

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Creation Justice Sunday / Earth Day Sunday • April 21, 2024 • 10:00 AM



SAINT JAMES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A JUST PEACE AND OPEN AND AFFIRMING CHURCH

Founded in 1853

Rev. Paul Werner, Pastor
Ciaran Krueger, Music Director
Christy Schrecengost, Church Administrator
Jonathan Rizzo, Accompanist



@hamburgucc



hamburgucc.org

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Creation Justice Sunday / Earth Day Sunday • April 21, 2024

Liturgist: Susan Hulbert



***As a courtesy to those who have gathered for worship,
please silence your phone and any other mobile devices.***

“If every day were Earth Day, we wouldn’t be in the mess we’re in.”
Neil deGrasse Tyson

“You are not an Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember
that the planet is carrying you.”
Vandana Shiva

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”
Albert Einstein

“The environment is where we all meet; where we have a mutual interest; it is the
one thing all of us share.”
Lady Bird Johnson

“The good man [*sic*] is the friend of all living things.”
Mahatma Gandhi

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world
around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind
of difference you want to make.”
Jane Goodall

“I believe in God, only I spell it Nature.”
Frank Lloyd Wright

Congregation: Bold print
*Please rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land upon which St. James UCC stands was originally the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee and Erie people. We celebrate and honor the contributions that Native Americans have made in the past and continue to make today in the Western New York area and the Americas. We embrace the Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. Additionally, we commit to supporting initiatives that empower the local, national, and international Indigenous communities and to listening, learning, and taking actions to address injustices past and present that have impacted these communities and all God's creation.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to St. James, an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, where we strive to be more fully the body of Christ. We are committed to welcoming and celebrating all people and the uniqueness we each bring. As people of faith, we boldly proclaim: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

ERIE COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

C. Sandy Przybylak
Erie County Climate Ambassador Volunteer

CONTEMPORARY READING / CONTINUING TESTAMENT

Rev. Paul Werner

INTROIT

"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

arr. Mark Schweizer

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Please rise in body or in spirit to greet your neighbor with Christ's peace.

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Please return to your seat as we begin to sing the opening hymn.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (by Creation Justice Ministries)

Susan Hulbert

One: Scripture tells us that “creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.” (*Romans 8:19*)

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: To open our eyes to the devastation in our world.

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: To put the needs of the most vulnerable above the greed of the powerful.

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: To move from doing what is easy to doing what is necessary and right.

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: To prioritize the needs of community over the convenience of self.

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: To remove the pollution from our seas, land, air, bodies, and hearts.

Many: Creation is waiting for us.

One: In all these things and more, creation waits for us to assume our roles as its servants and protectors.

Many: With God’s help, we will answer creation’s call.

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Susan

(adapted from “A Prayer for Our Earth,” in Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato Si”)

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect your creation and its beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as siblings, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to us, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love, and peace. Amen.

***RESPONSE**

“We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky” (*Verse 1*)

NCH 563

***We cannot own the sunlit sky,
the moon, the wildflowers growing,
for we are part of all that is
within life’s river flowing.
With open hands receive and share
the gifts of God’s creation,
that all may have abundant life
in every earthly nation.***

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURES

Psalm 23 (The Inclusive Bible)

Susan

No psalm is better known or more loved as a prayer of trust in God. God loves and cares for us now and forever. Psalm 23 cannot be correctly attributed to David as ancient tradition supposed, but it is a tradition generations have followed.

God, you are my shepherd—
I want nothing more.
You let me lie down in green meadows;
you lead me beside restful waters:
you refresh my soul.
You guide me to lush pastures
for the sake of your Name.
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.
You spread a table for me
in the presence of my enemies,
and you anoint my head with oil—
my cup overflows!
Only goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in your house, God,
for days without end.

