

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN**(Traditional & Online Service)**May 11, 2025 • Communion • Care for Creation, Part Two
Mother's Day Weekend • Third Sunday in Easter**Genesis 2:4b-25***"Till the Earth"*

God expects us to co-create.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If you don't have a particular item, fret not:

- a piece of white cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate with bread
- a cup with juice
- a glass or bowl of water
- a lighter/match
- a garden spade or other tool
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week



For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you. Have enough elements for each person in your household.

Questions for the announcement loop*In preparing for Worship, consider the following:*

- What does it take for something to grow?
- When growing anything, is there a bigger part of the process than patience?
- What does tilling the soil actually do?
- Why do you imagine picked YOU as a co-creator?

(10am only) Call to Worship*"Christ Has Arisen!" by Daniel Mattix***Christ has arisen as our King.****Conquering death and sin's vile sting!****With all creation join to sing; Alleluia!...***Liturgy:**Christ is risen!***Alleluia!***Death has been swallowed up in victory!***Where, O death, is your victory?***Where, O death, is your sting?***The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.***But thanks be to God!***He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Alleluia!****Christ has arisen from the grave,****He rose to triumph and to save!****New life to humankind he gave:****Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!****(10am only) Prelude:***"More Love to Thee/My Jesus, I Love Thee" arr.*

Melody Bober

Opening Sentence**Genesis 2:15 (CEB)**

The LORD God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it.

Welcome to this service of Worship, We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week...

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than the Sanctuary.

Grow What God Wants

So if you were hired to work on a farm, who do you think calls the shots about what is planted and grown? The one who hired you, of course! So knowing God is the one who created AND employed us, what do you imagine God wants grown on the world God made? What do you imagine God wants grown *in you*? As you contemplate God's ongoing creative work in you and the world around you, how reliable an employee are you? How well do you follow instructions and innovate against the challenges to God's goals for harvest? If you really want to dig into the metaphor, talk to people who farm for a living (if you don't already do that). Find out what goes into their decisions and work and compare that to the work you do with your faith.

Caring for Creation

The truth is as daunting as it is grace-filled: we ARE *partners* with God in Creation. God has seen fit to give us authority over the majesty, variety, and riches of Creation. The question is *what kind of partner does God want us to be*? We will be exploring Scripture's take on our role in several ways throughout this series. Look for the study materials on our website and Facebook page.

Compass Communion Service

On Sunday, May 11th, we are hosting our worship service with Communion at Compass Health and Rehabilitation. It's a special one as we will celebrate Easter (early!) with them. We can use your help to make it happen! We need folks to prepare the Communion elements, to gather residents who need assistance, to help residents during the service, and getting folks back in place. We meet at the door closest to the Chapel (facing the front, the door to the right end of the building) at 1:30pm.

Homecoming 2025: Music Festival

The third Sunday in May is the traditional celebration of the founding of our congregation and our church family reunion! We invite everyone to come ready to reminisce and reconnect. This year, we plan on worshipping together in song! With Psalm 150 as our guide, we will praise God in gratitude and awe! Also, as always, we will have our potluck following the service. Bring Lemonade or Tea and your favorite dish to share and be ready

for our group picture. Everyone is welcome to join in, whether or not they're a member or friend or visitor! Let's make this a grand celebration of 270 years!

Game Night!

Friday, May 23rd, starting at 7pm, is once again Game Night! Bring your favorite card or board game to share as well as a snack. We will break out at tables throughout the Fellowship Hall (and if need be, the Education Building). Come and join in and let's learn a thing or two about each other!

Honor Your Mothers!

It is hard to overstate how much we need and count on those who mother us. Those folks who help make sure we're fed and ask us uncomfortable questions. Those who mentor us and those who work ahead of us. Those who want the best for us and those who love taking care of us. While this Sunday is an arbitrarily set holiday, the task of honoring those who mother us is not arbitrary. Take time to show appreciation this weekend. Find ways to show honor year round.

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) "This Is the Day CEL #209

This is the day, that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it

This the day that Lord has made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

God expects us to co-create.

In this moment, let us remain standing, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship. Let us sing our opening song together...

Sing:

"Mother's Day Song" by Jaime Woodruff

On this day, on this day, Lord we thank You for our mothers on this day.

All their guidance and their care, Lord, with us Your love they share,

Let us praise You for their love on this day.

Mother's Day, Mother's Day, Lord, may this day be holy, Mother's Day.
 With Your wisdom they show grace, an example to embrace.
 Lord, help us return their love every day.

