

# Ocean Heights

Presbyterian Church



[www.ohchurch.org](http://www.ohchurch.org)



A More Light Presbyterian Congregation joyfully welcoming people from all walks of life, acknowledging the differences of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities. We celebrate all people as children of God.

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Earth Sunday**  
**April 21, 2024**

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### GOD CALLS US TO GATHER

PRELUDE For the Beauty of the Earth by Jason W. Krug

CALL TO WORSHIP (STAND)

Liturgist: Praise to God.

**All: Praise to God for the greenness of the trees, for the beauty of the flowers, for the blessing of the sky, for the greatness of the sea.**

Liturgist: Thanks to God.

**All: Thanks to God for the gift of friends and for the community of the church, for the gift of wondrous love, for the gift of endless grace.**

Liturgist: Sing to God.

**All: Sing to God, the Source of all that is, the Word of truth and wisdom, the Spirit of the holy. God to you we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.**

HYMN 14 (STAND) For the Beauty of the Earth by Conrad Kocher

### JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION (UNISON)

**Holy God, rain falls on the just and the unjust alike. Sometimes we are among the just, and sometimes we are among the unjust. We are grateful for the soil and water, the sun and the air, for all that sustains our lives, and for the creatures of your good creation. When we are ungrateful, forgive us. When we do not care for the sustaining gifts that make life possible, forgive us. When we waste or hoard these good gifts, forgive us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us that we would care for each other and for the Earth and meet you, our Creator, in our caring for your creation.**

*Hymn 14: 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.*

MOMENT OF SILENCE

SUNG RESPONSE HYMN 774 (Sing Twice)

There is Now a New Creation

**There is now a new creation  
through the grace of Jesus Christ,  
peace and reconciliation  
with the God of endless life.**

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST (STAND)

HYMN 713 (STAND)

Touch the Earth Lightly

by Shirley Erena Murray

**GOD'S WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORD**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Acts 4:5-17

When the leaders, the elders and the scribes met the next day in Jerusalem, Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, Jochanan, Alexander and all who were of the high priestly class were there. They brought Peter and John before them and began to interrogate them: "By what power and in whose name have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke up: "Leaders of the people! Elders! If we must answer today for a good deed done to a person who was unable to walk, and explain how this person has been made whole, then you and all the people of Israel must realize that it was done in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead. In the power of that Name, this person stands before you perfectly sound. This Jesus is 'the stone rejected by the builders which has become the cornerstone.' There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given to the human race by which we must be saved." They were amazed as they observed the self-assurance of Peter and John, and they realized that the speakers were uneducated and of no standing. Then they recognized them as having been with Jesus. When they saw the person who had been healed standing there with them, they could think of nothing to say, so they ordered them out of the court while they consulted. "What will we do with these two? Everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows what a remarkable show of power took place through them. We can't deny it. To stop this from spreading further among the people, we must give them stern warning never to mention the Galilean's name to anyone again."

READING OF SCRIPTURE

1 John 3:16-24

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ died for us. And we, too, ought to lay down our lives for our sisters and brothers. If you have more than enough material possessions and see your neighbors in need yet close your hearts to them, how can the love of God be living in you? My children, our love must not be simply words or mere talk – it must be true love, which shows itself in action and truth. This, then, is how we'll know we belong to the truth; this is how we'll be confident in God's presence, even if our consciences condemn us. We know that God is greater than our consciences and that God knows everything. And if our consciences do not condemn us, my friends, then we have confidence before God, and we will receive whatever we ask from God's hand – because we keep the commandments and do what is pleasing in God's sight. The commandments are these: that we believe in the name of God's Own, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another as we were told to do. Those who keep these commandments live in God and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us by the Spirit given to us.

*Hymn 713: An Australian aboriginal saying opens this gentle hymn from New Zealand on the stewardship of creation. "Clouds of disaster" in the second stanza refers to the testing of nuclear devices then occurring in the Pacific Ocean, but the concern for all created things is timeless.*

SMALL TALK

READING OF SCRIPTURE

John 10:11-18

I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd would die for the sheep. The hired hand, who is neither shepherd nor owner of the sheep, catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be scattered or snatched by the wolf. That's because the hired hand works only for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, in the same way Abba God knows me and I know God – and for these sheep I will lay down my life. I have other sheep that don't belong to this fold – I must lead them too, and they will hear my voice. And then there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why Abba God loves me – because I lay down my life, only to take it up again. No one takes my life from me; I lay it down freely. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This command I received from my Abba.

