

# ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

April 21st, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Earth Sunday

A Service of the Word



## The Good Shepherd

by Kally Latimore

painted for The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Athens Ohio  
Kelly Latimore Icons. <https://kellylatimoreicons.com/>.



**April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024**  
**Fourth Sunday of Easter**  
**Earth Sunday**  
**A Service of the Word**

*“Many of us have similar Sunday morning routines. They include tasks we hardly think about, like turning on a light, taking a shower, and eating breakfast. Yet, our routine actions impact people and places around the world, often contributing to environmental degradation, hunger, poverty, and chronic illness. We can help bring healing to God’s people and God’s earth by examining our routines and changing our habits to live more simply and sustainably. In doing so, we respond to Jesus’ call to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, and care for the sick (Matt 25:34-45).”*  
*- Sunday Morning Sustainability - A service for Earth Sunday of Season of Creation*

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that the land we stand on and the place we call Cuyahoga County is land that was claimed by the United States government through force, displacement and treaties negotiated in bad faith. We acknowledge those of the Shawnee, Miami, Erie, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Haudenosaunee confederacy whose lands we stand on - and the thousands of Native Americans, representing over 100 tribes, who currently live in Northeast Ohio today.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

**Prelude – Adam Petrosino**

**\*Call to Worship**

One: Morning has broken!

**Many: We gather to greet the new day by praising God.**

One: God created us for relationship with God, one another, and the earth.

**Many: Let us honor those relationships today and every day.**

One: We seek to care for our brothers and sisters around the world and care for God’s good Creation.

**Many: Let us honor those relationships today and every day.**

One: May we commit to new ways of honoring your Creation as a means of sharing Jesus' transforming love,

Many: And let us seek God's grace, justice and mercy for all. Amen.

**\*Gathering Prayer**

Creator God,  
we give you thanks  
for the great abundance  
and nourishment  
that you provide us  
through your Creation  
and through your great love.  
As we come together  
to worship you,  
reveal to us ways  
we can honor you  
and your created world.  
Inspire our worship  
and shape our lives  
to reveal your magnificence.  
Amen

**\*Gathering Hymn: Pilgrim Hymnal (blue) 38 - "Morning Has Broken"**

**A READING OF THE WORD**

**First Reading Acts 4:5-12**

*The selection in Acts is a continuation of the same story from last Sunday. Peter and John, after healing a person who used to beg at the temple gate, and after speaking to the people at Solomon's Portico on the east side of the temple after that miracle, were arrested and held until the next day. They came before the high priest and his family and were questioned by them about the healing miracle. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke to all assembled, recognizing that he and John were arrested because they did something good. He answered their question about the power behind the miracle: the person who used to beg stood before them was healed by the name of Jesus Christ, the one crucified and now raised from the dead. Peter concluded with quoting Psalm 118:22, which Jesus quoted when he was questioned in the temple, and Peter declared salvation is found in no other name.*

**4** **5** When the leaders, the elders and the scribes met the next day in Jerusalem, **6** Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jochanan, Alexander and all who were of the high priestly class were there. **7** They brought Peter and John before them and began to interrogate them: "By what power and in whose name have you done this?"

**8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke up: "Leaders of the people! Elders! **9** If we must answer today for a good deed done to a person who was unable to walk, and explain how this person

has been made whole, 10 then you and all the people of Israel must realize that it was done in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead. In the power of that Name, this person stands before you perfectly sound. 11 This Jesus is ‘the stone rejected by the builders which has become the cornerstone.’ 12 There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given to the human race by which we must be saved.”

**\*Psalm Response: Psalm 23** (Responsively)

*The shepherd’s psalm of Psalm 23 has long been attributed to king David and understood as a song of comfort in the face of death. God is the shepherd who leads the faithful, the sheep, to safety and security, restoring those who are downtrodden. Even in the face of death (the valley of the shadow), the shepherd comforts the sheep, their rod and staff are there for protection and assurance. Switching metaphors, the psalmist understands God as the one who justifies those who have been wronged, preparing a banquet table and anointing the faithful before their enemies. The psalm concludes with a blessing of goodness and mercy for all the life of the faithful, and that they will live with God forever. This psalm might also be used for Earth Sunday, in thinking of the Good Shepherd and how God cares for all of creation and provides for us good, green spaces and still, clean water.*

**23** 1 YHWH, you are my shepherd—

I want nothing more.

**2 You let me lie down in green meadows;  
you lead me beside restful waters:**

3 you refresh my soul. You guide me to lush pastures  
for the sake of your Name.

