

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

Land Sunday

We worship with creation in the land



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

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

1. *This Sunday we worship with the land, the soil and the earth of our country. Ideally this worship would take place out of doors in a garden, a paddock or a park. The land can be experienced, however, within a church building, with living plants, grasses, soils and small creatures located throughout the church, including the sanctuary. At the centre of the church or near the Lord's table a large terracotta Earth bowl filled with red soil represents the land. A large candle burns in the bowl to symbolise God's presence.*
2. *A psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung when the presiding ministers enter or after the greeting.*
3. ***An Invocation**, such as the one that follows, may be said before or after the greeting.*

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.

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

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

The Lord of life be with you.

And also with you.

5. *These or similar responses are used.*

Christ, we gather in your name
to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,
**a planet filled with your presence,
quivering in the forests,
vibrating in the land,
pulsating in the wilderness,
shimmering in the rivers.**

God, reveal yourself to us in this place
and show us your face in all creation.

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

6. ***An Invitation.** The minister or members of the congregation may invite creatures of the land to worship in these or similar words.*

We invite the country to worship with us:

wild flowers and mushrooms, swirling grasses and golden wattle.

We join the land as it trembles before God:

With tremors and earthquakes, whirlwinds and volcanoes.

We invite the farmlands to sing with us:

wheat fields, orchards and vineyards, red gums, gardens and wetlands.

We join with all the fauna of the fields in praising God:

kangaroos, emus and bandicoots, echidnas, eagles and magpies.

We invite the ground to stir deep below:

life-giving microbes restoring the soil, beetles and worms preparing our food.

We celebrate the song of the soil!

Sing, soil, sing!

We invite you to name land creatures to join us in worship.

The names of other creatures or parts of the countryside may be added by members of the congregation.

We celebrate the song of the soil!

Sing, soil, sing!

- 7. A hymn or song may follow which celebrates creation, especially the land. Children or other members of the congregation may enter the church with symbols of the land—grasses, coloured soils and banners portraying creatures of the countryside. A large terracotta Earth bowl with red soil representing Earth is located near the Lord's table. A candle in the red soil symbolises God's presence.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- 8. A Remembering. A small piece of rosemary, eucalyptus leaves or some other fragrant symbol of remembrance may be given to the people as a reminder of our past connection with creation.*

As we rub this fragrant symbol in our hands we remember the countryside where we have worked and played.

O God, we thank you for the beauty of creation and the gift of land.

We remember and confess how we have poisoned and polluted the soils in our garden planet.

Christ, once buried in Earth, hear our cry.

We regret that we have forgotten Earth and treated this garden planet as a beast to be tamed and a place to be ruled.

Christ, the hope of all creation, we lament our failings.

9. ***A Confession.** A symbol of how we have poisoned the soils of our land may be raised in the sanctuary. This symbol may be bleached animal bones or some other symbol meaningful to the local community. This symbol may be deposited on the red soil of the Earth bowl in the sanctuary.*

We have killed living soils with excessive chemicals, turned fertile fields into lifeless salt plains and cleared rich lands of wildlife.

Christ, the source of all life, we are sorry. We are sorry.

10. ***The Absolution.** The people may sit in silence or they may name aloud sins against the land. The presiding minister declares the absolution.*

Christ hears your confession from the tomb and forgives your sins against the land.

**Christ, teach us to love Earth
and return to Earth as our home.**

I speak for Christ:

I invite you to come home to Earth
by rejoicing in the land.

Shalom! Shalom! We are coming home!

11. ***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.

12. ***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!

13. ***The Collect of the Day.** The presiding minister may say:*

Let us pray.

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

God, our Creator, whose glory fills our planet, help us to discern your vibrant presence among us, especially in the wonders of the land. Help us empathise with your land creatures who are suffering. Lift our spirits to rejoice with the land, the flowers of the field and the creatures of the countryside. We ask this in the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews all things in creation. Amen.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

14. *All may sit for the first three readings for the Second Sunday in Creation and rise for the Gospel.*
15. *A reading from Genesis chapter 3 verses 14 to 19 and chapter 4 verses 8 to 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

16. *Psalm 139 verses 7 to 10 may be said or sung.* ‘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.
17. *A reading from the Epistle to the Romans chapter 5 verses 12 to 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.
18. *The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew chapter 12 verses 38 to 40*

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

‘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’.

This is the Gospel of the Lord,

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

19. *A Children’s Address: ‘A Secret in the Soil’ may be told by a storyteller or by means of a puppet. A hymn or song suitable for children may be sung. The following children’s prayer may be used.*

Thank you, God, for making me from red soil, the way you made your first child, Adam. Amen.

20. *The Affirmation of Faith. The Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed may be said here or after the sermon, or this 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.**

21. *A Sermon. This may be followed by 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

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

**Jesus Christ, teach us to be at one with Earth.
Make our spirits sensitive to the cries of creation,
cries for justice from the hills and the trees.
Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit
from the deserts, the salt plains, the winds.
Jesus Christ, make our souls sensitive to the songs of our kin,
songs of celebration in the sea, the land and the air.
Christ, teach us to care. Amen**

23. *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.

24. *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

25. *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.

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.

**Holy, holy, holy, God of all life,
Earth and sea and sky are full of your presence
and glorify your name. Amen.**

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

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

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

28. *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 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.

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

29. *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.**

30. ***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 their kin on the land who has become extinct.*

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

31. *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. Amen.

32. ***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 land.*

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

**We will follow our crucified Lord,
listening for cries of injustice from Earth
and groaning with creation.**

**We will follow our risen Christ,
to become partners in healing our planet.**

**We will care for creation,
nurturing the land, loving our kin
and celebrating life.**

33. *A hymn of praise may be sung here or after the dismissal. The land joins us in thanking God, as the psalm writer says, 'Let the field exult and everything in it' Psalm 96:12.*

34. ***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, 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.

35. *The presiding minister or another minister may say:*
Go in peace,
serving Christ and loving Earth!
We go in peace, serving Christ and tending Earth.