,
And then we pass life on.

What wonder is in summer
When days are for creating.
The whale brings forth her calf,
Soils grow abundant.
That's how it is with sun's good grace;
Once you've experienced it,
You live to give, you give to live,
You want to pass life on.

**Benediction** *-by Jamie Miller, First UC, Dryden, ON*

We have gathered on the seventh day of Creation. We celebrate that God gazed out at all that had been created and declared, "It is very good!" As our worship comes to a close and we move into the week ahead, notice the goodness of God's Creation around you. Give yourself permission to work and rest. Seek God in the rest, in the calm, and in the quiet. Seek out time to rest and offer rest to others. Amen.

**Sung Benediction** ***How Deep the Silence***, (Tune VU # 625, I Feel the Winds of God) -lyrics by *Sylvia Dunstan, Ajax, ON*

Like unseen chimes on moving air,
Like warm and morning sun,
Like gladdening, greening, growing things,
Like trees with blooms begun,

Such is your presence in our lives
You touch without a trace,
Until we turn and find ourselves
Held fast in your embrace.

**Choral Amen**
**Extinguish the Christ Candle**