

Garden of Hope: A Liturgy for the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

Invitation to Worship

(to be read silently)

Creator God,
maker of all things,
including this planet
in which we live,
give us the grace to honor you
by the choices we make to care for the earth
and for all of her inhabitants. Amen.

Invocation: God of All the Earth

(see page 4)

Meditation of Preparation

(to be read silently)

To live, we must daily break the body
and shed the blood of creation.
When we do it knowingly, lovingly,
skillfully, reverently,
it is a sacrament.
When we do it ignorantly,
greedily, destructively,
it is a desecration.
—Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land"

Hymn of Praise

"Morning Has Broken"

(Chalice Hymnal, #53 /

Celebrating Grace hymnal, #27)

Words: Eleanor Farjeon, 1931

Music: Gaelic melody (BUNESSAN)

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 1:28-30

The Stewards' Confession

(see page 3)

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 24:1-6

Special Music

(see page 3 for suggestions)

Reading from the Epistles

Romans 8:18-25

Hymn of Praise

"God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens"

(Chalice Hymnal, #651 /

Celebrating Grace Hymnal, #21)

Words: Catherine Cameron, 1967

Music: William Moore, *Colombian Harmony*, 1825

(HOLY MANNA) K. Lee Scott, 1997, alt.

(NEW PROVIDENCE, alt.)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:13-16



art by Sally Lynn Askins

Prayer to the Creator

(see page 5)

Sermon

(See "Children of the Earth" on page 6.)

Preparation for the Table

When we meet together to break and share bread, where all kneel side by side and receive—as it were—of the same loaf, then we are acting out in miniature what God desires for his creation. It is, in its own small and local way, a fleeting but true foretaste of the longed-for universality

of the Kingdom. Moreover, we are taking the products of the earth and doing with them what is intended; offering them back to their Creator thankfully, and sharing them equally. Each Eucharist, whatever else it may be, is a sign of our desire to redress the balance.

—Michael Mayne, *The Enduring Melody*

Invitation to the Table

Come, then, to the Table of the Lord, and remember God's gifts to us. May we be healed, strengthened and emboldened by these gifts to become the peace of Christ within ourselves,

continued on page 3

The Stewards' Confession

by Sean Sutcliffe & Katie Cook

FIRST READER: God of wonder, you alone are able to fashion a world out of nothing;

PEOPLE: *You gave us the Earth, full of all kinds of creatures, flowering plants and beautiful people.*

SECOND READER: We look at our world, where every day the sun rises in glory and sets in splendor,

PEOPLE: *Where flowers grow wild in the craziest places, where the sky is true blue, and butterflies surprise the landscape with color.*

FIRST READER: You made for us an earth full of beauty and wonder,

PEOPLE: *And we have taken it for granted.*

SECOND READER: We've been unfaithful stewards. We haven't taken care of your gift.

PEOPLE: *Lord, have mercy.*

FIRST READER: What we haven't destroyed, we have hoarded.

PEOPLE: *Lord, have mercy.*

SECOND READER: But we also know that you are a God of grace and second chances,

PEOPLE: *And we know that you still love us, no matter how many times we mess things up.*

SECOND READER: We know that you can help us as we start again, this time to be better stewards,

PEOPLE: *To better nurture the planet you left in our care.*

FIRST READER: We know that you can help us to be better neighbors,

PEOPLE: *To share the bounty of this globe.*

FIRST READER: Together, with your help and with the help of each other

PEOPLE: *We can make this world more like you meant it to be.*

SECOND READER: Show us how. Give us the vision, the strength, the courage, and the love...

PEOPLE: *To be good stewards of your creation.*

FIRST READER: In the name of your Son, who taught us how to love and who fed the hungry crowd,

SECOND READER: In the name of your Son, who spoke to the seas and watched the flowers grow,

PEOPLE: *Amen.*

—This prayer is adapted from a pastoral prayer written for "Earth Sunday" in 1990 as part of the Waco Ministerial Alliance's Earth Sabbath/Earth Sunday, an observance of the 20th anniversary of the original Earth Day. Sean Sutcliffe, a librarian in Waco, TX, was a high school student. Katie Cook was his Sunday-school teacher.



within our own faith community and across the global community to all the Earth and her creatures.

