**SERVICE OF THE LORD’S DAY**

**SEASON OF CREATION**

**(One Sunday between September 1st – October 4th)**

**[Traditional/ Without the Lord’s Supper]**

**[Emphasis: Care of Creation]**

**GOD CALLS US TOGETHER**

**PRELUDE**

**Greetings and Concerns of the Church o**

**INTROIT**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

**People: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;**

Leader**:** Let the field exult, and everything in it.

**People: Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy**

**before the Lord!**

**All: Let us sing for joy before the Lord!**

[Adapted from Psalm 96:11-13]

**PRAYER OF PRAISE AND ADORATION**

We praise and bless you, O Lord, for you are the King of all ages, and through Christ your Son you have made all that is. In the beginning of the beginning, you breathed upon the waters of creation, and filled the earth with life through your vibrant Spirit. The heavens declare your glory, O Lord, and the stars of the sky bring light to our darkness. You spoke, and the earth burst forth in life, you saw that it was good. You called forth creation and enlivened every creature on land and sea. You made human beings in your image and set us over the whole world in all of its wonders. You gave us share in your dominion and called us “to till and to keep” this garden, the work of your hands. We praise you for your manifold gifts this morning and may our adoration give glory to your name, so that we may serve you with faithfulness and love. May our daily care for your creation show reverence for your name and reveal your saving power in every creature under heaven. We make this prayer in the name of Christ your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. **Amen.**

[Adapted from *Creationtide and Environment: Resources for Worship and Prayer*, Church of England, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/creationtide\_and\_environment\_resources.pdf]

**\*Hymn “Joyful, Joyful We Adore You”**

**WE PREPARE TO HEAR GOD’S WORD**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

God has given much to the dominion and protection of humankind. The world and all that is in belongs to God, and we have been charged with its care. Sometimes we have faithfully cared for the earth, and sometimes we have neglected its care or even contributed to its abuse.

Let us pray together the unison prayer of confession printed in the bulletin and then continue in silent confession.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Holy One, creator of all that is, help us to be mindful of the earth and all its resources. Help us to remember the love you have for creation, the willingness you have for all creation to be redeemed. Cause us to repent of our neglect for your earth, and move in us to repair the damage we and previous generations of humanity have caused. As we repent, make us true stewards of your creation. Amen.**

(Silent Personal Confession)

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Humbly repent and you are forgiven. For the Lord makes a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland, the Lord makes all things new. The Lord says, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

[2 Chronicles 7:14]

Leader: Friends believe the good news:

People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

**THE PEACE**

In Jesus Christ, we know God’s forgiveness and peace. Let us share that peace with one another.

Leader: Friends, may the peace of Christ be with you all.

**People: And also with you**.

Members of the congregation may greet each other with a sign of peace, most commonly a handshake.

\*Hymn “For the Beauty of the Earth”

WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Great and awesome God, you are great in power and in wonder. We celebrate your works of creation this day. As you made the heavens and the earth, you declared all the things you had made good. We humans are also your creation, and we long to be good, just as you created us to be. Give us wisdom to see your creation as a holy responsibility for us, your people. Help us to see the beauty in all you have made. Help us to see clearly the ways that we have damaged your creation, our air, water, and natural resources. Help us to see clearly how we can live our lives so that we may honor our holy responsibility before you. Gracious God, grant that we may see the world as good, just as you declared it good, and help us to love it and care for it, to your glory. Now grant us the openness to hear your good news through the reading of this scripture and the preaching of your word. **Amen**.

[Adapted from Ministry Council of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, https://cpcmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/A-Liturgy-for-Earth-Day.pdf]

**READING OF GOD’S WORD**:

**Psalm 8**

**1O Lord, our Sovereign,  
    how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

**You have set your glory above the heavens.**  
2    Out of the mouths of babes and infants  
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,  
    to silence the enemy and the avenger.

**3When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
    the moon and the stars that you have established;**  
4what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
    mortalsthat you care for them?

**5Yet you have made them a little lower than God,   
    and crowned them with glory and honor.**6You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
    you have put all things under their feet,  
**7all sheep and oxen,  
    and also the beasts of the field,**8the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
    whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**9O Lord, our Sovereign,  
    how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

**Genesis 1:26-31**

26Then God said, “Let us make humankindin our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

27So God created humankindin his image,  
    in the image of God he created them;   
    male and female he created them.

28God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” 29God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**Romans 8:18-22**

**18**I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. **19**For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; **20**for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope **21**that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22**We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;

**Mark 6:30-44**

30The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 35When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” 37But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “Are we to go and buy two hundred denariiworth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” 38And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42And all ate and were filled; 43and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

**PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD**

**Sermon**

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**Sample texts to include with the regular Prayers of the People**

Creator of all, you entrusted the earth to the human race, yet we disrupt its peace with violence and corrupt its purity with our greed. Prevent your people from ravaging creation, that coming generations may inherit lands brimming with life. [*Book of Worship* (BOW), 2018, 111]

God our Creator, all creation groans in expectation; convert us from exploitation. Teach us to live in harmony with your creation. [BOW, 2018, 108]

Loving God, in your providence, creation yields its good fruits that all may enjoy its riches. For our planet Earth, that we may dwell peacefully with nature, be good stewards of its resources, and share its abundance for the sake of human flourishing. [BOW, 2018, 109]

Awaken all people to the danger we have inflicted upon the earth. Implant in each a reverence for what you have made that we may preserve the delicate balance of creation for all coming generations. [BOW, 2018, 104]

Restore among us a love of the earth you created for our home. Help us put an end to ravishing its land, air, and waters, and give us respect for your creatures, that, living in harmony with everything you have made, your whole creation may resound in an anthem of praise to your glorious name. [BOW, 2018, 99]

