

# ◆ MELROSE UNITED CHURCH ◆

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◆ Wednesday, April 22, 2020 ◆  
Earth Day

**MELROSE UNITED CHURCH**  
**Melrose celebration for environmental justice**

★ indicates a time to stand, if you are able  
congregational responses are in **boldface type**

PRELUDE – Chris Palmer, guitar

INTRODUCTION - (*Rev. Sonia Ireson*)

One: April 22 is Earth Day and is celebrated in communities around the world. It is a day to show our care for God's good earth and to recognize the challenges faced by many of the world's poorest people as they struggle to adapt to changing weather patterns and grow food enough to feed their families. Earth Day points us back to the Creator in our work and worship. The covenant we have with God to protect the earth, soil, and water is connected to our responsibility to those around the world who do not have enough to eat.

Earth Day calls us to love, not only in word or speech, but in truth and action.

The United church of Canada's theme for Earth Day 2020 is climate action. The enormous challenge: but also the vast opportunities of action on climate change, have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary. There is urgency to recognize the many human-experienced effects of climate change, from forced migration to unclean water to the spreading of diseases.

**One:** (*Rev. Sonia Ireson*)

**Indigenous Quote:** Along with recognition of the land we are on....Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe shall we include "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children"-Native American. There are a number of different quotes from different chiefs I thought this respectfully covered them all.

## LIGHTING OF A CANDLE

READER: John 1: 3-18 (*Rev. Sonia Ireson*)

New Testament-The word of Life ( John 1: 3-18)

Through him God made all things: not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought life to mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. This was the real light-the light that comes into the world, and shines on all mankind. The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him. He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so, he gave them the right to become God's children. They did not become God's children by natural means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their father. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only son. John spoke about him. He cried out, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'He comes after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I

was born’”. Out of the fullness of his grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another. God gave the law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God, and is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

STORY: “Earth Day: A Call to Care for the Planet “(*Kathy Ross*) – written by *Kathryn Dorrell*, Senior Editor in Communications Unit at the UCC General Council Office.

One: A friend who lives in northern Ontario recently posted a photo on social media that emphasized nature’s hushed sense of sanctuary. The image, taken out her back door a week ago, showed a serene pathway into the wood. It was lined on both sides with soaring evergreens arching inward toward one another under the weight of pristine snow that looked like some sort of giant creature’s glittering pixie dust. “This is my cathedral,” she wrote. A Song of Faith captures the magic of nature in its poetry: “[We find] ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery, of living things, diverse and interdependent, of complex patterns of growth and evolution, of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls.” Let’s make every Sunday Earth Day so we never forget our sacred call to care for the natural world and all its wonders.

A CHILDREN’S SERMON ON CARING FOR THE EARTH (*Ian and Annika Brisbin*) -Taken from FoodGrainsbank.ca

One: Some of you have perhaps heard of a very important city known as Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville. What you might not know is that there was a time when the citizens of Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville had a very poor reputation. People said that they were dirty; that the only time they ever took a shower

was when it rained, and they went outside. People thought they were disgusting, and that they would eat garbage.

The stories about them got so bad that the citizens of Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville decided it was time to do something. They were tired of being laughed at and looked down on. They were proud of who they were and the important work they did, and they wanted others to know.

And so, they started an advertising campaign to try and let people know who they really were. They put up signs and billboards everywhere; they put ads on the internet and in newspapers.

The signs said things like, “We’re not just dirty, we’re necessary” or “Don’t look at us with disgust, or soon you’ll bite the dust.”

Well, at first people didn’t know what to make of these signs – they didn’t quite understand them. And so, they went home and Googled “Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville.” And they began to read all about the citizens there, and the work they did. And they realized that not only were the citizens of Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville valuable and necessary, they were also excellent role models for the rest of us in how we should care for others and for the earth.

Did you all know that each one of you has met a citizen of Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville? You have seen them when they are all dirty, and you have probably seen them when they come outside to take a shower in the rain. Who are they? Can you guess? The outstanding citizens of Squiggly-Wiggly-Ville are worms!

Worms might look dirty and disgusting, but we all depend upon them. Worms do things like eat dead leaves and turn them into nutrients for the soil. They also make sure the soil gets the air and water that it needs. If worms didn't take care of the soil, there would be no plants, and if there were no plants, there would be no animals, and if there were no animals, there would be no "us."

