

## **Resources & themes**

**Presbyterians for Earth Care** <https://presbyearthcare.org/>

**Lutherans Restoring Creation** <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>

**Creation Justice Ministries** <https://www.creationjustice.org/> what used to be Eco-Justice, a branch of NCCC until 2013 - campaigns on water, ocean, conservation, endangered, energy, climate change, environmental health

## **NACD – Soil & Water Stewardship Week**

<https://www.nacdn.net.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/2021-healthy-forests-healthy-communities/>

last Sunday April – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of May

April 25- May 2, 2021 theme was “Healthy Forests & Healthy Communities”

You can download free as pdf a Church Leader guide, ½ page bulletin litany, & program insert

**Earth Ministry- [Earth Ministry – Stewardship of the earth](#)**

## **Season of Creation - WCC**

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>, starts September 1 – October 4<sup>th</sup> - Feast Day of St. Francis promoted by WCC

Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed 1 September as a day of prayer for creation for the Orthodox in 1989, Pope Francis made declaration in 2015.

## **Season of Creation – Australian & Lutheran churches**

<https://seasonofcreation.com> [Season of Creation | Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania](#) Uniting Churches in Australia embraced idea in early 2000s, and developed resources for full liturgical season starting 2005

## **Green Faith [https://greenfaith.org/about/#gf\\_mission](https://greenfaith.org/about/#gf_mission)**

Because the Earth and all people are sacred and at risk, GreenFaith is building a worldwide, multi-faith climate and environmental movement.

## **Dates to lift up Eco-Justice themes**

1. Earth Day April 22 –
2. National Soil Stewardship Week – last Sunday April- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday May
3. September – Season of Creation Sept. 1 – Oct. 4
4. Evolution Sunday – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday February (Clergy Letter Project)
5. Outdoor Worship
6. Celebrate Church Camp & Conference Ministry Sunday
7. Youth Sunday
8. Coordinate with Mission or Social Justice Committee – special donation or action – Volunteer park, nature center, plant trees, clean up river or highway
9. Educational/recreational opportunities for church members to participate in bird walk or nature walk – identifying scat in summer, identifying tracks in winter snow

## PEC Scriptures On Earth Care

- Genesis 1 (priestly story unfolding Creation, all is “good”)
  - [The Living Pulpit » The “Ruling Over” Experience](#) by Rev. Patricia Wolff
- [Genesis 2](#)

Gen 2:15 – 1<sup>st</sup> command- your purpose is to *avadah* (serve) & *shamarah* (protect) the garden  
 Animals are brought to 1<sup>st</sup> human (adam) as potential companions – *etzer neged*  
 Naming animals isn’t about control but establishing relationship
- [Job 12:7-10](#)

<sup>7</sup> “But ask the animals, and they will teach you;  
 the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
<sup>8</sup> ask the plants of the earth,<sup>[c]</sup> and they will teach you;  
 and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
<sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know  
 that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
<sup>10</sup> In his hand is the life of every living thing  
 and the breath of every human being.
- [Job 38-39 theophany](#)

<sup>26-30</sup> “Was it through your know-how that the hawk learned to fly,  
 soaring effortlessly on thermal updrafts?  
 Did you command the eagle’s flight,  
 and teach her to build her nest in the heights,  
 Perfectly at home on the high cliff face,  
 invulnerable on pinnacle and crag?  
 From her perch she searches for prey,  
 spies it at a great distance.  
 Her young gorge themselves on carrion;  
 wherever there’s a roadkill, you’ll see her circling.”
- Psalms: 8, 24, 65, 96, [98](#), 104 ([Ecology Psalm](#)), 145, 146, 147, 148
- Isaiah 24, 35, 40, 55
- Isaiah 58:13-14, Isaiah 65:17-25
- Ezekiel 34:2-4, Ezekiel 36
- Matthew 6:1-3 (Lord’s Prayer)
- Matthew 6:25-34
- John 1:1-5
 

John 1 – Erasmus translated the Greek word “logos” into sermo (conversation) instead of verbum (word) – Rev. Victoria Looz, *Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred* – to be published Oct. 2021
- Romans 1:18-25
- Romans 8:18-39
- Philippians 4:4-13
- Colossians 1:15-20
- Hebrews 11:3
- Revelation 21:1-4

## Liturgical Resources

### ***Call to Worship (responsive)*** from *Worship Resources*, UCC “Council for American Indian Ministry”

Leader: Everything as it moves, now and then, here and there, makes pauses.

