

EARTH DAY SUNDAY 2002
Protection of God's Creatures
April 21, 2002 (or any Sunday throughout the year)



WORSHIP AIDS

Calls to Worship

*Reader: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and all that dwells therein.*

All: We live in God's world, we are not alone. We share this life with the heavens and the earth, with the waters and the land, with trees and grasses, with fish, birds, and animals, with creatures of every form, and with all our brothers and sisters.

Reader: God saw all that was made, and behold, it was very good.

Or

Reader: Whose World Is It?

All: The world and all that is in it belong to our Creator;
The earth and all who live in it are God's.

Let us worship our God who calls us to cherish God's creation, protect its plants and mammals, reptiles and amphibians, fishes and coral, birds and insects, so that the web of life which sustains us all may flourish and praise our Creator.

Hymns

Celebrating the beauty, mystery and diversity of creation

The Presbyterian Hymnal contains several hymns which lift up God's role as Creator, acknowledge the diversity of life on earth and give thanks for its beauty and mystery. The following are but a few of the hymns you could use:

"All Things Bright and Beautiful"	- 267
"Let All Things Now Living"	- 554
"From All That Dwell Below the Skies"	- 229
"God of the Sparrow"	- 272

“God Created Heaven and Earth” - 290
“O That I Had a Thousand Voices” - 475

Prayers

Leader: Ever Loving God, You created the world as an interconnected web of teeming life. We are grateful for the ways the natural world sustains life, and provides a place and role for all creatures. Help us to love Your creation as much as You do.

Gracious God, thank you for the beauty of other creatures, the delicate flowers bringing springtime glory to mountain meadows, the hawks gliding on air currents, the luminescent colors of tropical fish, the graceful movements of a frolicking whale, the warmth of a puppy or kitten, the pleasure of a young bear sliding down a snow-covered hillside. Help us to understand how much they give you joy.

Let us remember how much of your creation is in peril this Earth Day Sunday. Let us name but a few of them, and lift up their existence in our prayers.

(Members of the congregation, or youth since it is Young Peoples' Sunday, can call out names of endangered or threatened species. You can check the internet for a listing of such species, even by state or country, at eelink.net/EndSpp)

Righteous God, hear our prayer. Hold all these threatened creatures in your care. As we have protected others in the past, help us to see how we can now protect them from extinction, and permit them to live out their role in the ongoing story of your love for Your creation. Amen.

Or

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

People: All of creation belongs to you, O God.

Leader: We thank you for the song of the mockingbird, the chatter of festive parrots as they gossip in the rainforest, the call of the cardinal high in the tree, and all the birds who greet us in the morning.

People: All the birds belong to you, O God.

Leader: We thank you for the roar of the lion, the bugle of the elk, the brilliant color of the red fox, the endearing face of the panda, the acrobatic grace of the gibbon, and all the animals who share this earth with us.

People: All the animals belong to you, O God.

Leader: We thank you for the bold orange of California poppies, the cathedral-like majesty of a redwood grove, the perseverance of a desert cactus, the tenacity of the bristlecone pine, and all the trees and plants that breathe oxygen back into the air.

People: All the trees and plants belong to you, O God.

Leader: We thank you for the beautiful color of the peacock bass, the strength and endurance of the Chinook salmon, the size of the Giant Sea Bass, the darting movement of the Apache trout, and all the fish which swim in the water.

People: 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.

Or

Gracious and Loving God, you created plants and animals, birds and fish, amphibians and insects, and so much more to grace this planet, and bring joy and praise to you. We pause this day to remember the parts of your creation whose presence no longer graces this earth. The Blue Pike of the Great Lakes, the Crescent Nailtail Wallaby, the Heath Hen, the Tasmanian Tiger Wolf, the Spectacled Cormorant, the Steller's Sea Cow, the Passenger Pigeon, the Arabian Gazelle, the Mexican Grizzly Bear, the Crimson Indian Paintbrush, the Hot Chocolate Flower, the Santa Catalina Monkey-Flower, the San Francisco Popcorn Flower to name but a few. Help us to see how our actions can protect the species which remain. Amen.

Benedictions/Blessings

May every living creature abound in peace.
May every being, weak or strong, great or small,
Seen or unseen, far or near,
May all have peace.

(Source: Montreat Peacemaking Conference, 1990)

Or

The earth is precious to God, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. So love it... care for it... and with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children and love... as God loves us all.

(Chief Seattle, 1855)