

Call to Prayer:

As we gather this Earth Day in praise and thanksgiving for Creation, offered to each of us by our Creator, let us call to mind how we depend on and care for our common home:

- How do we return to the Earth the love, care and sustainment we receive from it?
- How can we better attend to the needs of one another through our attention to creation?

Opening Prayer:

God, Creator of All, we offer our prayer in gratitude and humility that we might heed your call to care for one another through our care of the least, the lowest and the most vulnerable of all your blessed creation. Grant, we pray, the courage to speak on behalf of the soft soil under our feet, the running and still waters, the warmth of the sun on our face, and all the crawling, flying and swimming creatures you love. May our courage to speak translate into actions that protect our planet – so that our children and their children might enjoy the fruits of what we sow.

In your name, we pray:

AMEN.

Reading:

Praise the Rain

Joy Harjo, 2019 U.S. Poet Laureate

Praise the rain; the seagull dive
The curl of plant, the raven talk—
Praise the hurt, the house slack
The stand of trees, the dignity—
Praise the dark, the moon cradle
The sky fall, the bear sleep—
Praise the mist, the warrior name
The earth eclipse, the fired leap—
Praise the backwards, upward sky
The baby cry, the spirit food—

Praise canoe, the fish rush
The hole for frog, the upside-down—
Praise the day, the cloud cup
The mind flat, forget it all—
Praise crazy. Praise sad.
Praise the path on which we're led.
Praise the roads on Earth and water.
Praise the eater and the eaten.
Praise beginnings; praise the end.
Praise the song and praise the singer.

Praise the rain; it brings more rain.
Praise the rain; it brings more rain.

[Joy Harjo, "Praise the Rain" from *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*. 2015]

Optional Musical Interlude:

"All Things Bright and Beautiful" (Rutter)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShpRCvU_bxM

Reading: John 4:34-38

A reading from the Gospel according to John:

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'In four months, the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest.

The reaper is already receiving his payment and gathering crops for eternal life so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here, the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection:

We are often reminded by the popular prayer that we are "prophets of a future not our own." While our work for a more equitable and just world starts with us, we recognize that our offering is only possible because of the care and attention paid by those who came before us. Likewise, those who come after us will inherit the outcomes of the ways in which we commit ourselves to restore and care for the world around us.

Call to mind again the mutual relationship we share with our common home:

- How do we return to the Earth the love, care and sustainment we receive from it?
- How can we better attend to the needs of one another through our attention to creation?

Closing Prayer:

God of rain and sun, of land and sea: we praise you for the most generous gifts of life.

In the crunch of leaves underfoot in fall, in the smallest bulb which bursts through the soil in spring: on these days, our offering of praise comes easily.

In the trying moments, when the shivering cold bites in winter, when the scorching sun burns in the summer, grant we pray that we may still offer you praise for your goodness.

Let our praise and thanksgiving be unceasing. Let them move us to action. God of all, grant us the courage and strength to engage in the necessary hard work of change for our home, for our brothers and sisters and for your names' sake.

AMEN.