

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [April 25 Worship Service Video](#)

- **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** this Sunday at 10am.
<https://zoom.us/j/4639675160?pwd=V09OUmV0VFpMVGJLTWhueGpSekkwZz09>
Meeting ID: 463 967 5160
Passcode: 4F7iE2
Phone option: 1 204 272 7920
- A new **Cool School children's video** is available here: <https://youtu.be/n0V2PPkbGAM>
- **St. Vincent Relief** - We will be collecting donations at the church for the next three weeks and forwarding them to the Red Cross for relief efforts in St. Vincent following the eruption of Mt. Soufriere. Donations can be received by mail or e-transfer. Please indicate your gift is for the St. Vincent Appeal.
- **Offering Information for Charleswood United Church:** www.charleswoodunited.org/donate Thank you for your generous support.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, April 25, 2021.

And God said, 'It is good.'

This past Thursday was Earth Day. It was observed in a myriad of ways. School children had access to endless resources and worked on projects. The Prime Minister was part of a specially convened Zoom conference on climate change with world leaders. I think I saw that a new movie on climate activist Greta Thunberg is being released.

Climate/environment is a top of the mind issue these days. And with good reason. The increase in devastating weather events is alarming. And incredibly destructive. Much of it is attributable to the increase in temperature from carbon emissions. While there is no vaccine that will reduce the threat of the climate crisis in short order, there are many signs of a more promising future, often in the form of targets for when a country will become carbon neutral or when a car company will only sell electric powered vehicles.

But what does the church have to offer on Earth Day? Perhaps a perspective that shifts our focus away from what is wrong with the earth towards a view of what is right about it. Even though we have been slow at times to act with urgency, there is nonetheless a long history of faithful stewardship from which we can draw. David Hallman was a United Church General Council staff person in 1992 when he released his bestselling and influential book "A Place in Creation". In it he acutely and accurately analysed/predicted the crises which had already begun but always with an air of faithfulness. The last line of his book is "The future is hopeful." This issue is part of our church's history.

More importantly, we are people of the Word and the glory of creation is a theme in scripture that wants to inform our present understanding of the goodness of the Earth. The most obvious example is in the creation story itself from Genesis 1. The One in whom we believe is present and part of everything that is. More than that, the chorus of creation is a moral one as God repeatedly sings "It is good" with the passing of each new day.

If you were to remove the waters that are parted, the mountains that are climbed, the animals who carry, or the trees that shade, there would be little left in scripture's testimony. When Jesus needs an illustration of grace he turns to the natural world and tells those who would hear to 'look at the lilies of the field' and 'look at the birds of the air'.

What I think is true about environmental spirituality is that we know the goodness of the earth inherently. God has blessed us with it. No one has to be told that a mountain is majestic and awe-inspiring. No one needs to be taught that a pristine lake in the Canadian Shield is beautiful. No one needs to have it explained to them that the Northern Lights compel you to watch. These things we know deep within ourselves, and so too is the depth of our understanding that they should be protected.

Thirty years ago when I was the minister at Birtle-Isabella-Miniota Pastoral Charge there was a popular song in church circles called "Take off Your Shoes". I remember that the choir at Miniota took particular delight in singing this Jim Manley composition as an anthem. The words of the chorus were:

*Take, take off your shoes, you're standing on my holy ground.
Take, take, take off your shoes, you're standing on my holy ground.
Well, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.
From the waters beneath to the heavens above.
So take, take, take off your shoes, you're standing on my holy ground.
You're standing on my holy ground.*

Whether the tune is familiar to you or not you will likely recognize that the song takes a refrain from the biblical story of Moses at the burning bush on Sinai and re-interprets it in an environmental frame. That's the perspective we have to offer the world on Earth Day and year round.

All ground is holy ground.

Grace and peace
Michael

- Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is: <https://youtu.be/5jhoW7VU65M>
- For news and events please have a look at **Life & Work**: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Psalm 23](#)