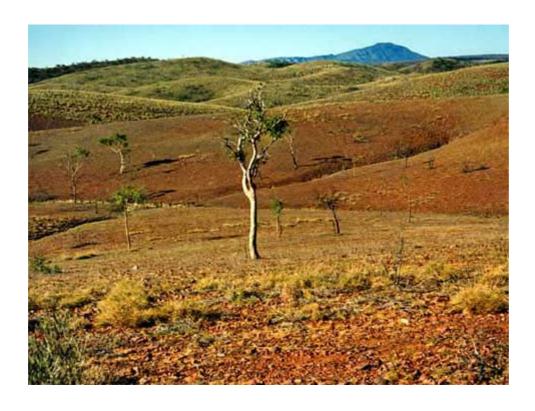
Second Sunday in the Season of Creation (Australian Version 1)

Land Sunday
We worship with creation on the land



'Let the field exult and everything in it'. Psalm 96:12

LAND SUNDAY

Welcome! We worship this Sunday with the land. We celebrate with the grasses, the soils, the vines and the creatures of the land present in the sanctuary. We celebrate with the land represented by a terracotta Earth bowl filled with red soil. A large candle burns in the bowl.

Gathering

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 today to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,
- P A planet filled with your presence, quivering in the forests, vibrating in the land, pulsating in the wilderness, 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! Earth is filled with God's presence.

Procession and Song

We join in song with the children as they enter the church holding symbols of the land—grasses, coloured soils and banners celebrating creatures of the countryside. We celebrate with them as they place these symbols around the terracotta bowl representing Earth. They run their fingers through the red soil in the bowl. We rejoice as one child lights the candle in the Earth bowl.

Call to Worship

We celebrate with creation as worship leaders, from different points in the church, call the land and land creatures to join us in worship.

- L1 We invite the country to worship with us:
- P wild flowers and mysterious mushrooms, swirling grasses and golden wattle.
- L2 We join the land as it trembles before God:
- P with tremors and earthquakes, whirlwinds and volcanoes.
- L1 We invite the farmlands to sing with us:
- P wheat fields, orchards and vineyards, red gums, gardens and wetlands.
- L2 We join with all the fauna of the fields in praising God:
- P kangaroos, emus and bandicoots, echidnas, eagles and magpies.
- L1 We invite the ground to stir deep below:
- P life-giving microbes restoring the soil, beetles and worms preparing our food.
- L2 We celebrate the song of the soil!
- P Sing, soil, sing!
- L1 We invite you to name land creatures to join us in worship.

We name, silently or aloud, other creatures of parts of the land and invite them to join us in praising our Creator.

- L2 We celebrate the song of the soil!
- P Sing, soil, sing!

Remembering

We use rosemary, eucalyptus leaves or some other fragrant symbol to assist us to stir our memories.

- L Take the fragrant symbol you received at the door, rub it between your fingers and share with the person next to you a special memory of the soil, the paddocks or wild creatures in the country.
- L We remember the dry land that rose from the waters in the beginning of creation, and the plants that emerged from the soil to cover the land with vegetation.
- P We remember with delight the gardens and the fields of our childhood, the places where we played in the sand, when we felt close to the ground, to bright flowers and baby animals.
- L We remember and rejoice.
- P Thank you, God, for the land, for soils that sustain our life.

Confession

L As I hold aloft this symbol, we remember and confess that we have become alienated from Earth and cleared much of the life from the land in our garden planet.

Large bleached bones and/or other symbols of parched lands may be held high in the sanctuary and then deposited on the red soil of the Earth bowl.

P We are sorry.

We have killed living soils with excessive chemicals. We have turned fertile fields into lifeless salt plains. We have cleared rich lands of wild life. We have swallowed Earth's resources in selfish cities.

- L We are sorry.
- P We are sorry. We are sorry.

Absolution

- L Christ hears your confession from deep in the tomb and forgives your sins against the land.
- P Christ, teach us to love Earth and return to Earth as our home.
- L. I speak for Christ:I invite you to come home to Earth by rejoicing in the land.
- 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 all creation!

Prayer for the Day

- L Let us pray.
- P God, our Creator, we celebrate your vibrant presence among us and our kin in creation, especially in the soil, the fields and the land. Help us to empathise with your creatures who are suffering. Lift our spirits to rejoice with the land, the flowers of the field and all the creatures of the countryside. In the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews 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 is three days and three nights 'in the heart of the earth'.

Children's Address: 'A Secret in the Soil' told by a storyteller or by means of a puppet

Children's Prayer: Thank you, God, for making me from red soil, the way you made your first child, Adam. Amen.

Children's Song

Affirmation of Faith

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 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.

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 Holy 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 the Peace

- Let us share the peace of the Lord with one another.
- P The peace of the Lord be with you.

Song

Sermon or Reflection

The Offering

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

Creation Prayer

Jesus Christ, teach us to empathise with Earth.

Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation, cries for justice from the land, the hills and the soil.

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 from the sea, the land and the air.

Christ, teach us to care. Amen

Lord's Prayer

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

Your Spirit is the life impulse in all things, renewing the barren and healing the wounded, groaning in anticipation of a new creation, stirring a 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 death to redeem humankind, renew creation, and affirm all born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your presence is the living impulse 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, 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 are full of your presence and glorify your name. Amen.

Words of Institution

Invitation

- 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 all our kin.

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

Distribution Songs

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 we return from the Lord's table we light a candle and place it in the sand-filled candle-stand in memory of departed loved ones or one of our kin in the land who has become extinct.

Thanksgiving

- L Let us give thanks for this meal.
- 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.

Sending Out

Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion and to serve Earth by caring for creation, especially the land that God has given life so that we and all our kin may live.

Hold again the fragrant symbol in your hands as you go forth to serve.

P We will remember the land! We will groan with creation! We will rejoice with the fields!

- L Will you care for creation?
- P We will care for creation! We will nurture the soil! We will celebrate life!

Blessing

L 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 within you.

Go in peace, serving Christ and loving Earth!

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

Recession and Song

We join with the children in a song of joy as they process from the church with plants and banners. We join with the psalm writer who cried, 'Let the field exult and everything in it' Psalm 96:12.