**4 Even if I’m surrounded by shadows of Death,  
I fear no danger, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff—  
they give me courage.**

5 You spread a table for me  
in the presence of my enemies,  
and you anoint my head with oil—  
my cup overflows!

**6 Only goodness and mercy will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in your house, YHWH,  
for days without end.**

**Second Reading: 1 John 3:16-24**

*This section of 1 John 3 echoes John 15:12-13, that one who loves lays down their life for their friends. There is no greater love than this, for Christ laid down his life for us. Love must be lived out, to meet the needs of others. Lived-out love is greater than words. Our hearts will let us know when we’ve let down one another, but God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. God will forgive us and restore us to the work of loving one another. For the commandment that the faithful must obey*

*is to believe in Jesus Christ, and to love one another.*

**3** 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ died for us. And we, too, ought to lay down our lives for our sisters and brothers. 17 If you have more than enough material possessions and see your neighbors in need yet close your hearts to them, how can the love of God be living in you? 18 My children, our love must not be simply words or mere talk—it must be true love, which shows itself in action and truth. 19 This, then, is how we'll know we belong to the truth; this is how we'll be confident in God's presence, 20 even if our consciences condemn us. We know that God is greater than our consciences and that God knows everything. 21 And if our consciences do not condemn us, my friends, then we have confidence before God, 22 and we will receive whatever we ask from God's hand—because we keep the commandments and do what is pleasing in God's sight

23 The commandments are these: that we believe in the name of God's Own, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another as we were told to do.

24 Those who keep these commandments live in God and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us by the Spirit given to us.

**Gospel Reading: john 10:11-18**

*Jesus is the Good Shepherd in these verses of John 10, the one who lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand runs away when the wolf comes, but the Good Shepherd cares for the sheep and knows them. The Good Shepherd knows there are sheep not of this fold but will bring them together (alluding to Gentiles). In John's account, no one has the power to take Jesus' life—only Jesus has the power to give it up, and Jesus does so by laying down his life for all, so that life may be taken up again.*

**10** 11 I am the good shepherd.

A good shepherd would die for the sheep.

12 The hired hand, who is neither shepherd  
nor owner of the sheep,  
catches sight of the wolf coming  
and runs away,  
leaving the sheep to be scattered  
or snatched by the wolf.

13 That's because the hired hand works only for pay  
and has no concern for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd.

I know my sheep  
and my sheep know me,

15 in the same way Abba God knows me  
and I know God—  
and for these sheep  
I will lay down my life.

16 I have other sheep

that don't belong to this fold—  
I must lead them too,

and they will hear my voice.  
And then there will be one flock,  
one shepherd.

17 This is why Abba God loves me—  
because I lay down my life,  
only to take it up again.

18 No one takes my life from me;  
I lay it down freely.  
I have the power to lay it down,  
and I have the power to take it up again.  
This command I received from my Abba.”

**Reflection – Our Shepherd Is Calling - Rev. Scott Rosenstein**

#### **WE RESPOND**

##### **\* Prayer of Response**

**Loving One, we know that your promise of resurrection is always around us, in the leaves and seeds falling to death, and bulbs and shoots sprouting into life. You gave us this awe-inspiring earth and entrusted it to our care. Remind us to put your love first and foremost, a love that seeks to bless and build and create rather than break down and destroy. Call us into accountability for care of your beautiful earth and for all our neighbors, including all the creatures and plants of the wondrous world. Help us to pause now and then in amazement of all you have made, and all you continue to do, and lead us in ways to participate in care of your creation. For you are our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen**

**\*Hymn of Response: NCH 252 - “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”**

##### **Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings**

Jesus offers us fullness of life, protecting us and advocating for our needs. What will you give to join him in the work of building beloved community in the world?

##### **The Offertory – *Adam Petrosino***

##### **\*Presentation of Offerings – Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host;**

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Blessing of the Gifts**

Gracious God, thank you for your gift of Jesus Christ, who cares for us and protects us. With these gifts we return to you, help us care for others in our communities and around the world. Amen.

**Choir Hymn: NCH 31 - "All Things Bright and Beautiful"**

**"All Things Bright and Beautiful)**

Author: Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

Tune: ROYAL OAK 7.6.7.6. with refrain

English melody

Adapt. Martin Shaw, 1915

**Choir: Barbara Rossington, Bob Bucklew, and Keith Konet**

**Accompanist: Adam Petrosino**

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord's Prayer (*using "debts" and "debtors"*)**

Our Father, 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 debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power,

and the glory,

forever.

Amen.

