

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

*A Christian Vigil in Thanksgiving
and Lamentation for Our Planet Home*



June 17, A.D. 2010
7:00 p.m.

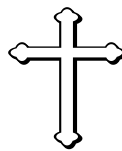
St. John's Episcopal Church
Charlotte, North Carolina

Officiants

The Right Reverend William Gregg
The Rev. Fr. Paul Winton

Assisting

The Rev. Amy Huacani
The Rev. Fr. Terry Harris
The Rev. Dr. Deacon Deb Blackwood



A Christian Vigil in Thanksgiving and Lamentation for Our Planet Home

God's people are invited to enter and remain in silent meditation and prayer on behalf of God's earth before the service actually begins.

Bidding Prayer

Officiant Almighty and merciful God, the Creator of all that was and is or ever will be; we gather before You tonight in humility and need. We have taken the planet earth, the cosmic gift from You to us and we have treated it badly. We have looked to the blue skies above and rather than treasure them, we have polluted them, we have walked on the soil You have given us to sustain life itself, and we have filled it with chemicals and toxins; we have treated the oceans, the home of Your majestic creation, as our dumping ground.

We come to You tonight, Lord God, and we seek Your help. We have penetrated the floor of Your ocean in search of oil, which we believe You have indeed given us for our use; yet we have taken too little care in how we would receive and use it and yet protect Your oceans and environment in the process. Our ignorance has cost You, Lord God, the lives of eleven men, people engaged in an enterprise of great cost and danger. The price paid: their lives and the peace and dreams of their families. May they rest in Holy Peace eternal. And now God of all, we find that we cannot reverse the great harm we have done. We do not seem to be able to stop the oil and Your beloved ocean and its creatures and dependents are at risk or are dying and livelihoods are vanishing.

We have gathered here tonight to implore You Lord, to reach down Your mighty arm into the ocean depths and stop the flow of this oil. We ask You to reverse the flow and stop the damage we have, by our ignorance, manufactured. We are indeed asking You, God of all that lives, to suspend for a season the very laws of the Universe that You put in place in the interest of protecting us and Your environment from ourselves.

If it be Your will, Lord God, to leave us in the chaos we have created, then we beseech You to hear us and guide us to the solution. Brighten our minds, quicken our imaginations, stir our willingness to work and create together so to mitigate the effects of our greed and help us restore that which was never ours to disturb.

We come to You, God, because You call us to do so, even when we have fallen short, even when we have been greedy, even when we have ignored the obvious truth that You have entrusted us with the care and stewardship of Your planet. It is our sacred obligation to leave this earth and enter Your eternal arms, this fragile gift being no worse for our brief time upon it.

Forgive us, Lord, and help us, for Your tender mercy's sake. *Amen.*

Meditative silence

A Canticle in Celebration of the Cosmic Order

A Song of Creation (*in unison, seated please*)

I *Invocation*

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

II *The Cosmic Order*

O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye waters that be above the firmament, bless ye the Lord;
O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord;
O ye showers and dew, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord;
O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye dews and frosts, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord;
O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord;
O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

III *The Earth and its Creatures*

O let the earth bless the Lord; *
O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord;
O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye wells, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye seas and floods, bless ye the Lord;
O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord; *
O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord;
O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

IV *The People of God*

O ye people of God, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord;
O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord; *
O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord.
Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; *
praise him and magnify him for ever.

Hymn 31 (*standing*) *Most Holy God, the Lord of Heaven*

Dunedin

A Reading about God's Creative Goodness: Genesis 1:1 – 2:1

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in 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." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God 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." God 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. And 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. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there

was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Beauty of the Earth

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, rivers and oceans; for the songs of birds, the beauty of fish and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Soil

Soil, in three forms, is carried into the Sanctuary and placed upon the altar as an offering to God; raw earth upon which we depend for much of our life on earth; soil in the form of clay formed into something of function and beauty, while yet in its greenware state to communicate that even that which God created is still evolving into that which He hopes for us; and finally ashes, a reminder of our temporal nature and eternal hope.

Officiant Lord God, Creator of all that sustains life itself, we give You thanks for the soils of the earth. From them come forth all which sustains us, upholds us and gives us the strength to wonder and hope. We give thanks to You for the glorious soils of the earth. May we be ever mindful that it is Your soil upon which we tread, it is Your soil within which we grow crops, it is Your soil upon which we depend for everything from shelter to grain. We thank You for that which is shaped and made from Your soils and we recognize that one day “all of us go down to dust” and part of Your soil we shall all become.

Silent Meditation

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Air

A glass vessel is carried forward and placed upon the altar in thanksgiving for air, that like so many things given us by God is impossible for us to see yet impossible for us to live without.

