

PRAYER FOR EARTH DAY APRIL 22, 2018

Theme for 2018: *Mobilizing the World to End Plastic Pollution*

Suggestions for prayer environment: a globe or photo of Earth from space, a plastic bag, bowl of water

Suggestions for an opening hymn:

Canticle of the Sun, David Haas
For the Beauty of the Earth

How Great Thou Art
Morning Has Broken

Psalm 147: All

How good to celebrate our God in song; how sweet to give fitting praise. . . .
Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; with the lyre celebrate our God,
Who covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for Earth,
 makes grass sprout on the mountains,
Who gives animals their food and ravens what they cry for.

READING: Plastic and Marine Life: from Commentary by Sean McDonagh , [On Care for our Common Home, Laudato Si, The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment](#)

“The ubiquitous plastic bag also causes damage and great suffering to many marine creatures. A plastic bag bobbing up in the ocean looks like a jellyfish to a turtle. Once consumed, the plastic blocks the turtle’s intestines and causes a slow, painful death. . . . Oceanographers and ecologists have discovered that about 75 percent of the marine rubbish actually sinks to the bottom of the ocean. Both on the surface of the ocean, and on its floor, plastic does enormous damage to marine creatures.” (Chapter 5 of the Commentary)



Poem: *The Isle of Innisfree*, by William Butler Yeats (one reader or three readers)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening’s full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear the water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the heart’s deep core.

REFLECT quietly on the psalm, commentary and/or poem. Picture a garden or trees or a lake or ocean choked with plastic bags and debris. Picture yourself clearing the grass or trees or water of plastic. Feel them breathing again and thanking you.



READING: Earth Day (excerpt from Earth Day 2018 website)

Since 1970, Earth Day has been dedicated to raising individual and global awareness of the need for protection of our home, planet Earth. Care for Creation has always been part of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but there is greater urgency now as we face the alarming realities of climate change and the impact of harmful destruction of soil, water, and air by human actions and indifference. Earth Day is now a global event each year with more than 1 billion people in 192 countries taking part in political action and civic participation. Corporations and governments make pledges. Faith communities create worship and prayer resources and encourage action. Faith leaders, including Pope Francis, connect Earth Day with protection of God's precious Creation.

Earth Day 2018 will focus on mobilizing the world to End Plastic Pollution. Earth Day Network will educate millions of people about health and other risks, including pollution of oceans, water, and wildlife, as well as show growing evidence that decomposing plastics are creating serious global problems. Plastics poison and injure marine life and have a presence in our foods which disrupt human hormones, causing diseases and early puberty. The goal is to end single-use plastics, promote alternatives to fossil fuel-based materials, promote 100% recycling, and change human behavior.



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1. Next time you walk by the ocean or lake or river, pick up plastic bags or small plastic items and dispose of them properly.
2. Use cloth bags for shopping, not plastic bags.
3. When you purchase an item in plastic check to see if it has a recyclable image or wording.
4. Go to the Earth Day 2018 website for further information: www.earthday.org.

SHARING: If done in a group, share thoughts, questions, or actions you have taken or will take.

CLOSING PRAYER (by Operation Noah in Earth Day 2018 toolkit, Worship Resources: Prayers)

Creator God, how deep are your designs!
You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,
And charged us with their care.
We confess that the way we live today
Is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of life,
Dispossessing the poor and future generations.
Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,
And, as you promised Noah never to repeat the flood,
So make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:
Choosing life for all that is at risk--
For creation, neighbors near and far,
Our children and ourselves. AMEN.