**GOING FORTH**

**\*Parting Hymn: NCH 8 - "Praise to the Living God"**

**\*Commissioning**

One: Let us go to be bold before God.

All: We will speak up for all people

who long for healing and hope.

One: Let us go to shepherd Jesus' sisters and brothers.

**All: We will risk our lives for justice,  
we will serve those who are outcast.**

One: Let us go to anoint others with the Holy Spirit.

**All: We will bring goodness and mercy  
to all whose lives need restoring.**

**\*Benediction**

One: Go and act, for the care of creation.

Go and learn, for the sake of creation.

Go and pray, for the love of creation.

And may

the care of God enfold you,

the passion of the Risen Christ embolden you,

and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit empower you,

now and forever,

**All: Let it be so. Amen.**

**Postlude - Adam Petrosino** (please be seated for the Postlude)

\* \* \* \* \*

## Credits

- (1) The Introduction, Call to Worship, and Gathering Prayer, are adapted from *Sunday Morning Sustainability - A service for Earth Sunday of Season of Creation - A worship service focusing on Eco-justice Impacts and Opportunities*, written by The National Council of Churches Eco-justice Program and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and posted to Worship Words - creative and refreshing liturgy for today's church. <https://worshipwords.co.uk/6408-2>. Permission given to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All rights reserved.
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resource for April 21st, 2024, Fourth Sunday of Easter* written by the Rev Mindi Welton Thomas, and posted April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, on his blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>
- (3) Invitation to Share our Tithes and Offerings, Blessing of the Gifts adapted from *Power to Lay It Down: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B*, written by Rev. Jacob Nault, Pastor of Union-Congregational Church in Waupun, WI. He also works alongside the UCC's Disabilities Ministries Board to provide music, liturgy, and other resources on issues of disability justice. Permission given to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All rights reserved.
- (4) The Benediction is adapted from Commissioning and Benediction, written by Alydia Smith. From Alydia Smith, ed., *Act/Fast: Spiritual Practices for a Climate in Crisis* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2023), p. 125. Free to use with attribution.
- (5) Commissioning is adapted from *Liturgy and Communion for April 21st, 2024, Easter 4-B*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>.
- (5) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE License #A-736636. All rights reserved



**Ministers, *All of Us***  
**Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor***  
**Adam Petrosino, *Music Director and Pianist***  
**Keith Konet, *Council President***  
**Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant***



## **NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **God is Still Speaking...**

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

**Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont** is committed to reaching out to all people with the saving "Good News" of God's Love. To do this, we strive to attain a covenant relationship with people of all races, colors, ethnic origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identity. We are also committed to grace-filled inclusivity in our worship, programs, membership, mission and social activities. We very strongly believe in outreach and community involvement, as well as ecumenical spiritual involvement within the surrounding community. We are committed to listening to history while joining with the future.

**Tithes and Offerings** - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ  
c/o Keith Konet  
1039 Bridlewood Drive**

**Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

### **Adam D. Petrosino, Our Music Director/Pianist**

We are so pleased to welcome Adam, and his partner, Kiel, to our community of faith here at Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont. We're grateful to you sharing your presence, faith, and your musical gifts with us. Adam can be reached by e-mail at [A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com](mailto:A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com) and by phone at 234-205-9397.

### **Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm**

Beverly is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street/home. The days and hours are:

#### **Winter Schedule:**

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: [zionchurchtremont@gmail.com](mailto:zionchurchtremont@gmail.com) or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile)

### **Please Remember in Prayer**

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community.
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. We also pray for our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and – and for an end to violence and bloodshed particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Gaza.
- The people of Haiti.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 141 mass shooting incidents occurred in the US in 2024 as of April 18th

**Mass shooting incidents in the past 10 years in the US:**

2023 – 656 (*While mass shooting incidents increased slightly since 2022, 2023 has shown an 8-10% overall DECREASE in deaths and injuries from gun violence. Some cities saw 20%+ decreases.*)

2022 - 646

2021 - 689

2020 - 610

2019 - 414

2018 - 335

2017 - 247

2016 - 383

2015 - 332

2014 - 272

While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit—and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States – We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.

- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for their comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments.
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
  - Patti Augustine and family including Noah, Kate, Lucy, and Max along with Patti's brother Dave doing well after another procedure ).
  - Robert O Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing in Senior Living. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
  - The family, loved ones, and friends of Betty Funk.
  - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob*)
  - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, and Nancy Moore's neighbor - also Ivory, Ken's downstairs neighbor.
  - Maddie (the young daughter of Scott's friend) prayers for her, her parents, Rachel and Ron, and her younger brother.

