

**A Liturgy for Earth Day
(on Saturday after this Sunday)
April 16, 2017
Byron Forester**

Call to Worship

God said, "Let there be light."

God saw that the light was good.

God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear."

God called the dry land Earth and saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation."

God saw that it was good.

God created every living creature.

God saw that it was good.

God said "Let us make humankind in our image."

God saw everything that had been made and it was very good.

Call to Confession

Let us be bold and confess our sin against God and creation.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

**Redeeming God, though we are created in your image we do not live in that image.
You have made us caretakers of creation yet we exploit that creation for our own purposes.**

We pollute the air.

We foul the rivers and streams.

We poison the earth.

In our attempts to make our lives more comfortable we make creation unsustainable.

Forgive us, O Creator.

**Call us back to your holy mandate to have dominion over the fish of the sea,
the birds of the air, the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing.**

Call us back to our role as co-creators

to join in the holy work of redeeming and restoring creation to you. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

God creates and loves creation and God creates and loves us also. Just as surely as God makes creation new each morning God offers us a new beginning each new day. Sisters and brothers we are a forgiven people.

Prayer for Illumination

O Creator, your word comes to us by the power of the Holy Spirit which moves in and through us. Calm us now and open us to hear your word anew. Amen.

Scripture for the Sermon

- Genesis 1:26-31

Prayers of the People

Holy Spirit, you have given us an inner being that longs to be connected with you.

We are drawn to leave the concrete and pavement to walk on the earth,
to ride the wild rivers, and breathe the clean air.

We long for an open place where our eyes take in the full sky
and behold the canopy of the universe.

We look into the stars and imagine what other forms of creation might be out there
and wonder how you reveal yourself to them.

O Lord, we glorify your creation in psalms, poems, music, paintings, and photography.

But we live as if creation is disposable

and we turn away from the reality that someday psalms, poems, music, paintings, and photos
will be the only evidence that there was ever an earth that was pure.

When you willed humankind into existence in your divine image

the very first words you spoke to humans were the instructions to have dominion over the earth.

Dominion. Not domination.

Loving God, you have blessed humans with the ability to think, to reason, to develop ideas.

Inspire us, Lord, and help us inspire others to use our intelligence

to develop alternatives to what we are doing,

help us find a way to live that does not require draining all our resources to sustain it.

Move us to an appreciation of what we have been given

and to take to heart our responsibility to care for this gift.

When we defer our responsibility as stewards of the earth,

we also deny our connection with the earth and we deny our connection with each other.

We deny our connection with you.

Eternal God, it is from you that all blessings flow.

May those blessings flow upon us

as clean rain that nourishes the earth and produces wondrous abundance.

May we, in turn, bless others till all creation exists in your grace

and that you will forever look at it and call it good.

In the name of the Triune God we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

The Lord provides for us everything we need in this life. May we now offer our resources of money and the pledge to live our lives in accordance with your plan.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord, we thank you for your bountiful blessings and your tender mercies. Accept our gifts of money as a means to sustain the good thing you have started. Take our lives and make us aware of how much we need you and all you have made. Amen.

Benediction

Go now out into the wonderful and mysterious world.
Go and behold the beauty that is all around you.
Let yourself be blown by the wild wind.
Hear the birds and listen to the music of the ages.
Know that the Holy Spirit is in you and for you. Amen.