

THE PRAYERS OF CREATION: AN EARTH DAY LITANY

For this litany you will need one leader and four readers. The congregation reads the sections marked "all". In the times of silence you can invite the congregation to contemplate how they would pray if they were the earth, water, animals, or people. Psalm 104 taken from "*The Message*"

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great.

All: God, my God, how great you are!
beautifully, gloriously robed,
Dressed up in sunshine,
and all heaven stretched out for your tent.
You built your palace on the ocean deeps,
made a chariot out of clouds and took off on
wind-wings.
You commandeered winds as messengers,
appointed fire and flame as ambassadors.
You set earth on a firm foundation
so that nothing can shake it, ever.

1 minute of Silence

Reader 1: Prayer from the earth

Creator of the cosmos, how marvellous are Your works! You made me unique among the planets of the Milky Way. From the fabric of the heavens You brought forth oceans of life-giving waters and soils for great green growing things. I laughed with joy as whales and wildebeests, bees and bears, salmon and sparrows leaped into being. You breathed and humans sprang up from the humus. You looked at it all, and said, "It is so good!" To the humans you said, "I give this to you to care for. Take, and eat!" So the humans took.... And they took and they took and they took! Now my body is beaten, oil like blood oozes, and fires flame in wilderness. Hosea cried out in my defence saying, "the earth itself becomes sick!" but still the humans do not listen...

How long, oh Lord, will they ignore my groans? I wait, breathless with exhaustion and anticipation for the children of God to be revealed. Restore and renew me, Creator, that all my inhabitants might sing your praises with one voice.

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great.

**All: You blanketed earth with ocean,
covered the mountains with deep waters;
Then you roared and the water ran away—
your thunder crash put it to flight.
Mountains pushed up, valleys spread out
in the places you assigned them.
You set boundaries between earth and sea;
never again will earth be flooded.
You started the springs and rivers,
sent them flowing among the hills.
All the wild animals now drink their fill,
wild donkeys quench their thirst.
Along the riverbanks the birds build nests,
ravens make their voices heard.
You water the mountains from your heavenly
cisterns;
earth is supplied with plenty of water.**

1 minute of Silence

Reader 2: Prayer from water

Holy Wellspring, you are the Source of all being and an overflowing ocean of love. From the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, to the peaks of the Himalayan glaciers, the waters of the world praise You! We praise you for the ability to purify, quench, clean, and bring about renewal and transformation. We mourn the fact that many in this world do not have access to us for a clean drink or even to splash about and play. We lament that so often we are an excuse for violence, conflict and even death. Aquifer of love, let your justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Make the deserts into ponds, and dry land into cascades. Let those who are thirsty come!

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great.

**All: You make grass grow for the livestock,
hay for the animals that plow the ground.
Oh yes, God brings grain from the land,
wine to make people happy,
Their faces glowing with health,
a people well-fed and hearty.
God's trees are well-watered—
the Lebanon cedars he planted.
Birds build their nests in those trees;**

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look—the stork at home in the treetop.
Mountain goats climb about the cliffs;
badgers burrow among the rocks.
The moon keeps track of the seasons,
the sun is in charge of each day.
When it's dark and night takes over,
all the forest creatures come out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
clamoring to God for their supper.
When the sun comes up, they vanish,
lazily stretched out in their dens.
Meanwhile, men and women go out to work,
busy at their jobs until evening.

1 minute of Silence

Reader 3: Prayer from the animals

Creator of Creatures, blessed be your name. We, the congregation of animals, praise you for the furred and feathered, the scaled and slippery, all manner of beast on earth, in the sky and under the water. We thank you for giving each of us a home where we would thrive. We mourn together for our sisters and brothers, the Spix Macaw, the Northern White Rhino and others who, because of human greed and indifference, will never look upon this earth again. We believe the Psalmist who declares, You save humans and animals alike, great Lamb of God. Gather us under your wings like a mother hen. Praise be to you, who sustains and restores us.

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.
O LORD my God, you are very great.

All: What a wildly wonderful world, GOD!
You made it all, with Wisdom at your side,
made earth overflow with your wonderful
creations.

Oh, look—the deep, wide sea,
brimming with fish past counting,
sardines and sharks and salmon.
Ships plow those waters,
and Leviathan, your pet dragon, romps in
them.

All the creatures look expectantly to you
to give them their meals on time.
You come, and they gather around;
you open your hand and they eat from it.
If you turned your back,
they'd die in a minute—

Take back your Spirit and they die,
revert to original mud;
Send out your Spirit and they spring to life—
the whole countryside in bloom and blossom.
The glory of GOD—let it last forever!
Let GOD enjoy his creation!
He takes one look at earth and triggers an
earthquake,
points a finger at the mountains, and
volcanoes erupt.

1 minute of Silence

Reader 4: Prayer from people

Mothering God, you formed us from the soil and breathed life into our bones. Thank you for our bodies and our earthy companions of flora and fauna. We are grateful that you chose to teach us how to be human by becoming a human among us. We confess that we have often abandoned our first calling to care for our Earth home. Forgive us for the ways we have wounded creation and our human kin who most feel the effects of a changing climate. Open our hearts to wonder and transformation. Teach us to rebel against the silencing of your creatures, the felling of your forests, and the suffering of your children. Help us to become ambassadors of reconciliation on our way to a new creation. Oh Love Incarnate, may your kingdom come on Earth as it is in heaven.

All: Oh, let me sing to God all my life long,
sing hymns to my God as long as I live!
Oh, let my song please him;
I'm so pleased to be singing to God.
But clear the ground of sinners—
no more godless men and women!
O my soul, bless God

Optional Song: All Creatures of Our God and King

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