**People:** **The bird as it flies stops on one place to make its nest, and in another to rest in its flight.**

In the same way, God has paused as well.

**The sun, which is so bright and beautiful, is one place where God has paused.**

The moon, the stars, the winds: God has been with them, too.

**The trees, the animals, are all places where God has stopped, leaving the touch of the Holy in all these things.**

We, too, have had God pause in us. We too have the Holy touch in our beings.

**Let us now pause ourselves and listen for the voice of God on our hearts.**

### LITANY OF CREATION’S AGONY

“Creation Will Be Set Free” worship 2/8/90 CSWP & Eco-Justice Task Force Mtg

Reader: “And God saw everything that God had made, and behold, it was very good.”

***People:*** ***In the midst of this web of life, you brought forth the human race, and gave us the stewardship of all creation charging us to till and to keep the garden of life. You made a covenant with Noah, charging all living creatures together to be fruitful and multiply on the earth, and promising not to curse the ground for human sin.***

Reader: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

***People:*** ***But we have turned against you and betrayed your trust, and it is we who threaten the cycles of seedtime and harvest, cold and heat. We poison the shining waters, foul the sparkling air, and strip the living land of trees and topsoil. We destroy habitat for the other creatures we were charged to care for, herd them into torturous confinement, and sacrifice whole species. We have turned against your creation, and we have turned against each other, exploitation and oppressing our human and nonhuman neighbors. We have been blinded by pride in our dominion, and false trust in our own wisdom. Even when we can see our wrong, we have been paralyzed by feelings of helplessness and isolation.***

Reader: “The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.”

***People:*** ***Yet you have not abandoned us. You gave Israel the Law of justice and righteousness for the people and the land, and brought forth prophets and sages to lead the way. Finally you came into the world, incarnate in your Son Jesus, who shared our creaturely nature, bringing us forgiveness, healing, and new life, opening to us and to all creation the way of liberation and peace.***

Reader: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing of the revealing of the children of God; because Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

***People:*** ***We give thanks for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and for the gift of your Holy Spirit who makes us one with Christ, with one another, and with all creation – giving us new life and courage for adventurous faithfulness, leading us to reaffirm our human vocation as stewards who seek a sustainable, sufficient, participatory life in solidarity with all creatures on a thriving earth.***

**CONFESSION OF SIN (UNISON)** based on 1990 Policy Statement Restoring Creation for Ecology & Justice  
**We confess that humanity has desecrated God’s wonderful, ancient, beautiful and good works in creation.**

**We confess that the church has powerful reason for restoring God’s creation. We pray that we may heed the call of the Creator to keep and heal the Creation.**

**We humbly acknowledge that human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life. We pray for wisdom to recognize that humans depend upon the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God ordained at the beginning of Creation.**

**Christ’s command to love of our neighbor, particularly “the least” of these, requires action to stop exploiting the earth’s resources to the detriment of all species of life. Christ’s command compels us to see the links between environmental degradation and the suffering of poor people’s around the world.**

**Help us, O Creator God, so to live and act as to preserve your creation for our children and their children and all who come after.**

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (unison)** (from 1990 GA Policy Statement “Restoring Creation”)  
**The church has powerful reason for engagement in restoring God’s creation: God’s works in creation are too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful and too good to be desecrated. Restoring creation is God’s own work in our time...God our Creator and Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with Him in keeping and healing the creation, both human and non-human. Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life, and the integrity of the life-supporting processes which God has ordained. The love of neighbor, particularly the “least” of Christ’s brothers and sisters, applies to other creatures in our world besides humans. The future of our children, and their children and all who come after us is at stake.**

#### **LITURGY/MEDITATION ON THE LORD’S PRAYER**

*Used as part of the 1996 Commissioning Service for the first RCE’s at Ghost Ranch, NM. It was adapted from the study guide for the nationwide PCUSA study on Sustainable Development, which provided input into the policy statement adopted by the 208<sup>th</sup> GA.*

Reader 1: Our Father, who art in Heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Reader 2: ...What is God’s will for this earth and all its people? ...What would such a world look like? ... How can we as Christians help bring this prayer into reality?