**Alternate – a Prayer for the Earth:**

God, Creator of the Universe:

Fill us with your love for the creation, for the natural world around us, for the earth from which we come and to which we will return. Awake in us energy to work for your world; let us never fall into complacency, ignorance, or being overwhelmed by the task before us. Help us to restore, remake, renew. **Amen.**

Jesus, Redeemer of the World:

Remind us to consider the lost lilies, the disappearing sparrows; teach us not to squander precious resources; help us value habitats: seas, deserts, forests and seek to preserve this world in its diversity. Alert us to the cause of all living creatures destroyed wantonly for human greed or pleasure. Help us to value what we have left and to learn to live without taking more than we give. **Amen.**

Spirit of the Living God:

At the beginning you moved over the face of the waters. You brought life into being, the teeming life that finds its way through earth and sea and air, that makes its home around us, everywhere. You know how living things flourish and grow; how they co-exist; how they feed and breed and change. Help us to understand those delicate relationships, value them, and keep them from destruction. **Amen**.

God, of the living earth:

You have called people to care for your world -you asked Noah to save creatures from destruction. May we now understand how to sustain your world –Not over-fishing, not over-hunting, not destroying trees, precious rainforest, not farming soil into useless dust. Help us to find ways to use resources wisely to find a path to good, sustainable living in peace and harmony with creatures around us. **Amen.**

Jesus, who raised the dead to life:

Help us to find ways to renew what we have broken, damaged and destroyed: Where we have taken too much water, polluted the air, poured plastic into the sea, cut down the forests and soured fertile soils. Help all those who work to find solutions to damage and decay; give hope to those who are today working for a greener future. **Amen.**

[Adapted from Anne Richards, Mission Theology Advisory Group, Resources available on www.ctbi.org.uk *The Dispossession Project: Eco-House*]

\*Affirmation of Faith – Apostles’ Creed

\*GLORIA PATRI

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen”

**CALL FOR THE OFFERING**

We are surrounded by Earth’s gifts of beauty, diversity, and power. We are called to be stewards and caretakers of our amazing and fragile planet. Let us offer back our gifts of money, skills, and service to our ongoing shared work with our Creator.

OFFERTORY

SPECIAL MUSIC INSTRUMENTAL

\*DOXOLOGY

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, giver of all good things, we thank you for the earth, the mountains, rivers, and trees. We thank you for our home, our present abundance, and for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. We thank you for our faith, for our knowledge of you, and for the assurance of your love. May all these gifts be a blessing to those in need. Eternal God, who called us from death to life, we give ourselves to you; and with the Church through all the ages we thank you for your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn: “All Creatures of our God and King”**

\* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Go, now, children of God, secure in the knowledge that God is a sovereign God of the heavens and the earth! Work alongside our God for the redemption of all creation!

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with all of you.

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\*Stand if you are able.

All Scripture is cited from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

The Apostles’ Creed

(Ecumenical Version)

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**

**maker of heaven and earth;**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord;**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**He ascended into heaven, He**

**is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and, He will come again to judge the living and**

**the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**APPENDIX**

**PC(USA) Statements for Context Setting**

September 1 is the World Day of Prayer for Creation and the start of the Season of Creation. This day of prayer was established by Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Orthodox in 1989 and was then embraced by major Christian European churches in 2001 and by Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church in 2015 when he issued a new statement for the day of prayer, calling for a “renewed and sound relationship between humanity and creation”.

The Season of Creation ends on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis and the traditional day for the Blessing of the Animals.

[https://www.presbyterianmission.org/eco-journey/2020/09/01/welcoming-the-season-of-creation/]

From the Book of Order 2019/2021:

*W-5.0305: Care of Creation*

God sends the Church to share in the stewardship of creation, preserving the goodness and glory of the earth God has made. God cares for us through the gifts of creation, providing all that we need in abundance. As caretakers of God’s creation, we are called to: tend the land, water, and air with awe and wonder at God’s gifts; use the earth’s resources wisely, without plundering, polluting, or destroying; use technology in ways that preserve and enhance life; measure our production and consumption in order to provide for the needs of all; foster responsible practices of procreation and reproduction; and seek beauty, order, health, harmony, and peace for all God’s creatures.

In the Service for the Lord’s Day we express our care for creation by: giving thanks for God’s creative power and sustaining care; acknowledging God’s call to stewardship of the earth and confessing our failure to care for creation; rejoicing in the promise of redemption and renewal in Jesus Christ proclaimed in the Word and Sacraments; offering our lives and resources in service to the creator of all; and committing ourselves to live as good stewards of creation until the day when God will make all things new. One way in which the church demonstrates integrity in caring for God’s creation is through responsible choices about materials for worship, including the use of paper, sacramental elements, the construction of worship space, and other resources.

**Potential Topics for the Sermon**

* What does it mean to be an image bearer of God and how should this be reflected in our care for creation and each other?
* What is the meaning of dominion relative to care of creation?
* What were the consequences of the Fall on creation and what does this mean for us today?
* After the feeding of the five thousand, what is the significance of Jesus’ instructions to His disciples to “*Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost*”?

**Revised Common Lectionary Gospel Lections During the 2022 Season of Creation**

Sunday September 4th Luke 14:25-33 [Cost of Discipleship]

Sunday September 11th Luke 15:1-10 [Lost Sheep/Lost Coin]

Sunday September 18th Luke 16:1-13 [Parable of the Dishonest Manager]

Sunday September 25th Luke 16:19-31 [Lazarus and the Richman]

Sunday October 2nd Luke 17:5-10 [Some Sayings of Jesus]