We all depend upon worms. Worms really are great and necessary. And they are outstanding citizens of planet earth. They care for the earth, and in that way, they care for us. In that way, each one of us should try to be more like worms. Are all of you ready to go out and act like worms?

*~ adapted from a Children's Sermon posted on the First Congregational United Church of Christ (Vancouver, WA) website.*

QUESTIONS FOR THE CHILDREN (*Michael, Imogen and Jonathan Clase*).

One: We are all different and live within the rules, and routines of our homes. Some children may be following expectations in their home to conserve energy. What does it mean to conserve energy? We can develop ways to protect our environment such as recycling, composting and using less energy. How do we take care of our environment in our home and in the community where we live?

READER: (*Libby Cook*)

One: There are some important environmental issues we face information (information source found from the Resource Teacher of Ontario magazine Renaissance Spring 2020"

Going green").

The United Nations has said that clean water is a right. The 1971 Canadian Environmental Act (CEA) aimed to reduce the flow of toxic substances into the environment with enforcement power given to the provinces, yet in Canada water regulation has been ineffective. Many indigenous communities have gone years and years without drinking water.

One: WATER - The importance of water: Let us think about our individual water usage and how we can make our water consumption more sustainable. Let us call to mind the importance of water to all life and be more aware of the amount of water we use daily.

One: PRAYER - I promise to strive to live gently upon this earth for the good of all coming generations. Help me to protect my land.

One: FOOD - Every day we decide what food to eat. We make choices whether to eat plant-based that is good for our health, the planet, other people and animals. We choose whether to think about saving rain forests, protecting where our wild animals live and the places our fish live, avoiding water shortages and pollution, and reducing antibiotics, growth hormone and chemical use. We choose whether to increase world hunger and the dangers slaughterhouse workers face. We choose whether to prevent the abuse, exploitation and killing of land and sea animals. When you go to the grocery store, where does your food come from and who picked it.

Some people in countries are working hard with little pay.

One: PRAYER – We thank God for bringing food from the earth. Let us work to show our thanks and understanding of the environment and human impacts of our food consumption. Help us to work to ensure that sustainable food is accessible to everyone.

One: FREEDOM AND COMFORT – We sit tonight in our homes, a place of safety, comfort and freedom remembering the hardship of others. There are millions of people being displaced from their homes due to natural disasters. We currently sit in our homes as a result of a pandemic that has had a huge impact on our lives.

One: PRAYER - We thank you God for the safety and comfort in our homes.

One (*Gwyn Xagoraris*):

**Caring for our shared environment as followers of Christ**

We live in a wonderful, beautiful, and ecologically rich country. As stewards of the environment each one of us has the responsibility to look after the “corner” of the earth we in which we live. We also need to advocate for environmental changes and protection in other parts of our country and the world. Canada is a large producer of natural resources that are sold world-wide. Many of our country’s employment opportunities depend on the extraction of oil, minerals, ores, natural gas, salt,



and the harvesting of trees for lumber, paper and paper products as well as the harvesting of fresh and saltwater foodstuffs.

Managing the environment and restoring the environment is necessary to continue our livelihoods.

What can we as custodians of our planet do to protect our environment? We can donate to charitable organizations that have the power and skills to effect change. There are many organizations that require monetary donations to ensure all levels of government are aware of environmental issues.

Here are a few:

- Forest Ontario is a nonprofit charity whose goal is to plant 50 million trees in Ontario and educate the community to keep forests healthy. Their vision: “Ontario’s forested landscapes sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”.
- Safe water is a nonprofit charity dedicated to educating people about water quality issues and to bring safe drinking water to every Canadian. Water is often contaminated due to storm sewer run offs. Sewer run-offs can happen due to huge storms and fertilizer run off due to agricultural practices. This results in toxic algae blooms and mining practices that have resulted in toxic non-drinkable water. Educating young people will assist them to become leaders in the future who will continue to focus on the issue of improving water quality for all people.
- The “World Wildlife Foundation” is a global outreach of protecting wildlife and ecosystems around the world.
- Conservation. org is a nonprofit international partnership working with local communities that assists protecting the environment (animals, land and water) to allow sustainable living. They attempt to work with industry so that

environmentally responsible business practices can be adopted and ecosystems thrive.