John 10:11-18 (The Inclusive Bible)

Rev. Paul

It may be helpful to read this passage and then to read Ezekiel 34 immediately after. There seems little doubt that Jesus (or his apostolic interpreters, if these were not his own words) made that Old Testament passage the basis for his own ministry as Messiah. One of the enduring images of Jesus is that of the good shepherd. The startlingly different aspect of this passage is the willingness of the shepherd to lay down his life for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd would die for the sheep. 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. That's because the hired hand works only for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, in the same way God knows me and I know God—and for these sheep I will lay down my life. I have other sheep that don't belong to this flock—I must lead them too, and they will hear my voice. And then there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Creator loves me—because I lay down my life, only to take it up again. 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 the Creator.

RESPONDING WITH OUR GENEROSITY

INVITATION

OFFERTORY / GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

- *Please place your gift in the offering plate by the altar. Many of our members and friends give online. To do so, you are invited to use the information located on the back cover of this bulletin.*
- *Our gifts help sustain this community of faith by maintaining our facilities, supporting our staff, and providing the materials that make our ministry available to all.*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM “All Things Bright and Beautiful”

John Rutter

***DOXOLOGY**

NCH 780

(Sing the version of the Doxology that is closest to your own heart.)

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Every part of nature is connected. Every gift we receive comes from you, O God. Every moment of time is pregnant with new creation. We return our gifts to you in wonder and gratitude. Amen.

MESSAGE

“Metaphor Madness”

Rev. Paul

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD’S PRAYER / PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (by United Society Partners in the Gospel)

Our Creator, who art in heaven, you are also at home in the air, the soil, the forests, and the oceans. Hallowed be your name by the care we take of your creation. Your kin-dom come. All that you see is good. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, your will to till and care. Give us this day our daily bread, that all may have enough to live life in its fullness. Forgive us our trespasses—our greed, our exploitation, our lack of concern for other species and future generations—as we forgive those who trespass against us, by reconciliation and justice and peace. Lead us not into temptation to equate

(continued on the next page) →

dominion with exploitation. And deliver us from evil, the evil of destroying your gift of creation. For yours is the kin-dom—yours, O God, not ours—the power, and the glory, in the cross and the resurrection forever and ever. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“The Climate Is Changing”

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

You may remain in the sanctuary for contemplation and reflection, or you may make your way to the Horton Lounge (Hospitality Room) for refreshments and fellowship.

PLEASE JOIN OUR TECHNOLOGY TEAM

We want to be able to continue offering our worship services on Facebook Live, so we are desperately asking for volunteers to join a rotating Sunday morning schedule of Technology Team members to help. There are members and friends of St. James UCC who rely on this important ministry, and we don't want them to be cut off from being able to attend worship online.

Training will be provided. Alex Wright prepared an illustrated instruction manual with step-by-step instructions that will be made readily available. (Thank you, Alex!) Please prayerfully consider this urgent ministry opportunity.

TECH HELP NEEDED!

We need additional members on our Tech Team to keep our worship services running smoothly and our online streaming available to those who watch from home.

Training provided.



For more information or to volunteer, contact Rev. Paul or Christy in the church office.

716-649-6171 · churchoffice@hamburgucc.org

O How Glorious, Full of Wonder

558

Curtis Beach, 1958, rev. 1980; alt.

Ps. 8

1 O how glo - rious, full of won - der is your name o'er all the earth,
2 When we see your lights of heav - en, moon and stars, your power dis - played,
3 You have set us in com - mu - nion with the won - ders of your hand,
4 O how won - drous, O how glo - rious is your name in ev - ery land,

God, who wrought cre - a - tion's splen - dor, bring - ing suns and stars to birth!
Who are we that you should love us, crea - tures that your hand has made?
Made us fly with ea - gle pin - ion, pil - grims o - ver sea and land.
God, whose pur - pose shines be - fore us toward the goal that you have planned!

