

South Freeport Church

Congregational † United Church of Christ



Earth Sunday Worship

April 21, 2024 † 9:30am

Everyone is welcome at South Freeport Church!

Hearing amplifiers are available for those who need them, please ask an usher.

Young kids are invited to explore the "Prayground" in the back of the sanctuary. We also have nursery care available. Children are always welcome to be their authentic selves here: noises, wiggles, and all!

Order of Worship

**Please rise as you are able*

PRELUDE

“Petit Prelude (Aria)”

Joseph Jongen

WELCOME

Rev. Sean Patrick Coady

INTROIT

MEDITATION

Rev. Dr. Judith Blanchard

*“We find ourselves teetering at the edge of a precipice.
Yet so much of the climate dialogue is about changing lightbulbs.
If we are to survive, we need to change more than lightbulbs.
We need to change our worldview.”*

– Robin Wall Kimmerer, botanist, celebrated author,
and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation

**CALL TO WORSHIP Congregation invited to read bold parts*

Dave Palm

We walk in wonder beneath the sun and stars:

Creation is God’s masterpiece and we are blessed to share it.

We give thanks for the air, the land, and the water,

and for all the creatures joined together in the web of life.

Beauty is before us, around us, over us, and beneath us.

We join our hearts, minds, and spirits as one in thanks and awe.

**OPENING HYMN*

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

#30

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Children and youth may now head upstairs to Children’s Church and Middle School Youth Group

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us, O God, for forgetting who we are and for mistreating your Earth.

Forgive us for our collective abuse of our planet, which is causing a climate crisis.

Forgive us for our over-consumption, endless extraction, and unwieldy wastefulness.

Forgive us for endangered species, melting glaciers, and extreme weather phenomena.

Forgive us, O God, and remind us of who we are: earthlings, creatures of this planet.

Forgive us, and reshape us into the caregivers of creation you call us to be. We pray in the name of the Risen Christ, who shows us the way. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE and SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

RESPONSE SONG

"Open Our Hearts"

Strathdee

O - pen our hearts, _____ o - pen our minds. _____
_____ O - pen our lives to you, O lov - ing
God. _____ O - pen our hearts. _____

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 31:9-16, read antiphonally (below)

Matthew 22:34-40

A Living Psalm (31:9-16)

written by Maren Tirabass

Be gracious to the earth, O God, for it is in distress; the ice caps melt away from the warming of rampant industrialization, the soul of the trees of the field, which once clapped their hands, are scattered and the bodies of creatures are endangered.

The life of soil is spent in single-crop farming, and years of care for national parks and all the sacred places of God's children are just sighs to those who mine them.

The strength of pollinators fails in the midst of their migration, and the bones of the mountain tops are choking the waterways.

The earth's body is the scorn of the powerful, a horror is the rainforest become a savannah. It has become an object of dread even to those who long to repair its damage.

On the streets or in the sky – those who monitor carbon emissions long to flee, but there is nowhere to go.

The earth has passed out of mind of the wealthy. It has become a broken vessel.

Those without grandchildren or whose grandchildren mean nothing to them or who do not know that children everywhere are their progeny scheme together, plotting to be rich now and escape somewhere, someday.

They take the life of the earth.

But we trust in you, O God, and know that you trust in us. Our times are in your hands, and your times are in our hands.

Deliver us from all who scheme destruction. Let your light shine upon us and teach us to be savers for you, to become the doers of your steadfast love.

SERMON

“Care, Repair, Prepare” Rev. Dr. Allen Ewing-Merrill
Executive Director, The BTS Center

CHORAL ANTHEM

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father/Mother/God/Creator, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ, and Spirit one. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

*CLOSING HYMN

“Touch the Earth Lightly”

see insert

BENEDICTION

SUNG RESPONSE

“Go Now in Peace”

Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast strong, and true. Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others, so all the world can see.

God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. Amen.

POSTLUDE

“Pasticcio”

Jean Langlais

+ + +

We offer gratitude for Meg Broderick who provided the flowers for the altar today, Janie Iverson and SueAnn Randall for ushering, and The Green Team for hosting Fellowship Time after worship in the Community Hall.

All are invited to stay after worship for a showing of “Common Ground” a film that explains why transitioning to regenerative agriculture could be key in rehabilitating the planet while simultaneously invigorating a new sense of hope and inspiration in viewers.

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*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ*

Staff

Rev. Sean Patrick Coady, Settled Pastor
sp@southfreeportchurch.org

Jeremy W. Young, Pastoral Resident
jeremy@southfreeportchurch.org

Denis Drobinski, Music Director
denis@southfreeportchurch.org

Dorothy VanDine, Organist

Bethany Dunfee, Admin. & Ed. Director
beth@southfreeportchurch.org

Brooke Bolduc, Children’s Church Teacher

Chloe Bibula, Nursery Care Provider

Ella Brown, Nursery Care Provider

Stella Kryzak, Nursery Care & Teacher’s Asst.



Visit southfreeportchurch.org/contact to get on our email list.

PO Box 46, 98 S. Freeport Rd, Freeport, ME 04078
www.southfreeportchurch.org | (207) 865-4012