Litany of Promise

ONE: We have faith in One God,
One Source of all life.
MANY: *One Ground of the whole earth,
with all its creatures.*
ONE: And thus we believe
in the goodness of earth's life,
MANY: *In the innate worth
of all its dependents,
and in human partnership with nature.*
ONE: And thus we believe
that in Christ we have been shown
the special role of the human race:
MANY: *To bear God's likeness
in working and caring for the earth,*
ONE: In seeking to understand its mysteries
and powers,
in gently working with these powers
MANY: *For the well-being of all children of the earth.*
ONE: And thus we believe
MANY: *That God's spirit will lead us to sensitivity
and communion with earth's life,*
ONE: To that meek, unselfish and
compassionate lifestyle
by which the earth is inherited in peace,
MANY: *By which its life is transformed
for all creatures to share justly in its bounty.*
ALL: So be it. Amen.

—adapted from “Caring for the Earth,” a responsive reading, Chalice Hymnal #694)

Hymn of Commitment

“God, Who Touches Earth with Beauty”
(Chalice Hymnal, #514)
Words: Mary S. Edgar, 1925, alt.
Music: Carl Harold Lowden, 1925 (GENEVA)

Alternative Tune:
BUTLER, in *The Baptist Hymnal* [1991],
#500 / CCLI Song No. 6111696
Music: Aubrey Lee Butler, b. 1933;
arr. Anna Laura Page, b. 1943

Benediction

(see page 9)

This litany is adapted from “Garden of Hope,” the 2014 Sacred Seasons Hunger Emphasis worship packet. The original liturgy was written by Guilherme Almeida, Katie Cook and Deborah Harris.

Other Suggested Hymns

“For Beauty of Meadows”
(Chalice Hymnal, #696 /
Celebrating Grace hymnal, #666)
Words: Walter H. Farquharson, 1969
Music: Welsh folk melody (ST. DENIO) /
The Sacred Harp, 1844; harm.
Dwayne Davis (EXPRESSION)

“Indescribable”
(CCLI Song #4403076)
Words and Music: Laura Story
and Jesse Reeves

“God In Such Love For Us Lent Us This Planet”
Words: Fred Pratt Green, 1971
© 1982, The Hymn Society
Music: A LA PUERTA,
New Mexican folk song;
adapt. Lee Hastings Bristol, 1961
(Chalice Hymnal, #444)

Alternative Tunes:
MORNING STAR,
James P. Harding
Worship and Rejoice, #37)
JULIAN OF NORWICH,
David A. White, 1991
CCLI Song #1671255)
STEWARDSHIP,
Valerie Anne Ruddle, 1979
(CCLI Song #4817105)

“We Are Not Our Own”
(Chalice Hymnal, #689)
Words: Brian Wren, 1987
Music: Brian Wren, 1987; arr. Fred Graham
(YARNTON)

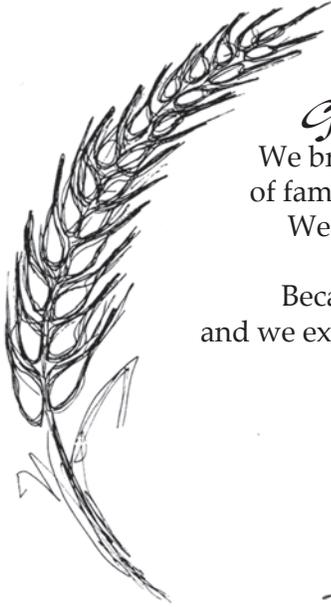
Suggested for special music:

“For the Beauty of the Earth”
Text: F. S. Pierpoint (1835-1917)
Music: John Rutter
SATB with keyboard / HI.HMC550,
Hinshaw Music Inc.

“God Has Work for Us to Do”
Text: Carl P. Daw
Music: Mark A. Miller
SATB with Piano / CGA1288—Choristers Guild

God of All the Earth

by Claire McKeever-Burgett



God of all the earth, God who is the earth,
We breathe in your presence now, in the company of friends,
of family, of new acquaintances and burgeoning relationships.
We see you in the faces of each other, and we thank you.

Because of you, we sense the spirit, we experience the life
and we exude the energy of our fellow worshippers around the globe.

We know and understand the faith
that connects us to people throughout the world
because we seek to know and understand you.

God of all the earth, God who is the earth,
Help us now, in this time and in this place,
to grieve with those who grieve,
to celebrate with those who celebrate,
to laugh with those who laugh,
to question with those who question.

Help us not to fear life but to crave it,
Not to run away from pain but to embrace it,
Not to avoid relationships but to nurture them.
God, teach us that in loving you, in loving each other
and in loving creation we create life and love anew—
we stand directly in the face of fear and doubt
and hatred and violence and cry, “No.”

