

Prepare the prayer space with a candle and elements of God's creation- branch, flower, animals, fruit, water, dirt etc. or invite each person to bring a piece of creation to the prayer space.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust...Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life. (Excerpts from the Earth Charter)



**SONG:** any song that celebrates creation. Some suggestions...How Great Thou Art or a Jan Novotka song (e.g. A Holy Embrace , Heart of the Mother, or In the Center)

**READING:** Laudato Si, 139

When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it... We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

### MOMENT OF SILENCE

**READING** If we approached rivers, mountains, dragonflies, redwoods and reptiles as if all are alive, intelligent, suffused with soul, imagination and purpose, what might the world become?...What if we simply practiced honoring the wild Others as if they could hear us, as if they were responsive, and as if Earth depended on this reciprocity for continued flourishing? (from *Imagining Earth* by Geneen Marie Haugen)

**HONORING THE WILD OTHERS...** Each person goes outside or can choose one of God's creation from the prayer space. Honor it, this living being, and converse with it. What can you learn from this member of our earth community? After 10-15 minutes, return to the prayer space and share your reflections with the group.

**COMMUNAL BLESSING:** Together with hands extended in blessing ( by Jan Richardson)

May you know the embrace of Earth.

May she teach you the wisdom of time:

the unfolding of Spring,  
the ripening of Summer  
the turning of Autumn,  
the shedding of Winter.

May she teach you the wisdom of intimacy:  
seed embraced by warm, dark soil,  
crevice traced by insistent stream  
raindrop clinging to new, soft leaf,  
precious stones in hidden places.

May she teach you the wisdom of grace:  
flowers entwining fallen oak,  
healing gifts of common "weeds"  
grain for bread, fruit for wine,  
dancing stars through barren branches.

May you be known in Earth's embrace. Amen.



### SPONTANEOUS INTERCESSIONS

#### **CLOSING PRAYER:** A Prayer for Our Earth (from Laudato Si)

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

#### **FOR FURTHER REFLECTION...**

- Are we willing to expand our notion of morality to include an evaluation of our effect on all other living systems?
- Can we live on this planet in a mutually enhancing way by altering personal and communal lifestyles?
- Through prayer and contemplation, are we willing to let our present view of ourselves as independent and separate be transformed into the realization that we are indeed one, integrally united to everything that is?
- Can we truly live who we essentially are? (LCWR 2009)