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| Week | Hebrew Scripture  | Psalm | New Testament | Gospel |
| Week 1: Creation Belongs to God | Job 38:1-18 | Psalm 19:1-8,14 | Revelation 4:1-2, 6b-11 | John 1:1-5 |
| Week 2: God Delights in Creation | Isaiah 55:10-13 | Psalm 65 | 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 | Matthew 6:24-33 |
| Week 3: God Does Not Delight in Destruction | Genesis 9:8-17 | Psalm 33:13-22 | Colossians 1:15-23 | Mark 4:37-41 |
| Week 4: God Equips us for Creation Care | Genesis 1: 26-30 | Psalm 8 | Acts 17: 22-28 | Matthew 6:7-15 |

**Prayers for Week 1 of *Singing Plains, Calling Mountains***

Helped by the same Spirit who moved over the waters at the beginning of creation, we pray together.

Loving Creator, we are in awe of your power and glory as revealed in all of creation. Your presence in both the details and the big picture brings comfort and builds trust. Grant us, we pray, an even greater awareness of our own place and vocations within all that you have made.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Loving Creator, you told your servant Job about your awareness and joy in the details of creation- both land and creatures. We call your attention to the places where your works ache because of fires, drought, unbearable heat, and plagues of insects, especially here in Montana. Pour out your healing mercy in each of these situations for the sake of your handiwork- land, animals, and people.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Loving Creator, we give you thanks for those whose direct vocation is stewarding the earth- ranchers and farmers, park rangers and wildlife specialists, fire fighters and fishing guides. Grant them patience, safety, and joy in their work. Inspire and sustain them in all they do. Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Loving Creator, guide leaders of our community and nation, as well as us, into deeper understanding of the changing climate of our planet. Help us to comprehend both the shape of scientific wisdom and the ways we can grow in love for the earth you have made.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Loving Creator, we are grateful for all the saints, now at rest, whose lives taught us about the beauty of the earth and the significance of community in Christ. May we continue in faithfulness to the truths we learned from them until we join that great company in praise around your throne.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

*Here other prayers may be offered.*

We know, God of all, that you hear us when we pray- both what is said aloud and what we keep in our hearts, but is never hidden from you. We trust your great faithfulness in all things for you have revealed it to us- first in creation and then in life, work, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

**Prayers for Week 2 of *Singing Plains, Calling Mountains***

Helped by the same Spirit who moved over the waters at the beginning of creation, we pray together.

God of all joys, we celebrate your delight in all you have made. From the depths of secret fishing spots to the heights of eagle nests, you have created a world of captivating marvels and mysteries. Strengthen us, through the Holy Spirit, to share in the Divine joy in all that has been made.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

God of all mercy, you have called your people together as one church to be ambassadors for Christ in all we say and do. As we have been reconciled to you through his faithfulness, may we also bear faithful witness to the world that all may be drawn in by Jesus’s love.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

God of all provision, your creation provides enough for the needs of all- people, animals, and land. Instill in all people, especially those in leadership positions, a deeper awareness of enough and grant us the will and courage to be generous and patient stewards of all you have made.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

God of all healing, we pray for those who are pained in body, mind, or spirit. Fill them the wholeness that can only come from you. Uphold those who care for the sick and the dying, that they may be sustained in their vocations.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Loving Creator, we are grateful for all the saint of your whole earthly congregation who now rest in the peace of your eternal joy. Guide us in our own pilgrimages of faith until we join them, in your good timing, in praise around your throne.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

*Here other prayers may be offered.*

We know, God of all, that you hear us when we pray- both what is said aloud and what we keep in our hearts, but is never hidden from you. We trust your great faithfulness in all things for you have revealed it to us- first in creation and then in life, work, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

**Prayers for Week 3 of *Singing Plains, Calling Mountains***

Helped by the same Spirit who moved over the waters at the beginning of creation, we pray together.