**People: Help us, O Lord, to know and to do your will.**

Reader 1: Give us this day our daily bread.

Reader 2: ...How much food do we need a day? How much meat? How much gasoline, electricity heating, air conditioning? ...How can we help others get bread once a day? Meat once a week? Enough gasoline to drive to work, enough electricity to light the dark night, enough fuel to keep warm in the winter?

**People: Help us, O Lord, to live more simply so that others may simply live.**

Reader 1: Forgive us our sins.

Reader 2: ...In what way does our society hurt others by our demand for affluent lifestyles? ...How might our way of living be considered a sin against God’s will?

**People: Forgive us, O Lord, for the greed that keeps us overfed and overheated, overcooled and overwhelmed, while most people struggle to survive.**

Reader 1: As we forgive those who sin against us.

Reader 2: ...Who has told us that we need all these things? Who has convinced us that greed is a virtue and overindulgence is an admirable habit?

**People: Help us to forgive those who betrayed our trust, who have given us abundant waste instead of abundant life. Help us to distinguish between true values and vanity, so that we might be salt and light in the world once more.**

Reader 1: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Reader 2: ...How can we escape the temptation of always wanting more?

**People: Protect us from our own fears and insecurities that make us selfish and greedy. Turn our pantries of plenty into gifts of life for others.**

Reader 1: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, today as in eternity.

Reader 2: ...How can we use the power of God's love, alive in us, to bring God's kingdom closer for so many who struggle daily just to survive?

**People: Help us, O Lord, to be participants in prayer that all your children may have enough food each day, that your creation may be sustained for future generations and that all people share in the bounty and goodness of life as you intend.**

Reader 1: Your kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven, forever and ever. Amen.

#### **LITANY BASED ON CHIEF SEATTLE'S SPEECH**

Reader 1: Every part of this earth is sacred.

**All: Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore,**

Reader 2: Every mist in the dark woods,

**All: Every clearing and every humming insect is holy.**

Reader 1: The rocky crest, the juices of the meadow, the beasts and all the people,

**All: All belong to the same family.**

Reader 2: Teach your children that the earth is our mother.

**All: Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.**

Reader 1: The water's murmur is the voice of our father's father.

**All: We are part of the earth, and the earth is part of us.**

Reader 2: The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst.

**All: The perfumed flowers are our sisters.**

Reader 1: The air is precious,

**All: For all of us share the same breath.**

Reader 2: This we know, the earth does not belong to us,

**All: We belong to the earth.**

Reader 1: This we know, all things are connected, like the blood which unites one family.

**All: All things are connected.**

Reader 2: Our God is the same God, whose compassion is equal for all.

**All: For we did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it.**

Readers 1 & 2: Whatever we do to the web,

**All: We do to ourselves.**

**CREATION CREED (UNISON)**

**Season of Creation – Uniting Church of Australia**

**We believe that God creates all things,  
renews all things, and celebrates all things.**

**We believe Earth is a sanctuary,  
a sacred planet filled with God’s presence,  
a home for us to share with all creatures.  
We believe every creature joins us in praising God.  
We see many suffer with Earth  
because of human crimes against creation.**

**We believe that God became incarnate  
as a part of Earth, Jesus Christ,  
that he lived and breathed and spoke among us,  
suffered and died on a cross,  
for all human beings and for all creation.  
We believe that the risen Jesus Christ  
fills the whole creation,  
reconciling all things to God, renewing all things.**

**We believe the Spirit renews life in creation,  
groans in empathy with every suffering creature,  
and waits with us for the rebirth of the whole creation.**

**We believe that with Christ we will rise  
and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation,  
reconciled, restored, and renewed.**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER – FROM ARAMAIC** Neil Douglas Klotz, *Prayers of the Cosmos*

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,  
you create all that moves in light.  
O Thou! The Breathing Life of all,  
Creator of the Shimmering Sound that touches us.  
Respiration of all worlds,  
we hear you breathing--in and out-- in silence.  
Source of Sound: in the roar and the whisper,  
in the breeze and the whirlwind, we  
hear your Name.  
Radiant One: You shine within us,  
outside us--even darkness shines--when we remember.  
Name of names, our small identity  
unravels in you, you give it back as a lesson.  
Wordless Action, Silent Potency--  
where ears and eyes awaken, there heaven comes.  
O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos!

