

Prayers

Education Sunday 2009

'THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S.' HOW THEN SHALL WE PRAY?

God of the elements, glory to you.
Glory to you for flowing air.
Glory for light beyond compare.
Glory for water as it flows.
Glory for soil and all that grows.
Glory for life and love and birth.
Glory to you, Lord of the Earth.

David Adam, *The Open Gate: Celtic Prayers for Growing Spiritually*, p.88 (London: Triangle-SPCK, 1994)

The Creator who brought order out of chaos,
Give peace to you.
The Saviour who stilled the raging storm,
Give peace to you.
The Spirit who broods on the deeps,
Give peace to you.

David Adam, *The Open Gate: Celtic Prayers for Growing Spiritually*, p.110 (London: Triangle-SPCK, 1994)

Let the earth proclaim
The joy of your Name.

Let each bulb rejoice,
Its growth be a voice.

Let each seed and flower
Tell of your power.

Let the glowing bright sun
Show the deed that is done.

Let us hear from the rain
He is risen again.

Let all repeat the refrain
He is risen again.

David Adam, *Tides and Seasons: Modern Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*, p.48 (London: Triangle-SPCK, 1989)

Dear Lord Jesus, we are sorry for the times when we have dropped litter, for the times when we have wasted food and water, when we have not recycled our rubbish. Please forgive us and help us to act as Jesus would act.

Amen.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for the trees that every year have new leaves, for pretty flowers, for roaring seas, for the stars that twinkle and the rolling hills. Thank you for animals: for wild animals and those that live on farms. Thank you for big animals like elephants and small animals like mice. Thank you for fish that live in the sea and birds that fly in the sky.

Amen.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that you give us hope for the future. Thank you that you will make everything good again when you come back to earth. Jesus, we ask that you would help us look after planet earth until you return.

Amen.

Father, we come to you today as your children. Yet we have lost our way, we have failed to heed your call to care for the earth, and we have failed to reflect your image in us. Father, you spoke and the earth was created. We ask that you would create a new heart within us today.

Amen.

Jesus, you were born on this earth and share our humanity. Through your death and resurrection you opened a way to the Father, and bring hope for the renewing of creation. Instill in us this hope to enable us to live your way until you return.

Amen.

Holy Spirit, you were present at creation and bring new life. We thank you that you are our helper and comforter. We ask that you will fill us anew with your presence, and equip us to live out our calling to bring the light of Christ into this dark world.

Amen.

Lord, we welcome you this day. In a world where climatic change brings many uncertainties, we welcome you. Let us recognise you, the creator of the bird-song, and by the movement of the sun may your love dawn in our hearts as we rise to worship you now. Fill us with your peace, and with the beauty of your complete and unfailing forgiveness, now and for ever.

Amen.

The prayer of blessing from the Book of Common Prayer beginning 'Almighty God, Father of all mercies'. Section V of the Litany in 'Common Worship' could be used as a framework for your prayers. This can be found at: www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/word/litany.html

Father of all creation, we thank you that you
Have given us a world rich in resources,
And made us stewards of your mysteries;
Help us to act responsibly,
Not wasting or destroying what we do not need,
Not polluting the earth, or sea or sky,
That we may act with love towards all things,
And so reflect the great love that you have for the world.

Be with us, Lord God, creator of all,
To strengthen us on our journey,
To guide us in all our doings,
That we may share in the love and care for your world.

David Adam, *The Rhythm of Life*, p.37 (London: Triangle-SPCK, 1996)

Dear God of the workplace,
Who is present in every transaction,
Watching for the well-being of working people
Everywhere.
You know each person involved in producing,
Trading and consuming the products that
I buy and sell.
When I trade, I become entwined with every link in the trade chain.
Likewise, be entwined in me, and through me
Let your presence be revealed.
For your name's sake. Amen.

Geoffrey Duncan (ed.), *What a World*, p.143 (London: Granary Press, 2002)

Creator God, how deep are your designs!
You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,
And charged us with their care.

We confess that the way we live today
Is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of life,
Dispossessing the poor and future generations.
Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,
And, as you promised Noah never to repeat the Flood,
So make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:
Choosing life for all that is at risk –
For creation, neighbours near and far,
Our children and ourselves. Amen.

The Operation Noah Prayer

Responsive prayers

Psalm 115:16 (New International Version)

'The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man.'

Father God, we thank you that you created the earth for your delight and that it was good. Father, we thank you that you placed us upon the earth to tend it and to enjoy it.

God of creation ... **we thank you.**

Father, we thank you for your gift of the land. For forests, swamps and deserts. For mountains, lakes and seas. For fields, rivers and glaciers.

God of creation ... **we thank you.**

Father, we thank you for all living things. For birds flying high in the sky, for fish and whales deep under water. For lions and giraffes, snakes and lizards, sheep and pigs, penguins and seals – so wonderfully made and perfect in every way.

God of creation ... **we thank you.**

Father, we thank you for the hope that you give us for our future and the future of the planet. Help us to walk in your ways and care for the earth which you have entrusted to us until your return.

Amen.

A Litany in praise of creation

For the earth in all its richness,

We praise you, Lord.

For rocks, mountains and islands, signs of your strength and power,

We praise you, Lord.

For fossils, shells, and tiny, intricate creatures, signs of your delight in creation,

We praise you, Lord.

For fruits and nuts, berries, beans and blossoms, signs of your bounty toward us,

We praise you, Lord.

For wind and clouds, stars and galaxies, signs of your infinite mystery,

We praise you, Lord.

For birds and fish, reptiles and all animals in the land, signs that you trust us not to abuse earth's creatures,

We praise you, Lord.