God of all the earth, God who is the earth,
Empower us to go where you go,
walk where you walk, stand where you stand.
Encourage us to love one another—
regardless of where we are, regardless of who we are,
help us live love, live hope, live peace, live life.

God of all the earth, God who is the earth,
We come to you now, just as we are—
in music, in word, in silence, in song,
in confusion, in despair, in hope and in trust.
You are our connector, you are our friend,
you are our community and our beginning and end.
Alleluia. Thank you. Amen.



—Claire McKeever-Burgett is Program Interpretation Manager for Upper Room Ministries in Nashville, TN, helping to tell The Upper Room's stories in compelling ways. She is an ordained Alliance of Baptists pastor and writes often at www.pastorpoet.com. She served as a Seeds of Hope intern in 2004.

Prayer to the Creator

by Claire McKeever-Burgett

art by Susan Duddy, IBVM

*God of the sky and the sea,
God of the birds and the bunnies,
God of the grass and the greenway,
God of the mountain and the molehill,
God of the tree and the terrain,
God of everything, everywhere,
Help us to see you in the small, minutiae of our day.*

Help us celebrate you as we lie in the grass, as we embrace a tree, as we look above to the vast sky in wonder, awe and reverence.

Help us to know that your care comes mysteriously, your touch comes fruitfully, your presence comes intentionally. Help us to know that you come. In the ways we move and breathe and find our being, we sense your spirit of and within the Earth, and we say thank you.

We breathe in your breath, we sigh in relief, and we begin to rest more comfortably into who we are as we sense who you are, where you are, how you are. Because we can see you in the flowers and the produce and the hills and the valley, we celebrate, today, your earth, your body, your abundance.

God—where your earth is violated, desecrated, destroyed and defamed, give us the strength, the will, the heart to go there, physically, mentally, spiritually and prayerfully to help mend what is broken. Make our hands and feet the bearers of good news, the messengers of beauty, the restorers of peace.

We rest in silence, this morning, as we remember all of the places, all of the animals, all of the birds, all of the creatures, all of the people who live in disarray and fear and exile this morning. As we breathe in and out, in and out, we trust you are present with us all.

Silence

Guide us to places of deeper communion with the Earth. Help us to see you in everything. Hold our hands as we grow more of our own food, as we feed the birds and as we water the plants.

Your love is abundant, your grace is sufficient, your forgiveness is necessary and your hope is inspiring.

We come to you, on this day, Oh God, uttering prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of hope, prayers of restoration, prayers of grief, prayers of peace.

We come to you, now, joining with creation in the groanings of our hearts, minds and bodies as we hope for and plan for new ways of being within this world, this earth, this body that is yours.

May forgiveness be our work. May love be our guide. May grace be our message, and may hope be who you created us to be.

Amen.

—Claire McKeever-Burgett is Program Interpretation Manager for Upper Room Ministries in Nashville, TN, helping to tell The Upper Room's stories in compelling ways. She is an ordained Alliance of Baptists pastor and writes often at www.pastorpoet.com. She served as a Seeds of Hope intern in 2004.

Children of the Earth

A Sermon by Douglas M. Donley

Text: Psalm 24:1-6

This is the fourth week of joint services between University Baptist Church and First Congregational Church in Minneapolis, MN. We have been studying environmental stewardship, focusing our four Sundays together on the topics of air, fire, water and earth.

There can be no peace until we learn how to share land with equity and with a hope toward future sustainable peace.

As we look at these four topics, let us examine the elements of the medicine wheel, as described by the teachings of First Nations leaders.

The wheel has four quadrants, each representing a color, an element, a season, a life-stage. The North represents the element of air. It is symbolized by the color white. It is associated with the elders, the winter season, the mind.

The East represents fire. Its color is yellow. It represents spring, birth and the body. The South represents water and the summer season, with the joy and excitement of youth. Its color is red, the color of the Spirit.

Finally, we have the West, representing earth. Its color is black, the fulfillment of all other colors combined. Its season is the earthy fall, representing adulthood and the heart. In the heart lies the earth.

All of these elements, ages, seasons, colors and

aspects of our beings need to be in balance in order for us to be whole.