Rapt in rev - erence we a - dore you, mar - veling at your mys - tic ways.
Born of earth, yet full of yearn - ing, mix - ture strange of good and ill,
Soar - ing spire and ru - ined cit - y, these our hopes and fail - ures show.
Yours the will our hearts are seek - ing, con - scious of our hu - man need.

Hum - bly now we bow be - fore you, lift - ing up our hearts in praise.
From your ways so of - ten turn - ing, yet your love does seek us still.
Teach us more of hu - man pit - y, that we in your im - age grow.
Spir - it in our spir - it speak - ing, make us yours, O God, in - deed.

1 We can-not own the sun-lit sky, the moon, the wild-flowers
 2 When bod-ies shiv-er in the night and, wea-ry, wait for
 3 God calls hu-man-i-ty to join as part-ners in cre-

grow-ing, for we are part of all that is with-
 morn-ing, when chil-dren have no bread but tears, and
 a-ting a fu-ture free from want or fear, life's

in life's riv-er flow-ing. With o-pen hands re-
 war-horns sound their warn-ing, God calls hu-man-i-
 good-ness cel-e-brat-ing. That new world beck-ons

ceive and share the gifts of God's cre-a-tion, that
 ty to wake, to join in com-mon la-bor, that
 from a-far, in-vides our shared en-deav-or, that

all may have a-bun-dant life in ev-ery earth-ly na-tion.
 all may have a-bun-dant life in one-ness with their neigh-bor.
 all may have a-bun-dant life and peace en-dure for-ev-er.

Unison
Brightly

Shirley Erena Murray, 1992

1 Touch the earth light - ly, use the earth gent - ly,
 2 We who en - dan - ger, who cre - ate hun - ger,
 3 Let there be green - ing, birth from the burn - ing,
 4 God of all liv - ing, God of all lov - ing,

nour-ish the life of the world in our care:
 a - gents of death for all crea - tures that live,
 wa - ter that bless - es, and air that is sweet,
 God of the seed - ling, the snow, and the sun,

Gift of great won - der, ours to sur - ren - der,
 We who would fos - ter clouds of dis - as - ter—
 Health in God's gar - den, hope in God's chil - dren,
 Teach us, de - flect us, Christ re - con - nect us,

trust for the chil - dren to - mor - row will bear.
 God of our plan - et, fore - stall and for - give!
 re - gen - er - a - tion that peace will com - plete.
 us - ing us gent - ly, and mak - ing us one.

The Climate Is Changing

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2021

St. Denio

arr. Caniadau y Cyssegr, 1839

1. The cli - mate is chang - ing! Cre - a - tion cries out!
2. We pray for the a - ni - mals here in our midst
3. We thank you for peo - ple who trea - sure the earth,
4. We thank you for lead - ers, cou - ra - geous and brave,
5. You love this good earth, and you sent us your Son!

Your peo - ple face flood - ing and fire and drought.
who can - not de - fend their own right to ex - ist.
whose faith has long taught them its beau - ty and worth.
who know that the earth is worth fight - ing to save,
May we love our neigh - bors— there's work to be done.

We see the great heat waves and storms at their worst.
We pray for the moun - tains and fo - rests and seas
We thank you as well for the chil - dren and youth
who care a - bout jus - tice and what they should do,
May we, by your Spi - rit, do all in our power

