



Tending to Creation

Activity for Sunday, September 20
Walking in Wonder

INVITATION

As you go about your week, notice the natural cycles that are all around us. Maybe you add food scraps to a compost pile, so they can decompose and lend nutrients to a garden. Perhaps there is a caterpillar munching on leaves in your yard, building up energy for the transformation into a butterfly. Is there rain in the forecast? That rain has evaporated from somewhere else and then condensed high in the atmosphere, to fall to earth here. Exhale onto a houseplant; now you're a direct part of the plant's carbon dioxide to oxygen exchange. Find something that reminds you of a natural cycle and bring it with you to church on Sunday. Your contributions will create the morning's worship visuals. You will be invited to leave them up for another week if you are willing.

Get creative! An ear of corn could represent the cycle of growth; an umbrella could represent the water cycle. A picture, painting, or other art project can represent anything that is too big to bring to the sanctuary!

For reflection:

- What natural systems can you think of that are present in your community?
- What new things can you learn about how one of these systems works?
- How can you get on board with God's restoring work in the world through participating more intentionally in these systems and cycles?



WELCOME TO FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
of Champaign-Urbana

Following Christ. Nurturing Community. Seeking Peace with Justice.



Celebration *of* Worship

September 13, 2026

*God’s Shalom for Our Common Home:
Coming to the Water*

Centering chimes

Prelude Like a River Glorious/The Harmonius Blacksmith *arr. Marily Ham*

***Call to worship**

One: Listen.
All: Let all who are thirsty, come.
One: Listen carefully.
All: Let ALL who are thirsty, come.

One: We are thirsty, all of us—the young, the old, the trees, the soil,
the creatures that fly, crawl, and swim—all of us,
**All: sharing a common home and seeking abundant life. Together, let us seek and find
ourselves, in God’s story of shalom.**

***Gathering Hymn #441** “Crashing Waters at Creation”

Welcome and Prayer

Children’s story and NEW children’s offering for the Tanzania College Scholarship Fund
Congregation sings as children come forward (Voices Together #512)

Scripture Isaiah 55:6-9; Matthew 6:7–13

Tending to Creation Action & Prayer

***Response Hymn #806** “Called by Earth and Sky”

Prayer
One: God of abundance, your love is limitless.
**All: Your mercy reaches out to the universe, your faithfulness to the skies. Your
righteousness is like the highest mountains; your justice is like the deepest oceans.**
One: Yet in your greatness, you still care for the “least of these:” the most vulnerable
among us, the tiniest of creatures, the living systems that our economy would count
as insignificant.
All: You provide enough for all of us to flourish.

One: We cannot manufacture this kind of love. We cannot buy this kind of satisfaction.
**All: Let us invest in your dream for the earth, labor for your kin-dom. We hunger and
thirst for your justice as we come to your table—a communion feast for all creatures.**

Word of Witness: SIM Bangladesh Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program

***Response Hymn #703** “Rain Down”
Congregational sharing and prayer (*text prayers to Pastor Michael*)
Prayer & Offertory Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing *arr. By Marilynn Ham*
Ushers will pass the offering plates.

Introduction of visitors
Work of the church (*please come forward to the mic to make your announcement*)
***Sending Hymn #453** “As I Went Down to the River to Pray”
***Benediction**

**Stand in body or in spirit. Children are invited to wave the worship ribbons during the hymns.*

Bill and Carole Schumacher are Mennonites who help the poor in southern Bangladesh where high amounts of arsenic are prevalent. The Schumachers partner with SIM-Bangladesh to help people escape the ravages of arsenic poisoning. SIM-Bangladesh is a Christian-based international non-government organization, registered in Bangladesh in 1980. Along with other projects, SIM-Bangladesh has worked for 24 years on a project that tests water for arsenic in highly affected areas and provides safe water to people who need it. They identify nearby safe sources of water or provide affordable filters that remove arsenic. SIM’s work has helped and saved tens of thousands of lives, but there are still many areas without help. FMC supported SIM-Bangladesh through our children’s offering in 2024-25.

Note: Because worship is participatory and not a performance, instead of applauding please show appreciation for preludes, offertories and special music in other ways, such as ASL, silent applause, saying “Amen” or thanking musicians later.

We welcome, without exclusion, all who seek God’s love and grace...

You are welcome here, inclusive of gender, race, country of origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, family status, past imprisonment, education, citizenship status and physical or mental abilities. We encourage you to share in the rituals, fellowship and ministry of this congregation.

Hearing devices (T-coil and over-ear) and large print hymnals are available from the greeters.
Childcare (birth – preschool) is provided in the nursery downstairs.