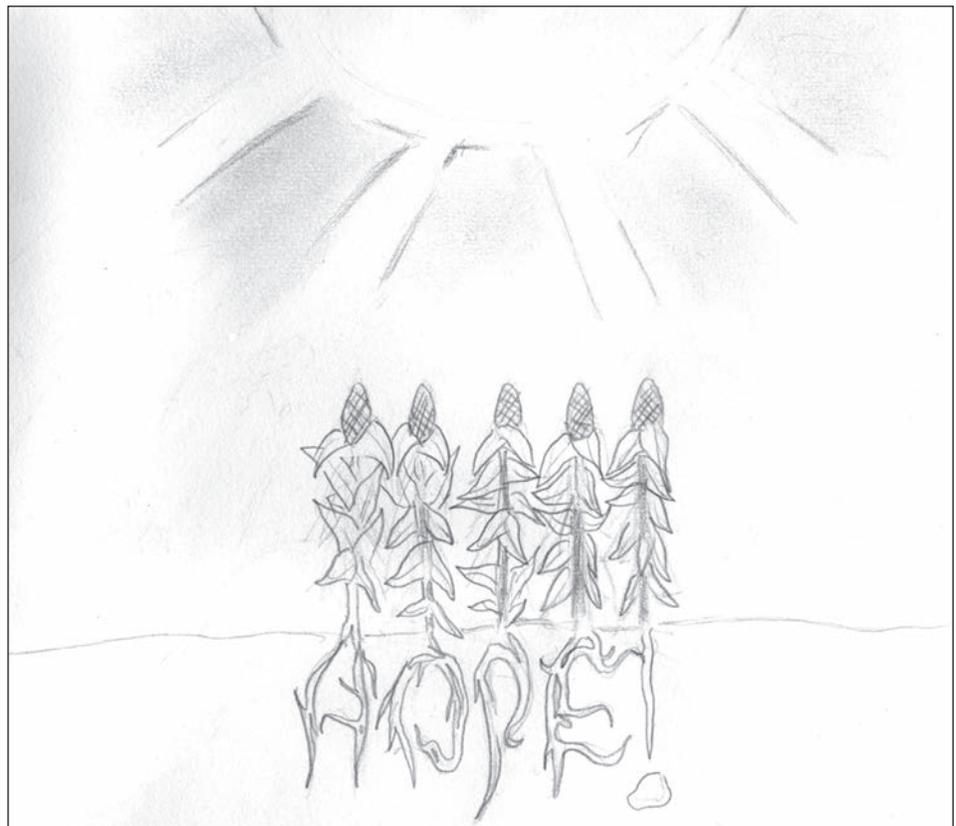
Maybe the reason we chose to focus on these elements now is because we know that we have become somehow out of balance. And we recognize that a part of our work as Christians is to bring our part of the world back into balance.

In Ojibwe, the Gospel verse in John 3:16 says that that God so love the *land*. This is different from what we usually say: God so love the *world*. The land is what God loved. The earth.

Land is at the heart of the Israel/Palestine war. They are at a bomb-laden stalemate because each group wants the same land, which both groups see as holy and God-given.

There can be no peace until we learn how to share land with equity and with a hope toward future sustainable peace.

art by Jesse Manning



“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” says the psalmist in today’s text. What have we done with this earth that God has made?

Long before the North American continent was split up to become the United States, Canada and Mexico, it was inhabited by proud nations who, for thousands of years, had referred to the land as “Turtle Island.” As the First Nations people will tell us, all over Turtle Island, the land cries out.

This is about more than changing the kind of light bulbs we buy. It’s about challenging the system that degrades our earth and keeps us dependent on Mammon and fossil fuels.

In Canada, we have the tar sands—a cash cow for certain industrialists, but an earth-scorching and burning death zone for the land.

In Minnesota, we have hydraulic fracking, which extracts natural gas from fissures in rocks deep underground by pumping chemical-laden water into the porous subterranean rocks. Is the natural gas worth the earthquakes, the groundwater pollution?

North Dakota is Ground Zero for oil production, and the oil comes right through the Twin Cities, where you and I are today, on old train cars prone to leaking and explosions.

Pesticides flow off our farmland and into our aquifers, poisoning bees and aquatic life. All of these things are putting the world out of balance.

As someone said recently, this is about more than changing the kind of light bulbs we buy. It’s about challenging the system that degrades our earth and keeps us dependent on Mammon and fossil fuels.

I have a clergy friend who has gotten rid of his car and has decided to ride his bike everywhere he can and rely on friends and public transportation for the rest. Steve Lee has commuted from Maple Grove by bicycle at least once per month for 40 months in a row—and counting. Even I rode my bike to church this morning. It felt good.

