

Fauna Sunday

(Australian Version 2)

Introduction

Fauna refers to the all the living species on planet Earth—in the wild, in our lives and in our soils. In Genesis One, all living species emerge from Earth who is their common mother. In Genesis Two, the first human and all animals are created from clay and the breath of God. In Job 39, the kingdom of the wild is God’s special concern, no matter how remote or mysterious.

Setting

It is appropriate to create a kingdom of the wild in the sanctuary, with creatures from rain forests, deserts and mountains, and/or the world where humans live with fauna in farmlands and gardens. Statues or models of known and endangered species can be located among the trees and rocks. In such a context rare species could be a special focus for the worship domain that is created. A large sandbox for candles is located in the middle of the living animals; during the service candles are placed in this sandbox to call back extinct species into our midst.

Special Focus

A special focus for this service is endangered and extinct species. Living plants represent the food or abode of endangered species; the names of these species may be placed on the plant or pot and represented with adoption papers. Members may adopt an endangered species. Candles placed in the sandbox can help us focus our memory on extinct species as we would sages and saints from our past.

Themes

In our call to worship we express our kinship with the animal world. We are, in fact, a family of fauna—both biologically and spiritually. The creatures of Earth are our kin. We have all emerged from Earth and return to Earth. All living things are animated by the very breath/spirit of God. The loss or survival of a given species is a family matter.

It is also appropriate to incorporate traditions from Indigenous peoples, many of whom have a rich spiritual kinship with the animal world, sharing a common spirit with their totem or dreaming as well as with the land where they live.

Optional Liturgies

Some may wish to consider elements of the Blessing of the Animals liturgy also on this website or appropriate prayers and rituals from *Seven Songs of Creation*, published by Pilgrim Press (2004).

Songs

This special song/hymn written for Fauna Sunday is located in *Habel Hymns Volume One*. A copy of the song book with music is available from nhabel@esc.net.au

SONG OF THE WILD

1. Will you come back with Me to the birth of the Earth,
Before all its life forms evolved?
Will you sing with the heavens amazed at the sight:
A planet with secrets to unfold?

Refrain:

Will you praise,
Be amazed
With eyes as wide as a child's?
Will you praise,
Be amazed
And sing
The song of the wild?

2. Will you walk home with Me on the way to the wild
And watch baby birds break from their shells?
Do you know how I serve as a mid-wife to all,
The lion, the lizard and gazelle?
3. Will you gather with Me as the wading birds dance,
Preparing to migrate North once more?
Can you fathom the code I have fixed in their souls
To navigate oceans when they roar?
4. Will you sleep with your God in the desert one night
And wake with the creatures of the sand?
Can you fathom the wisdom instilled in their mind
To live without water, sun or man?
5. If you don't feel at home with the rain forest snakes,
If you're troubled when creatures change their skin,
Then surrender the claim that you rule on this Earth
And discover creation as your kin.

*Second Sunday in the Season of Creation
(Australian Version 2)*

Fauna Sunday

We worship with the whole fauna family



“Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Praise the Lord!” Ps. 148.10

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

- 1. This Sunday we worship with the whole fauna family on Earth. We celebrate with birds, animals, reptiles and all our living relatives. We listen to their sounds, watch their movements and wonder with them as they praise their Creator. We give thanks for and with all our kin in creation*

Sections of a psalm, such as Ps. 104, a creation hymn or an anthem may be sung when the presiding ministers enter or after the greeting.

- 2. An Invocation, such as the one that follows, may be said before or after the greeting.*

In the name of the Creator of all fauna,
the name of Christ, the lamb of God,
and the name of the Spirit, the breath in all life. Amen.

Holy! Holy! Holy!

Creation is filled with God's presence.

Christ, we come to into your presence today,
to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,

Holy! Holy! Holy!

Earth is filled with your presence.

- 4. The Greeting. The presiding minister greets the people in these or other suitable words.*

The Lord of all Life be with you.

And with your spirit.