In Your church, in Your church. May our Mothers be honored in Your church.
 Lord, to honor and obey, in Your presence we now pray.
 O please bless this special day, in Your church.

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

In our efforts to take every advantage Creation offers us we forget that everything is given to us in trust. That's just wrong. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: Creator God, even though you are the real owner, the true employer, and the one and only God, we are quick to act as though our authority over Creation is NOT given but owed. Like we own the place. Please correct this tendency in us. Help us realize everyday our partnership with you over the world around us. Help us renew our sense of direction from you over what must grow. Forgive us for forgetting that all of Creation, even our role in it, is given. May we come to reflect your generosity as enthusiastically as we receive it. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. And it is God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

The Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)

Glory be to the Father

And to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning

It is now and ever shall be

World without end: Amen, amen.

Reading of Scripture

Say: The Word of God doesn't just inform: it reveals. The Word of God doesn't just tell us the truth, it empowers us to live our true path. The Word of God, by God's own Spirit, teaches us to live. Let us be open to this gift of God and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"
 (GTG #232)

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!

Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!

Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!

Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Genesis 2:4b-25 (CEB)

The second Creation story.

^{4b} On the day the LORD God made earth and sky—⁵ before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the LORD God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being to farm the fertile land, ⁶ though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land—⁷ the LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life. ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east and put there the human he had formed. ⁹ In the fertile land, the LORD God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also he grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flows from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides into four headwaters. ¹¹ The name of the first river is the Pishon. It flows around the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² That land's gold is pure, and the land also has sweet-smelling resins and gemstones. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It flows around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris, flowing east of Assyria; and the name of the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of

it. ¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the human, "Eat your fill from all of the garden's trees; ¹⁷ but don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day you eat from it, you will die!" ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It's not good that the human is alone. I will make him a helper that is perfect for him." ¹⁹ So the LORD God formed from the fertile land all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky and brought them to the human to see what he would name them. The human gave each living being its name. ²⁰ The human named all the livestock, all the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals. But a helper perfect for him was nowhere to be found.

²¹ So the LORD God put the human into a deep and heavy sleep, and took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh over it. ²² With the rib taken from the human, the LORD God fashioned a woman and brought her to the human being. ²³ The human said,

*"This one finally is bone from my bones
and flesh from my flesh.*

*She will be called a woman
because from a man she was taken."*

²⁴ This is the reason that a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵ The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they weren't embarrassed.

*One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the
Word of God among us, for the Word of God within
us...*

All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon

Adults, you'll need:

- a seed and an accompanying flower or produce
 - Don't forget to wait for answers
- "From Here to There"*
- (showing the seed) So do you know what this is?...It is a seed! It's pretty small though. Looking at it, can you tell what it is? Do you know what it will be?...
 - (Now show the flower or produce) well, it's going to become this! (name the flower or produce) But how do you know? How will we know how big it

will be? How do we know what color(s) it will be? How will we know how it tastes (if you can eat it)?

- To get from here (the seed) to there (the produce) what has to happen?...well, the ground has to be tilled, the seed has to be planted, then watered, the sun must shine, the rains must fall, weeds have to be pulled, and, most importantly, we have to wait!
- All the things that have to happen to get from here to there...that's what a mother is like. Mothers are like all the things that help a seed to grow into whatever it is meant to be. Without mothers, we would be lost, we would be empty, we would be nothing.
- So when you're around the people who care about you, be sure and thank God for your mothers. Oh, and make sure you actually thank your mothers for helping you grow.
- Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"This Little Light of Mine" arr. Ginger Littleton;
Soloists: Sandy Muller, Daphne Layfield, Erin Layfield

Sermon: "Till the Earth"

Make your mark!

Leave your legacy!

Punctuate your purpose!

When we review our lives—at any point, not just near the end—we have to wonder: how will we be remembered? As you think about your own life right now, what's your takeaway? How would you summarize your existence? And, just because we're talking about it, given that we are created, how would GOD summarize your life? You have to imagine God feels pretty good about how you were put together. God *wants* you to be here, intended for you to be made. For all the wonders of the universe (and they are legion), YOU are among them! The particular mix of personality and quirk and flair and sound and personal preferences: everything that can possibly go into you being you: on purpose. Thanks be to God for you!

Sigh...it does beg one small question, though: why? Why make you? What's the reason you are here? What are supposed to do?

We typically answer this question in terms of what we're meant to accomplish.

God put me on this earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now I'm so far behind I will never die...

