Outdoor Worship Weekly Activity
For the Week of August 10th

Week 3: Returning to God's Garden

God created a beautiful and good world, and yet we have not always lived in right relationship with it. This week creates space for lament. Spend some time outside again to observe the ecosystem and landscape in which you live:

- What are observable signs of how human disruption of natural relationships has negatively impacted your environment?
- Who or what has suffered from this impact? (This may be indicated by either the presence or absence of something.)
- Do you see signs of distress or death caused by visible pollutants?
- Are there plants, animals, birds, or insects that used to live in your area but no longer do?
- Has the built environment disrupted natural systems, like the flow of water through your environment, and what living beings have benefited or suffered due to this?
- Are there signs of historically unusual fire, flood, drought, heat, or cold in your landscape?

Name the losses by writing them down and bring them with you to worship. Read Psalm 74. Then, if you feel moved to do so, write your own psalm of lament. Include both words of distress and words of trust in our God who promises to remain faithful, even when we stray. Say a prayer for any people or creatures you have identified as suffering. Commit them to God's care and healing.

East Goshen Mennonite Church
Outdoor Worship Service
August 9th, 2026
Living in Relationship

Focus Statement: In God's shalom, we are called to honor our covenantal relationship with our Creator and with the whole community of creation.

Opening Songs

***Summoned by the God Who Made Us**, VT 1*

Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity,
gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity:

Refrain: Let us bring the gifts that differ and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.

Radiant risen from the water, robed in holiness and light,
ev'ry person in God's image, ev'ry person, God's delight. *Refrain*

Trust the goodness of creation; trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised sprung from seed of what has been.
Refrain

Bring the hopes of ev'ry nation; bring the art of ev'ry race.
Weave a song of peace and justice; let it sound through time and space.
Refrain.

Draw together at one table all the human family;
shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free. *Refrain.*

***I Come with Joy,** VT 478 v. 1, 4, 5*

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,
the life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.

The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known, alive among us here,
alive among us here.

Together met, together bound by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.

Call to Worship

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Singing

This is God's Wondrous World, *VT 180*

This is God's wondrous world, and to my list'ning ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world; I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, the wonders God has wrought.

This is God's wondrous world; the birds their carols raise,
the morning light, the dark of night, declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world; a wand'rer I may roam.
Whate'er my lot, it matters not, my heart is still at home.

This is God's wondrous world; oh, let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world; the battle is not done.
Jesus who died shall be glorified, and earth and heav'n be one.

God Speaks to Us in Bird and Song, *VT 539*
Music on Facing Page

Scripture Readings Isaiah 55:3-5, Matthew 5:17-20

Children's Time

Let the Children Come to Me*, VT 511*

"Let the children come to me;
let the children come.
Never hinder them; never stop them.
Oh, let the children come." *Repeated.*

Message "Community of Creation"

August 9 Worship
Focus on Trees growing behind the Outdoor Sanctuary

Eastern Red Bud (Burgundy ribbon marker)
Value: Most based on its flowering beauty, ornamental landscaping appeal. The eastern redbud has a bright pink to purple bloom, blooming in early spring.

Ecologically: The eastern redbud tree is an important early spring source of food for honeybees, butterflies and many of our native pollinating insects. This tree has little to no commercial lumber value.

Growth rate: Considered fast paced in early years; depending on soil types it can add up to 2 feet annually, although growth can be significantly slower with poor sandy soil and dry conditions. EGMC red bud trees are planted at the N/W corner of the lower parking lot, on the right, as you walk towards the Outdoor Sanctuary.

Height: 20-30 feet, Spread 25-35 feet.

Soil: Eastern redbuds thrive in moist well-draining loamy soil, adaptable to sandy or clay loam.

Root type: Seedlings develop a taproot, reaching depths of 2-3 feet, with lateral roots extending as far out as the tree's branches are wide. Adding mulch, a 2-3 inch layer can help growth by keeping the shallow roots cooler and preferably moist. It is said best to avoid mounding the mulch against the tree trunk.