- 5. An Invitation. The minister or members of the congregation may invite fauna from diverse domains to worship in these or similar words.*

We invite our fauna family to worship with us,

**All our kin living on this planet,
from the busiest bee to the tallest giraffe.**

We remember our ancient relatives who became extinct,

**Dinosaurs, dodos and Tasmanian tigers,
giant marsupials and the woolly mammoths.**

We join our brothers and sisters in praising God,

**Gliding eagles and watchful meerkats,
Gorillas in the mist and polar bears in the snow.**

We summon the kin we have come to love,

**The stray cat and the backyard dog,
the koala, the pony, and the little lamb.**

All our fauna family in the wild,

Raise your voices to the skies

in a family festival of praise.

Sing, family, sing!

A fauna song of praise!

6. *A hymn or song may follow which celebrates creation, especially diverse domains of fauna. Children or other members of the congregation may enter the church holding symbols from the fauna family. Another option is for each child to carry a card or banner on which is represented a particular endangered species. These cards may also be depicted as adoption cards that encourage members of the congregation to adopt or support an endangered species.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

7. ***A Remembering.** A small remembrance candle received at the door is designed to remind people of living creatures with whom they felt a close kinship, creatures that are now endangered or species that have become extinct.*

Take the remembrance candle you received at the door and hold it quietly in front of you. Remember birds and animals you have loved or with whom you felt a spiritual kinship. Share your memories with the person next to you.

Remember too those of our kin who are endangered
those who have had their homes destroyed
and those who have become extinct,
through human greed and exploitation.

We hear creation groaning.

We hear fellow creatures crying out in pain.

And we hear members of our fauna family weeping.

8. ***A Confession***

As you remember, you are invited to come forward
and light a candle to remember an extinct species in our
fauna family. You may name the family member as you
light the candle and remember one of our lost ones

*(Music plays while people come forward to light candles
and place them in the sandboxes located at key points in
the place of worship.)*

We share the sorrow of our fauna family.

We feel the loss.

We share the sorrow.

We share the memory.

And we are sorry for our sins

against members of our fauna family.

9. The Absolution. The presiding minister declares the absolution.

Christ, who was deeply grieved in Gethsemane,
knows your sorrow and shares the suffering of all creatures.

**Christ, teach us compassion
for the life that suffers around us.**

I speak for Christ:
I affirm your compassion.
Come now, embrace creatures in pain,
and care for those in danger.

**Shalom! Shalom!
We embrace the suffering of creation.**

10. The Kyrie. The minister may add the Kyrie Eleison.

As we come home to Earth,
Christ, have mercy.

As we seek to love our home,
Christ, have mercy.

As we seek to care for our planet,
Christ, have mercy.

11. The Gloria in Excelsis, a suitable hymn of praise or the following invocation may be said or sung.

Glory to God in the highest!
And on Earth peace with all creation!

12. The Collect of the Day. The presiding minister may say:

Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The following collect may be said or sung.

**God, our Creator, we celebrate with all living creatures today.
Help us to see your presence, not only in human history but also in
the stories of our kin in creation, the great fauna family.
Teach us to hear the good news of God's loving care ringing
through the creatures of the wild. Rejoice with us as we behold
the mysteries of your Wisdom implanted in all life. In the
name of Christ who fills heaven and Earth. Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

13. All may sit for the first three readings for the Second Sunday in Creation, and rise for the Gospel. After each reading the reader may say:

This is the word of God.
Thanks be to God.

14. A reading from Job chapter 39 verses 1-12, 26-30.

‘The Kingdom of the Wild.’ God shows Job the kingdom of the wild, over which he as a human has no control, but where God’s Wisdom and nurture are ever present. Each part of nature has its ‘way,’ a reflection of that Wisdom.

15. A reading from Psalm 104 verses 14-23, 31.

‘Survival and Celebration in the Wild’. God not only nurtures and sustains all creatures of the wild, but also joins with them and us in celebration.

16. A reading from the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians chapter 1, verses 10-23.

‘The Wisdom of the Gospel’. The Wisdom of God may be evident in creation. The wise of the world may search for wisdom. The message of the Gospel, however, which may seem folly to the wise of the world, is the ultimate wisdom.

17. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke chapter 12 verses 22-31.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

‘The Kingdom of God’. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of the wild complement each other, says Jesus. God provides for all and that should lead us to live in harmony with all and not be stressed about possessions or power.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

18. A Children’s Address: ‘Would you Like to be a Platypus?’ may be told by a storyteller or by means of a platypus puppet. A hymn or song suitable for children may be sung.

