



First United

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1917 Fifth Avenue, Troy, NY 12180
Unitedprestroy.org † (518)272-2771

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

GATHERING MUSIC

Andante Cantabile (from the String Quartet in D Major, Opus 11)
Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), arr. Mark L. Williams (b.1958)

Meditation on our Sending Hymn "Where the Green Will Rise Again"
Thomas Keesecker (b.1956)

STILLING VIDEO

"Wilderness is not a luxury, but a necessity of the human spirit."

WELCOME & FRAMING

*GATHERING WORDS

Beloved, do you hear the wilderness singing?

**The percussion of acorns tumbling from treetops,
the roar of waterfalls, and the susurrant of sand over sand
sings praise to God in places untouched by human hands.**

Today we seek refuge from human folly in spaces forever wild.

**We long to smell the perfume of pine trees, to gaze at swirling galaxies,
and feel the chill of running water, cold and crystal clear.**

Immersing ourselves in places untrammelled, unrestricted, and unconfined
puts our own reality into perspective.

**Listening to wilderness songs means also listening to wilderness
lament.**

Creation groans with labor pangs awaiting the birth of promised peace.

**Come, let us worship God who inspires and empowers us
to be stewards of hope and in a wounded and hurting world!**

*SONG

"The Climate is Changing"
(Tune: "Immortal, Invisible")

***The climate is changing! Creation cries out!
Your people face flooding and fire and drought.
We see the great heat waves and storms at their worst.
We pray for the poor, Lord — for they suffer first.***

***We pray for the animals here in our midst
who cannot defend their own right to exist.***

***We pray for the mountains and forests and seas
that bear the harsh footprint of our human greed.***

***We thank you for people who treasure the earth,
whose faith has long taught them its beauty and worth.***

***We thank you as well for the children and youth
who look to the future and speak out the truth.***

***We thank you for leaders, courageous and brave,
who know that the earth is worth fighting to save,
who care about justice and what they should do,
who listen to science and work hard for you.***

***You love this good earth, and you sent us your Son!
May we love our neighbors — there's work to be done.***

***May we, by your Spirit, do all in our power
to care for your earth in this critical hour.***

INVITATION TO ACCOUNTABILITY

from *Red: Passion and Patience in the
Desert* by T. T. Williams

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and merciful God, we confess that we have failed to fulfill our responsibility to serve and tend your creation. We have walked heavily on your earth, overused and wasted its resources, taken for granted its beauty and abundance, and treated its inhabitants unjustly, holding future generations hostage to our greed. Creation groans, but we continue to pursue our own comfort and convenience. Have mercy on us and forgive us our sin. Renew in us the resolve to keep and conserve your earth as you desire and intend, with grateful and compassionate hearts, through your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

*RESPONSE TO GRACE

#611 – Joyful, Joyful (vs. 2)

***All thy works with joy surround thee;
earth and heaven reflect thy rays;
Stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.***

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

**The Peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you!
And also with you!**

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Joel 1:8-12, 17-20
Romans 8:18-27

SERMON

“Unnatural Disasters”

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it. And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God. And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces. Amen!

*HYMN

#713- Touch the Earth Lightly

***Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.***

***We who endanger, who create hunger,
Agents of death for all creatures that live,
We who would foster clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!***

***Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
Water that blesses and air that is sweet,
Health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
Regeneration that peace will complete.***

***God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,
Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
Using us gently and making us one.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER

Adapted from Jane Deren

Wilderness God, help us to respect and renew the earth.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name,
thy kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and
the glory, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

*An offering plate will be passed during the service,
or you may give online through Tithe.ly: <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1309305>
Please note where you would like your gift to be directed (general fund, deacons, etc.)*

OFFERTORY

Berceuse (Lullaby)

(The Rev. Dr.) Albert Schweitzer, MD (1875-1965)

*DOXOLOGY

#714- God of the Fertile Fields (vs. 2)

***We would be stewards true,
holding in trust from you all that you give;
Help us in love to share, teach us like you to care
For people everywhere, that all may live.***

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND LITTLE FREE LIBRARY BLESSING

God, Source of all Wisdom and Truth, you spoke, and the heavens and earth sprang into being. Thank you for the power words still have to create new worlds. Bless these gifts and stories to strengthen our compassion, nurture our curiosity, and deepen our learning. In these pages, guide us to find both windows and mirrors. Amen.

*SONG

**"Where the Green Will Rise Again"
(Tune: *Wild Mountain Thyme*)**

***Where the green will rise again,
bud and blossom in the breaking,
earth will smile and ease her aching,
drought or flood, through sun or rain,
so the green will rise again.***

***Water, river, clear again,
when, with skill and science blending,
health returns from our befriending;
when we watch and nurture, then,
there the green will rise again.***

***Hands and minds with vision plain,
people with a sense of wonder,
caring lives that do not squander,
plant for futures to sustain,
so the green will rise again.***

***Where the green will rise again,
when God's world knows peace and healing,
common cause and common feeling,
love will make us her domain,
so the green will rise again.***

*BLESSING & SENDING

SENDING MUSIC

Postlude in D Major

Francois Couperin (1688-1733), arr. David Paxton (1934-2015)



Preacher: Rev. Marranda Major

Guest Organist: David A. Vredenburg – Eastern NY Chapter, American Guild of Organists (AGO)

Onscreen Visuals: Charlotte Albertin, Martha Juenger, and Jim Parmelee

Audiovisual Production: Martha Juenger and Dan Rogers

Session

Class of 2027

Jim Parmelee
Sue Steele
Marilynn O'Dell

Class of 2028

Alan Chandler
Kodzo Dzikunu
Bruce Reed

Class of 2029

Nora McDowell
Fred Miller
Peggy Smith Savchik

Diaconate

Class of 2027

Debbie Brown
Miriam Parmelee
Brenda Westbrook

Class of 2028

Diane Chandler
Olga Green
Noel Hains

Class of 2029

Peg Drew
Laura Rogers
Pat Rudebush