

## A Liturgy for Outdoor Ministries Sunday

July 12, 2015

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### Call to Worship

Leader: As we gather, we are reminded that your creation offers a natural sanctuary for worship, O God.

**People: May our eyes notice the awesomeness of your handiwork.**

Leader: May our ears hear the songs of nature that fill the air.

**People: May our hands feel the textures of all that surrounds us.**

Leader: May our noses smell the aromas that cause a flood of warm and welcoming feelings.

**People: May we experience your continuing presence as we offer our praise to you, O God.**

### Call to Confession

Being human means being fallible. It means we fail to live up to God's desire for our lives all of the time. It means we make mistakes, we treat others unfairly and we don't care for this world in which we live. Aware of our inability to be all God desires, we humbly come seeking the unconditional love and grace as we confess our sins to God.

### Prayer of Confession (unison)

**Forgiving God, we have failed so many times to live up to your expectations. We don't take care of this earth with which you have entrusted us. We don't love as we have been loved. We don't really spend time with you as often as we should. We want to do more, do better, but we make excuses and ignore what we know to be right and good. Help us, as we are removed from our regular routines in the world, to be more intentional. Give us strength and courage to begin a new way of living as your disciples, a way that we can take back to our everyday lives. As we spend this time in your creation, help us to appreciate more of the little things in life and focus more on your presence and love. We humble ourselves before you, Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer. Amen.**

### Assurance of Pardon

Leader: God breathed life into us and loved us, even offering God's only Son, for us!  
So, be assured that by that gift, we are forgiven and called to walk a new path,  
in a new light!

**People: Thanks be to God!**

### Prayer for Illumination

Inspiring God, as we gather under your canopy of life, help us to hear more clearly your word. May it break the darkness with a light that will show us the way of hope and may it rest upon our hearts with a new way of living. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

### Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Genesis 1:1-2:4a

- Genesis 2:4b-25
- Psalm 24
- Psalm 65
- Psalm 104
- Romans 8:18-25
- Colossians 1:15-20
- John 1:1-5

### **Prayers of the People**

*(following the congregation's response, there should be a short time of silence)*

When we gather in a place like this, O God, we have an opportunity to breathe. We have left our schedules and busy lives back home and have come here with a hope for peace. We come to spend time with you. But, we don't leave behind the concerns that seem to consume our hearts and minds. So, we come to you with all we carry and ask for your help.

For the world which is never at peace and full of war and death...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

For our country that is still wracked with racism, sexism and hatred...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

For our communities that have neglected to care for not only nature, but also those who are homeless and poor...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

For our churches that are shrinking and struggling to reach others with the gospel...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

For our homes where families are trying to keep it all together in a time of crisis and yet so many are falling apart...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

For each person here who desires to grow closer to you and yet faces challenges every way they turn...

**Hear our prayer, caring God.** *(silence)*

Hear our prayer, caring and loving God. Remind us every day that you are with us and we are never alone. We pray with hope. Amen.

**Invitation to the Offering**

Look around. (*pause to look around*) This is but a small portion of all God has given to us, entrusted to us and offered to us. Everything we have is a blessing and our response is to offer back to God a small part of ourselves. So bring. Bring your offering to a giving God. Bring your time to an expectant God. Bring your talent to a waiting God. Isn't it the least we can do?

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God of many blessings, we are humbled by all you have given to us and we ask your blessing upon this which we bring to you. Use it to make a difference in this world which is in such need of hope and healing. We pray as your people filled with your grace. Amen.

**Charge and Benediction**

As you leave this place, take notice. Listen for the sounds so unfamiliar in our busy lives. Smell the aromas that fill the air that are so different from our homes. See the beauty that offers a glimpse of God's creative power. Feel the presence of a living, loving God who calls you to care for this place that brings us together. And know you are a child of God, called to go out and share the good news. Amen.