

Mountain Sunday

(Australian Version 2)

Introduction

Mountain refers to the all the mountains on our planet, near our homes and beneath the ocean. This domain includes the various creatures that inhabit the mountains, especially the wild worlds and strange life-forms that fascinate us and celebrate life with us. Mountains are not domains to be conquered, but to be enjoyed, preserved and explored as wondrous worlds of creation.

Setting

Central to this liturgy is a sense of being on a mountain as well as celebrating with mountains and mountain creatures. As we enter the church or the sanctuary it is helpful if worshippers can experience being in or on a mountain. Images of other mountains in the distance can be projected on screens.

Special Focus

A special focus for this service is a 'mountain top experience'. We enter into God's presence in a holy mountain. Like Zion, it is the mountain of God. If the optional text is used for celebration of the Eucharist (see attached below), we hear voices from sacred mountains that call us into God's presence. We climb these mountains in the imagination of our faith. Finally we hear the voice of Christ inviting us to feast on the mountain of God. God is also present on that mountain in Christ's body and blood. The melody for the song, *Be Still and Feel the Presence of God*, is found in *Habel Hymns Volume 1* or *Australian Lutheran Hymnal* # 885.

Themes

In our call to worship we invite all the domains of the mountains to worship with us. In our confession we recall how we have polluted the wild in the mountains. In the readings we become aware of God's presence revealed on a mountain, whether Horeb, Zion or Calvary. We also discover that our mission is not only to preach the Gospel to all peoples, but also to all creation! We anticipate that we will have a sense of God's presence in the mountain of God where we worship in this liturgy as the climax to *The Season of Creation*.

Optional Liturgies

Song of the Sanctuary found in *Seven Songs of Creation* published by Pilgrim Press (2004) may also be adapted, recognising that the sanctuary of God's presence is especially evident in sacred mountains on Earth.

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

Mountain Sunday

We worship with creation in the mountains



*“The mountains and the hills before you will burst
into song” Isa. 55.12*

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

1. *This Sunday we worship with the mountains. We sing with the rocks and hills. We enjoy the wonders of the wild. We connect with the mystery of the mountains through majestic rocks that grace our sanctuary. We celebrate in/on the mountain of God. We receive a fragrant symbol as we enter.*
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 our God, who creates mountains,
the name of Christ, crucified on a mountain,
and the name of the Spirit, deep in the mountains. 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 mountain
and show us your face in all creation.

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

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

We invite the mountains to worship with us:

**mighty boulders and deep forests,
sliding glaciers and swirling snow.**

We invite the wild to join us in wonder:

**gliding eagles and rock wallabies,
mysterious moths and magic mushrooms.**

We join with the mountain creatures in praising God:
**leaping trout and crawling creatures,
exotic orchids and honey bees.**

We call the depths of the mountains to celebrate:
**precious gems and sparkling stones,
volcanic lava and rich red ore.**

We enter the mountain of God today:
**and we worship in God's presence,
a sacred place on our planet.**

We celebrate the song of the mountain!
Sing! Mountain! Sing!

We invite you to name mountain creatures
to join us in worship:

The names of other creatures or domains of the mountains may be added by members of the congregation.

We celebrate the song of the mountains!
Sing, mountains, sing!

- 7. A hymn or song may follow which celebrates creation, especially the world of the mountains. Children or other members of the congregation may enter the church holding symbols of the wild in the mountains—strange rocks, gems, and banners depicting wild creatures such as eagles and bears. We rejoice as children light candles and place them on the mountain.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- 8. A **Remembering**. Rosemary, eucalyptus leaves or come other fragrant symbol may be used to help stir our memories of special moments in the mountains.*

As we rub this symbol in our hands we remember the mountains we have climbed and where we have watched in wonder.

O God, we thank you for the splendors of the mountains and the gift of life in the wild.

We remember and confess how we have poisoned and polluted the rivers in our mountains.

Christ, crucified on a mountain, hear our cry.

- 9. A **Confession**. Two representatives of the people may approach the mountain in the sanctuary and pour waste (tailings) from mountain mines into waters at the foot of the mountain.*

We have polluted our mountain rivers with poisonous waste, turned majestic mountains into commodities, and killed many creatures in the wild with chemicals.

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 mountains. The presiding minister declares the absolution.*

Christ hears your confession from the cross and forgives your sins against the mountains.

**Christ, teach us to love Earth as our home
and mountains as signs of your presence.**

I speak for Christ:

I invite you to come home to Earth
by rejoicing in our mountains.

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, as we climb the mountains, we celebrate the wonders of the wild that surround us. Help us to see in the surrounding landscape the places where the planet has been polluted and to empathise with the groaning of creation beneath us. Teach us to recognise that the hills are alive with your Spirit and to rejoice with all our kin, especially the creatures of the wild. 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 Final Sunday in Creation and rise for the Gospel. After each reading the reader may say:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

15. A reading from Isaiah chapter 65 verses 17 to 25.

‘Good News from a Holy Mountain’

The prophet dreams of Mount Zion being transformed into a ‘peace mountain’, an ecosystem where humans and animals live in harmony.