The biblical creation stories accentuate our connection with the earth. The very first person was named Adam, a derivation of *Adamah*, meaning “earth.” *Adam* means “earth-creature.” We are

children of Adam, children of the earth, beautifully connected with the elements.

I recently participated in a soil ritual in which people were invited to bring a little bit of soil from their various homes to an international meeting and bring it forward, pouring it together into a ritual urn. The organizers of this meeting will plant and grow something in this urn during the coming year.

People brought soil from their gardens and their beaches, and they mingled them with words of hope, of longing, of dreams. There was Arizona dry soil; Toronto, ON, clay; Minnesota sandy loam; Cuban tobacco soil; soil from a Florida retirement home; soil from an Austin, TX, church yard; from a community garden in Rochester, NY; from the Adirondacks; from Vancouver, BC; from the mountains of Chiapas in Mexico; from a memory garden in Pittsburg; from a Karen¹ youth farm in Louisville, KY, where these refugees now live.

We shared these stories while someone played the Ash Grove² on piano. We are all Adam, children of Adamah, connected and responsible for this creation and for each other. And yet, we act like we are Lone Rangers and that we have a right to do and get and use what we please without any thought to how it affects the earth, her creatures, or even other people.

Environmental degradation, warfare and poverty are all part of a sinful pathology that sees us as separate beings. Salvation is never just about our own personal, individual salvation; it’s about the salvation of us all. It’s about saving the world and being a part of the solution.

Think about the prayers that we sometimes use to open worship services. We call it an *invocation*. We say we are invoking God’s presence in worship, which perpetuates the illusion that God is “out there” and “other.” Maybe we ought to be invoking ourselves to awaken to God’s presence, which is always with us.

Maybe we can pray something like what Rabbi Harold Kushner said:

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect. Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken. Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color. Let

the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness, so that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors. Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty. And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.

My friends, we are children of the earth. We are responsible. The earth is God's, and the fullness thereof. We are God's. Therefore, care for the earth, your mother, your caretaker, your heart.

Tread on the earth lightly. Preserve it for the next generation. Nurture peace in the land. Respect all living things. Live in balance. Air, fire, water, earth—they are all God's gifts to us. Treat them as you would treat God. Treat other people as you would treat God. Live in balance, so that you and your children can live in beauty and joy.

Howard Thurman, a Baptist writer and minister, wrote: "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

Come alive, my friends. Nurture the Spirit at the heart of Adam, the earth-creature. For the earth is not only God's. It is God.

Let me close with a song by Pete Seeger (see the lyrics on this page). It's probably the last song that he wrote before his death. It merits learning and singing.

—Doug Donley is the pastor of University Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, and a frequent contributor to Sacred Seasons.

Endnotes

1. The Karen are an ethnic group from Burma/ Myanmar who have been consistently persecuted in their own country. Many of the Karen, who fled from the violence in Burma, have resettled in the United States.

2. This is a traditional Welsh folk song that has been paired with numerous sets of lyrics, including "Let All Things Now Living" and "Sent Forth by God's Blessing."



God's counting on me, God's counting on you

by Pete Seeger & Lorre Wyatt

When we look and we can see

things are not what they should be

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus:

Hope and we'll all pull through,

Hope and we'll all pull through,

Hope and we'll all pull through, me and you.

It's time to turn things around, trickle up not trickle down

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus

And when drill, baby, drill turns to spill, baby, spill

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus

Many wrong turns we have made, change the course, don't be afraid

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus

When we sing with younger folk, we will never give up hope

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus

Don't give up, don't give in, workin' together we all can win

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus

When we do the work of peace, we can see God's love increase

God's counting on me, God's counting on you (2x)

Chorus (2x)

art by Susan Daily, IBVM

Benediction

by Katie Cook

Let us go now from this place,

remembering that our Creator God
called us to nurture this planet.

Let us go now from this place,
remembering that Jesus Christ
called us to care for our neighbors.

Let us go now from this place,
clothing ourselves with love
for all creation,
for all people

and for the tasks set before us.

Let us go and be tenders of the Earth
healers of the nations,
sowers of new seeds
and harvesters of new abundance.

Let us build up the ancient ruins,
repair the ruined cities
and bring comfort to those who mourn.

May God's will be done here, where we live;
may impossible things come to pass.

May we find strength in the journey
and joy in the struggle,
through the grace of God,

Amen.