

SOLAR UNDER THE SUN

EARTH DAY RESOURCES

Sunday, April 22, 2012



HYMN SUGGESTIONS

All Creatures of Our God and King
All Things Bright and Beautiful
Fairest Lord Jesus
God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens
God of the Sparrow
Lord of Light, Your Name Outshining
Morning Has Broken

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Colossians 1:15-20)

Leader: In the name of the One who is the firstborn of all creation,

People: We gather in the presence of God and assemble amid the beauty of nature in the glorious circle of life.

Leader: In the name of the One in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

People: We gather in the presence of God to celebrate with the birds that sing and the animals that enrich human life.

Leader: In the name of the One through whom God reconciled all things,

People: We gather in the presence of God to rejoice in the wondrous diversity of life.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

(Unison) **God of the universe, through Your grace You fill the world with Your glory and provide a home for all creation. Because all life is valued in Your sight, teach us to recognize its wonders, to treasure its variety, and to protect its fragile beauty. Make us mindful of the great responsibility we bear as stewards of Your earth, and grant that we may treat with respect the creatures that share our homes and our planet, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

(Unison) **God of all creation, although You have breathed life into all living things, far too often we abuse what You have called “good” for sport and entertainment. We praise You for the beauty and wonder of Your creation in earth and sky and sea, but we often fail to address issues of ethics and ecology. Because of greed or indifference, we have devastated the earth; we have harmed plants and animals; and we have jeopardized the well-being of our sisters and brothers upon the planet. Forgive us, Lord, and renew us through Your Holy Spirit, so that we may learn to respect what You have given and to honor what You have made. Give us the courage to speak on behalf of the nonhuman world whose voices are often muffled, silenced, and ignored, and inspire us with the courage to care for all living creatures and the strength to defend even the weakest of all, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (adapted from Ephesians 1:7-10)

Leader: Through Jesus Christ we have redemption and forgiveness through the riches of His grace that He lavished upon us.

People: According to God's good pleasure, God has set forth a plan to gather up all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

LITANY FOR EARTH DAY

Leader: God of all creation, because You call us to treasure the gift of life that You share with all creation, we pray that You would not only bless us with eyes to envision a world in harmony, but You would also empower us to fulfill Your mission for the benefit of all humanity.

People: Grant that we may respect all living creatures that surround us, and fill us with Your Spirit, O God, so that we may be made one with Your creation, and know that all things come from You, and belong to You.

Leader: Enlighten us so that we may perceive Your sacred presence among each reality in the universe. Deepen our appreciation for the unique beauty of the natural world that graces the earth; and because Your word is often revealed in unexpected ways, enable us to hear Your voice as You speak through the choruses of creation.

People: Compassionate God, evoke within us a sense of awe for all life. Bless us with new hearts that love, new ears that hear, and new eyes that see the unity of all creatures in Christ.

Leader: Gracious Lord, let Your blessing be upon all creation. May our care for our pets and other animals of the earth serve as a reflection of Your love, and grant that our concern for them would embody the bountiful mercy that You have shared with us.

People: Help us be good stewards of Your creation and continually find joy and wonder in all Your works. Give us a reverence for all life, so that we may utilize our gifts to care for the world You have made.

Leader: Heighten our senses so that we may discover the wonder that is revealed in nature; instill within us the discernment to value the interconnectedness of all things; and inspire us to live in harmony with all creation.

People: Magnify our desire to live at peace with the earth, and awaken us to the finely woven interdependence of Your creation. Inspire us with Your wisdom, so that we may seek to develop a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable way of life.

Leader: Lord of illumination, because even the darkness is not dark to You (Psalm 139:12), we thank You for Your light that shines in us, through us, and among us. Utilize us to reflect Your light, so that Your radiant grace may be shared with the world, and all creation may be blessed with manifestations of Your illuminating love.

People: As we seek to faithfully follow You, illumine our thoughts so that we may embrace Your wisdom; shine in our hearts so that we may reflect Your love; and strengthen our hands so that we may reach out to all people with the grace of the One who is the Light of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from *A Declaration of Faith*, 2.3)

**God made human beings together with all the other creatures
and charged us to care for the earth and all that lives on it.**

**We acknowledge we share in the interdependence
that binds together all God's creation.**

Yet God gives us power to rule and tame, to order and reshape the world.

We hold the earth in trust for future generations of living things.

The Lord forbids us to plunder, foul, and destroy the earth.

**The Lord expects us to produce, to consume, and to reproduce
in ways that make earth's goodness available to all people
and reflect God's love for all creatures.**

The Lord wants us to use our technical skills for beauty, justice, health and peace.

or

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from *A Brief Statement of Faith*, 10.3)

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

**In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.**

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

**Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.**

We deserve God's condemnation.

Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

The prophet Isaiah once spoke of the newness that would dawn for all humanity – “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined” (Isaiah 9:2).

While darkness is often used as a metaphor in Scripture, it is also a reality for many of our fellow human beings with whom we share the planet. Approximately one-third of the world's population (1.6 billion) have no electrical power and probably never will.

However, through the ministry of Solar Under the Sun, the people who live in a land of darkness can be blessed with power. Solar Under the Sun works to establish partnerships with our sisters and brothers in communities around the world, and through these partnerships we participate in bringing the gift of solar power that can enhance the quality of life for people in these villages and towns.

The solar array utilized by Solar Under the Sun can provide the power to run water treatment systems . . . it can supply lights for schools in remote places . . . or it can also be used as a power source for communication, medical clinic refrigerators or x-ray equipment.

Clearly, our gifts to Solar Under the Sun not only help to train and equip individuals and teams to work with communities in other corners of God's kingdom, but they also serve in making a difference in the world as we seek to reflect the light of Christ.

May you be illumined with God's love as you share your gifts with Solar Under the Sun.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving Lord and Giver of all good gifts, from the abundance of Your grace and the combination of earth, sun, and water, You have blessed us with the fruit of glorious harvest. As we cherish, respect, and care for our natural environment, grant that our lives, our talents, and our resources will be used to promote Your work, so that we may recognize our connectedness with all living beings, and all creation may be blessed with the gift of life, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

CLOSING RESPONSES

Leader: As we have been inspired and strengthened through worship, let us now walk into the world to serve.

People: May the light of the Lord illumine us with new insights.

Leader: May the light of the Lord warm us with the gifts of faith, hope, and love.

People: May the light of the Lord provide the beacon that leads us along God's pathways of peace.