

# ***Fauna Sunday***

## *(Australian Version 1)*

### ***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 to focus on extinct species as we would the sages and prophets of our history.

### ***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](mailto: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 1)*

## *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*

## ***FAUNA SUNDAY***

***Welcome!***

***We worship this Sunday 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.***

### ***Gathering***

Leader        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.

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

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

P              **Holy! Holy! Holy!**  
                  **Earth is filled with your presence.**

### ***Procession and Song***

***We join in song with the children as they enter the church holding symbols of 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 would encourage people to adopt or support an endangered species.***

### ***Call to Worship***

L1            We invite our fauna family to worship with us,

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

L2            We remember our ancient relatives who became extinct,

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

L3 We join our brothers and sisters in praising God,

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

L1 We summon the kin we have come to love,

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

L2 All our fauna family in the wild,

**P Raise your voices to the skies  
in a family festival of praise.**

L3 Sing, family, sing!

**P A fauna song of praise!**

*We name, silently or aloud, other living creatures and invite them to join us in praising our Creator.*

L1 We celebrate with our fauna family.

**P Sing, family, sing!**

## ***Remembering***

*As we hold the remembrance candle received at the door, we remember birds and animals with whom we have felt a close kinship, creatures that are endangered and species that have become extinct.*

L 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.

L 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.

**P We hear creation groaning.  
We hear fellow creatures crying out in pain.  
And we hear members of fauna family weeping.**

## ***Confession***

L 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.)*

L We share the sorrow of our fauna family.

**P We feel the loss.  
We share the sorrow.  
We share the memory.  
And we are sorry!**

### ***Absolution***

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

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

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

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

### ***Christ Have Mercy***

L As we come home to Earth.

**P Christ, have mercy.**

L As we share Earth with our kin.

**P Christ, have mercy.**

L As we care for creatures in danger.

**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, 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.**

### *Readings for Fauna Sunday*

*Old Testament:* Job 39.1-12, 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.

*Psalm:* Psalm 104.14-23, 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.

*Epistle:* 1 Corinthians 1.10-23 '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.

*Gospel:* Luke 12.22-31 '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 and power.

### *Children's Address: Would You Like to be a Platypus?*

*Prayer: Thank you God for putting in every creature a voice that teaches it how to be what it is. And thank you for giving each of us a special voice inside that makes us a girl or a boy. Amen*

### *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 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 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 fauna in creation. We pray for all in danger and 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 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**

### *The Great Thanksgiving*

L The Creator be with you and all living creatures.

P **And also with you.**

L Open your hearts.

P **We open them to our Creator.**

L Let us give thanks to our Creator.

P **It is right to join creation in thanking God.**

L 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:

P **Thank you, God, thank you!**

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

P **Thank you, God, thank you!**

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

P **Thank you, God, thank you!**

L 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:

**P Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of all life!  
The whole cosmos is filled with your presence!**

### *Lord's Prayer*

### *Words of Institution*

### *Invitation*

C Come, for all things are now ready.  
Come to the table with all our 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 and the creatures of Earth. In Jesus' name.  
Amen

### ***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 our kin on Earth. Amen.**

### ***Sending Out***

L 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?

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

### ***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 Wisdom sustaining this planet  
and the pulsing of Christ deep within you.

Go in peace!  
Serving Christ and loving Earth!

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

### ***Recession and Song***

*We join the children in song as they process from the church carrying the adoption cards they brought into the church. They may wish to share these with members of the congregation.*