19. The Affirmation of Faith. The Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed may be said here or after the sermon, or the following Affirmation of Faith may be used.

God creates all things,
renews all things and celebrates all things.

This we believe.

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

This we believe.

God became flesh and blood
a piece 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.

This we believe.

The risen Jesus
is the Christ at the centre of creation
reconciling all things to God,
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

This we believe.

The Holy Spirit renews life in creation
groans in empathy with a suffering creation
and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

This we believe.

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

20. A Sermon. The sermon may include a time of congregational reflection involving questions and discussion and mutual encouragement. The sermon may be followed by a hymn that reflects the message of the sermon.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

21. The Prayers. One or more members of the congregation may lead the people in prayer. The prayers conclude with the following prayer or another suitable prayer.

**Jesus Christ, teach us to empathise with Earth.
Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation,
cries for justice from the air, the clouds and the sky,
cries of our fellow creatures deserted and dying.
Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit
in creation, groans of longing for a new creation.
Jesus Christ, make our hearts sensitive to the songs of our kin,
songs of celebration echoing around us.
Christ, teach us to care. Amen**

22. A hymn or song may be sung.

THE GREETING OF PEACE

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.
We meet in Christ's name and share God's peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

*23. **The Greeting of Peace** may be shared by the people, after which the gifts of the people are brought to the Lord's table. They may be presented in silence or a suitable prayer, such as the one that follows, may be used.*

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 signs of our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.
With all creation, we praise our Creator.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*24. **A Prayer of Thanksgiving.** The presiding minister takes the bread and wine for the communion, places them on the Lord's Table and says the following or an authorised Prayer of Thanksgiving.*

The Creator be with you and all creation.
And also with you.

Open your hearts.
We open them to our Creator.

Let us give thanks to the Maker of heaven and earth.
It is right to join creation in thanking God.

God, our Creator,
source of everything that is,
we bring before you this day,
bread and wine
and with it we bring before you all creation to say:
Thank you, God, thank you!

Thank you for joining the web of creation
for living and dying among us
to redeem us and all creation:

Thank you, God, thank you!

Thank you for rising to life
permeating creation with your Spirit
to sustain and heal all things:

Thank you, God, thank you!

Therefore with voices of thanks
echoing through the cosmos
from the first day of creation
until this very moment in time,
we praise and thank you saying:

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of all life!

The whole cosmos is filled with your presence!

*25. **The Consecration.** The presiding minister says an authorised prayer of consecration, the words of institution or other suitable prayer.*

*26. **The Lord's Prayer,** if not already used, may be said here or after the communion.*

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

*27. **The Invitation.** The presiding minister breaks the bread. The following invitation may be said.*

Come, for all things are now ready.
Come to the table 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.

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

*28. **During the communion, psalms, hymns or anthems may be sung, including the following:***

**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.**

*29. **The Distribution.** The people receive the Holy Communion. As the people return to their places, they may light a candle in memory of departed loved ones or one of our kin who has become extinct.*

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

30. The presiding minister says

Let us give thanks for this meal.

The people say the following prayer or another suitable prayer.

**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 and our fauna family on
Earth. Amen.**

*31. **The Commission.** The members of the Earth care or Earth ministry team may announce practical plans for Earth care sponsored by the congregation. The congregation may be commissioned for ministry to the support or sponsor endangered species.*

Christ calls you to be his disciples,
to serve him with love and compassion,
to serve Earth by caring for creation,
and all creatures in danger or need.

Will you care for creation?

**We will care for all creatures!
We will nurture our planet!
We will sustain our endangered kin.**

32. A hymn of praise may be sung here or after the dismissal.

*33. **The Blessing.** The presiding minister says this or another appropriate blessing:*

Now may the penetrating 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 and the creatures of Earth, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

or

May the Spirit of God,
who is above all and in all and through all,
fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth
and the pulsing of Christ in creation,
through whom all things are reconciled and renewed. **Amen.**

34. The president or other minister may say:

Go in peace,
serving Christ and loving Earth!

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving Earth.