

**A SERVICE OF PRAYER
FOR THE
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CARE OF CREATION
SEPTEMBER 1, 2022**

[Note: In both Greek and Hebrew, one word is used to mean breath, or wind, or Spirit (in Greek it is *pneuma*; in Hebrew, *ruach*). Biblical translators have historically chosen one or another of our English meanings when translating from the original languages. I have chosen to use the term “breath-wind-Spirit”, to remind us that the original writers understood God’s spirit to flow through creation in the wind, and to reside in people and animals in our breath.]

CALL TO WORSHIP - Susan

One: The earth is God’s,

Many: And all that is in it.

One: This is the day that God has made;

Many: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

INVOCATION - Susan

Holy One, we read in Scripture that it is your breath-wind-spirit that hovered over the deep as Creation began, and it was your breath-wind-spirit that gave us life. We give you thanks for your breath-wind-spirit within, among, and beyond us today, and every day, and we ask that our prayers might be joined to yours as we pray today for the care of your good Creation. Amen.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - Jane

Isaiah 24:3-6
Common English Bible

³ The earth will be devastated, totally devastated;
it will be destroyed, completely destroyed
because the Lord has said it would be so.

⁴ The earth dries up and wilts;
the world withers and wilts;
the heavens wither away with the earth.

⁵ The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants,
for they have disobeyed instruction,
swept aside law,
and broken the ancient covenant.

⁶ Therefore, a curse devours the earth; its inhabitants suffer for their guilt.
Therefore, the earth’s inhabitants dwindle; very few are left.

A TIME OF LAMENT – Bruce (perhaps open with a brief prayer, allow time for participants to unmute and share their own occasions of lament, then Bruce close the time of lament.)

HYMN

The Climate is Changing

ST. DENIO

I IV V I V I
 The climate is changing! Creation cries out!
 I IV V I V I
 Your people face flooding and fire and drought.
 I V
 We see the great heat waves and storms at their worst.
 V IV V I V I
 We pray for the poor, Lord — for they suffer first.

We pray for the animals here in our midst
 who cannot defend their own right to exist.
 We pray for the mountains and forests and seas
 that bear the harsh footprint of our human greed.

We thank you for people who treasure the earth,
 whose faith has long taught them its beauty and worth.
 We thank you as well for the children and youth
 who look to the future and speak out the truth.

We thank you for leaders, courageous and brave,
 who know that the earth is worth fighting to save,
 who care about justice and what they should do,
 who listen to science and work hard for you.

You love this good earth, and you sent us your Son!
 May we love our neighbors — there's work to be done.
 May we, by your Spirit, do all in our power
 to care for your earth in this critical hour.

Tune: Traditional Welsh hymn, in John Robert's *Caniadau y Cyssegr (Songs of the Sanctuary)*, 1839 ("Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise") ([MIDI](#)) Text: Copyright © 2021 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

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A RESPONSIVE READING FROM THE PSALMS - Mindy Psalm 104:1-15, 19-24, 27-33
 Common English Bible

¹Let my whole being bless the Lord!
 Lord my God, how fantastic you are!
 You are clothed in glory and grandeur!
²**You wear light like a robe;**
you open the skies like a curtain.
³You build your lofty house on the waters;
 you make the clouds your chariot,
 going around on the wings of the wind.
⁴**You make the winds your messengers;**
you make fire and flame your ministers.

⁵ You established the earth on its foundations
so that it will never ever fall.

⁶ **You covered it with the watery deep like a piece of clothing;
the waters were higher than the mountains!**

⁷ But at your rebuke they ran away;
they fled in fear at the sound of your thunder.

⁸ **They flowed over the mountains,
streaming down the valleys
to the place you established for them.**

⁹ You set a boundary they cannot cross
so they'll never again cover the earth.

¹⁰ **You put gushing springs into dry riverbeds.
They flow between the mountains,**

¹¹ **providing water for every wild animal—
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.**

¹² Overhead, the birds in the sky make their home,
chirping loudly in the trees.

¹³ From your lofty house, you water the mountains.
The earth is filled full by the fruit of what you've done.

¹⁴ **You make grass grow for cattle;
you make plants for human farming
in order to get food from the ground,**

¹⁵ **and wine, which cheers people's hearts,
along with oil, which makes the face shine,
and bread, which sustains the human heart...**

¹⁹ God made the moon for the seasons,
and the sun too, which knows when to set.

²⁰ **You bring on the darkness and it is night,
when every forest animal prowls.**

²¹ The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.

²² When the sun rises, they gather together
and lie down in their dens.

²³ **Then people go off to their work,
to do their work until evening.**

²⁴ **Lord, you have done so many things!
You made them all so wisely!
The earth is full of your creations!**

²⁷ ...All your creations wait for you
to give them their food on time.

²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled completely full!

²⁹ **But when you hide your face, they are terrified;
when you take away their breath-wind-spirit,
they die and return to dust.**

**³⁰ When you let loose your breath-wind-spirit, they are created,
and you make the surface of the ground brand-new again.**

³¹ Let the Lord's glory last forever!

Let the Lord rejoice in all he has made!

³² He has only to look at the earth, and it shakes.

God just touches the mountains, and they erupt in smoke.

³³ I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I'm still alive.

A TIME OF PRAISE FOR CREATION – Susan (perhaps open with a brief prayer, allow time for participants to unmute and share their own occasions of praise, then Susan lead into unison prayer)

UNISON PRAYER

Good and generous God, your loving energy flows through all of Creation, charging the atoms with potential and the heavens with light, connecting us to one another, to all life, and to you. We realize that the danger to your creation is not really a problem with technology or industry, but a problem of the human heart, as we see that even thousands of years ago, the prophet Isaiah was challenging your people to live in right relationship to Earth and to one another. We echo the words of the shepherd king, David, who cried out in repentance, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." You have promised many times in your Word that you would give us a new heart—this is the time, O God, when we and all the Earth desperately need for humans to have a heart for your Creation. Create such a heart within us, Great Spirit God, and renew a right spirit within us, that we might serve and preserve your Creation, the creation that you called good. Help us to believe in our capacity to create change—in each of our own lives, and in our communities and nations. And then, grant us the energy, the hope, and the strength to live as people who have been changed by you, and by our trust in you. Amen.

RESPONSIVE CHARGE AND BENEDICTION - Susan

**One: Wherever you go in the world, north, south, east or west,
Mountain or valley, desert or river, city or forest,**

**Go remembering that God calls us to serve and preserve the earth,
and that God's breath, God's wind, God's spirit are within and beyond us always.**

Many: We remember. We go to love and serve God and God's Creation. Amen.

**Liturgy written by the Rev. Dr. Susan Gilbert Zencka and offered to Presbyterians for Earth Care.
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