Life span: 20-40 years, first blooms at age 3 to 4. Optimal growing conditions can extend it to 50-70 years and first blooms may be seen by year three or four.

Pig Nut Hickory (Dark Green ribbon marker)
Value: Primarily known as an exceptionally hard wood, now often used as firewood and in smoking meats. The wood's high elasticity strength is also used for items such as skis, and was used as golf club shafts. The tree can be used in landscaping as a shade tree, as the branches resist breakage in storms, although it is very difficult to transplant. Leaves turn a striking bright yellow in the fall. Wildlife support includes being a host plant for native butterflies and moths and the nuts feed wild turkeys, deer, and squirrels.

Historically this tree is said to be named pignut hickory, for in colonial times the small nuts were used to feed the hogs. ☺

At EGMC one tree is growing on the south side of the acreage next to the parking lot.

Growth rate: Slow pace, averaging 2 feet per year under normal conditions.
Height: 50-65 feet. Width 25-40 feet wide

Root type: Seedlings quickly develop a deep heavy taproot and less well-developed lateral roots. The taproot grows deep into the soil to reach moisture and help the tree's stability against strong winds.

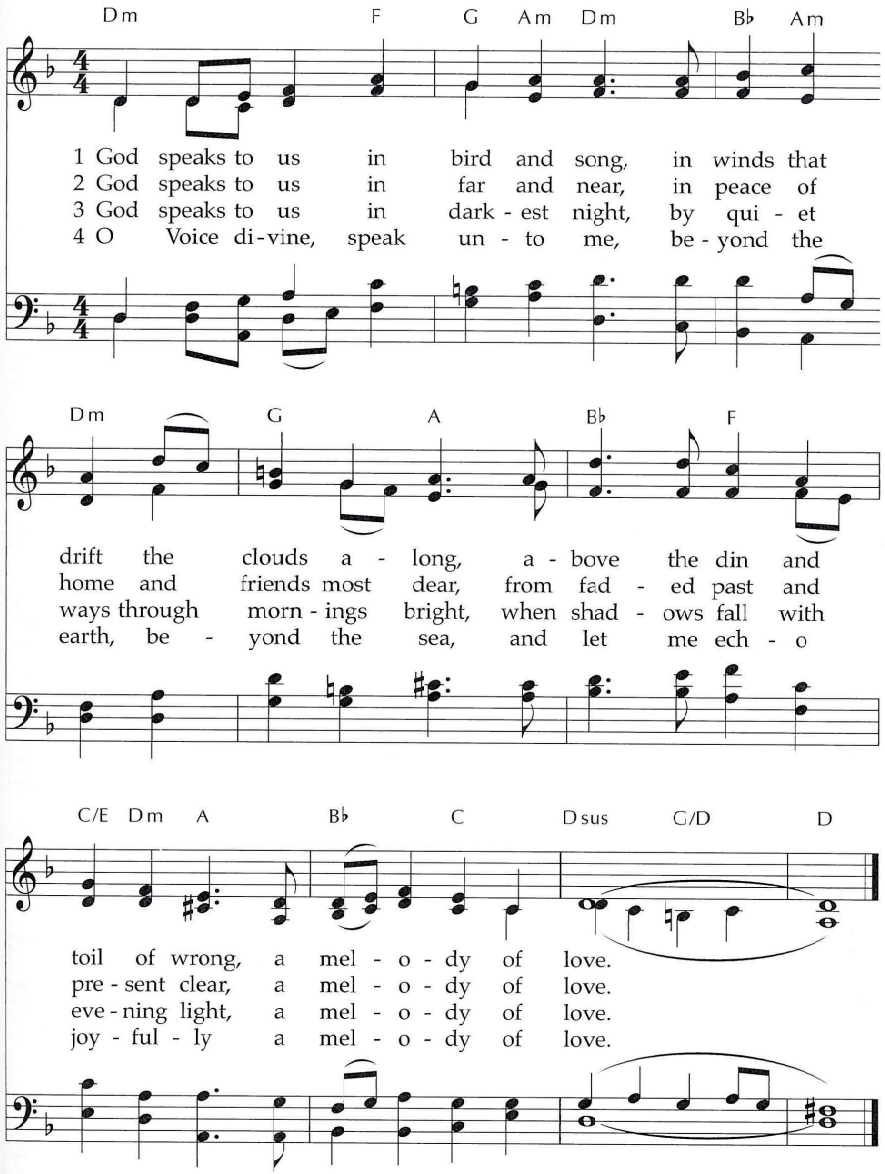
Lifespan: Slow growth, a 30-year threshold for initial seed production, 300-year life span.

