



KAIROS-EARTH

# Church of the Woods

*Welcome, blessed people! Let us gather round that we may be transformed in and through God as we immerse ourselves in the natural world, in human community, and in divine space and time.*

*About our service: We begin with brief readings from Christian and other traditions, followed by a period (typically 20-30 minutes) of contemplation in nature. We return to share observations, reflections, questions, news, and prayers, both silently and aloud. If you have a reading, poem, story, or other reflection to share, we welcome it.*

*After sharing God's Peace, we celebrate the Great Thanksgiving or Eucharist. All are invited.*

*We welcome you to take part in any or all parts of the service, as you feel called.*

**Gathering** *Welcome & moment of stillness as we settle into this place and community.*

May the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. *The leader offers a prayer of intention for the gathering.*

**Singing, Readings, & Gospel**

**Teaching & invitation to quiet reflection in the woods** *As Jesus went alone into the wilderness to encounter God, so do we. If a small token of Nature's mysteries and beauty speaks to you, bring it back (being gentle, please) as an offering to place at the altar.*

**Shared reflections, introductions, prayers & offerings from the woods**

**Prayer for Restoration** *Recognizing that we all have a part in hurts done to each other and to the whole creation, we acknowledge our own failings, ask forgiveness, and pray for a new start:*

**(Together)** Fount of all mercy, we acknowledge that we have strayed from your way. We ask that you restore us when we lose the way of oneness with you and your creation. Be with us as we wander in that lonely wilderness, strengthen us as we return, renew us in the awareness of your ever-present love, and return us to your ways of love, compassion, and service. *By the power of the one great love, our errors are forgiven. May you be made whole and brought anew into the peace of God. † Amen.*

**May the peace of God be always with you!** *We greet one another in the name of peace.*

**Offering & Setting the Table** *We welcome your offerings of God's gifts from Nature and of money to support this church.*

## *The Great Thanksgiving*

God is with us!

**We are with God!**

Lift up your hearts!

**We lift them to the Source.**

Let us give thanks to our Creator God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant.

*(Together)* From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; rock, fire, and every living thing.

You made us creators in your image and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, wandered far away, and used your gifts for evil. And yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in your light and the fullness of your love.

So this day we join with all the Earth and heavens in a chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we say:

**Holy, Holy, Holy God, Source of light and life.**

**Earth and the heavens are filled with your love.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*(Leader)* Holy of Holies, remembering our oneness with all that exists and all that has life, it is a joyful thing to be in your presence with each other, with this land, and with all creation.

*(Together)* It is a miracle that we and this whole world are here, made by the Light of all lights, formed from stars that lived, died, and poured forth the elements – hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, iron, gold, and more. Born of the sea and walking on earth, we are miracles, shaped by the forces of life, kin with all beings.

This meal of abundance we are about to share is also a miracle – a gift of earth, water, wind, and fire, and of seeds buried in the earth and cracked open. This bread and this wine, with their many meanings, are gifts of life to the living.

*(Leader)* For followers of Jesus, these gifts assume particular meaning. Living among us, Jesus went alone upon the mountain to pray. He loved us, broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world into the heart of God — but we have not heeded his call to walk in love.

When the time came to complete the offering of his life upon the cross, Jesus was eating supper with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, O God, broke it, offered it to his friends, and said: “Take, eat: This is my Body, offered to heal you and the whole world. Whenever you eat it, remember this.”

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again he gave thanks to you, offered it to his friends, and said: “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new covenant – a promise of eternal love poured out for you and for all beings. Whenever you drink it, remember this.”

***(Together)* Now gathered at your table, remembering that we are one with you and with all creation, we offer to you from your own Earth these gifts of the land, this bread and wine, and our own bodies — our own living sacrifice.**

**Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ.**

**Fill us with your Breath, O God, opening our eyes and renewing us in your love.**

**Send your Spirit over this land and over the whole Earth, making everything a new creation.**

**In the fullness of time bring us, with this good Earth and with all your creatures from every people and tribe and faith and language and nation and species, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.**

*(Leader)* Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all light and life and love are yours, now and forever. **Amen.**

Now together we pray:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Life-giver, Pain-bearer,**

**Source of all that is and ever shall be,**

**Your name be sung with joy!**

**Your peace, your justice, your mercy come on earth.**

**With the food we need for today, feed us.**

**For the hurt we cause, forgive us.**

**As we lose the way, restore us.**

**When we are enslaved by evil, transform us,**

**For you are the way, and the truth, and the life, now and for ever. Amen.**

*The priest breaks the bread, saying:*  
(Alleluia!) Christ is sacrificed for us all!

These are gifts of God for all the creatures of God. Remember that Christ came to renew us and the whole world. Feed on him in your hearts and bodies and minds that you may be made new and sent forth in love to heal the world.

*The practice at Church of the Woods is to offer the first morsel of sacred bread back to God's holy ground from which it has grown. All are welcome to partake of the bread and wine, in whichever ways are meaningful to you: as holy fruits of the soil and stars, as a remembrance of Jesus sharing sacred food with his friends, as the real presence of Christ – the divine spirit that forms and dwells in all things. If you wish to pass, please do so with our blessing.*

**Post-communion Prayer (together)** God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of love. You have reunited us with Christ, with the Earth, and with one another. Now, send us forth in the power of your Spirit that we may proclaim your love and continue forever in the risen life of Christ.

***Blessing***

God's Blessing be with you,  
Christ's peace be upon you,  
The Spirit's outpouring be within you and amongst you,  
This day and always. **Amen.**

***Going Forth***

**Offerings** Church of the Woods operates on free-will offerings from our friends. We invite you to take an envelope as a sign of what you have received and to give it back, today or later, with a gift to help us continue and spread this way of being church. Thank you!

**Information** Church of the Woods is a program of **Kairos Earth**. Visit us online at [kairosearth.org](http://kairosearth.org) for events, information, updates, reflections, photos, and more. If you would like to receive our email newsletter, you can subscribe on our website or leave your name and email address.

*May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts  
and bodies and minds in the knowledge and love of God  
& all the Earth!*