We pray for the poor, Lord— for they suf - fer first.
that bear the harsh foot - print of our hu - man greed.
who look to the fu - ture and speak out the truth.
who lis - ten to sci - ence and work hard for you.
to care for your earth in this cri - ti - cal hour.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sun 4/21	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Creation Justice Sunday / Earth Day Sunday
Mon 4/22	6:00 PM	Girl Scouts - Troop 34714 (Assembly Hall)
Tue 4/23		<i>Connector</i> weekly e-news articles are due (every Tuesday)
Wed 4/24	7:00 PM	Cub Scouts - Pack 525 (Assembly Hall)
Thu 4/25	7:00 PM	Scouts BSA - Troops 525B & 509G (Assembly Hall)
Thu 4/25	8:00 PM	Alcoholics Anonymous (Horton Lounge)
Sun 4/28	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sat 5/4	1:15 PM	Ecclesiastical Council for Hope Schwartz (at Church of the Nativity UCC in Buffalo)
Tue 5/7	6:00 PM	Spring Sprucing
Fri 5/10 - Mon 5/13		Rev. Paul - vacation days
Tue 5/14	1:00 PM	Worship Team
Thu 5/16	11:00 AM	Mission and Social Action Team
Sat 5/18	11:00 AM	Celebration of Life: Barbara Reuter
Sun 5/19	10:00 AM	Pentecost Sunday Celebration
Thu 5/30 - Sat 6/1		Rev. Paul at NY Conference Annual Meeting in Binghamton

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS (Christy)

Monday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Tuesday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Wednesday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Thursday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Friday:	Church Office closed

REV. PAUL'S SCHEDULE THIS WEEK

Monday:	Day off
Tuesday:	Office and by appointment
Wednesday:	Office and by appointment
Thursday:	MORNING: Office and by appointment AFTERNOON: Church of the Nativity UCC in Buffalo EVENING: Rainbow Collective of WNY board meeting
Friday:	Study and writing day
Saturday:	Day off

BE A SUNDAY VOLUNTEER!

Please use the links below to sign up for Sunday volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

Liturgists:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccliturgists
Greeters:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccgreeters
Altar flowers:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccflowers
After-church coffee and fellowship:	https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccfellowship

FOOD AND TOILETRY DONATIONS

We continue to collect toiletries and food gifts (as well as pet food and treats) for the Saints Peter and Paul food pantry and outreach center.

There has been a dramatic increase in people needing food and services in the Village of Hamburg, so the people of SSPP are grateful for the gifts that the members and friends of St. James UCC continuously provide.

Most urgent need:

- **bath towels & washcloths**
- **microwavable plates & bowls**
- **silverware**

Urgent needs:

- **baby formula**
- **baby wipes**
- **dish soap**
- **facial tissues**
- **laundry detergent**



Food:

- cereal bars
- fresh apples and oranges
- fruit (can)
- individual fruit cups
- macaroni and cheese (box)
- pasta (box)
- pasta sauce (can or jar)
- shelf-stable milk
- soup (can)
- tuna (can or pouch)
- vegetables (can)

Pet food and treats for:

- cats
- dogs

Toiletries:

- body wash
- feminine hygiene products
- shampoo
- toothpaste
- other toiletry items

Additional needs:

- children's supplies
- clothing
- diapers
- dish soap
- paper towels
- pull-ups
- toilet paper

Collection bins for donations are located by the elevator and outside the Horton Lounge.
Thank you to Marie Nolan for regularly delivering donated items to the food pantry.

FAMILY PROMISE DONATIONS



The next collection day for the donation of a week's food to Family Promise will be **Sunday, April 28**. It will help families in our area that are experiencing homelessness. The items requested for donation will go out as a SignUpGenius email on **Thursday, April 25** (in the afternoon). Donations of food and/or money will be accepted. Thank you for your loving generosity!

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Do you need a photo for our church directory?
Do you want to update the photo that you currently have?
Do you want to update your church directory entry?



Please see Rev. Paul after church on any Sunday, and he will gladly take a photo for you and include it in the church directory. You can appear by yourself or with your spouse/partner/family. If you already have a photo and would like to have it included, you can email it to Christy at churchoffice@hamburgucc.org.

To update your directory entry, or to upload or replace your photo, simply go to <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com>. Go to your entry, and then click "Edit My Family." (The email address that you currently have listed in our church directory is the one you will use to log in.)

