



Until now you  
have asked nothing  
in my name.

Ask  
and you will receive,  
that your joy may be full.  
— JOHN 16:24 (ESV)

*May 7, 2023*

*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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### *Rural Life Sunday Thoughts*

All nature's works His praise declare, to Whom they all belong;  
There is a voice in every star, in every breeze a song.

— Henry Ware Jr.

*All Nature's Works His Praise Declare (1822)*

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Lift up your hearts to the risen Christ who sustains us!

**For God cares for us through all the days of our lives.**

Let us bow and be thankful for every living thing.

**For God watches over our every heartbeat.**

Sing joyful praises for God's loving kindness!

**Blessed be the name of the Lord!**

\* *Invocation*

Almighty God, through your power the earth has brought forth its noblest fruit, the tree of the cross. Unite all people in its embrace, and feed us with its fruits, everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

\* *Opening Hymn*

*"Morning Has Broken"*

PH #38

*Prayer for Confession*

**Almighty God, you have created what we humans need to sustain our earthly lives. We confess that we have neglected to care for your creation. We have carelessly used the soil, air, and water. We have forgotten how to love. We have forsaken the needs of future generations. Our concern is for the immediate satisfaction of our own greedy interests. Forgive us and set us on a new path pleasing to you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## *Words of Assurance*

Through Jesus Christ God knows us and accepts us as we are. God hears our prayers and forgives us all our sins. Walk forth renewed and refreshed on the pathway of life

### *Epistle Reading*

**1 John 4:13-19 NIV**

<sup>13</sup> This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.

### \* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

**Matthew 6:25-34 NIV**

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

**TH #497**

#### *Do Not Worry*

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying,

‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Blessing of the Fields Hymn*

PH #460

*“We Plow the Fields and Scatter”*

*Today's Message*

\* *Blessing of the Fields*

John 16:23b-24

Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

*Blessing of the Elements*

*Blessing of the Seed*

God, you have given us these seeds

**They have a past. They are the fruit of the past. They have a present. They are to be planted into your soil. They have a future. They are to bear fruit for the harvest. May the miracle of life within these seeds burst forth yielding a bountiful harvest. Bless these seeds and those who plant them.**

*Blessing of the Soil*

God, you have created and given us this soil.

**The soil serves as the medium for the seed to grow, it cleans water, it regulates climate, it provides warmth, nourishment and support so that new life may emerge. Bless this soil that it may feed and nourish the seed. Bless those who work this soil and harvest the produce.**

### *Blessing of the Water*

God, this water is your creation.

**Water gives sustenance and nourishment to the soil and the seed. Bless the soil and the seed with gentle rain. Bless this water. Let it come as rain at the right time, in the proper amount so that the seed may flourish and grow. In your mercy send us favorable weather so that the harvest will be bountiful.**

### *Blessing of the Fields Prayer*

Lord, you make a pink flower from a gray seed, an ear from a kernel, a carrot from a seed the size of a pinhead, an oak tree from an acorn. You have programmed your soil to provide food for your plants, wooden trees to make apples, feathered hens to lay eggs, grass-eating cows to give milk. And you, Grand Creator, you have us take care of your grand creation.

**In your love, Lord, send rain to water our crops and gardens. Let your sun shine on our fields so that seeds will produce abundantly, so that vines and stalks and trees will hang heavy with fruit and grain. And Lord, let your grace be rich to our cattle as it is to us; let it keep our hogs free of disease, our hens laying eggs, and our cows giving milk. May our animals be fertile; may our lambs and calves and pigs frolic in your green pastures; so that even in their play, we may see your grace.**

Help us to live on your good earth even as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden - preserving and caring for the life and soil you bless, ever thankful that for our good, you gave your laws of nature and your law of love. Help us for our good and your glory to see those laws as you see them and as the psalmist saw them—as good and perfect, pleasant to think about.

**And Lord, teach us to share the abundance you have given us, never gloating in our excess, but always giving our first bushels to feed the hungry in your name. Enlighten our hearts, Lord, so that our thanks ever rise in a crescendo to your throne ...**

\* *The Lord's Prayer*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is  
in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And  
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.**

\* *Sung Response*

*“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”*

TH # 501

*The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

\* Doxology

TH # 551

\* Offertory Prayer

**We pray, O God, to take these gifts of ours - ourselves, our  
lives, our labors, our thoughts, our words, our powers;  
though they all are unworthy to place before you; we know  
you will accept them through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

\* *Closing Hymn*

*“For the Beauty of the Earth”*

PH #66

\* *Benediction*

May God who gives breath and life to the sower,  
Multiply the seed sown and increase its fruits.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

*Maypole Dance* (weather and field conditions pending)