Reflection Notes:

Participants

Worship Leader	Joyce Driver
Music Team	Roberta Miller Yoder, Tom Good, Jana Yoder, Elizabeth Hershberger
Scripture Reading	Larry Yoder
Children's Time	Nina Longenecker Fox and Jeff Kauffman
Message	Naomi Yoder-Hess
Congregational Prayer	Kyle Schlabach
Tech Team	Outdoors: Sam and Kaylee Woelk, Beth Grieser, Tom Yoder Indoors: David King, Roger Mertz
Ushers	Amos Hostetler, Gary Miller, Karsten Yoder-Hess
Planners	Joyce Driver, Jeff Kauffman, Caleb Longenecker-Fox

God Speaks to Us in Bird and Song 539

EVENING LIGHT 8.8.8.6

Tex:: Joseph Johnson (England), 1838, alt.
Music: Pax Ressler (USA), © 2016 Pax Ressler

Response

Confession and Assurance, *Based on Ephesians 2:14-22*

Leader: God of covenant, God of promise:
All: We come to you in a spirit of humility,
knowing that we have not always embodied
your love and shalom
through our relationships with ourselves,
our neighbors, and creation.

— Pause—-

Leader: Christ is our peace—the embodiment of reconciliation.
He has taken down dividing fences.
And brought us together in fellowship.
All: We are no longer strangers passing on the sidewalk,
but neighbors working together for the common good.

Leader: Look—Christ is already at work,
building a community garden!
He has sown the seeds;
And called us to tend the soil.
All: People of all ages, all walks of life,
are drawn into this place,
a habitat for all to thrive.

Congregational Prayer

Back to School Blessing

Song and Offering

I Saw a Tree by the Riverside, VT 514

Verse 1: I saw a tree by the riverside one day as I walked along,
straight as an arrow and pointing to the sky, growing tall and strong.
"How do you grow so tall and strong?" I said to the riverside tree.
This is the song that my tree friend sang to me:

Refrain:
"I've got roots growing down to the water, I've got leaves growing up to the sunshine, and the fruit that I bear is a sign of the life in me.
I am shade from the hot summer sundown,
I am nest for the birds of the heaven.
I'm becoming what the Lord of trees has meant me to be—
a strong young tree."

Verse 2:
I saw a tree in the wintertime when snow lay on the ground, straight as an arrow and pointing to the sky; and winter winds blew all around.
"How do you stay so tall and strong?" I said to the wintertime tree.
This is the song that my tree friend sang to me: *Refrain.*

Verse 3:
I saw a tree in the city streets where buildings blocked the sun;
green and lovely, I could see it gave joy to ev'ryone.
"How do you grow in the city streets?" I said to the downtown tree.
This is the song that my tree friend sang to me: *Refrain.*

Announcements

Sending Song

Christ is Alive and Goes Before Us*, VT* 565

Refrain:
Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new,
our God is making all things new.

Verse 1:
This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.

Verse 2:
For by the life and death of Jesus, love's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of diff'rence, as faith and hope are born again.

Verse 3:
Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.

Benediction

Leader: Life abounds and fulfills us
when we live by and for one another.
As we go, may we go together,
faithful to God and each other
so that all of us may flourish
within this community of creation.

All: May we serve as witnesses to God's shalom
through all our relationships that form upon this earth,
our common home. Amen.