

Rideau Park United Church
Earth Day Service (Rev. Jim Baldwin and Jeanine Parker)
Sunday, April 19, 2026

Land Acknowledgement

Jeanine Parker

On this Earth Day, we acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. We recognize their long history and deep connection to this land as stewards who have protected it for generations. We honour their knowledge and commitment to the environment. We pledge to work toward a sustainable future in partnership with Indigenous communities.

Call to Worship

(Jim and congregation – congregation is bold)

Our planet Earth was entrusted to us by God. God has not asked us but God expects us to take care of this Earth, where Jesus walked and where we now tread.

We know there are everlasting things we can each do, many with the guidance of God. We can each be an ambassador for the planet.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

Let the sea roar, let the fields be triumphant.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord.

Let us sing for joy before the Lord.

Hymn All Things Bright and Beautiful

verses 1,2,3 only

Children's Time - What Can We Do?

Jeanine Parker

I'm going to bring some items that represent helping the earth – small shovel, litter bag, mug, reusable camping plates, reusable grocery bags

All Things Bright and Beautiful – verse 5, singing the children out

Scripture

Nancy McPherson

The Story of Creation: based on Genesis 1:1-31

This is the story of how the heavens and the earth were made.

In the beginning the earth had no form and there was nothing but darkness.

But the Spirit of God hovered over the waters and said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

God separated the light from the darkness and created day and night.

Then, God separated the water from the sky and made dry ground appear.

The ground produced fruits and seeds and trees of every kind.

And the sky held the sun and the moon and the stars.

God created living creatures to fill the earth.

There were fish in the seas, birds in the air and all kinds of animals on the ground.

Then God decided that these living beings needed someone to care for them, so God created people...in God’s own image, God created them...

God blessed the people and said,

“I’m giving you every seed-bearing plant, and every tree to look after.

I am entrusting every bird and fish and animal to your care.”

It was now the sixth day, and God looked at all of creation and decided, that it was very, very good.

Introduction to the Theme Jim

How did Earth Day come to be?

Rachel Carson wrote and published “Silent Spring” in 1962. This book could be seen as a precursor for student activism and citizen involvement: what needs to be done to change the trajectory and save the earth.

Earth Day 1970 is considered the dawn of the modern environmental movement.

April 22 was picked, as university students were on their break and could be part of the action. Earth Day is the largest secular day of protest in the world.

Dr Seuss wrote and published “The Lorax” in 1971.

Over the next two decades, amid more citizens protesting and advocating, legislation was passed to protect animals, clean up the air, clean up the water, control toxic substances, ban lead in gas – to mention a few.

In 1990, with activists who had been part of the first day, Earth Day went truly global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage.

The 40th anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 2010 marked the participation of nearly one billion people around the world who took action to raise awareness.

Citizens all over the world continue to involve themselves in climate change activism. Earth Day is about taking care of our Earth. The Earth we heard about in Genesis. What do we need to do?

Anthem

For the Beauty of the Earth

by Rutter

The Message

What Do We Need to Do?

Jim and Jeanine

Jeanine

We mentioned The Lorax earlier. Did you read the Lorax to your children...is it still part of your “books to read list”? Let’s listen to what Dr. Seuss and the Lorax had to tell us over 50 years ago, and explore why these words still need to be part of our hearts and minds.

Jim LORAX/SEUSS

Way back in the days when grass was still green
and the pond was still wet, and the clouds were still clean
And the song of the “song birds” rang out in space
One morning I came to this glorious place
And I first saw the trees.

Jeanine CONSCIENCE

Have you noticed yourself where trees are cut down – seemingly unnecessarily? If you haven’t, perhaps you should take a walk on some of the NCC trails right here in Ottawa. You may be shocked.

Have you found yourself in a situation that water isn’t readily available? I’m not talking about clean water – that is a whole different dilemma. I mean life giving water.

Do you remember the first time you noticed smog on the horizon? To quote the Lorax “No one can sing who has smog in his throat!”

Is it good enough for us to simply recognize “climate change”?

Jim LORAX

I’m the Lorax, who speaks for the trees,
Which someone is chopping as fast as they please
Now thanks to your hacking the trees to the ground
There’s not enough food and shade to go round.
And our poor little animals are all getting the crummies
Because they have gas and no food in their tummies.
They loved living here, but I can’t let them stay:
They have to find food, and I hope that they may!

Jeanine CONSCIENCE

So, what have we done to our earth? What are we doing? If a tree is taken, shouldn't it be replaced? What else are we doing that should nuzzle at our conscience? It seems to go, that we don't know what we have 'til it's gone.

Jim Dr. SEUSS and LORAX

We mean no harm, we most truly do not!

Business needed to grow bigger, and bigger it got.

We biggered the roads and we biggered the loads.

Business is business, and business must grow.

But

We're glumping the ponds where the fish hummed

No more can they hum with their gills full of glum.