- A local authority “Hamilton Conservation” promotes conservation and management of our watersheds and waterways. They manage our conservation areas so that we might enjoy hiking, biking and being a part of the natural area.
- World animal protection an international non-profit animal welfare group whose mission is: “A World where animal welfare matters, and animal cruelty has ended.” This group advocates humane animal welfare used in human consumption and mandates the end of exploitation of wild animals in the food chain and in human entertainment. Protecting our animals protects our world.

One (*Gwyn Xagoraris*):

How can each person make a positive difference for our environment?

One (*Meg Chalmers*):

**ENOUGH: WHAT IS ENOUGH FOR YOU?**

Questions for children Examples:

- What if we had enough clothes for comfort as opposed to a full closet?
- What if we ate meat only on special occasions and vegetables most of the time?
- What if we biked or walked to our friend’s homes or to school and didn’t own cars?
- What if we bought food from local stores and didn’t use plastic packaging and plastic bags?
- What if our things were built to last and we fixed things instead of throwing things away?

- How can we care for our shared environment as followers of Christ?
- How can we care for our shared environment as followers of Christ?

We can practice the 4 R's: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

- Refuse to use:
  - single use plastics (straws, cutlery, plastic bags)
  - plastic water bottles and plastic bags
  - paper towels, paper napkins, disposable wipes
  - "flushable" -not- baby wipes and other wipes
  - refuse to purchase unneeded items: does one really need 22 pairs of shoes?
- Reduce:
  - the need to purchase items that have a "short" life use- cheap clothing, flipflops
  - purchasing items that have multiple disposable parts
  - changing out to a new cell phone every year
  - the use of the car- walk more
  - the use of electricity-turn off the lights and tv
- Recycle
  - read the city of Hamilton website to understand what is recyclable and what is not cyclable
- Reuse
  - your "garbage" may be someone else's treasure. Consider donating used clothing,
  - towels and shoes (in reasonable condition) to many Hamilton charities!
  - post your items on Kijiji or other sites
  - plastic bags for another household use
- Speak out!

- Everyone at any age can speak out and write letters to indicate their viewpoints on concerns in the environment. Remember back in the '70's McDonalds did away with their Styrofoam
- packaging because customers wrote lots of letters!!
- Speak out!
  - Encourage your parents and your friends to READ garbage/recycling/compositing bins clearly to ensure the right waste goes in the right receptacle.
- Speak out!
  - If one person supports an environmental concern it validates the necessity of change.
- Speak out!
  - Join a charity or environmental group to be a leading part of the change.

**One: PRAYER:** Let's take a piece of bread and break it; it is no longer whole. The break symbolizes a move from brokenness towards healing. At the same time in our minds we will begin to uncover different aspects and responses to environmental injustice,

bringing us closer to understanding how, together, we can repair our environment and world. Help us, dear God, to heal our environment.

✳ HYMN - *This Is God's Wondrous World*

VU 296

*1 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.*

*2 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's voice speaks everywhere.*

*3 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!  
Amen.*

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION (Rev. Sonia Ireson):  
There is hope for the future of our planet, our children,  
grandchildren and future generations to inherit a healthy,  
habitable earth. We are already seeing the first stirrings of a green  
economy. Renewable energy sources like solar and wind power  
are beginning to take center stage. Climate change is not  
unstoppable or unsolvable, we have solutions at our fingertips.

TAKING ACTION (Rev. Sonia Ireson):  
We still have a chance to write our future. We open the door for

collaboration and new possibilities as we work for environmental injustice. This open door is an opportunity, for every individual to make a commitment this year to take part in writing our communal environment future.

\* HYMN - *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* VU 220

*1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation;  
O my soul, praise him, at all times your health and salvation.  
Come, all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,  
joining in glad adoration.*

*2 Praise to the Lord, above all things so mightily reigning,  
keeping us safe at his side, and so gently sustaining.  
Have you not seen, how all you needed has been  
met by God's gracious ordaining?*

*3 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;  
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:  
ponder anew what the Almighty can do  
who out of love will befriend us.*

*4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that has life and breath come now with praises before him!  
Let the Amen sound from God's people again:  
gladly with praise we adore him.*

PRAYER

POSTLUDE – Chris Palmer, guitar