

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

Land Sunday

We worship with creation on 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 field, or a park. The land can be experienced, however, within a church building by placing living plants, grasses, soils, and small creatures throughout the church, including the sanctuary. At the center of the sanctuary or near the Lord’s Table a large terracotta Earth bowl filled with soil represents the land. A large candle burns in the bowl to symbolize 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,
in the name of Christ, the pulse of life,
and in 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.** In these or similar words, the minister or members of the congregation may invite creatures of the land to worship..*

We invite the countryside to worship with us:

wildflowers and mushrooms, swirling grasses and goldenrods.

We invite the farmlands to sing with us:

wheat fields, orchards, and vineyards; hayfields, gardens, and wetlands.

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

horses, sheep, and cattle, grass snakes and grasshoppers, eagles and crows.

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 that celebrates creation, especially the land. Children or other members of the congregation may enter the church with symbols of the land—grasses, soils, and banners portraying creatures of the countryside. A large terracotta Earth bowl with soil representing Earth is located near the Lord's Table. A candle in the soil symbolizes God's presence.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

8. ***A Remembering.** A small piece of rosemary, a sprig of holly, a leaf, or another plant, a symbol of remembrance, may be given to the people as a reminder of our past connection with creation.*

As we take this plant in our hands we remember the countryside where we have worked and played.

O God, we thank you for the wonder 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 as 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 soil of the Earth bowl in the sanctuary.*

We have killed living soils with excessive chemicals, turned fertile fields into lifeless 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 as our home. Help us to return home to Earth.

I speak for Christ: I invite you to come home to Earth, and I call you to tend this planet by loving 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 all things, help us to discern your presence among us, especially in the wonders of the land. Help us to stand in solidarity 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 of 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 the first 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 was 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 hymn or song suitable for children may follow. The following children’s prayer may be used.*

Thank you, God, for making me from the soil of the Earth, 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 all creatures.

This we believe.

God became incarnate,
a part of Earth, like Adam,
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 center of creation,
reconciling all things to God,
renewing all creation, and filling the cosmos.

This we believe.

The 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 hills and the trees.
Jesus Christ, make our faith sensitive to the groans of the Spirit from the
deserts, the plains, and the winds.
Jesus Christ, make our souls sensitive to the songs of our kin, songs of
celebration in the land, the sea, and the air.
Jesus 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 following one, 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 as a sign of our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth.

With all creation, we bless 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 another 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, restoring the broken and healing the wounded, groaning in anticipation of a new creation, stirring with 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, to renew creation, and to reconcile 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, saints and sinners, 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 a prayer of consecration, words of institution, or another 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,
also share Christ with one another
and with all our kin.**

29. *The Agnes Dei. During the communion the Agnes Dei, 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.*

31. *The Remembrance. 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 in recent years.*

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,
honoring 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 Lord, the risen Christ,
to become partners in healing our planet.**

**We will care for creation!
We will nurture the land.
We will celebrate life.**

33. A hymn of praise may be sung here or after the dismissal. The land joins us in thanking God, as the psalmist 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 God who is above all and through all and in 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 creation!
We go in peace, serving Christ and tending the Earth.*