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**Behold the Earth: Invitation to a Lenten Practice
An Intergenerational Retreat on the first Saturday of Lent
Saturday, February 21 (9 am – Noon)**



Fellowship Hall

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UCCH members, friends, youth and children are invited to enter the season of Lent with a renewing half-day retreat at the church. Our time together will focus on refreshing and deepening our gratitude and awe for the gift of Creation. The impact of climate change fills the headlines and is a cause for grave concern and action, yet our faith also calls us to continue to affirm the scriptural and poetic testimony that “the world is charged with the grandeur of God!” Join us as we explore and develop our own witness to this hopeful affirmation.

This retreat is free of charge, though we will ask for a free will offering to offset lunch expenses. Children and youth are welcome to attend. We ask that preschool and elementary-age children participate in the small group sessions with their parents or caregivers. Child care will be provided for the very young throughout the morning.

Opening session led by Carolyn Toben

Carolyn Toben is an educator, counselor, grandmother and extraordinary creator of programs that offer individuals and groups spiritual renewal and reconnection with the natural world. She lives and creates out of Timberlake Earth Sanctuary, her family land in Whitsett, about forty-five minutes west of Chapel Hill. In 2000, Carolyn founded what is now the Center for Education, Imagination and the Natural World, a Center that continues to offer children and teachers new understandings of the human-earth relationship.

Carolyn recently wrote a book, *Recovering a Sense of the Sacred*, based on conversations with her dear friend Father Thomas Berry, whose work on honoring creation is known around the world. She travels across the country and beyond to talk about the book and lead retreats. During her time with us, Carolyn will lead us through an experience of “beholding” as a way of healing the human-earth relationship.

Appropriate for young children through adults of all ages.

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Our time together will follow the outline below:

- 8:45 am - Come early to greet one another! Coffee, tea and light refreshments.
- 9:00 am - Words of welcome and morning prayer, Fellowship Hall
- 9:15-10:30 am - Opening session for all participants, led by Carolyn Toben, Fellowship Hall
- 10:45-11:45 am - Small Group Sessions (break-out rooms) - Information on the individual workshops and registration form are on the back
- 11:50 am -12:00 pm - Concluding Assembly, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00-1:00 pm - Lunch, Fellowship Hall

Invitation to a Lenten Practice

Small Group Sessions (10:45-11:45)

1. *Beholding in Word and Image:*

Finding Your Resonant Reminder

Carolyn Toben and church member Cely Chicurel will guide participants through reflections on the morning's outdoor discovery experience followed by creating an image that can be displayed in a common area in each home, reminding participants to continue to practice beholding throughout the forty days of Lent. *Appropriate for younger children through adults. Limited to 24 participants.*

2. *Beholding At Home:*

Sustainable Household Practices

Church members Hiawatha Demby and Scott Sheppard, both of whom have longstanding experience with energy reduction strategies, will offer participants practical recommendations for honoring creation through our household habits. *Appropriate for older elementary age children through adults.*

3. *Beholding with Our Hands:*

A Faith Experience with Clay

Church member Natalie Boorman, a potter and therapist, will lead this program of exploration with a gift from the earth: clay. Several years ago Natalie led a memorable and much-lauded workshop during the church retreat at Blowing Rock in which children and adults created together, sometimes wordlessly, in a beautiful process of both self- and mutual expression and understanding. For those who recall that experience, this workshop will be a welcome reprise; for those who were not able to attend, this will be a unique opportunity to deepen your faith as you create with clay. *Appropriate for younger children through adults.*

4. *Beholding in Music:*

Hymns and Songs in Praise of Creation

Church member and choir members Craig Smith and Julie Mitchell will lead this uplifting hour of singing. Participants will review or learn for the first time some of the most moving and delightful hymns of creation, from Morning Has Broken to God of the Sparrow, participants will enjoy this hour of music together—and may even want to sing for the whole group before the retreat concludes! *Appropriate for children in the first grade through adults.*

5. *Beholding the Fruits of the Soil:*

Anathoth Community Garden

Chas Edens (no relation to our co-pastors) is the Executive Director and Farm Manager of Anathoth Community Garden in Cedar Grove; he also works part-time at NCSU developing Sustainable Agriculture curriculum. His session will provide theological background on Anathoth's history and belief about the sacred nature of soil—and its fruits. Chas will also share information about Anathoth's 2015 HarvestShare/Community Supported Agriculture Program. *Appropriate for youth through adults.*

6. *Beholding in Verse:*

Poetic Responses to Creation

Church member and poet Sherry Siddall will share a selection of poignant and moving poems written by Christian believers over the ages in response to the wonders of the natural world. Participants will have time to reflect on each poem and will come away with a word or phrase that will inspire them to practice beholding throughout the Lenten season. *Appropriate for youth through adults.*

Please leave registration form in the collection plate or return to Susan Steinberg or the church office. Thank you!

Name(s) of Adult Participants: _____

Email or other contact information: _____

Name(s)/Ages of children: _____

Names and ages of children who will need child care: _____

List your Small Group Session preference: _____

Lunch Information:

Will you be able to stay for lunch? Yes ___ No ___

Do you or anyone in your family have any special needs? Please indicate the number of people in your household who need the following kinds of meals:

Vegetarian ___ Gluten-free ___ Vegan ___ Other ___