

Land Sunday **(United States Version 1)**

The Second Sunday in A Season of Creation

This Sunday we worship with the land, the soil, and the land creatures.

Ideally this would take place out of doors in a garden, a field, or a park. Land and soil can be experienced within a church building by placing living plants, vines, grasses and soils at key points throughout the church, including the sanctuary.

At the center of the sanctuary, a large terracotta bowl filled with soil may be placed to represent the land. A large candle burns in the bowl.

Invocation

Leader In the name of the Creator, the fountain of life,
the name of Christ, the pulse of life,
and the name of the Spirit, the breath of life. Amen.

People **Holy! Holy! Holy!**
Earth is filled with God's presence.

L Christ, we come into your presence
to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,
P **a planet pulsating with your presence,**
a presence quivering in the forests,
a presence vibrating in the land,
a presence pulsating in the wilderness,
a presence shimmering in the rivers.

L God, reveal yourself to us in this place,
and show us your face in all creation.

P. **Holy! Holy! Holy!**
The whole Earth is filled with your glory.

Invocation/Call to Worship

(Leaders may call creation to worship from different points in the place of worship.)

L We invite the land to worship with us:

P **wildflowers and mysterious mushrooms,**
swirling grasses and goldenrods.

L We invite the farmlands to sing with us:

P **wheat fields, orchards, and vineyards,**
hay fields, gardens, and wetlands.

L We join with all the fauna of the fields in praising God:

P **horses, sheep, and cattle,**
grass snakes and grasshoppers, eagles and crows.

L We invite the ground to stir deep below:

P **life-giving microbes restoring the soil,
beetles and worms preparing our food.**

L We celebrate the song of the soil!

P **Sing, soil, sing!**

Procession and Song

(The children enter the church with grasses and soils, along with banners and symbols of the land. They place these symbols around the Earth bowl in the sanctuary, kneel, and run their fingers through the soil in the bowl.)

Refrain, Reflection

(After each verse of the refrain we pause to reflect on God's presence in creation, especially in the land. These interludes may include soft music, silence, or sounds of the land/countryside.)

Be still and feel the presence of God,
the presence pulsing, pulsing through Earth,
be still and feel the pulse of God.

(Interlude)

Be still and hear the Spirit of God,
the Spirit breathing, breathing through Earth,
be still and hear the breath of God.

(Interlude)

Be still, behold the glory of God,
the glory filling, filling this Earth,
be still, behold the face of God.

Melody: 'Be Still and Know That I Am God'
Words: Norman C Habel

Confession

(A small piece of rosemary, a sprig of holly, a leaf, or some other plant is given to each worshipper as an aid to remember.)

L As we take this in our hands,
we remember and confess:

**P. We remember the dry land
that rose from waters in the beginning,
the plants that emerged from the soil
to cover the land with vegetation,
and the rich diversity of animal life.
We remember the gardens
and the fields of our childhood,
the places where we played in the sand,
when we felt close to the ground,
to magic flowers, and to baby animals.**

L Jesus Christ, once buried in Earth, hear our cry:

**P We regret that we have become alienated from Earth,
and treated this garden planet
as a beast to be tamed,
as a domain to be dominated,
and as a place to be ruled for our gain.**

L We remember and confess how we have violated and polluted the lands of our
garden planet.

*(Large bleached bones may be paraded around the sanctuary and then deposited
on the soil in the Earth bowl.)*

P. We are sorry.
We have killed living soils with chemicals,
we have turned fertile fields into lifeless plains,
we have cleared rich lands of wildlife.
We are sorry. We are sorry.

Absolution

L Christ hears your confession from the tomb,
forgives your sins against the land,
and calls you now to open your ears and your hearts
to protect rather than to destroy our soils,
soils that God has filled with life and love.

**P Christ, teach us to love Earth as our home
and to know all living creatures as our kin.
Help us to return home to Earth.**

L. I speak for Christ:
I invite you to come home to Earth,
and I call you to tend this planet with love,
to nurture the land as I have nurtured you,
and to join me in healing creation.

**P Shalom! Shalom!
We are coming home!**

L As we come home to Earth,

P Christ, have mercy.

L As we seek to love our home,

P Christ, have mercy.

L As we seek to care for our kin,

P Christ, have mercy.

Gloria in Excelsis/Glory to God

L Glory to God in the highest!

P And on Earth peace with our kin in creation!

Hymn of Praise

Collect/Prayer for the Day

P. God, our Creator, whose glory fills all things, help us to discern your presence among us and our kin in creation, especially in the soil, in the fields, and on the land. Help us to empathize with your creatures who are suffering and to serve you as agents for healing the land. In the name of Christ, who reconciles and restores all things in creation. Amen.