- Keith Konet and family (including granddaughter, Jocelyn Paulette, and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui - and for Keith's brother -in-law Bob Naugle.
- The family, loved ones, and friends of Elaine Lukacs.
- Patricia Matheny Kellogg and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*). Also Patricia's friend, Sue Renovitz and Heather diagnosed with thyroid cancer.
- Our Music Director & Pianist, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
- Our Pastor Scott Rosenstein
- Barbara Rossington and Barb's cousin, Robert
- Debbie Webb
- Beverly Wurm and family

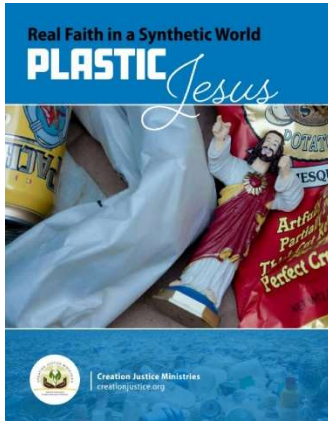


### **April is Earth Month**

For congregations, it can be a great time to further discern how to best answer our first calling as Christians: the caretaking of God's creation. Form a plan for making the most of April. Check out these suggested activities:

- (1) **Celebrate Earth Sunday (April 21st, 2024)!** Many churches celebrate God's creation on the Sunday closest to **Earth Day (April 22<sup>nd</sup>)**. For this occasion, the UCC partnered with the ecumenical organization **Creation Justice Ministries** to produce an Earth Sunday resource on plastics entitled "*Plastic Jesus: Real Faith in a Synthetic World.*"

**Join Creation Justice Ministries and the United Church of Christ in observing Earth Day Sunday with this resource!**



## **Everywhere we look in our culture you will find plastic.**

It surrounds our food, it makes up our technology and it is a standard element in our household items. Unfortunately, it is also overflowing from our landfills, floating in our waters and polluting our soil. More and more, you can even find it in our own bodies and those of other living creatures. There have even been traces of plastic found in breast milk. Despite the fact that we have learned the harms of plastics, we are steadily increasing our production of the material and integrating it into more and more items. Plastic is everywhere!

## **One place where you will not find plastic, however, is in the Bible.**

This resource is designed to help congregations think more deeply about the ways that plastics impact our lives and God's creation. It is also intended to equip people of faith to take actions to address this epidemic in faithful and practical ways.

**Download this resource** - <https://tinyurl.com/yjttjkxr> - to find stories of individuals and communities making a positive impact, sermon starters to spark meaningful discussions in your church, worship resources to unite in prayer and reflection, and actionable steps to address the plastic crisis in your life, community and our world.

## **Passover in 2024**

**This year, Passover starts before sundown on Monday, April 22, and concludes after nightfall on April 30 in the United States.** Many Jewish communities will host Seders the first two nights of the holiday.

Passover is later than last year. In 2023, it began at sundown Wednesday, April 5, and ended at sundown Thursday, April 13, according to USA Today.

### **What is Passover?**

Passover is considered the "festival of freedom." It is a celebration of freedom - of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from enslavement in Egypt. The holiday is rooted in the biblical story of Moses and the 10 plagues, which contributed to freeing the Jewish people from Egypt.

**The term Passover comes from the Israelites marking the doors of their homes with lamb's blood. This saved their firstborn son from one of the 10 plagues and allowed the angel of death to pass over their house, according to History.com.**

### How is Passover celebrated?

Jewish people observing Passover will often gather for a Seder, which is the ritual combination of service and dinner.

Some Jewish families or groups will display a Seder plate, the “centerpiece” of Seders that hold symbolic foods marking the holiday. For example, maror, or bitter herbs, represent the bitterness of slavery.

Seders involve moving through a book called a *Haggadah*, which contains stories, prayers, poetry and other teachings.



### What food is eaten (or not eaten) during Passover?

Food served during Passover will differ depending on family traditions, according to TIME. Some dishes include matzo ball soup, gefilte fish, beef brisket, chicken and potatoes. **Matzo**, an unleavened bread, is a well-known symbol of Passover.

Many Jews during Passover do not eat certain leavened foods, known as chametz. The dietary changes “reflect the plight of the Israelites as they left Egypt,” according to USA Today.

### Should I say “Happy Passover” or other greetings?

If you want to greet a friend or loved one who is celebrating Passover, “Happy Passover” is an appropriate sentiment.

You could also say “*chag sameach*,” which means happy holiday in Hebrew.