I submit, though, listing our accomplishments is a pretty low bar. What accomplishment, what achievement, what medal or blue ribbon, what accolade or renown could we possibly point to that God doesn't get the credit? I can brag about my education, for example. I had good grades in High School. But I promise you: realizing that potential was because our Mom read to us and demanded we behave and expand our vocabulary. (We had to pick a word and learn it and then by the end of the day come to her using it in a real way in a sentence.) I got an honors scholarship to Mount Olive College and graduated with honors and a Bachelors degree. But Mom taught me to wash my clothes, fix my own food and to actually care whether my grades were good. I earned two Masters degrees from my seminary. But my mother's voice was there every step of the way reminding me to say "Thank you" to God for my impossibly good scholarship, for choosing good friends, and finding my best friend who would choose to become my wife.

Listen, I did all those things. I had to do my part. But none of those degrees or experiences or, importantly, those achievements were possible on my own or in my own strength. What compassion you might experience from me in my ministry belongs to Mom. What optimism you might observe in me, what music you hear in my voice, what art I might craft, the way I speak, the way I give, what good you might see in my life, has my Mom to thank. And my Mom comes from God.

So, let's move past achievements.

Why are we here? What are we supposed to do?

Online Read: Genesis 2:4b-25 (CEB)
The second Creation story.

When people inevitably object to calling this "the Second Creation Story", I'm reminded of the debates over the Gospels and the efforts to shoehorn them into one continuous narrative. Y'all, we just flat don't have to do that for them to be true. It is more than okay that there are contradictions and conflicts and differences between Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are, after all, perspectives from different people about the most significant event in human history. If there weren't differences, I'd be very skeptical and concerned. I would trust them less.

And looking at the two Creation stories, I appreciate that our forebears thought enough of both traditions to preserve them for us. Because the lessons from both stories are priceless.

While the first story lends to us the sheer power of God's Word and the profound importance of the Sabbath—of rest as a part of the created order (a sermon for another time)—the second story gives us a summary of what we're supposed to be up to as a humanity and a clue to just how intimate a relationship we have with God and God's purposes.

So what are supposed to do?

Till the Earth
 'Til the Earth
 grows the the way
 that God wants
 Till the Earth
 'til the rivers flow free
 with mercy
 Till the Earth
 'til justice and peace
 are the fruit that we see
 'Til we sow all the seeds
 'til we heal all the hurts
 Till the Earth

First, God set things up specifically for us to have a part in how things grow. On the day earth and sky were made, BEFORE anything grew, God made us from the topsoil, the best of the best.

The next time you complain about your height or weight or wrinkles or clumsiness or hair color or

your voice (I confess, I frequently complain about not being a Bass singer...just wasn't meant to be) remember well that you were put together with the topsoil of the earth, the best of the best.

But that's not all. Not only were we made with the best of the best stuff, our source of power, our source of life, comes directly from God's own Spirit. We didn't even become human until God breathed life into us.

Sit with that a minute.

We are who we are because God literally inspired our living. Those aspirations, those dreams, those hopes, they're literally God-breathed. All those times you feel alone, all those times you feel abandoned or helpless, all those times you feel overwhelmed or overpowered, remember who *powers* you.

So...best of the best materials, powered by the very breath of God. What does God want with this pinnacle of the Created order? What are we supposed to do? Well, not to put too fine a point on it, we're supposed to farm.

More broadly, we're employed by God to play our part in Creation and its management. We are to literally till the earth. To cause things to grow. To give names to all that lives. To remove the brazen weeds that try to strangle those efforts. To leave our mark just as God leaves God's mark on us. That is a tremendous amount of trust, confidence and, importantly, responsibility. We are to take responsibility for Creation. And it's not just for our future generations, though that matters a great deal. It's not just so we can have stuff to eat and drink, though that matters on a moral level. It's not so that we can have things the way we want. Don't get me wrong: what we want matters to God, matters a great deal. But what should matter more is what the one who hired us wants.

One of the things we complain about a LOT with our politics is that our leaders are bought and paid for. What we mean is that they are beholden to their biggest donors rather than their constituents. Yet when it comes to Creation, when it comes to our chief benefactor, our biggest divine donor, we

completely check out sometimes. We are not only ignorant (by choice) of what Creation needs, we are willful in our pursuit that the only purpose of Creation itself is to serve us. Y'all, that attitude has GOT to come to an end.

