

## Call to Prayer

**Leader:** As we gather in gratitude for God's good gift of creation and the Earth, let us recall our responsibility to care for our common home. (*Pause*) Pope Francis says, "Nurturing and cherishing creation is a command God gives not only at the beginning of history, but to each of us. It is part of his plan; it means causing the world to grow responsibly, transforming it so that it may be a garden, a habitable place for everyone."

### **Psalm – Praise to God from Creation, Psalm 148 1-4, 7-13**

**Side 1:** Praise our God!  
Praise God from the heavens;  
Praise God in the heights!  
Praise God, all His angels;  
Praise God, all His hosts!  
Praise God, sun and moon;  
Praise God, all you stars of light!  
Praise God, you heavens of heavens,  
And you waters above the heavens!

**Side 2:** Praise our God from the earth,  
You great sea creatures and all the depths;  
Fire and hail, snow and clouds;  
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;  
Mountains and all hills;  
Fruitful trees and all cedars;  
Beasts and all cattle;  
Creeping things and flying fowl;

**Side 1:** Rulers of the earth and all peoples;  
Princes and all judges of the earth;  
Both young men and maidens;  
Old men and children.

**Side 2:** Let them praise the name of our God,  
For God's name alone is exalted;  
The glory of God *is* above the earth and heaven.



### **Reading – The Unity of Creation, Maximus the Confessor**

**Reader:** Humans beings are not isolated from the rest of creation; by [our] very nature [we are] bound up with the whole of the universe... In [our] way to union with God, [we] in no way leave creatures aside, but gather together in love the whole...that it may be transfigured by grace.

## **Ritual – Commissioning to Care for the Earth**

*(The ritual involves giving participants a physical reminder of their call to care for the Earth. A stone, packet of seeds, flower or other natural item would provide a nice symbol. Depending on the size of the group you will need someone to pass the items out or pass around a basket so that each person can take one for themselves.)*

**Leader:** The Earth is our common home, receive [this stone / these seeds / this flower] as a symbol of our shared responsibility to care for creation. Grateful for the beauty of the world, the fellowship of creatures and the richness of the land and sea, let us recommit ourselves to wise stewardship of creation in our actions and inactions, in our eating and purchasing and in our prayer. Consider now one action will you begin or one you will stop doing to better care for the Earth.  
*(Pause)*

As you feel called, share what you plan to do with the community gathered here.  
*(Group Sharing)*

Children of God, created of Earth, let us go forth to care for creation.  
Pray with me word from Basil the Great:

**All:** **O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals [and all creatures] to whom you gave the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of humans with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to you in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that all creatures live not for us alone but for themselves and for you, and that they love the sweetness of life. Amen.**

If an opening and closing song are desired, consider the following options: *All Creatures of Our God and King, Let All Things Now Living, Song at the Center, On Holy Ground, or Sing Out Earth and Skies.*