**THE ABBA PRAYER (UNISON)**

Dear One, closer to us than our own hearts,  
 farther from us than the most distant star, you are beyond naming.  
 May your powerful presence become obvious  
 not only in the undeniable glory of the sky,  
 but also in the seemingly ordinary and common processes of the earth.  
 Give us what we need, day by day, to keep body and soul together, because, intelligent as you have  
 made us, we still owe our existence to you.  
 We recognize that to be reconciled with you,  
 we must live peaceably and justly with other beings on earth, both human and non-human, putting  
 hate and bitterness and exploitation behind us.  
 We are torn between our faith in your goodness  
 and our awareness of the evil in our history and hearts,  
 Be-spoiling your creation, crushing your cherished children,  
 so deliver us from the temptation to despair.  
 Yours alone is the universe and all its majesty and beauty. So it is. Amen.

**TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYER (unison)**

O Great Spirit  
 Whose voice I hear in the winds,  
 and whose breath gives life to all the world,  
 Hear me! I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.  
 Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes  
 Ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made  
 And my ears sharp to hear your voice.  
 Make me wise so that I may understand the things  
 You have taught my people.  
 Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,  
 But to fight my greatest enemy – myself.  
 Make me always ready to come to you  
 with clean hands and straight eyes.  
 So when life fades, as the fading sunset,  
 My spirit may come to you without shame.

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)** — *from Psalm 19*

Leader: The heavens are telling the glory of God: and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.

**People: Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**

Leader: There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

**People: Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)** — *from Psalm 104: 1, 10-13*

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord, my God, you are very great.

**People: You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
 they flow between the hills,  
 giving drink to every wild animal;**

**the wild asses quench their thirst.**

Leader: By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;  
they sing among the branches.

**People: From your lofty abode you water the mountains;  
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

St. Basil the Great

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom thou gavest the earth as their home in common with us.

We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for thee, and that they love the sweetness of life.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** Julian of Norwich

Be a gardener.

Dig a ditch,

toil and sweat,

and turn the earth upside down

and seek the deepness

and water the plants in time.

Continue this labor

and make sweet floods to run

and noble and abundant fruits

to spring.

Take this food and drink

and carry it to God

as your true worship.

**HISTORIC LESSON** MEISTER ECKHART, 13<sup>TH</sup> C.

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.

Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God.

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature—

Even a caterpillar—

I would never have to prepare a sermon.

So full of God is every creature.

**JOHN MUIR QUOTE**

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

A medical missionary to Labrador in 1909 wrote: *It has not been easy to convey to the Eskimo mind the meaning of the oriental similes of the bible. Thus, the ‘Lamb of God’ had to be translated to kotik or young seal. This animal, with its perfect whiteness as it lies in its cradle of ice, its gentle, helpless nature, and its pathetic innocent eyes, is probably as apt a substitute, however, as nature offers.*



Remembering that the kotiks, or young white baby seals, have been endangered due to overharvesting and loss of habitat, we revisit the ancient prayer of the church, "O Kotik of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, and grant us thy peace." Be assured that God in Christ has taken mercy upon us, the power of sin has been broken, and we are free to abide in God's peace together with all God's creatures. Amen.

### **CONTEMPORARY LESSON "For All My Relations"** George Tinker

*George Tinker, "For All My Relations': Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Christmas Trees" (SOJOURNERS, January 1991), 20. Tinker is a professor at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, an ELCA minister and a member of the Osage and Cherokee Nations.*

"The Lakota and Dakota peoples have a phrase used in all their prayers that aptly illustrates the Native American sense of the centrality of creation. The phrase, Mitakuye oyasin, "For all my relations," functions somewhat like the word "Amen" in European and American Christianity. As such, it is used to end every prayer, and often it is in itself a whole prayer, being the only phrase spoken.

