

Opening Worship Final
“Sharing the Waters of Life”
Presbyterians for Restoring Creation
National Conference June 2005
Silver Bay, NY

Welcome

Prologue

“My Help is in the Mountain” by Nancy Wood^a

My help is in the mountain
Where I take myself to heal
The earthly wounds
That people give to me.
I find a rock with sun o in
And a stream where the water runs gentle
And the trees which one by one give me company
So must I stay for a long time
Until I have grown from the rock
And the stream is running through me
And I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.
Then I know that nothing touches me
Nor makes me run away.
My help is in the mountain
That I take away with me.

Earth cure me. Earth receive my woe. Rock
strengthen me. Rock receive my weakness. Rain
wash my sadness away. Rain receive my doubt.
sun make sweet my song. Sun receive the anger
from my heart.

Invocation to worship^b

Leader 1: Glory to you, Almighty God.
 You spoke, and light came out of darkness,
 Order rose from confusion.

Leader 2: Glory to you, Jesus Christ!
 You met us as a refugee, a threatened child,
 The word made flesh, born in a forgotten place.

Leader 3: Glory to you, Holy Spirit!
 You brooded over chaos,
 Mothering and shaping God’s new creation.

Leader 4: Glory to you, God, Three-in-one!
 You are surrounded by the song of the saints in heaven
 And you are present with us now.

Hymn (verses 1-4)

*God made the crystal clear waters and there was land for rain to fall on.
The Spirit moved upon the ocean. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning.*

*God wove the tapestry of green grass, embroidered flowers, bees and mushrooms,
And fashioned trees within the garden. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning.*

*God made the fish and life of oceans and all the birds that fly above us.
On land there were all kinds of creatures. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning.*

*A man, a woman in God's image, in full communion with creation,
Were loving, sharing with each other. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning.*

Dancers to process the water down the aisle and splash it into the bowl...
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Call to Confession ^c

Here we are, God, a people at prayer.
Attune our spirits to the chant of confession,
That we may face our violence done to the earth
And join with your energy to heal.

Here we are God, a people at prayer,
We ask for the gift of remembering (pause),
 for forgiveness (pause),
 for your grace.

Hymn (verses 5-6, slowly)

*But birds are dying, grass is withering and poisoned waters kill our children.
The paradise is lost for profit. God saw the goodness lost.
God saw the goodness lost and there was evening and there was mourning.*

*The covenant of all creation between the earth and heav'n is broken.
The earth is ruled by hate and evil. God saw the goodness lost.
God saw the goodness lost and there was evening and there was mourning.*

Kyrie (From UN Environmental Sabbath resources)

Leader: Giver of life
 In the midst of a plundered earth we groan with creation:

People: Have mercy on us. (perhaps sung?)

Leader: Giver of life
In the midst of poisoned waters we groan with creation:

People: Have mercy on us.

Leader: Giver of life
In the midst of polluted air we groan with creation:

People: Have mercy on us.

Leader: Giver of life
In the midst of mountains of waste we groan with creation:

People: Have mercy on us.

Leader: Giver of life
In the midst of a world at war we groan with creation:

People: Have mercy on us.

Leader: Giver of life
We who are made in the image of God have gone astray,
And creation groans with us:

People: Have mercy on us.

Silence

Hymn (verses 7-9)

*Lights come up and the
cloths are removed.*

*When Jesus walked his way among us we were reminded of God's image
And how it was from the beginning. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.*

*The Spirit's fire burns within us to care again for all creation
In covenant of bread that's broken. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.*

*All things will be renewed in Jesus who loves both sinners and creation.
Our future will be life forever. God saw that it was good.
God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.*

Words of Assurance^d

Friends,

The Holy One,

The Spirit of Creation

The Spirit of Life

The Spirit of Light,

Calls to us as children of the light:

Giving us the freedom to choose

new ways and new life.
Live now, for God's grace showers over you!

Passing of the Peace

Response – Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!^e

Hymn/Solo Many and Great, O God are Thy Things^f

Scripture Lesson Deuteronomy 8:7-11

Storytelling/songs by Joe Bruchac^g

Response Lamenting

Sung refrain:^h

**Surely God is in this place, Holy ground,
Surely God is in this place, Holy ground.**

show images of stressed eco-systems/species as the liturgy is read, and have a reader read the fact items.
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(The following comes from a variety of sources)

Millions more of our neighbors live in water-stressed areas:

places where populations rise as water tables decline; one of every six people in the world lacks access to safe drinking water, 80 countries, home of 40% of the world's population are encountering serious water shortages.

places where competition may soon turn to conflict over water drawn in too many directions; 1/3 of the world's households must use water sources outside the home. Girls and women in West Africa now walk an average of 21 minutes from home just to get water.

places where misuse and overuse and thoughtless use have squandered this natural heritage; Nearly 70% of the world's major marine fish stocks are over-fished or are being fished at their biological limit. Fishing fleets are 40% larger than the oceans can sustain.

places where some have sought control over what God has given to all; Palestinians are suffering from a permanent water crisis due to Israeli restrictions on their access to the limited water resources in the region.

places where people who have lived by and from the waters for millennia find that ancient way of life being poisoned. In the 1990s the number of children killed by diarrhea—the result of unsafe water and sanitation—exceeded the number of people killed in armed conflicts since the Second World War.

“News release: studies have found that levels of toxins in samples of breast milk of Inuit women of the Arctic are many times higher than levels found in the milk of women in the countries where the chemicals were produced. The toxic

substances have migrated toward the polar regions with ocean currents, and have become concentrated in the tissues of the marine animals that form the core of the native diet. The poisons are even found in the ice pack. One result is that Inuit babies have increased risk of abnormal and below-average development and susceptibility to disease. The discovery has caused a profound quandary for the people of the far north: “Without our food—the food that has sustained us and defined us for centuries—who are we as a people?” lamented one Inuit leader. “Yet we fear for the safety of our children. We feel as if we are being poisoned from afar.”