Officiant Through all of Creation, Lord God, You have breathed Your holy air into all living things. We give You thanks for Your air – air that we see in the gentle sway of Your trees when strong summer evening breezes blow; in the air beneath a child's kite; the movement of a wave across the water tops; the first heaving of an infant's chest, her lungs filling with the gift of life itself.

Silent Meditation

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Water

Water is carried into the Sanctuary and poured into the Baptismal Font

Officiant “We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.”

We give thanks to You, Lord God, for the water that flows across the earth and sustains life both within and without. We thank You for the majesty of oceans, for babbling brooks and silent mountain lakes, for mighty rushing rivers and crystal streams, for the wondrous waters of the earth and all the glories they provide and all the life they sustain.

Silent Meditation

Hymn 400 (*vs.1-4, standing*)

All creatures of our God and King

Lasst uns erfreuen

A Litany of Penitence for Our Mistreatment of God's Earth

Officiant In acknowledgement that the earth is Yours, Lord, we pray for forgiveness and mercy;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In our sin and resultant grief, for human life lost, for the death of creatures of the sea and coast;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In horror at our effects on Your planet;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In humility at our inability to control the damage we have begun;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In wonder and awe at the sheer magnitude of the strength of the forces of Your planet;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In surrender to the size of Your earth that dwarfs the human effort to control her forces;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In sorrow for our indifference to the harm in which we participate by our insatiable desire for more of everything, especially that which is extracted from Your earth;
People *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Officiant In shame for all the ways in which we mistreat Your earth, Your air and Your water and thereby mistreat our fellow human beings;
People *We beseech you to hear us, Good Lord.*

Officiant In embarrassment for our ignorance, our laziness and our selfishness regarding our responsibility to be good stewards of Your planet;
People *We beseech you to hear us, Good Lord.*

Officiant In commitment to a new day wherein we will take seriously our calling to care for the earth which is Yours and all its blessings and living things;
People *We beseech you to hear us, Good Lord.*

Officiant In promise to live in such a way that we celebrate and protect all Your creatures and the delicate environment in which they live and move and have their being;
People *We beseech you to hear us, Good Lord.*

Officiant In vows of obedience to you, as stewards of Your creation;
People *We beseech you to hear us, Good Lord.*

Officiant Merciful God, hear us;
People *Merciful God, hear us.*

Officiant Almighty God, hear us;
People *Almighty God, hear us.*

Officiant All powerful God, hear us;
People *All powerful God, hear us.*

Officiant All knowing God, hear us;
People *All knowing God, hear us.*

Officiant By your mercy, forgive us;
People *By your mercy, forgive us.*

Officiant By your might, instruct us;
People *By your might, instruct us.*

Officiant By your power, transform us;
People *By your power, transform us.*

Officiant By your knowing, change our hearts and minds;
People *By your knowing, change our hearts and minds.*

Kyrie eleison (*sung by the choir*)

Officiant Let us pray.

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and, for the glory of thy Name, turn from us those evils that we most justly deserve by our mistreatment of your earth. And grant that in all our troubles, which we confess are by our fault alone, we may yet put our whole trust and confidence in your mercy, and evermore live to serve you in holiness and pureness of environment and living, all to the honor and glory of you, O Father + Son + and Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Hymn (*seated*) *O Lord, hear my prayer* Taizé
O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Prayers

For the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority

O Lord our Governor, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to thy merciful care, that, being guided by thy Providence, we may dwell secure in thy peace. Grant to the President of the United States, the Governor of this State and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do thy will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in thy fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

For the Gulf Coast

Lord Christ, when you came among us, you proclaimed the kingdom of God in villages, towns, and lonely places: Grant that your presence and power may be known throughout this land. Have mercy upon all of us who live and work especially along the Gulf Coast; and grant that all the people of our nation may give thanks to you for food and drink and all other bodily necessities of life, respect those who labor to produce them, and honor the land and the water from which these good things come. All this we ask in your holy Name. *Amen.*

For Knowledge of God's Creation

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Conservation of Natural Resources

Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Future of the Human Race

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion over all the earth: Increase our reverence before the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Benediction and Blessing *(kneeling)*

Now, may the God of all Creation, redeemed in the New Adam, Christ our Lord, the Creator of the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the air, the seas and all that dwell therein, surround you with a sense of the majesty of Her creation; fill your mind with wonder at His generosity; gladden your heart with the earth's beauty, diversity and dignity and draw you ever more deeply into your calling as a steward of His earth.

And the Blessing of God the Father + God the Son + and God the Holy Spirit + bless, preserve and keep you and all of His creation – this night and forever more. *Amen.*

Hymn 398 *(standing)*

I sing the almighty power of God

Forest Green

Please depart in silence once the altar party has departed.



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