Like most native symbols, Mitakuye oyasin is polyvalent in its meaning. Certainly, one is praying for one's close kin--aunts, cousins, children, grandparents. And "relations" can be understood as tribal members or even all Indian people.

At the same time, the phrase includes all human beings, all two-leggeds as relatives of one another, and the ever-expanding circle does not stop there. Every Lakota who prays this prayer knows that our relatives necessarily include the four-leggeds, the winged, and all the living-moving things on Mother Earth. One Lakota teacher has suggested that a better translation of Mitakuye oyasin would read: "For all the above-me and below-me and around-me things: That is for all my relations."

These examples illustrate the extensive image of interrelatedness and interdependence--symbolized by the circle--and the importance of reciprocity and respect for one another for maintaining the wholeness of the circle."

### **CONTEMPORARY LESSON**

Charles Cummings, EcoSpirituality

All creation is a sacrament, a visible sign of the invisible presence. The sacramentality of the creation comes first of all from the fact that the Creator leaves an imprint on every creature, as an artist leaves something of himself or herself in every work. Each fragrant rose or singing bird, every cell or atom, bears some imprint of the divine creative love that brings it into being. Each individual, essentially related to God by its indelible imprint, exists in the divine presence and mediates the divine presence. This relationship to God gives each being its worth and dignity, its mystery. Because of this relationship, the entire universe and each creature in it can function as a sacrament or sign of God. All creation mediates and expresses something of the mystery of God to those who can read the sign.

### **JOHN MUIR QUOTE**

I drifted on through the midst of this passionate music and motion, across many a glen, from ridge to ridge; often halting in the lee of a rock for shelter, or to gaze and listen. Even when the grand anthem had swelled to its highest pitch, I could distinctly hear the varying tones of individual trees; -- Spruce, and Fir, and Pine, and leafless Oak, -- and even the infinitely gentle rustle of the withered grasses at my feet. Each was expressing itself in its own way, -- singing its own song, and making its own peculiar gestures, -- manifesting a richness of variety to be found in no other forest I have yet seen.

**READING “Our Wonderful World”**SueEllen Campbell, et.al. *The Face of the Earth.**Natural Landscapes, Science, and Culture.* Berkeley. University of California Press, 2011.

Besides being an incredibly beautiful image,

the Pale Blue Dot [photo from space] gives us some perspective on the scale of our world.

What’s more, we all share that same Pale Blue Dot.

And we carry in our bodies the products of an alchemy, forged in stars billions of years ago.

Earth is a special planet.

But that same Earth is changing all the time.

It is dynamic.

It is our home and one that we should treat with reverence, care, and respect.

Especially in the face of the climate crisis.

The more we understand our Earth and its part in the 14 billion-year old cosmos,

the more reason we have to stand in awe and reverence

at the process which lured and shaped its evolution,

our evolution, wherein our existence is rooted...

It streaks through space with the galaxy and with the solar system.

It loops around the sun.

It moves through sunlight, around and around, north to south to north.

It spins, wobbles, and tilts...

This—this wonderful moving kaleidoscope—is earth.

Our world.

And this world invites our endless wonder.

**Litany of Science Wonders (responsive) UCC Science & Faith**

Modern scientific advances open our eyes, filling us with wonder and praise. We look through new windows into the depths of deep space, as well as upon the unexpected intricacies of DNA.

**A new voice is arising, singing an anthem of praise, reverberating throughout creation!**

Science shows us a cosmos that gives birth to stars, galaxies, planets, life, mind, consciousness – we humans are tiny creatures in a vast cosmic sea. Are we alone? What does it mean to be human?

**Genesis describes a God who spoke the universe into existence. Is God still speaking, still creating an ever-unfolding, evolving universe?**

Scripture tells us we are creatures among other created ones, though uniquely crafted in divine image. But as we learn more about our fellow creatures who also communicate, make tools and form strong social bonds, we wonder – is intelligent life limited to human beings?