For varieties of language and differences in cultures, signs of the wealth of gifts that we share,

We praise you, Lord.

For similarities between people and our dependence on each other, signs that we are all made in your image,

We praise you, Lord.

Give us generous eyes, thankful hearts and open hands, Creator God, whom we praise with all our hearts.

Amen.

Read by Ann Persson at Environment Sunday Service, A Rocha Chiltern Gateway Project, June 2007

Responsive Confession 1

God of Justice, we acknowledge our guilt in response to the care of creation. We have used, abused and abandoned those things which you have created. You created a perfect world, yet under our care, beauty and goodness have been lost and the world is being destroyed. Father, we ask for forgiveness ...

Create us anew.

God of Creation, you entrusted us with dominion and control over this earth - a gift to be revered and used responsibly. Yet we have used your creation for our own selfish gain. We don't recycle enough; we don't re-use when we could; we don't often restore, but simply replace. Father, we ask for forgiveness ...

Create us anew.

God of the Nations, you commanded us to be fruitful and multiply, but through our sinfulness we have overpopulated the earth and failed to create a sustainable future. Father, we have failed to protect the vulnerable peoples of this world. Instead, we exploit their labour and their lands. Father, we ask for forgiveness ...

Create us anew.

God of Eternity, we thank you for the hope that comes through Jesus. Give us a vision for our planet and motivate us to act today. Enable us to capture your hope as we care for your creation, and wait in eager anticipation of its final restoration. God of creation, may your Kingdom come ... **Amen.**

Responsive Confession 2

Introduction

God's whole creation groans. The earth produces thorns and thistles. Our sin affects all around us. Let us confess our sin in penitence and faith.

Prayer of Confession

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,

We are your people and this is your world.

For times when we forget that the earth is yours, and treat it as if it is ours to use and abuse,

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,

The earth cries out to you for justice.

For times when we treat the earth without respect,

when we needlessly pollute or carelessly destroy,

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,

The earth reveals your nature and power.

For times when we fail to hear your voice,

or see you in your handiwork,

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much

that he sent his Son to be our Saviour,

forgive us our sins

and make us holy to serve him in his world,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Confession & Intercession for Creation

(These prayers were used in York on 13th May 2007 by Lindsay Schuman, and are used by permission.)

Holy Father, you are an awesome God. We come before you and we thank you for your creativity, and your generosity in sharing with us the world we live in. We praise you for the beauty of the natural world and intricacy of how you fit all things together.

In Genesis we read, 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.' Lord, we are painfully aware of how we have neglected to look after your earth. We hear of environmental pollution, ozone destruction, loss of forests, and global warming, and it is plain we have not been good stewards of your planet. Forgive us, Lord, for taking your world for granted and for the disrespect we have shown. Lord, we are sorry for our omissions and our emissions, which have had such a terrible impact on our world. We humble ourselves before you, and ask your forgiveness.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Father, help us to take our stewardship seriously. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by giant issues such as climate change, Lord, would you reveal to us how we can respond both as individuals and as your Body, the Church. We pray, Lord, that you would highlight to us over the coming weeks, those areas you would have us address in our own lives. Give us ears ready to hear your promptings, Lord. Would you be working within us. Please allow alterations in our lifestyles to be acts of worship to you.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, guard the hearts and motives of those people who lead us. We pray that you would bless those in authority with a genuine heart for your world. Lord, inspire our leaders to see their environmental responsibility as a matter of priority and importance, rather than political expediency. We pray for your hand over lawmakers, and ask that you give them wisdom in deciding where limits should be set.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Father God, we are blessed to live in a country where provision is plentiful, and we thank you for the clean water, food and electricity that are so readily available. Father, help us to resist the temptations associated with abundance. Help us to see honestly what we need, and what we don't. Keep us thankful and appreciative, and protect us from greed and waste.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Father, we pray for a growing global understanding of how our lifestyles and choices impact on other people and on our planet. We pray for a move of your Spirit throughout the nations. We pray, Lord, that you would enable countries to shoulder their share of responsibility for safeguarding the environment. We pray that you would provide the means for greenhouse gases to be cut, and climatic disasters to be avoided. We lift up to you those developing nations liable to be affected worst by drought and flood, and we pray for your hand of protection.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Challenge us, Lord, when we choose convenience over conscience; when we love ourselves more than our neighbours. Help us to accept our responsibilities, and give your Church a voice in the international debate. We pray that your Church would be at the forefront of a move for social and environmental change.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Finally, Father, we pray that you would change our hearts to be in line with your heart, even if this means sacrifice. We thank you that you made us stewards of your creation and that your natural world is so incredible. Thank you for giving it to us to enjoy and look after, and give us passionate hearts to defend and preserve this world which belongs to you.

Lord, in your mercy ... **Hear our prayer.**

Blessings

1. God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, send your Spirit to stay close to us this week. Open our eyes to see the beauty of creation and to respond by worshipping you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

2. Lord Jesus, you commissioned us to be your messengers on earth. Help us to proclaim by word and deed the message of your love to all humanity, and to declare the hope that you offer for the future, this week and for ever. Amen.

3. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages. Amen.

4. May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water welling up to eternal life, perfect in you the image of his glory; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you this day and for ever. Amen.

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon you his children,
that you may use them to his glory and the welfare of all peoples;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all, now and evermore. Amen.

May God who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the sky,
who leads the lambs to pasture and the deer to water,
who multiplied loaves and fishes and changed water into wine,
lead us, feed us, multiply us,
and change us to reflect the glory of our Creator
through all eternity;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all, now and evermore. Amen.

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