

Wild Church
Sunday, April 19, 2026

Picnic Site #3, Emily Murphy Park, Edmonton

Sacrament: The Gift of Grace
Celebrating Earth Day

Welcome and Announcements

Land Acknowledgment

We gather in this place with gratitude for the wisdom and compassion of the first peoples who walked this land - those who have persisted in engaging with the Holy in the Great Conversation. When these wise ones speak of “All my relations”, they do not speak only of blood relatives. They do not even speak only of two-legged creatures, for to the Indigenous ones, the plants, the four-legged creatures, the fish and the birds are likewise treated with the reverence and respect of personhood.

With them, as members of Treaty Six, we are reminded of our Treaty responsibilities and of the call to be at one with all beings, holding reverence for place and for life.

Blessed be.

Calling the Circle

As Earth circles our star, the Sun, so we too gather in this sacred circle. Let us gather ourselves into silence (*pause*). Listen - listen so carefully that you hear the beating of your own heart. Listen to the life blood coursing through your body. Take a deep breath in (*pause*) and let a long breath out (*pause*). Feel the blessings of this place, this time, this Holy moment.

You belong here. You are welcomed here. You are part of this ecosystem. All beings welcome you, for they have not forgotten that we are all related, that we come from one dust and will return to that same dust.

As we gather here, in this sacred circle, we are entering into a relationship with Nature. We are here to re-member ourselves back to where we belong. We are here to restore a loving a kindred relationship with all beings.

Bringing Our Names into the Circle

Each person is invited to say aloud their name, and to welcome into our circle a non-human being present among us. Following the offering of each name, all in the circle will reply:

Warm greetings to you _____. We give thanks for your presence here.

Theme Reflection

A sacrament is defined as an outward and visible sign of an inner and invisible grace. In the church we consider both Communion and Baptism to be sacraments, rituals that open us through outward and visible signs to an awareness of an inner and invisible grace. But this idea of sacramentality, which is rooted both into an intimate encounter of the Divine Presence, and a sense of awe at the immensity of an unfathomable God, is perhaps experienced more universally in Nature. The more we develop intimacy with the natural world, the more we discover about God's presence. Christine Valters Paintner says "All of our interactions with Nature can be sacramental, and all the ways Nature extends herself to us are sacramental as well. Sacramentality breaks through our surface obsessions in the world and plunges us into the depth of the Sacred at every turn. It is a spontaneous reminder of God's creative upwelling and expansive love, calling us to love beyond boundaries." And, every time it happens we are gobsmacked. We suck in a deep breath and breathe out an audible aah. This is ecstasy - a mystical moment when you are drawn outside yourself and realize you are part of something much bigger, more holy, deeply profound. Jungian analyst Robert Johnson wrote a book about ecstasy , describing it as the psychology of joy. On your solo walk today, I invite you to surrender yourself to an experience of ecstasy in deep union with Earth. Allow your own boundaries to soften so that you can become one with Earth, beautiful Gaia and observe how Earth experiences ecstasy as well. This is not an exercise of will but rather is an exercise in letting go.

Prayer

O Great Creator, we pray, enlarge within us a sense of kinship connection with all living beings, our siblings to whom you give, as you have given us, this amazing Earth home. Amen.

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient contemplative prayer practice used to allow Scripture to speak to our hearts and to help us discover the multiple ways the Holy dwells there. It means “sacred reading” and the practice can be extended beyond the reading of Scripture to that other great book of revelation - Nature. Lectio invites us to enter into silence and stillness, to listen deeply to the stirrings of the Holy the sacred texts around us.

This is a time in our gathering when we wander solo in this place. Today as you wander, let down your guard, shed the distractions of your worldly concerns. Soften your boundaries to allow grace to enter your heart and your soul. May you be touched by joy on the journey. Wander for 20 minutes, then return to the circle. You will be invited to share your experience as you wish.

(When all have returned to the circle, invite participants to share whatever they are moved to share.)

An Earth Day Blessing

*May the song of the birds be the bearer of your joy.
May the softness of the moss be the pillow for your dreams.
May the down of the feather be the gentleness of your touch.
May the wild herbs of the meadow be the healing of your pain.
May the tiny petals falling awaken wonder in your eyes.
May the gold of the buttercup reflect the deepening of your love.
May the chatter of the squirrels bring laughter to your lips.
May the hush of the breeze caress you in God's unfathomable care.*

-Valerie Allen and Lynn Maki