

**A Liturgy for Earth Day
(Friday after this Sunday)
April 17, 2016
Chris Warren**

Call to Worship

One: Praise is due to you, O God in Zion.

You are the hope of all the ends of the earth.

Many: By your strength you established the mountains.

You silence the roaring of the waves.

One: You alone can silence the tumult of the peoples.

All the world stands in awe of your works.

Many: You visit the earth and water it, enriching it.

The river of God is full of clear water.

One: You provide the people with grain as you have prepared it.

You water the furrows of grain with soft showers, blessing its growth.

Many: The pastures of the wilderness overflow, meadows are clothed with flocks.

The valleys filled with grain shout and sing together for joy.

—Adapted from Psalm 65, NRSV

Call to Confession

God has given much to the dominion and protection of humankind. The world and all that is in it belongs to God, and we have been charged with its care. Sometimes we have faithfully cared for the earth, and sometimes we have neglected its care or even contributed to its abuse. We pray together in confession.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Holy One, creator of all that is, help us to be mindful of the earth and all its resources. Help us to remember the love you have for creation, the willingness you have for all creation to be redeemed. Cause us to repent of our neglect for your earth, and move in us to repair the damage we and previous generations of humanity have caused. As we repent, make us true stewards of your creation. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

It is God's will that all creation will be redeemed. We believe that God will provide for that redemption. As we repent of our misuse of creation, we commit to being a part of God's plan for the health and well-being of this world. God has promised that those who truly repent will be forgiven. Children of God, you can be assured of your pardon.

Prayer for Illumination

Great and awesome God, you are great in power and in wonder. We celebrate your works of creation this day. As you made the heavens and the earth, you declared all the things you had made good. We humans are also your creation, and we long to be good, just as you created us to be.

Give us wisdom to see your creation as a holy responsibility for us, your people. Help us to see the beauty in all you have made. Help us to see clearly the ways that we have damaged your creation, our air, water, and natural resources. Help us to see clearly how we can live our lives so that we may honor our holy responsibility before you.

Gracious God, grant that we may see the world as good, just as you declared it good, and help us to love it and care for it, to your glory. Now grant us the openness to hear your good news through the reading of this scripture and the preaching of your word. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Psalm 8
- Psalm 65
- Genesis 1 (specifically 1:26-2:4)
- Mark 4:26-32
- Colossians 1:15-20

Prayers of the People

One: Let us pray together for the goodness of the earth:
For the mountains and plains, for the rocky and fertile soil,
for the health of the ground the earth over...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For the waters that abound on the earth,
for the health of our streams and lakes and rivers and seas and oceans,
for their health and well-being and their cleanliness...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For the air that we breathe and that sustains life throughout the globe,
for its health and an end to its pollution...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For the plants that live on the ground and in the waters,
that they may enjoy health and they may continue to cycle clean and fresh air
for the renewal of the world...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For the animals near and far, for their flourishing and their ability to adapt
to the pressures placed on them by humanity...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For the planet as a whole: the earth, water, air, plants, and animals,

for the ability of humanity to see the ways the planet has been damaged
by our use of the natural resources entrusted to us by God,
for an end to abuse of the planet and the beginning of a time of healing...

Many: Lord, hear our prayer.

Invitation to the Offering

All we have we have received from God. Nothing that has ever been was created without God. It is only fitting that during a time of worship we respond to these gifts to us by offering our gifts to God. Let us give generously, even as we have received from a generous God.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Great One, through the offering of our gifts we acknowledge our reliance on you. We pray for your blessings on these gifts that they may be used for your glory throughout the world, wherever our influence reaches. May they care for the sick, feed the hungry, and bring justice to the oppressed. May we use all we have to care for your creation. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Go, now, children of God, secure in the knowledge that God is a sovereign God of the heavens and the earth!

Go, now, children of God, working alongside God for the redemption of all creation!

Go, now, children of God, with the goodness of creation firmly established in your hearts and minds!

And may God's grace and the blessings of continual creation be ever with you and ever sustain you as you work toward the healing of God's world.

Amen.