SERMON

Our Neighborhood The Rev. Jeffrey Eaton, Ph.D.

**Responding to God's Word**

SPEAKING OUR COMMITMENTS (UNISON)

**We trust in God, Creator of all things, who is pure compassion, who loves us unconditionally, who is present with us in good times and bad, who is our salvation. We trust in Christ, the embodiment of God's love, the lover and healer of our souls, who saves us, forgiving our failures, washing away our betrayals, who teaches us life's deepest things: how to pray, how to love, how to be gentle with each other. We trust in the Holy Spirit, God's power flowing in us, that comforts the faithful, empowers us to love as we have been loved, and joins us together as the Body of Christ. We believe we are sent in that Spirit to heal, to forgive, to do justice, to radiate the love of God, in the name of Christ.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF JESUS

Holy Love in heaven, who is with us, blessed be your name.  
May your way of loving be a reality here on earth.  
Let us share our bread with those who hunger.  
Let us learn to forgive as well as receive forgiveness.  
Help us through times of temptation.  
Lead us to holy innocence, beyond the evil of our day.  
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:  
Forever your name is All in One.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Wordless Song Within the Waters

Richard Leach

Alfred Fedak

DOXOLOGY (STAND)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise God all creatures here below! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (STAND)

HYMN 22 (STAND)

God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale

by Carl F. Schalk

BENEDICTION

*Sidenote for  
Prayer of Jesus:  
written by Parker  
Palmer and  
Manny Santiago*

*Hymn 22:  
Though a lack of  
punctuation  
makes this text  
appear freeform  
and the flowing  
tune enhances a  
sense of  
movement, each  
stanza here is  
firmly anchored  
by a final weighty  
word (praise,  
save, thanks, life,  
peace, home), a  
sign of God's  
eternal presence  
in an ever-  
changing world.*

## Don't be a drag -- make a new bag!

Today for Earth Day, we'll have a fun upcycling activity after worship.

With a few simple snips and one straight seam, we'll make old t-shirts into washable, stretchy, re-usable bags. Earth Care will walk you through the project step-by-step. This activity is suitable for all ages.

Bring your own shirt(s) and/or donate shirts for others to convert into bags. There is a collection box in the sanctuary.



## MONTH AT A GLANCE

- 4/21 **Worship 10am, Earth Day Activities & New Members Class**
- 4/23 **Heart & Soul 10am**
- 4/25 **Bible Study 6pm**
- 4/28 **Worship 10am & Adult Ed**
- 4/30 **Bible Study 10am**
- 5/5 **Worship, Communion and EE Sale**
- 5/11 **Ladies Brunch for AIM**
- 5/12 **Worship 10am**



### Session

#### Class of 2024

Art Farnum  
Betsy Phillips  
Carol Petters

#### Class of 2025

Sharon Eaton  
Walter East  
Dianna Lease

#### Class of 2026

Brenda Brown  
Lorene Gilman  
David Prescott



This week's sanctuary flowers were donated by Jeff & Sharon Eaton in memory of Lawrence Hutchins.



Thank you to this week's liturgist:  
**Vicky Helsabeck**

## Ladies Brunch for AIM

We would like to invite all women of the church to be our guests at a brunch on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am where we will not only be treated to some delicious food but will also be part of a worthy cause. After brunch, we will be filling Blessing Bags for an Atlantic County organization called Angels in Motion (AIM). AIM is a registered nonprofit that participates in consistent and compassionate street outreach to individuals that are experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and struggling with substance use disorders. One of the primary opportunities for spreading their message is by handing out Blessing Bags to their targeted community. We'll supply the bags, but we are counting on you to help us fill them. There is an Angel Tree at the HUB. Please take as many angels as you are able to. Sign your name on the sheet and let us know what angels you took and what you are bringing so we will know what we needs to supply. We are hoping to fill at least 200 bags! Your generous donation will be your ticket to the brunch. If you cannot come, or would rather donate money, we will be glad to shop for you.

Any questions, see Bev or Bonnie.



**Clerk of Session** – Betsy Phillips  
**President of the Board of Trustees** – Lorene Gilman  
**Director of Music** – Bob Helsabeck  
**Pianist** – Heera Ghorashi  
**Office Administrator** – Alison Walter

2116 Ocean Heights Avenue  
Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234  
Office Hours T-W-TH 8-3pm

**609.788.0271**

**office@ohchurch.org**

www.ohchurch.org