Calling into Reaffirmation of Baptism

Liturgist

Consider, Christians, your calling.

To tend the creation,

to seek the well-being of your neighbors,

to assure that the gifts of God, meant for the children of God, are shared widely with all.

Drink, not from the cisterns of consumption or the ponds of indifference, but from the springs of love and justice and from that well that never runs dry—none other than Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thus may we, our neighbors, and all creation wade into the water, the water God has troubled unto our healing. And in that day, won't we all have the water we need to survive and thrive?

Reaffirmation of Baptism ⁱ

One: God calls us to the water to find a new way:

a new grace,

a new hope,

a new faith,

a new life.

People: God calls; we come.

Two: Come to the water and let go of the outworn:

outworn habits,

outworn pains,

outworn angers,

outworn burdens.

People: God calls; we come.

One: God blesses the water and it

heals us,

cleans us,

renews us,

refreshes us.

People: God blesses; we praise.

Two: Come to the water and receive
blessing,
freedom,
mercy,
love.

People: God blesses; we praise.

Confession of Faith^j

One We believe, O God of All gods
That you are the eternal God of life.

**All: We believe, O God of all gods,
That you are the eternal God of love.**

One: We believe, O God and Mater of all creation,
that you are the creator of the high heavens

Two: That you are creator of the deep seas,
That you are the creator of the stable earth

One: We believe, O God of all the peoples
That you created our souls and set their warp

**All: That you created our bodies and gave them breath
That you made us in your own image.**

Two: We are giving you worship with our whole lives.

One and two: We are giving you assent with our whole power.

**All: We are giving you our existence with whole mind,
We are giving you kneeling with our whole desire.**

Blessing over the waters

One: Gracious God,
your spirit moved over the waters of chaos to bring forth cosmos.
Your spirit moves in the waters of the womb to bring forth life.
Your spirit rains and pours and floods in rivers and oceans and veins cleansing, purifying,
anointing all creation for your service.
Bless this water with your presence. Amen.

Two: (Both leaders touch the water in the bowl while leader Two speaks:) Take this water, gift of God, and name yourself as God names you: Beloved.

Invitation to come forward to the waters:

The central station will have a large bowl (see through if possible) in which either sea glass or glass pebbles of a variety of colors and sizes will be placed. Hopefully this is where the dancers

will have poured water earlier. A small bowl with a few pebbles may sit on the table and be available to be carried to those who cannot come forward.

Songs:

Water Our Lives by Stephen Iverson (email weevenji@yahoo.com)

*Water our lives with everflowing streams of your grace
Bear in our lives creating God
The living fruits of your love.*

Wash O God, Our Sons and Daughters^k

*Wash, O God, our sons and daughters, where your cleansing waters flow.
Number them among your people; bless as Christ blessed long ago.
Weave them garments bright and sparkling; compass them with love and light.
Fill, anoint them, send your Spirit, holy dove and heart's delight.*

*Oh, how deep your holy wisdom! Unimagined, all your ways.
To your name be glory, honor! With our lives we worship, praise.
We your people stand before you, water-washed and Spirit born.
By your grace, our lives we offer. Recreate us: God transform.*

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you have created us,
you have named us,
you call us your beloved.
As your beloved children,
servants, witnesses,
may we serve your children
even as we see in each of them
your image. Amen.

^a Found in *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 prayers, poems and invocations for honoring the earth*, eds. Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. *Earth Prayers* has a multitude of materials for worship across many traditions in the ecological tradition. See also *Life Prayers* and *Prayers for a New Millenium*.

^b **Creation Hymn:** The Invocation and opening hymn come from a service of worship found in the following resource: *Worshipping Ecumenically: Orders of Service from Global Meetings with Suggestions for Local Use*, edited by Per Harling is a good collection of worship services from ecumenical meetings. Lots of good liturgy and music. (1995) ISBN 2-8254-1141-8. Order from WCC, (800) 523-8211

^c Prayer of Confession written by Renee Rico, permission given for use.

^d Word of Assurance written by Renee Rico, permission given for use.

^e A traditional Caribbean song which has been published in numerous resources with numerous arrangements, including: *Sing the Faith* (<http://www.ppcpub.com/Details.asp?BookID=0664502407>) *Sing the Faith* includes favorite songs by Presbyterians not included in *The Presbyterian Hymnal*; traditional hymns; world music from Europe, Africa, and Asia; African American and Hispanic American music; liturgical chants from the Taize community; plus more contemporary contributions such as 'Awesome God' and 'Sanctuary.'

^f Published in the *Presbyterian Hymnal*: Words: Joseph R. Renville, 1842 Appeared in the *Dakota Indian Hymnal*, 1916; translated from Dakota to English by Philip Frazier, 1929. Music: "Lacquiparle," American Indian tune, adapted by Joseph Renville

^g Joe Bruchac can be reached through his website at < <http://www.josephbruchac.com> > including purchase of his books and CDs.

^h Words by Andrew Dreitcer, music by Stephen Iverson. Stephen has written many chants and songs suitable for contemporary worship. Found on "Prayer" CD, for sheet music contact Stephen Iverson at weevenji@yahoo.com

ⁱ From *Seasons of the Spirit Congregational Resource Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2004-5*.

^j From the Iona community, an ecumenical community in Scotland dedicated to peace and justice and prayer as transformation. Two wonderful liturgy books available in the US are *The Iona Community Worship Book*, Wild Goose Publications, 1994, and *A Wee Worship Book*, Wild Goose Resource Group, 1999.

^k Tune: Beach Spring, *The Sacred Harp*
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