16. Psalm 48 verses 1 to 11 may be said or sung.

Mount Zion, God’s holy mountain’

The Psalmist hails Mount Zion as the ‘city of God’ that rejoices in God’s presence.

17. A reading from the epistle of Paul to the Romans chapter 8 verses 28 to 39

‘No separation from God’s love’

Creation in no way separates us from the love of God in Christ.

18. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark chapter 16 verses 14 to 18.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

‘Good news for all creation’

Our mission is to ‘go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation’.

This is the Gospel of the Lord,

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

19. A Children’s Address: ‘Rocky, the Rock’ may be told by a storyteller or by means of a puppet called Rocky. A hymn or song suitable for children may be sung.

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 another 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 mountains and the hills.
Jesus Christ, make our souls sensitive to the songs of our kin in the wild,
songs of celebration from the valleys and the mountain tops.
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 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 in the rivers 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 mountains.*

Christ calls you to be his disciples,
to serve him with love and compassion,
to serve Earth by caring for creation,
especially the mountains God has formed
for us to celebrate the world of the wild.

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

**We will care for creation,
preserving the mountains
and celebrating life.**

33. *A hymn of praise may be sung here or after the dismissal. The mountain join us in thanking God, as the psalm writer says, 'The mountains and hills will burst forth in song before you' Isa. 55.12.*

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 us 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 president or other minister may say:*

Go in peace,
serving Christ and loving Earth!

We go in peace, serving Christ and loving our home.

OPTIONAL EUCHARIST

Meal on the Mountain

(Background mountain music)

Voice 1 I hear a voice from Mount Zion, the sacred mountain,
 calling, calling.

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 2 *(from a high point in the church)*

 Come up to me.
 Come into my presence.
 Come into my mountain.

Voice 1 Who is calling?
 Who is calling from the mountain?

Voice 2 This is the mountain of God,
 where Peter stood with Jesus.
 You are all invited.

Voice 1 And I heard the voice of Peter say:

Voice 2 It is good, Lord, for us to be here.
 It is good to be on the mountain with you.

Voice 1 I heard a another voice cry from the mountain
 the high mountain of God,

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 2 Come up the mountain as Moses did,
 enter my presence today.
 Don't be afraid!

(Choral refrain or sounds from a mountain)

*Choral Refrain (softly):
Be still and feel the presence of God,
The presence pulsing, filling this place,
Be still and feel the pulse of God.*

Voice 1 I heard a voice from the mountain of God
 calling as God did to Elijah, long ago,

Voice 2 I am present today,
 not in the storm or the earthquake
 but in the silence, the soft voices of the mountain.

I am waiting for you.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the silence of God,
The Spirit breathing, breathing through Earth.
Be still and feel the breath of God.*

Voice 1 And I heard a voice call from the mountain,
a voice in pain:

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 3 I thirst! I thirst! *(Pause)*
Father into your hands I commend my spirit.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the anguish of Christ,
His spirit pulsing, pulsing through Earth.
Be still, behold the death of God.*

(Brief silence)

Voice 1 In the silence of the dawn
I again heard a voice from the mountain,

Voice 3 Come to the feast on my mountain!
Come dine with your risen Lord!

Voice 1 And I heard the voice repeat
the words of the Last Supper:

(Brief call from a flute or some other instrument)

Voice 3 Take and eat, this is my body
which is given for you.

Take and drink, this cup is the new covenant
in my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin.

Come eat and drink with me.

Voice 1 Then I heard Peter and all the disciples say,

Voice 2-3 It is good for us to be here at your table.

(Call from a flute or other instrument)

Voice 1 And I heard Jesus repeat his invitation
from the presence of God:

Voice 3 You are all invited to this holy place,
all peoples and all creatures.
Put aside your differences and be one
as you eat and drink with me.

Come one. Come all!
For the feast is prepared in the presence of God,
on the mountain of God.

*Choral refrain (softly);
Be still and feel the presence of God,
The presence pulsing, pulsing from Christ.
Be still and taste the bread of life.*

Prayer before Meal

**Jesus Christ, our host,
We join you on your mountain today.
Surround us with your light.
Stir us with your voice.
Heal us with your touch.
Fill us with your love.
Dine with us, today.
Refresh us with your blessing
in the bread and the wine.
Amen.**

Distribution

Distribution Songs

Thanksgiving

L Let us give thanks for this meal on the mountain.

**P We thank you Christ, for inviting us to join you with God on the
mountain. We pray that through your body and blood we may be healed
and become agents of healing for Earth. Amen.**

Sending Out

L Christ calls you to be his disciples,
to come down the mountain and serve him
by caring for creation,
especially the mountains
where we celebrate God's presence with our kin.

Hold again the fragrant symbol in your hands.
Will you care for creation?

P **We will care for creation!**
 We will rejoice in the mountains.
 We will celebrate God's presence!

Blessing

L May the Spirit of God blowing from the mountains,
 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 loving our home.

Recession and Song

We join the children in song as they process from the church. We cry with the prophet: 'The mountains and hills will burst forth in song before you' Isa. 55.12.