

Mountain Sunday

Introduction

Mountain Sunday celebrates the all the mountains on our planet, near our homes and beneath the ocean. This domain includes the various creatures that inhabit the mountains, especially the wild worlds and strange life-forms that fascinate us and that celebrate life with us. Mountains are not domains to be conquered, but to be enjoyed, preserved, and explored as wondrous worlds of creation.

Setting

Central to this liturgy is a sense of being on a mountain, as well as celebrating with mountains and mountain creatures. As we enter the church or the sanctuary it is helpful if worshippers can have a sense of being in or on a mountain. Images of mountains can be projected onto screens.

Special Focus

A special focus for this service is a ‘mountain top experience.’ We enter into God’s presence in a holy mountain. Like Zion or Sinai, it is the mountain of God. In the second half of the liturgy we hear voices from sacred mountains that call us into God’s presence. We climb these mountains in the imagination of our faith. Finally, we hear the voice of Christ inviting us to feast on the mountain of God. God is present on that mountain in Christ’s body and blood. The melody for the song, ***Be Still and Feel the Presence of God***, is found in *Habel Hymns: Volume 1*.

Themes

In our call to worship, we invite all the domains of the mountains to worship with us. In our confession, we recall how we have polluted the wildlife in the mountains. In the readings, we become aware of God’s presence revealed on a mountain—on Horeb, Zion and Calvary. We also discover that our mission is not only to preach the Gospel to all peoples, but also to all creation! We celebrate the Lord’s Supper with Christ on a mountain top. We anticipate that we will have a sense of God’s presence in the mountain of God as the climax to this *Season of Creation*.

Optional Liturgies

Song of the Sanctuary found in *Seven Songs of Creation* published by Pilgrim Press (2004) may also be adapted, recognizing that the sanctuary of God’s presence is especially evident in sacred mountains on Earth.

*Final Sunday in the Season of Creation
(United States Version 1)*

Mountain Sunday

We worship with creation in the mountains



*“The mountains and the hills before you
will burst into song” Isaiah 55:12*

MOUNTAIN SUNDAY

Welcome!

We worship this Sunday with the mountains. We sing with the rocks and hills. We enjoy the wonders of the wild. We connect with the mystery of the mountains through majestic rocks that grace our sanctuary. We celebrate in the mountain of God. We receive a symbol as we enter for worship.

Gathering

Leader In the name of God, who creates mountains,
in the name of Christ, crucified on a mountain,
and in the name of the Spirit, deep in the mountains. Amen.

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

L Christ, as we come to into this sanctuary today,
we enter the holy mountain of God.

P **Holy! Holy! Holy!**
This mountain is filled with your presence.

Procession and Song

We join in songs with the children as they enter the church holding symbols of the wild in the mountains—such as strange rocks, gems, and banners depicting wild creatures such as eagles and ants. They place these symbols around the rock/mountain in the sanctuary. We rejoice as children light candles and place them on the mountain.

Call to Worship

We celebrate with creation as worship leaders. From different points in the church, we call the mountains and the creatures of the mountains to worship with us.

L1 We invite the mountains to worship with us:

P **mighty boulders and deep forests,
sliding glaciers and swirling snow.**

L2 We invite the wildlife to join us in wonder:

P gliding eagles and graceful cougars,
mysterious moths and magic mushrooms.

L3 We join with the mountain creatures in praising God:

P leaping trout and crawling creatures,
exotic orchids and honey bees.

L1 We call the depths of the mountains to celebrate:

P precious gems and sparkling stones,
volcanic lava and rich red ore.

L2 We enter the mountain of God today:

P and we worship in God's presence,
a sacred place on our planet.

L3 We celebrate the song of the mountain!

P Sing! Mountain! Sing!

L1 We invite you to name mountain creatures
to join us in worship:

We name, silently or aloud, other creatures or mountain formations, and we invite them to join us in praising our Creator.

L We celebrate the song of the mountain!

P Sing! Mountain! Sing!

Remembering

We use rocks, leaves, or some other symbol to assist us to stir our memories and connect with the mountains of creations.

L Take the symbol you received at the door, rub it between your fingers, and share with the person next to you a special memory of a mountain that stirred your soul.

L We remember the mountains where God chose
to reveal a special presence,
Mount Sinai and Mount Zion,
a presence that also fills our planet.

P We remember our excitement as a child
climbing a peak and viewing creation,
wonders that extended almost forever

**and fascinating creatures around us,
the mysteries of God's wild world.**

L We remember and rejoice.

**P Thank you, God, for mountains to remember,
wild worlds to make us wonder.**

Confession

L As we hold this symbol aloft,
we remember and confess
that we have become alienated from Earth
and we have viewed mountains as little more than tourist spots,
hills as places for mining,
or wild beasts as creatures to be tamed.

*Some waste (tailings) from mountain mines that have polluted the
regions and rivers around mines may be deposited in water below a
set of rocks representing a mountain.*

**P We are sorry.
We have polluted rivers with waste from mountain mines.
We have turned the wonders of the wild into a commodity.
We have killed creatures in the wild with chemicals.
We are sorry. We are sorry.**

L We are sorry.

P We are sorry. We are sorry.

Absolution

L Christ hears your confession from
Mount Calvary
and forgives your sins against the wild.

**P Christ, teach us to love Earth as our home
and mountains as gifts for wonder.**

L. I speak for Christ:
I invite you to come home to Earth
and to love the mountains.

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

Christ Have Mercy

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.

Glory to God

L Glory to God in the highest!

P And on Earth peace with our kin in creation!