CREATION JUSTICE OPPORTUNITIES • MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION TEAM

Today we are observing **Creation Justice Sunday** and **Earth Day Sunday** during worship. Sandy Przybylak, Erie County Climate Ambassador Volunteer (and St. James UCC member!) will be making an overview presentation on the Erie County Climate Action Plan, and she will be available to answer questions during our after-church fellowship time. Explanatory flyers that detail the plan and coloring books for children in attendance will be available.

Also, after church on **April 28**, you're invited to participate in a wonderful opportunity provided by our Mission and Social Action Team. As we work toward our Creation Justice Church designation, one clear thing congregants and the church are encouraged to explore is a property use evaluation as it pertains to what we choose to plant. Native plants—those designed to thrive in our climate zone and support our native insects, birds, and other species—also help to combat the negative effects of climate change.

Master gardener and native plant specialist Lyn Chimera will be with us that day during coffee hour to share valuable information on local natives, with suggestions for your home garden(s) and ours.

About Lyn Chimera: After retiring from teaching, Lyn got her Master Gardener certification from Cornell and began a garden consulting business, Lessons from Nature. She specializes in helping people with sustainable gardening and incorporating native plants into their landscape. They are easy to grow and necessary to help support pollinators, birds, and nature in general.



Spring Sprucing

May 7
6:00 PM

Wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty and come ready to help with some much-needed spring cleaning inside the church. All ages welcome.

Pizza will be provided.



*"Outer order
contributes to
inner calm."*

~ Gretchen Ruben

What is the United Church of Christ?

The United Church of Christ traces its roots to the Protestant Reformation, the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower*, and traditions indigenous to the United States. There are five historic "streams" that formed the UCC: Congregational, Christian, Afro-Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed.

- In 1931, the Christian Church, along with the Afro-Christian Convention, joined with the Congregational Churches to form the Congregational Christian Churches. Then, in 1934, the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America united to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Both of these denominations merged to form the United Church of Christ in 1957. We are a united and uniting church.
- The UCC weaves God's message of hope and extravagant welcome with social action for justice and peace, and our response to the demands of our faith is woven into the history of our country.
- We were the first historically white denomination to ordain an African American (1785) and the first in the modern era to ordain a woman (1853). We were the first mainline denomination to ordain an openly gay man (1972) and affirm marriage equality (2005). We were in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement, the Social Gospel movement, and the Civil Rights Movement, taking seriously Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself."
- Learn more about the UCC's "firsts": <https://www.hamburgucc.org/about-the-ucc>

Welcome to St. James United Church of Christ

- We believe that faith is a matter of heart and mind.
- We believe that taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally.
- We believe that God embraces all people equally.
- We believe that we are called to be nothing less than global citizens.
- We believe that the social expression of love is justice.
- We believe that every generation is called to discover new faith traditions.
- We believe that God continues to speak through the actions and words of people today, just as in times of old.



We are a **Just Peace** church. In the United Church of Christ, Just Peace churches promote peace with justice (a just peace) as an expression of God's love. We support peaceful opposition to intolerance, injustice, discrimination, and war, and we seek the ways of justice and peace in order to make a difference in our lives and the lives of all who experience injustice and violence.

We are an **Open and Affirming** church. In the United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming churches covenant to welcome and celebrate people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, we welcome and celebrate people of every faith experience, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, age, background, viewpoint, and life experience. If you struggle with addiction, are recovering from trauma, or have ever felt the pain of exclusion, you are embraced here.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

To receive our **weekly e-news**, *The St. James Connector*, scan the QR code or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccnews>



For **online giving**, scan the QR code or go to: <https://www.hamburgucc.org/giving>



St. James United Church of Christ

76 Main Street • Hamburg, NY 14075 • 716-649-6171

Church Office: churchoffice@hamburgucc.org • Pastor: revpaul@hamburgucc.org



We recycle church bulletins! After you are finished using your bulletin, please share it with a friend or neighbor or place it in the recycling bins in the narthex or in front of the church.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER WITH 100% POST-CONSUMER CONTENT