

Thanksgiving Interfaith Gathering

Monday, November 22, 2021 at 7pm

Online Shared Worship Service of the Mount Olive Clergy and Congregations
from the sanctuary of St. Elizabeth Anne Seton Church

Quote and Photo for Meditation

*For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food,
For love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Photo courtesy of Unsplash website (Pro Church Media)



GATHERING IN COMMUNITY

PRESERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME

Rabbi Dr. Daniel Zucker, MOCA President

OPENING WORDS OF FAITH - Reading from the Psalms 107:1-3

Chanted by Rev. Serena Rice and Rabbi Daniel Zucker

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;
for God's steadfast love endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
those whom God redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

א: הַדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי-טוֹב כִּי לַעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

ב: יֹאמְרוּ גְאוּלַי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר גָּאֵלָם מִיַּד-צָר:

ג: וּמֵאֲרָצוֹת קְבָצָם מִמִּזְרָח וּמִמְעַרְב מִצְפוֹן וּמִיָּם:

OPENING SONG

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

TUNE: DIX

1. For the beauty of the earth, For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth Over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to You we raise This our hymn of grateful praise.
2. For the beauty of each hour Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flow'r, Sun and moon, and stars of light:
Lord of all, to You we raise This our hymn of grateful praise.
3. For the joy of ear and eye, For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony Linking sense to sound and sight:
Lord of all, to You we raise This our hymn of grateful praise.
4. For the joy of human love, Sibling, partner, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above; For all gentle thoughts and mild:
Lord of all, to You we raise This our hymn of grateful praise.

OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

Father Wayne Sherrer

**Creator God, whose Spirit moved over the faces of the waters,
who gathers the sea into their places,
and directs the courses of the rivers,
who sends rain upon the earth that it should bring forth life:
We praise you for the gift of water.**

**Creator God, who lifted up the mountains and formed the dry land,
whose hands have shaped us out of the dust of the earth,
who has formed the soils and made this earth
a place of beauty and abundance:**

We give you thanks for the gift of soil and water all that they provide.

**Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in these and all your gifts,
that we might receive them with gratitude,
care for them with love,
and generously share them with all your creatures
to the honor and glory of your holy name.**

SHARING WORDS OF FAITH

RESPONSIVE READING FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE Psalm 100 Rev. Meekyung Choi Kim

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into God's presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is God that made us, and we are God's own;

we are God's people, and the sheep of God's pasture.

Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving, and the courts with praise.

Give thanks to God, bless the Holy name.

For the Lord is good;

God's steadfast love endures forever, and faithfulness to all generations.

READING FROM THE KORAN

Imam Jawad Ahmed

Chapter 31 Verse 12:

Indeed, We blessed Luqmân with wisdom, ‘saying’, “Be grateful to Allah, for whoever is grateful, it is only for their own good. And whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.”

READING FROM THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

Rev. Lorna Woodham

Philippians 4:4-6, 8-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Finally, siblings, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Rev. Heather Morrison-Yaden

Franciscan sister José Hobday (1929-2009) was a Seneca elder, an author, and a storyteller. She writes of how she learned to “pray always” from the Native American spirituality of her mother, which honored this sense of being in constant communion and harmony with God in all things.

“My mother prayed as a Native American. That meant she saw living as praying and praying as living. She tried to pray her life. She expressed her prayer of gratitude, for example, in the way she did things. She told me many times, “When you stir oatmeal, stir it slowly so you don’t forget that oatmeal is a gift and that you don’t take it for granted.”

She made a prayer out of the way she stirred oatmeal. Doing things prayerfully. That reflected her approach to prayer. She always did that. She even did it in the way she walked. She taught me and my brothers to walk with our hearts high and to walk softly on the earth because the earth is our mother. . . . As we walked, she said, we should be ready to enter into every movement of beauty we encountered. . . .

So, what things have I learned from Native American spirituality? First, to make my prayer creation-centered. Indians pray as relatives of the earth. They consider the sky their father, the earth their mother. The sun can be a brother or a sister. This makes you a creature with a relationship to creation, not someone above it or better than it. . . .

In our prayer, we might very well reflect on . . . creatures, and their relationship with creation. That is what Native Americans have done. It has not only kept them in touch with creation, but with the Creator as well.”

José Hobday, *Stories of Awe and Abundance* (Sheed & Ward: 1995), 12, 13.

MESSAGE

Gratitude Reflected

Rev. Heather Morrison-Yaden

God of wisdom,

We thank You for all of the parents, teachers, coaches and clergy who instruct our children.

Guide us in being loving and positive role models.

God of healing,

We thank You for doctors, nurses and scientists who have tended the sick and developed vaccines and treatments for COVID-19. And we thank You for the sanitation workers, grocery store clerks, first responders, postal and delivery workers, and so many others who have provided essential services during the pandemic.

Help us to care for all our neighbors.

God of love,

We thank You for the gift of family and friends.

Keep us close to one another, and to You. Amen.

BLESSING "When We Breathe Together" by Jan Richardson Rev. Serena Rice

AARONIC BLESSING (Numbers 6:23-27) Father Stanley Barron and Rabbi Daniel Zucker

The LORD shall bless you, and keep you.

יְבָרֵךְ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ

The LORD shall shine his countenance to you, and be gracious to you.

יְאֵר ה' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֵּךְ

The LORD shall shine his countenance to you, and grant you peace.

יֵשׂא ה' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

POSTLUDE

We give thanks for the music the worship service and for The Seton Choir who are live in the building this evening.

Thanks are due to the technical team responsible for the filming and live streaming this service: Ralph Meola and Joy Rastiello.

All of us are grateful for the opportunity to gather in worship and thanksgiving together with all the communities of faith that are a part of the Mount Olive Clergy Association, and the member leaders who represent these communities and our greater community this evening:

Temple Hatikvah of Flanders, NJ; Rabbi Dr. Daniel M. Zucker

Christ Episcopal Church, Budd Lake, NJ; Reverend Deacon Lorna Woodham

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Flanders, NJ; Rev. Stanley C. Barron, Pastor and Shannon Jones, Youth Minister and Confirmation Coordinator

Flanders United Methodist Church, Flanders, NJ; Rev. Meekyung Choi Kim

Islamic Society of North Jersey, Hackettstown; Imam Jawad Ahmed

Abiding Peace Lutheran Church, Budd Lake, NJ; Rev. Serena Rice, Pastor

Mountaintop Church, Hackettstown, NJ; Rev. Matt Jones, Pastor

St. James' Episcopal Church, Hackettstown, NJ; Father Wayne Sherrer

Chaplain at New Jersey State Prison in Trenton, and supply clergy in the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, living in Flanders, NJ; Rev. Sharon Sheridan Hausman

United Presbyterian Church, Flanders, NJ; Rev. Heather Morrison Yaden, Interim Pastor