They'll swim with their fins and get woefully weary

In search of some water that isn't so smeary.

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,

Nothing is going to get better. It's not!

Jeanine CONSCIENCE

Our attention to God's trademarks turns our minds to caring about the evidence of God's fingerprints in nature.

Listen: to the trees rustling, to the birds flying and singing.

Listen: to the rhythm of the falling rain.

Listen: to the whishing of the water past the beaver lodge.

Observe: the leaves letting go of their branches.

Observe: the clouds making pictures in the sky.

Observe: foxes sleeping in the forest, goats sleeping on the mountainside.

We CAN care an awful lot.

And things will get better....Why not?

Jim

You are in charge of the last of the seeds

And seeds for trees are what everyone needs.

Jeanine

Plant a new tree. Treat it with care.

Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.

Jim

Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack.
Then the Lorax, and all of his friends will come back.

Special Music - Jim

Take off Your Shoes

by Jim Manley

A Prayer for Earth Day 2026

Jim

Creator of our Common Home,
We thank you for the breathtaking beauty and diversity of the
Earth—for the life-giving soil, the majestic forests, the vibrant
oceans, and the breath of life in the air.

**We confess that we have often neglected our role
as stewards, treating Your creation with indifference
and consuming its resources with reckless abandon.**

Merciful God,

Forgive us for the waste that clogs your waters
and the pollution that fills our atmosphere.

**Forgive our short-sightedness as climate change
impacts the most vulnerable among us.**

Lord of Life,

In 2026, we feel the urgency of this moment.

Grant us the courage to change our lifestyles
and the will to demand lasting, systemic change.

**Give us the vision to see this planet not as a resource to be
used, but as a sacred trust to be honored.**

Empower Us to Act,

To reduce our waste, to share our resources, and to heal the
wounds we have inflicted on the land and its creatures.

**May our actions this year and beyond
reflect our gratitude for Your mighty works,
striving toward a future where all creation can flourish.**

**We ask this in the name of the One who came to bring life
in all its fullness. Amen.**

The Life and Work of the Church – Jim after other announcements, Jeanine will
explain the coffee time project)

We have a special opportunity for you at coffee time. In preparation, I invite you, now, to close your eyes, take a deep breath (pause)...think about something in nature that is near and dear to you. Anything, in the outdoors, that you care about especially. Do you have it? Now, think about drawing a picture, or creating a poster. That's what we'll be doing at coffee time. Paper and crayons, pencils and pens will be at a table. We'll then create our own "what is of value to me in creation" wall display. Let your inner artist show!

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern – Jim

The Lord's Prayer

Music Adam **Big Yellow Taxi** by Joni Mitchell

Offering **Asante sana Yesu** **MV 188**

**Asante sana Yesu, asante sana Yesu,
Asante sana Yesu moyoni.**

**Asante sana Yesu, asante sana Yesu,
Asante sana Yesu moyoni.**

**I thank you thank you Jesus, I thank you thank you Jesus,
I thank you thank you Jesus in my heart. (repeat)**

Carrying the Theme into the World Jim

Nobel Laureate, Wangari Maathai founded the organization Green Belt Movement in 1977. The Green Belt Movement empowered rural women to plant over 51 million trees to combat deforestation, poverty and political oppression in Kenya. Her work demonstrated that securing our living environment is essential for peace. As a direct acknowledgement of this, Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

"A greener safer planet does not need much – it only needs willingness from within." A quote from activist Bella Kagisa, Tanzania, who began planting trees as a child. Let us pray that we continue to plant the trees, and plant the seeds to take care of our Earth.

Hymn **Touch the Earth Lightly** VU 307

Benediction **Jeanine and Jim**

Jeanine

We can dedicate ourselves to live lightly and respectfully on the planet. We join with the Earth and work with each other.

Jim

**We bring new life to the land. We restore the waters.
We refresh the air.**

Jeanine

We join with the Earth and work with each other.

Jim

We renew the forests. We care for the plants. We protect the creatures. We celebrate the seas. We rejoice in the sunlight. We sing the song of the stars.

Jeanine

We join with the Earth and with each other.

Jim

We join together, as many and diverse expressions for the healing of the Earth and the renewal of life, to recreate the human community and to promote justice and peace.

Sung Response

Walk with Me

VU 649

**Walk with me, I will walk with you
And build a land that God has planned
where love shines through.
Walk with me, I will walk with you.
And build a land that God has planned
Where love shines through.**

Bulletin insert

10 things to pay attention to:

Take multi use bags to the store – include bags for produce

Reduce, reuse, recycle, reject

Start the car when you are ready to drive – seatbelt on, mirror adjusted, ect.

Save water – washing machine full, shorter showers, no car washing

Put on more clothing before heat is turned up

Turn off lights, radios, tv, computers when not in use

Refrain from using a clothes driver

Keep your car well tuned, don't idle it

Walk if less than 5 blocks

Plant a tree!