**We can observe the brain while it prays, or watch as one single cell begin to generate the trillion cells of an adult human being.**

The Psalms tell us we are wonderfully made, knit together by God. But as we develop new medical technologies, such as stem cell research, and reply to complex environmental challenges – will we need to engage new questions, honoring our ancient tradition of valuing both ethics and justice?

**We hunger for an authentic spirituality that is intellectually honest and at home in the scientific era. We seek a new wisdom to live by – scientifically sophisticated, technologically advanced, morally just, ecologically sustainable, and spiritually alive.**

God speaks and the Word becomes flesh, local, in a particular time and place. God is still speaking, and we are joyfully listening!

**CHARGE TO ENGAGE IN MISSION**

Janet Adair Hansen

You are made of stardust. You are God’s brilliant shining creation even more than the stars themselves. Go forth in your awareness of the sacred role God has assigned humanity in this dancing universe, go forth knowing you are the cantors, the singers of the glory of God as is manifest in the heavens. Go forth letting God’s love shine forth brightly from your heart and from your life.

**BLESSING**

Eric Williams, adapted

And, May the blessing of the firm earth be yours.  
May the blessing of the water flow be yours.  
May the blessing of the free air be yours.  
May the blessing of the fierce fire be yours.  
May all of the gifts of this life, below and above,  
Around and within,  
Be with you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**CONTEMPORARY READING from Wendell Berry: (The Journey’s End)**

At any moment, I think, the forest may reveal itself to you in a new way. Some intimate insight, that all you have known has been secretly adding up to, may suddenly open into the clear -- like a grouse, that one moment seemed only part of the forest floor, the next moment rising in flight. Also it may not.

Where I am going I have never been before. And since I have no destination that I know, where I am going is always where I am. When I come to good resting places, I rest. I rest whether I’m tired or not because the places are good. Each one is an arrival. I am where I have been going. At a narrow place in the stream I sit on one side and prop my feet on the other. For a while I content myself to be a bridge. The water of heaven and earth is flowing beneath me. While I rest a piece of the world’s work is continuing here without my help.

**CONTEMPORARY READING from Ed Abbey:**

Leader: We have failed to be good stewards of the earth. Listen to the anguished protest of Edward Abbey from his book, *The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West*:

Junk, trash, rubbish – our lives are debauched, our natural resources squandered, our native land ravaged in this mad production of metal, plastic, glass and paper garbage. Who needs throw-away beer cans? Bottle my beer (and let’s go back to making real beer, by the way; no more of this watery green commercial (stuff) in solid, substantial, amber-colored jugs that fit a man’s hand, that rest solidly on a table and can be washed out and used over again, for (heaven’s) sake., like they do it in Bavaria and Austria, where beer began. Who needs color televisions? It’s bad enough in black and white and wavy stripes. Who needs trail bikes, snow-mobiles, electric razors? Winnebagos, power lawn mowers, Styrofoam packaging, bulk-rate mail? Ballpoint pens, glass office buildings with windows that can’t be opened, tract homes made of green lumber and plasterboard? Condominiums with cardboard walls, polyurethane geodesic igloos, plumbing that doesn’t work, blenders, dishwashers, dryers, plastic picnic plates, electric guitars and Moog synthesizers? Vinylite upholstery, synthetic textiles made from ersatz fibers, sour green oranges and acid-injected tomatoes and hormone-polluted beef shipped from 3,000 miles away, frozen grape juice, incomprehensible income-tax forms, short-life light bulbs, high-powered cabin cruisers on every

pond and stream, spray deodorants, nondairy products, plywood ski hutches in the mountain valleys of Colorado and Utah, four-wheel-drive “recreation” vehicles, snow-making machines, Astrodomes, the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport, aluminum pie plates, Teflon frypans, artificial fruit “drinks”, electric typewriters, all-electric homes, electric chairs, gas chambers, neon billboards, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Los Alamos? The list goes on and on ad infinitum and anyone who wants to can easily make up a list ten times longer than mine.