God wants life to flourish. God wants Creation to thrive. Greed can't get us there. War won't get us there. Hoarding won't get us there. Selfishness is incapable of getting us there. Apathy, laziness, procrastination, turning a blind eye, pretending we don't know what we know, being wasteful, are all hallmarks of the profound way we miss the point of Creation. Sure, we are capable of terrible things, evil things. We prove that time and again. But we were made with the best of the best, empowered by the divine and given the highest trust. We are capable of powerfully noble and good and lasting life-growing legacies.

Not just trees that stand the test of time, but values that resist erosion. Not just crops that feed thousands, but love that feeds generations. Not just medicines, architecture, art and literature that moves life-expectancy and knowledge, but faith that can transform the earth itself. God's dreams for us are vast and built on the premise that we observe how we are made and take responsibility for our part in all of it.

We are in the season of Easter. In that time of the year that we linger on the resurrection and the power of God to stand against our worst instincts and to transform us. And while we justifiably wonder at what *God* can do, the true beauty of Easter is rooted in the Creation story. God *expects* us to co-create. God is looking for us to take responsibility for our part in seeing to it that the promise of Creation is fulfilled. Salvation is here. And all it needs is for us to do what we were created to do. My family in Christ, let us till the earth.

Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Song of Reflection

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower " GTG #250

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

(10am only) Offertory

"Prayer for Mothers" text by Kathy Burdette and music by Donna Butler; Duet: Lora and Noah Melton

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God, above heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Blessing

(text online only)

Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Service of Communion

- Say: Let us first show we belong to a faith larger than ourselves. Let us say what we believe:

I believe in God's hopes—

That God created us for a reason,

That God chose people for a reason

That God fought for us for a reason

That God fought against us for a reason

That God called us out on our sins for a reason

That God made us partners with God for the building of the kingdom

That God created us for a purpose

That God has called us to be farmers:

**prophets, priests, teachers, students,
companions, travelers, historians, parents,
grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and most importantly children
all tilling the earth**

**Now by God's grace,
God's love really does
change everything**

**and makes us people of God
because of Jesus Christ**

Who was, who is, and is to come.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

- Say: The Lord be with you...and also with you. God invites us to the Table as we are, given who we are! God invites us to the Table even though we may think we don't belong. Yet God invites us, does NOT force us, because God still loves us. So let us answer together as one Church across time, across our homes, across our various situations, and eat and drink of what the Lord offers. Let us pray...
- *"Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks"* (GTG #240)
**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to His name (2 X)**
- Creator God, it can seem too simple. Too easy, even. And yet the task before us seems to elude us often. Help us first give thanks to you, to each others, but, as you instruct, to our mothers. To all those who embody what's best about your direction to till the earth. Help us be a part of helping everything thrive and grow, helping everyone thrive and grow.
- And please help us remember how we started. Help us remember well what you did. Knowing that you used the best of the best to make us and gave us your own Spirit to empower us, it makes sense that you would be willing to die. But as we celebrate the resurrection, help us, please, embrace anew our responsibility as people saved. Help us live lives of utter gratitude for what has been given...which is everything.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Teach us to live lives weeding out apathy, selfishness, cravenness, callousness, and evil. We pray this not only for ourselves, but for so many that we can name... (take time to name your own prayers)
- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

- (take the bread in your hands) On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread and having blessed it he broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, "This is my Body given for you. As often as you eat of it, do this in remembrance of me." (break and eat some of the bread)
- (take the cup with juice in your hands) In the same manner he took the cup, and, having blessed it, he gave it to his disciples and said, "This cup represents the new covenant sealed by my blood for the forgiveness of many. All of you drink of it." (drink some of the juice)
- Say: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's saving death until He comes. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.
- The only proper response to the grace of God is gratitude. Let us pray together with the whole Church:
- **Pray: Thank you, God, for making us your kingdom. Help us live out that thanks by being a refuge to all you call us to. Thank you for including us at your Table. Help us do the same with ours. In the great name of Jesus Christ we pray this together. Amen.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) "For the Fruit of All Creation " GTG#36

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

God expects us to co-create.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guide your hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Sing: "Praise, Praise, Praise the Lord!"

(GTG #390)

Praise, praise, praise the Lord! Praise God's holy name. Alleluia!

Praise, praise, praise the Lord! Praise God's holy name. Alleluia!

Praise God's holy name, alleluia! Praise God's holy name! Alleluia!

Praise God's holy name, alleluia! Praise God's holy name! Alleluia!

Praise, praise, praise the Lord! Praise God's holy name. Alleluia!

Praise, praise, praise the Lord! Praise God's holy name. Alleluia!

(10am only) Postlude

"What A Friend We Have In Jesus" arr. Jerry Ray
