

## Season of Creation

### A Week-Day Prayer Service for the Season of Creation 2022 “Listen to the voice of Creation”



*This prayer service can be used on September 1<sup>st</sup> – World Day of Prayer of Creation, in an ecumenical setting, or as a resource that could be used for the celebration of the Eucharist in parishes, or at any other time between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> October, feast of St. Francis of Assisi. We have prepared it for a formal church setting or for use out-of-doors. You may wish to shorten it or why not do your own with readings and prayers of your choice.*

**Procession to the altar** with Irish grown fruit, vegetables, flowers/foilage and a sheaf of corn if available. Suitable background music or a commentary may be used (alternatively they may be placed on the altar in advance).

**Introduction:** In this Season of Creation, the burning bush, symbol of God’s Spirit, calls us to listen to the voice of Creation and to faithfully respond through prayer, repentance and action. May this symbol remind us to take off our shoes, to contemplate our connection to holy ground. May it remind us to be filled with hope to quench the fires of injustice with the light of God’s healing love that sustains our common home.

#### **Gospel Reading: Exodus 3:1-15**

*Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law – Jethro, the priest of Midian: he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a Flame of Fire out of a bush; he looked and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said , I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up. When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush. Moses, Moses! And he said , Here I am. Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground”. He said further, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*

*Then the Lord said, the cry of the Israelites has now come to me..... But Moses said to God “Who am I that I should go to Pharoah and bring the Israelites out of their suffering in Egypt. God said “I will be with you”.*

Like Moses we are called to trust God and be aware of the holy ground on which we stand and its need for healing, care and protection. The burning bush was not consumed- a hint of the hope for a burning planet. The Hebrew slaves were liberated against all odds because

nothing is impossible to God. You can renew the face of the earth, “burdened and laid waste” and “make all things new”. (Rev 21:1-5)

### **Pause for quiet reflection**

#### **Turning Aside to See**

We gather now, eyes open to wonder.

As Moses turned aside to see

The bush ablaze with eternal Presence,

So here in the holy ground of (name your area)

Do we turn aside to see the world

Changed with the grandeur and the glory

Of the Mystery of the Holy One.

We turn aside to see

the beauty of each other,

the goodness of this life, and the truth of sacred wisdom that knows:

Earth to be holy;

all creatures to be kin;

the Universe to be One;

and Spirit to be a flaring presence

for all who turn aside to see. Amen

### **Pause for Reflection**

**Music could be played in the background or a Taize chant**

## Prayers of Intercession:

Let us pray

Most provident God, you graciously give us all good gifts. Teach us to care for our earth, to free our waters from pollution, to harvest the warmth of our sun (add anything relevant in your area), and to respect the rights of all species. May we willingly share the gifts of your goodness with one another. We ask this of you, God of the universe. Amen.

## Pause for quiet reflection

*Verses read by individuals and all say the response*

**Response: Teach us to reverence your creation**

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We lift a chorus of praise to you, Creator Spirit,

Joining with all people, across the global,

Blending our speech with the voices of soft rain and desert heat,

Lofty pines and jewelled frost crystals, splendid ravens and soaring eagles

Pulsating jellyfish and fragile humming birds,

Patient reptiles and industrious beavers, graceful elk and powerful bears,

Radiant stars and spinning planet

**All: Teach us to reverence your creation**

We repent of the losses we have inflicted on our planet.

We mourn the silenced songbirds and scorched soil,

Slashed forests and polluted seas, unclean air, and vanishing bees,

We weep for those people whose lives have been fractured and diminished, rendered intolerable and cut short by our wars and ethnic cleansing, our violence and our greed.

We seek forgiveness and healing.

**All: Teach us to reverence your creation**

Bless all living beings now making their way in your universe,  
all creatures who embrace and uphold us,  
who show us our unique gifts in time and space,  
who add to our particular pattern and presence.

Bless people of every race and religion, every gender and difference,  
every culture and calling, every country and nation.

Bless algae and bacteria, alpine wildflowers and pesky mosquitoes, cloying air and gentle breezes, penguins and puppies, waterfalls and rivers, farmland and meadows.

**All: Teach us to reverence all your Creation**

We give thanks, Creator Spirit, for the rich array of relatives who share our home.

We praise you for the falling rain, the fruitful fields,

And every green growing thing.

As we journey with all creation towards full communion in you,

Teach us to reverence other creatures

As beloved members of your household.

**All: Teach us to reverence all your Creation**

**Let us Pray:**

Creator Spirit, you who dwell within our cosmos, infuse with fresh love all our atoms, cells and sinews. Forgive and renew us. Convert our hearts and turn us around again and again until we discern your face in all you have created and forge new ways of living together in your universe. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen. (K Fisher)

**Pause for reflection or hymn**

## Ritual – Healing Our Common Home

**Note:** When bulb planting – use **peat free compost only** if possible.

- Plant some of the following pollinator- friendly bulbs: crocuses, snowdrops, grape hyacinths, alliums.
- (Information note: Trees and bushes suitable for planting in autumn, elder, rowan, pussy willow, blackthorn and whitethorn).

During the planting of the bulbs the following statements are read by solo voices with microphone. After each statements pause and light a candle on the altar.

We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness (LS 226).

We confess the loss of biodiversity irreplaceable and irretrievable, and no longer giving glory to God by its very existence, nor available for the functioning of the earth, human well being, and future generations.

Pause and light a candle.

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only she/he who sees, takes off her (his) shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pick blackberries.  
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning).

Pause and light a candle.

It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet (LS 9).

Pause and light a candle.

Each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains; everything is as it were, a caress of God (LS 84).

Pause and light a candle.

There is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face (LS 233).

Pause and light a candle.

Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is, not an optional aspect of one Christian experience (LS 217).

Pause and light a candle.

The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things (LS, 83).

Pause and light a candle.

The environment is on loan to each generation which must then hand it on to the next. What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? (LS 160)

Pause and light a candle.

### **Our Father.....**

#### **Poem: WALK DON'T RUN By Rob Bell**

Walk, don't run.  
That's it. Walk, don't run.  
Slow down, breathe deeply,  
and open your eyes because there's a whole world right here within this one.  
The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire,  
it's been burning the whole time.  
Moses is simply moving slowly enough to see it.  
And when he does, he takes off his sandals.  
Not because the ground has suddenly become holy,  
but because he's just now becoming aware  
that the ground has been holy the whole time.  
Efficiency is not God's highest goal for your life,  
neither is busyness,  
or how many things you can get done in one day,  
or speed, or even success.  
But walking, which leads to seeing,  
now that's something.  
That's the invitation for every one of us today,  
and everyday, in every conversation, interaction, event,  
and moment: to walk, not run.  
And in doing so,  
to see a whole world right here within this one.

## **FINAL BLESSING:**

Bless us, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as we go forth with joy and hope to care for God's creation,

- Walking gently on the earth,
- In right relationship,
- Nurtured by your love,
- Taking only what we need,
- Giving back to the earth in gratitude,
- Honouring all with reverence,
- Reconciling and healing,
- Mindful of those who will come after, and of the poor today
- Recognising our proper place as part of, not apart from, your creation.

Ignite your spark within us, that we may know ourselves as truly human and irrevocably part of the web of Life.

## **RECESSIONAL HYMN: "How great thou art" (or hymn with a similar theme)**

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy pow'r throughout the universe display'd.

Then sings my soul, my saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

Refrain: Then sings.....

**As the congregation leaves the church** each person receives one of the pollinator – friendly bulbs named above for planting at home. During this time we listen to or sing along with the following chant;

Taize: Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes (Praise the Lord all you nations).