While the real needs go unsatisfied: good beer, good fresh healthy food for all; homes and apartments for all that are well-made, well-designed, comfortable, durable and handsome; quick easy urban transit systems; good continental passenger train service, air that’s fit to breathe, water that’s fit to drink, food that’s fit to eat, and now and then, when we want it, some space and solitude and silence. Is that too much to ask of a sane and rational political economy? (186-187)

### **PASTORAL PRAYER (RESPONSIVE)**

God, we thank you that your love for all your creatures is so much greater than our indifference, greater than our lack of understanding.

We acknowledge that all of creation belongs to you, O God.

We thank you for the songbirds as they start to return south this autumn, the warblers and thrushes rushing about, hummingbirds filling up on nectar, the loons and geese preparing for their migration, eagles and hawks circling the skies for prey, the herons and sandpipers frequenting the shores, the owls and woodpeckers hiding in the woods.

#### **We acknowledge that all the birds belong to you, O God.**

We thank you for the deer we see along the edge of the roads and trying to eat the last of our summer garden produce, the clusters of turkeys that break cover for the open fields, the coyotes we hear calling over the island at night, the otters in the lakes and our resident otter in Goose Marsh, the moose whose habitat covers so much of this state, and all the animals who share this earth with us.

#### **We acknowledge that all the animals belong to you, O God.**

We thank you for the moths and butterflies who visited us all summer, the bees that play such a vital role in our crops and gardens, the ants who are slowing down in their mound-making, that black fly season doesn’t last any longer than a few weeks, and give thanks for all the insects that help keep soil healthy and pollinate plants.

#### **We acknowledge that all the insects belong to you, O God.**

We thank you God for the bold purple of blooming crocuses, the cathedral-like majesty of pine groves, the perseverance of swamp vegetation, and all the trees and plants that breathe oxygen back into the air.

#### **We acknowledge that all the trees and plants belong to you, O God.**

We thank you for the trout, bass and salmon, which swim in the local lakes, and the cod, mackerel, bluefish and pollock in the Atlantic Ocean.

#### **We acknowledge that all the fish of the oceans, lakes and rivers belong to you, O God.**

**All: Help us, Creator God, to open our eyes to the wonder around us, and grant us a deeper love, respect and appreciation for the diversity of the web of life you have created. Amen.**

**Music**

**Have congregational hymns, choral hymns, Prelude, Postlude music eg. Baba Yetu**

**Can use music video with lyrics like “Blue Boat Home”**

**Hymn “*The Earth Is the Lord’s*”**

*"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."*

*Creation reminds us, O God, of your love.*

*By grace we are learning, as year leads to year,*

*We're called to be stewards, your caretakers here.*

*Your rainforests nurture the world that we share.*

*Your wetlands give animals shelter and care.*

*Your coral reefs cradle the life of the sea.*

*You've shown us, in love, what your good world can be.*

*Too often, O God, we abuse your good earth.*

*We fail to remember its beauty and worth.*

*We take from creation much more than we need,*

*We threaten your world through indifference and greed.*

*May we be good stewards of all that you give,*

*Protecting creation wherever we live.*

*May we be a church that renews and restores*

*And lovingly cares for this earth that is yours.*

Tune: St. Denio, Welsh Folk Hymn

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**Hymn “A Firemist and a Planet” William H. Carruth**

*UUA Singing the Living Tradition #343 tune Aurelia*

1) *A firemist and a planet, a crystal and a cell,  
a starfish and a saurian, and caves where ancients dwelt;  
the sense of law and beauty, a face turned from the sod —  
some call it evolution, and others call it God.*

2) *Haze on the far horizon, the infinite tender sky,  
the ripe, rich tints of cornfields, and wild geese sailing high;  
and over high and lowland, the charm of goldenrod —  
some people call it autumn, and others call it God.*

3) *Like tides on crescent seabeach, when moon's so new and thin,  
into our hearts high yearnings come welling, surging in,  
come from the mystic ocean whose rim no foot has trod —  
some people call it longing, and others call it God.*

4) *A sentry lone and frozen, a mother starved for her brood,  
and Socrates' dread hemlock, and Jesus on the road;  
and millions, who, though nameless, the straight, hard pathway trod —  
some call it consecration, and others call it God.*