



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship April 19, 2026 9:30am
Third Sunday of Easter

Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

PRELUDE “Fairest Lord Jesus” arr. by J. Daniel Smith
Who is this ... fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars? —*Song of Songs 35:28*
Bob Dover, flute & Linda Dover, piano

*In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a
contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.*

WELCOME Rev. Karen Wright

CHILDREN’S MUSIC “Love the Lord” Carol Huffman Dickerson
Joy! Singers
Hilary Schmidt & Emily Hussey, co-directors
Drake Cabe, Rowan Cabe, Gilbert Dixon, Brody Frye, Josie Noren, Wyatt Schendel, Abby Schmidt, Bristol Sellers,
Weston Sellers, Zoey Wetzig, & Landon Wilson

*Love the Lord
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
And with all your strength.*

*Love all the neighbors you meet every day.
Be kind in everything you do and say.*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, yours are the praise, the glory, and the blessing

ALL: To you alone they belong.

ONE: We praise you with all creation—with sun and moon, with wind and sky, with water and fire, with earth that sustains us.

ALL: All creation reflects your beauty and gives you praise.

ONE: We praise you in times of joy and in times of struggle, in mercy, in endurance, and in peace.

ALL: For in all things, you are present and faithful.

ONE: Come, let us praise and bless the Lord, give thanks, and serve God with humility.

ALL: Let us worship God.

*HYMN 247

“Now the Green Blade Rises”

NOEL NOUVELET

247 Now the Green Blade Rises

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain;

love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;

love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Although there were some traditional Easter carols, this hybrid one has been created by grafting a 20th-century English text onto a late 15th-century French tune. The allegory of the dying and rising grain as a parallel for Christ's Resurrection is probably based on John 12:24.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Emily Nelson Dixon

God entrusted the earth to our care — not as owners, but as stewards; not for exploitation, but for flourishing. Yet we have not always honored this trust. We have taken more than we need, ignored the cries of creation, and turned away from the harm we have caused. Let us return to God, who is merciful and abounding in steadfast love.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Creator God, you formed the earth in beauty and balance, and called it good. But we have not treated your creation as good. We consume without gratitude, waste without thought, and neglect the responsibility you have given us. We confess the ways we have contributed to broken ecosystems, polluted waters, and changing climates. We confess our silence when action is needed, and our apathy when courage is required.

Forgive us. Restore in us a right relationship with the earth and with one another. Teach us to live more gently, to act more justly, and to care more deeply for all that you have made. In your mercy, renew the face of the ground— and renew us, your people. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: The God who created the world has not abandoned it — and has not abandoned us. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and made new. God’s mercy is wider than our failures, and God’s grace is stronger than our sin. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Rev. Dr. Patricia Tull

(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children’s wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you and all others!**

*RESPONSE 243

“Be Not Afraid”

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Genesis 1:24–2:4

Gay Lee Ludwig-Bonney

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humans in God’s image,
in the image of God they were created;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that was made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. On the sixth day God finished the work that was done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that was done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

ANTHEM

“I Will Tread Lightly”

Alisa Blair

Chancel Choir

with Susan Culp, flute & Gay-Lee Ludwig Bonney, bass

Jill Endaya-Smith & Keith Langabee, percussion

GCPC Youth Soloists

I lay no claim upon this land, for it stood here before I came.

And I will only know a fraction of the beauty it enfolds.

I lay no claim upon on this land, for it was never mine to own

when I was born into the majesty of all the life it holds.

*These hands have never toiled to feed this ancient fertile ground,
to sow the seeds of fortune in its clay.*

*But the sky has shed her tears of life, the sun has spread her warmth,
the heavens keep their vigil night and day.*

*I will tread lightly,
So I may leave a garden fit to grow.*

*I lay no claim upon this land, for it's a world we can't replace.
And though it's far away, I hope one day my footprint leaves no trace.*

*I will tread lightly...and I will learn to tiptoe as I go,
so I may leave a garden fit to grow.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Romans 8:18–25

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

“We Groan with Creation”

Rev. Karen Wright

HYMN 714

“God of the Fertile Fields”

ITALIAN HYMN

God of the Fertile Fields 714

1 God of the fer - tile fields, shap - er of
 2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in
 3 As grows the hid - den seed to fruit that
 4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the

earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your
 trust from you all that you give; help us in
 serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our
 Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our

boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
 love to share, teach us like you to care
 toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,
 lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.

that all in ev - ery land be clothed and fed.
 for peo - ple ev - ery - where, that all may live.
 no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.
 Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

Greater awareness has enlarged Christian stewardship to develop new dimensions of concern for people in all parts of the world. Because we believe that it is God's will that the gifts we have received should be shared, this hymn concludes with that phrase from the Lord's Prayer:

TEXT: Georgia Harkness, 1955, alt.
 MUSIC: Felice de Giardini, 1769, alt.
 Text © 1955, ren. 1983 The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing Company)

ITALIAN HYMN
 6.6.4.6.6.6.4

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.

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

Conrad Kocher

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

Give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds. —*Psalm 107–8*

Bob Dover, flute & Linda Dover, piano

Sending

*HYMN 14

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

DIX

For the Beauty of the Earth 14

1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the glo-ry of the skies,
 2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de-light,
 4 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
 5 For thy-self, best gift di-vine to the world so free-ly given;

for the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies:
 hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light:
 for the mys-tic har-mo-ny link-ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild:
 for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:

Refrain

Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

In the course of many revisions, the original eucharistic emphasis of this text has shifted to a hymn of thanksgiving for a wide range of human experience, with a Christological summation. It is set here to the tune that is customary in North America, though not elsewhere.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

“Go Now in Peace”

Natalie Sleeth

Celebration! Singers and Ringers

Pam Kelly, director & Angela Krug, accompanist

Eloise Armbrrecht, Margo Armbrrecht, Eloise Dixon, Henry Frye, Abel Frye, Kamden Frye, Charlotte Hearn, Mallory Hearn, Aiden Hussey, Liam Hussey, Brynnley Krug, Evie Schmidt, James Schmidt, Magnolia Sellers, Max Soule, Grant Stromberg, Nolan Tamke, Quinn Tamke, Sarah Wright, & Lucas Wright

Go now in peace

*May the love of God surround you
everywhere you may go.*

POSTLUDE

“Prelude on FOREST GREEN”

arr. by David Lowe

Linda Dover, organist

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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