

**First Congregational United Church of Christ,
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunday, May 15 at 3:00 pm — Earth Walk: A Concert for Mother Earth

Free to the Public

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – April 11, 2016 . . . Jazz, storytelling, art and dance come together in a creative celebration affirming humanity's global partnership as caretakers of the earth. **The Oikos Ensemble** under the direction of **Rev. Cliff Aerie** will be joined by **painter Michael Anderson** and the **Leverage Dance Theater**. Jazz, dance and painting will combine with Aerie's *earth stories* to celebrate the wonders of creation and the challenges of climate change facing the global community.

As Oikos performs original compositions and jazz standards, acclaimed artist Michael Anderson will spontaneously paint his creative response on canvas. The Leverage Dance Theater under the direction of Director, Diana Barrios will interpret story and music through their unique performance style.

The Oikos Ensemble (www.oikos-ensemble.com) is a national jazz ministry under the direction of its founder and saxophonist, the Rev. Cliff Aerie. Oikos features some of St. Louis' most talented jazz musicians—Carolbeth True (piano), Dave Troncoso (bass), Kevin Gianino (drums), Tim Osiek (trumpet) and featuring vocalists Kim Fuller and Arianna Aerie. Oikos has performed at more than 300 faith-based communities across the country. Grammy Award winner Paul Winter has said, "I salute Cliff Aerie and the Oikos Ensemble for their inspired music and mission. They are serving the world with their song."

Michael Anderson's (www.michaelandersonstudio.com) lengthy career as a designer, illustrator and artist continues to lead him in new artistic directions. His body of work includes murals, paintings and digital art. The inspiration for most of his works is simply the way the light falls upon the earth. Michael is a member of the Missouri Plein Air Painters Association, the St. Louis Artist's Guild, and Art St. Louis.

Leverage Dance Theater (www.leveragedancetheater.org) under the direction of Diana Barrios, is a modern dance company that has been producing and presenting work in St. Louis for seventeen years. Leverage specializes in using dance and creative movement in non-traditional environments to engage new audiences and invite participants into the artistic process.

A wine and cheese reception will follow with interactive resources provided by the Botanical Garden's **EarthWays Center** and the **Green Team**, First Congregational Church's ecological outreach ministry. The concert is free and open to all. A free-will offering will be received to benefit the work of the Green Team. "Earth Walk" is part of the congregation's concert series celebrating the church's 150 Years of service to the community and the world.

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