Prayer for the Day

P God, our Creator, as we descend from the mountains, we celebrate the wonders of the wild that surround us. Help us to see in the surrounding landscape the places where the planet has been polluted and to empathize with the groaning of creation beneath us. Teach us to recognize that the hills are alive with your Spirit and to rejoice with all our kin, especially the creatures of the wild. In the name of Christ who reconciles and renews all things in creation. Amen.

Readings for Mountain Sunday

Old Testament: Isaiah 65:17-25 ‘Good News from a Holy Mountain’

The prophet dreams of Mount Zion being transformed into a ‘peace mountain,’ a world where humans and animals live in harmony.

Psalms: Ps. 48:1-11 ‘Mount Zion, God’s holy mountain’

The Psalmist hails Mount Zion, the ‘city of God’ that rejoices in God’s presence.

Epistle: Romans 8:28-39 ‘No separation from God’s love’

In no way does creation separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Gospel: Mark 16:14-18 ‘Good news for all creation’

Our mission is to ‘go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.’

Children’s Address:

Prayer: Thank you God for rocks and mountains that are the bones of our planet.

Affirmation of Faith

L Let us affirm our faith together.

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

Men We believe Earth is a sanctuary,
a sacred planet filled with God's presence,
a home for us to share with our kin.

Women We believe that God became flesh and blood,
became a part of Earth,
a human being called Jesus Christ,
who lived and breathed and spoke among us,
suffered and died on a cross,
for all human beings and for all creation.

Men We believe that the risen Jesus
is the Christ at the core of creation
reconciling all things to God,
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

Women We believe the Spirit renews life in creation
groans in empathy with a suffering creation,
and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

Together We believe that with Christ we will rise
and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.

Passing of the Peace

L Let us share the peace of the Lord with one another.

P The peace of the Lord be with you

Song

Sermon or Reflection

Song

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 deep thanks and our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.

P. **With all creation, we bless our Creator.**

Prayers of the People

We thank God for a wondrous creation. We celebrate with all our kin. We pray for all those in need. We name them now. We close with the following prayer.

Meal on the Mountain

(Background mountain music)

Voice 1 I hear a voice from Mount Zion, the sacred mountain,
calling, calling.

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 2 *(from a high point in the church)*

Come up to me.
Come into my presence.
Come into my mountain.

Voice 1 Who is calling?
Who is calling from the mountain?

Voice 2 This is the mountain of God,
where Peter stood with Jesus.
You are all invited.

Voice 1 And I heard the voice of Peter say:

Voice 2 It is good, Lord, for us to be here.
It is good to be on the mountain with you.

Voice 1 I heard a another voice cry from the mountain
the high mountain of God,

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 2 Come up the mountain as Moses did,
enter my presence today.
Don't be afraid!

(Choral refrain or sounds from a mountain)

*Choral Refrain (softly):
Be still and feel the presence of God,
The presence pulsing, filling this place,
Be still and feel the pulse of God.*

Voice 1 I heard a voice from the mountain of God
calling as God did to Elijah long ago,

Voice 2 I am present today,
not in the storm or the earthquake
but is the silence, the soft voices of the mountain.
I am waiting for you.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the silence of God,
The Spirit breathing, breathing through Earth,
Be still and feel the breath of God.*

Voice 1 And I heard a voice call from the mountain,
a voice in pain:

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 3 I thirst! I thirst! *(Pause)*
Father into your hands I commend my spirit.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the anguish of Christ,
His spirit pulsing, pulsing through Earth,
Be still, behold the death of God.*

(Brief silence)

Voice 1 In the silence of the dawn
I heard again a voice from the mountain,

Voice 3 Come to the feast on my mountain!
Come dine with your risen Lord!

Voice 1 And I heard the voice repeat
the words of the Last Supper:

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 3 Take and eat, this is my body
which is given for you.

Take and drink, this cup is the new covenant
in my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin.

Come eat and drink it with me.

Voice 1 Then I heard Peter and all the disciples say,

Voice 2-3 It is good for us to be here at your table.

(Call from a flute or other instrument)

Voice 1 And I heard Jesus repeat his invitation
from the presence of God:

Voice 3 You are all invited to this holy place,
all peoples and all creatures.
Put aside your differences and be one
as you eat and drink with me.

Come one. Come all!
For the feast is prepared in the presence of God,
the mountain of God.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the presence of God,
The presence pulsing, pulsing, from Christ.
Be still and taste the bread of life.*

Prayer before Meal

**Jesus Christ, our host,
we join you on your mountain today.
Surround us with your light.
Stir us with your voice.
Heal us with your touch.
Fill us with you love.
Dine with us, today.
Refresh us with your blessing
in the bread and the wine.
Amen.**

Distribution

Distribution Songs

Thanksgiving

L Let us give thanks for this meal on the mountain.

P *We thank you Christ, for inviting us to join you with God on the mountain.
We pray that through your body and blood we may be healed and become
agents of healing for Earth. Amen.*

Sending Out

L Christ calls you to be his disciples,
to come down the mountain and serve him
by caring for creation,
especially the mountains,
where we celebrate God's presence with our kin.

Hold again the symbol in your hands.
Will you care for creation?

P **We will care for creation!
We will rejoice in the mountains.
We will celebrate God's presence!**

Blessing

L May the Spirit of God blowing from the mountains,
fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth
and the knowledge of Christ within you.

Go in peace!
Serving Christ and loving Earth!

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

Recession and Song

<p><i>We join the children in song as they process from the church. We cry with the prophet: 'The mountains and hills will burst forth in song before you' Isaiah 55.12.</i></p>
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