



SEASON OF CREATION

Chicagoland Christians United for the Care of Creation **2020 SEASON OF CREATION ECUMENICAL GATHERING** **SEPTEMBER 1 – OCTOBER 4**

SOUNDS OF NATURE

These the words on the screen:

FEEL THE RICH SOIL. LISTEN TO THE SOUNDS OF OUR COMMON HOME.

TODAY WE GATHER IN UNION WITH ALL LIVING CREATURES WHO HAVE EVER CALLED THIS LAND HOME.

THE CHICAGO AREA IS LOCATED ON THE TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE THREE FIRES: THE OJIBWE, ODAWA AND POTAWATOMI NATIONS.

Marked by a global pandemic, this Season of Creation, (Sept 1 - Oct. 4), proclaims a Year of the Lord's Favor – a Jubilee Year for Planet Earth! In the Biblical tradition of Jubilee, you and I along with the global Christian Community are invited into prayer, reflection and bold action. Truly this will be a Year of God's Favor as together we activate our imaginations and create new ways of sustainable living for the flourishing of Earth—the Common home for all creatures! Please join us as we pray:

PRAYER:

We gather in the name of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of Earth and all its creatures
Praise be to the Holy Trinity! (Hildegard)

WE PRAY:

At Your word, Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit.

The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas and forests sustained life.

The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing.

And throughout time, Earth has sustained life.

Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons,

renewal and growth, You open Your hand to give creatures their food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, You granted a Sabbath; a blessed time

to rest in gratitude for all that You have given;

a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption;

a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production.

(Prayer from Season of Creation)

Song: ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

Confession

Scripture: Romans 13

“and whatever other commands there may be, are summed up in this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself.”. . . [b] 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.

Reading: HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

“The way we respond to the natural environment directly reflects the way we treat human beings. So the survival of the natural environment, is also the survival of ourselves. When will we understand that a crime against nature is a crime against ourselves and sin against God?”

Prayer: O God, we confess in our ignorance, we have forgotten the call of love to give Sabbath rest to the land from which we are born. Forgive us for exploiting our natural resources out of greed and ignorance. Forgive us for neglecting the common good.

All: (Sing) Hold us in Your mercy.
We have taken beauty and majesty for granted, and have lost our sense of awe
and wonder,

All: (Sing) Hold us in Your mercy.
You call us to fairness and justice. Forgive us for not loving You with our whole heart
and strength and mind, for not loving our neighbors as ourselves, and for failing to be
good stewards of creation.

All: (Sing) Hold us in Your mercy.

Prayer: Bp. Ken Carter, RENEW US IN THE WATERS OF RENEWAL AND FRESH HOPE,

Move in us with the winds of Your spirit,
and sustain us with Your promise of life and abundance for all.
In the name of Jesus Christ and for the sake of our precious planet, we pray. Amen.

Sing: WE PRAISE YOU, O GOD (© 1978, Damean Music)

We praise You O God for all Your works are wonderful.

We praise You, O God, forever is Your Love.

Your wisdom made the heavens and the earth. O Lord;

You formed the land then set the lights;

And like Your love the sun will rule the day,

And stars will grace the night.

Repeat Chorus (above)

PRAISE PRAYERS

1. We praise You in the cosmos, the glittering galaxies that humans have begun to explore as well as distant domains far beyond our imagination. There are also unknown domains deep within each minute molecule we have yet to comprehend. For each of these we praise and thank You.
2. We praise You for the forests, the lungs of our planet, blessing all species with breath to sing, to groan, to speak in all our various languages.

Sing: We Praise You, O God for all Your works are wonderful

1. We praise and thank You for the rich and bountiful soil, full of nutrients, coming forth in flowers and food to nourish all creatures.
2. We praise You for clean water, especially our Great Lakes, the essence of life, without which no creature lives, moves or has its being.

Sing: We Praise You, O God for all Your works are wonderful

1. We give thanks for the intricate design of flora and fauna comprising our ecosystems, revealing Your beauty. Inspire us with ways to protect each species and habitat necessary for the flourishing of life.

Sing: We Praise You, O God, for all Your works are wonderful

Prayer: Inspire us with creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. As we proclaim a year of Jubilee for Earth, send Your spirit to renew Our Common Home and all who dwell herein.

Prayers of Petition

Reading: from **FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S MISSION STATEMENT**

There is now urgency as never before to heed God's call to earth-keeping, to justice, and to community.

Social justice cannot be achieved in the absence of environmental justice. . . "The love of neighbor, particularly 'the least' of Christ's brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death."

Prayer: Holy Wisdom, impel our hearts to love. Transform our living from all that poisons to all that protects, from harm to harmony. Fill the hearts of humanity with enthusiasm for our vocation as Earth Keepers, we pray.

Sing: Christ be the light burning within You. Christ be the love we bring to Earth.

Reading: Pope Benedict XVI

"We must therefore encourage and support the "ecological conversion" which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading

Prayer: Spirit of the Living God, Transform us from a culture of consuming to a culture of caring, from a culture of greed to a culture of "enough," we pray.

Sing: Christ be. . .

Reading: Pope John Paul II (*World Day of Peace*)

“[W]e cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations.”

Prayer: Holy Spirit of Love, in the wake of COVID 19, all creation is gasping. Breathe in us. Inspire us with holy imagination for sustainable ways of living where all have enough, where Earth is restored and children are healthy and free to run and play without harm, we pray

Sing: Christ be. . .

Reading: (*Elder Porphyrios, Wounded by Love*, p. 218)

“All things around us are droplets of the love of God, both things animate and inanimate, the plants and the animals, the birds and the mountains, the sea and the sunset and the starry sky.

Prayer: Creator of the Universe, fill us with wonder and awe as we contemplate our amazing planet! Teach us to honor and care for all creation so that those who come after us may discover You in its beauty and majesty, we pray.

Reader: John 17:20-23

“My prayer is . . . may all be one, O God, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that it is You who sent me. I in them and You in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Prayer: Christ in whom we live, move and have our being, fill us with a thirst for unity, peace and justice for all of creation. Make us bold and courageous that we may glorify You in our actions to protect and heal Earth, we pray.

Sing: Christ be. . .

Conversion

Reading: Pope Francis “Laudato Si” 217, 219

Living our vocation as protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue. It is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. . .The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. . .the ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.

What will You do to act on your ecological conversion? What will you invite your community to do to act on your communal conversion?

Blessing:

Reading: Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ *Ask the Beasts* (p.xiv)

Once one understands that the evolving community of life on Earth is God’s beloved creation and its ruination an unspeakable sin, then deep affection shown in action on behalf of ecojustice becomes an indivisible part of one’s life.

Leader: May Christ who dances in creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God’s Glory in creation. (CTBI Eco-Congregation Program)

Missioning:

Go forth filled with wonder and awe at the glories of creation.

Go forth filled with gratitude for your vocation as Earth Keeper that future generations and indeed all life may flourish.

Go forth into this Jubilee Year in solidarity with all races and creatures with all generations to proclaim a year of Jubilee throughout the land.

(Sounds of Creation)

These words on the screen:

MAY THIS PRAYER BE FOLLOWED BY MEETINGS OF EVERY AGE GROUP IN OUR CHURCHES TO DISCUSS "NEXT STEPS WE WILL TAKE AS COMMUNITIES OF ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION.

Visit: SeasonofCreation.org for suggestions