Readings for the Second Sunday in Creation

Old Testament Genesis 3:14–19; 4:8–16 “Earth bears the curse for us”
Because of the sin of our primal parents, God pronounced some curses. The ground of Earth bears the curse for humans, and from the ground Abel’s blood cries to God. At their death, Earth welcomes humans home again.

Psalm Psalm 139:7–10 “God is present in all of Earth”
The Spirit of God is present throughout creation, from the heights of space to the depths of the ocean.

Epistle Romans 5:12–17 “The second Adam comes to Earth”
Christ is the second Adam who came to overcome the sin and death caused by Adam, including the curse imposed on Earth.

Gospel Matthew 12:38–40 “Jesus in the heart of Earth”
In death, Jesus too is connected with the ground. He was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Sermon

Creation Creed

**P. 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.**

Offertory

Offering Prayer

- L. God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our thanksgiving and as a sign of our concern for those in need, including all our fellow creatures on planet Earth.
- P. **With all creation, we bless our Creator.**

Prayers of the People

Creation Prayer

**Jesus Christ, teach us to empathize with Earth.
Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation,
cries for justice from the hills and the trees.
Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit,
groans from the deserts, the plains, and the winds.
Jesus Christ, make our souls sensitive to the call of our kin,**

species in pain calling from land, sea, and air.
Jesus Christ, teach us to care. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

The Great Thanksgiving

L The Creator be with you and all creation.

P And also with you.

L Open your hearts.

P We open them to our Creator.

L Let us give thanks to the Maker of heaven and earth.

P It is right to join every creature in praising God.

L It is right to give you thanks, loving Creator.
Your word is the impulse for all things to be,
for space, stars, and stardust to appear,
for Earth to emerge from the deep,
for life to be born of Earth,
and for humans to be born of Earth and the Spirit.

You chose human beings
to be your servants on Earth,
to care for our garden home;
you suffered when they desecrated
the Earth and its waters and lands.

Your Spirit was the life impulse in all things,
Restoring the broken and healing the wounded,
groaning in anticipation of a new creation,
stirring with new life born of water and the Spirit.

You chose to be born a human being,
to become a part of Earth,
to suffer, die, and rise from the dead
to redeem humankind, restore creation,

and reconcile all born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your presence is the living power in all things,
the Christ deep among us,
filling Earth—land, sea and air;
filling every element and place;
filling the grain and the grape
we share with you this day.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
saints and sinners,
ancient voices in the forest,
high voices from the sky, deep voices from the sea,
and the whole company of creation,
we proclaim your presence among us.

**P Holy, holy, holy, God of all life,
earth and sea and sky
and all things that exist
are full of your presence
and glorify your name. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution, followed by this Invitation

In response to the great mystery of this sacred meal we proclaim our faith:

**P Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

**C Come, for all things are now ready.
Come to the table with all your kin
and share with all in need:
the gift of healing for those in pain,
the gift of forgiveness for those in sin,
the gift of assurance for those in doubt,
and the gift of hope for those in tears.**

**P May we who share these gifts, share Christ with one another
and with all our kin.**

Hymn/Lamb of God

- P. Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against God,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away all sin against Earth,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away all sin from the world,
receive our prayer.**

Distribution (with Song)

Dismissal Blessing

- L** Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds and through you to bring healing to Earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Candles for our Kin

(As worshippers return from the Eucharist they are invited to place a candle in a sand-filled candle stand in memory of one of their kin in the land who has become extinct in recent years.)

Thanksgiving

- P** We thank you, Christ, for the meal we have celebrated with you and we pray that through your body and blood we may be healed and become agents of healing for Earth. Amen.

Commission

- L** Christ calls you to be his disciples,
to serve him with love and compassion,
to serve Earth by caring for creation,
honoring the land that God has made alive

so that we and all our kin may live.

P **We follow our Lord, the crucified Christ,
we will listen for cries of injustice from Earth,
we will groan with a creation burdened by our sin.**

**We will follow our Lord, the risen Christ,
we will be partners with Christ in healing our planet,
we will join the Wounded Healer as he restores all things.**

**We will care for creation.
We will nurture the forests.
We will love our kin.
We will celebrate life.**

Blessing

L **May the God who is above all and through all and in all
fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth,
the pulsing of Christ through Earth,
and the dream of the Spirit
that all will be reconciled, renewed and restored,
through Christ, our wounded healer.**

Dismissal

L **Go in peace, serving Christ.**

P **We go in peace,
serving Christ and loving the Earth.**

Recession Hymn

(As the children recess from the church with ferns and trees and plants, the land joins us in thanking God.)