Holy God, you are both the reconciler and the reconciliation of all things. In division, you bring unity. In brokenness, you provide healing. In mistrust, you bring peace. Help us to remain firmly rooted in our hope in you and to grow more fully into the people you have made and called us to be.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Holy God, in the beginning, you made all things perfectly, revealing your love and power. While your love and power remain as strong as ever, we acknowledge that there are forces that oppose, wreaking havoc to the balance you carefully made. Strengthen our renunciations of these powers, in word and deed, that we may turn away from destruction and be part of your work of healing all you have made.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Holy God, we acknowledge before you our complicated history with your creation. We know that there were people here before us- both people we acknowledge and people whose presence is lost to us, but familiar to you. Help our leaders and our communities tell the truth to another and the world, that we may seek to heal wounded relationships and learn from one another.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Holy God, we pray for those who have received difficult diagnoses, those who are receiving treatments, and those who are dying. We ask for your presence to be with them, and those who love them, in clear and tangible ways. May your Spirit be felt by all those who offer care and comfort to the struggling, the sick and the dying.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Holy God, the One who stills the storm with a word has promised to draw all people through himself and into the Divine presence. We give thanks for those who have gone before and are now at peace in that holy rest. Sustain us in our work and our rest until we join that blessed company.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

*Here other prayers may be offered.*

We know, God of all, that you hear us when we pray- both what is said aloud and what we keep in our hearts, but is never hidden from you. We trust your great faithfulness in all things for you have revealed it to us- first in creation and then in life, work, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

**Prayers for Week 4 of *Singing Plains, Calling Mountains***

Helped by the same Spirit who moved over the waters at the beginning of creation, we pray together.

We learn from Jesus how to pray. We ask for earth to mirror heaven in fulfilling the Divine will. We offer gratitude for how our daily needs are met and sincerely desire to have all evil forces and plans defeated. We seek to be open to receiving forgiveness and generous in giving the same.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

The smell of smoke, the rushing of wind, and the uncertainty of weather predictions fill our minds. We pray for all of creation- land and water, plants and animals. Heal your aching creation and grant us the wisdom and grace to be part of that work.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Images from the daily news are haunting and grievous. Our hearts are pierced with pain for the people of Afghanistan and the people of Haiti. We humbly acknowledge the complexities of each situation, and that the depth of need is not hidden from you. Pour out healing and hope to those in need and strengthen those who are offering aid. Guide us in our own faithful responses.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

Our bodies are a gift from you. Among us and around us, there are people with the aches and pains of aging, the struggles of chronic illness, and the acute suffering of new diagnoses. Bring forth the wholeness that can only come from you wherever brokenness exists in our bodies and those around us.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

We pray for all who are returning to school in the week ahead. For teachers and students, for aides and support staff, for administrators and coaches- we ask a blessing for safety, health, and encouragement. May all people see and receive education as a gift, honoring and respecting those engaged the work of teaching and learning.

Receive our prayer, O Lord. **And in your mercy, answer us.**

*Here other prayers may be offered.*

We know, God of all, that you hear us when we pray- both what is said aloud and what we keep in our hearts, but is never hidden from you. We trust your great faithfulness in all things for you have revealed it to us- first in creation and then in life, work, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

The goal of *Singing Plains, Calling Mountains* is to create space in worship to hear, teach, and reflect on the role of creation and creation care in Scripture, in the will of God, and in our baptismal vows. Bringing forth all that is seen and unseen was the first outpouring of Divine Love that we are able to perceive and trust. Learning how to see God’s presence in creation and how to more fully embrace our role as stewards in accordance with God’s will is part of how we love our neighbors as ourselves. Through music, spoken liturgy, and the scripture passages, this liturgy offers community support to the vocation we all share in caring for the world that God made.

Texts included in materials for this series are shared from the *Common English Bible* (CEB). Liturgical aspects draw from a variety of translations and paraphrases, including *The Message*. You are welcome to use a different scriptural translation for reading in your congregation as is appropriate to your context.

**Week 1:**

**Theme: *Creation Belongs to God***

*As children of God, we are reminded again and again that God is God and we are not. The quickest way to remember this lesson is to be alert and attentive to all that happens in creation without our effort. The One who made and loves huckleberries and sage, lodge-pole pines and willows, rainbow trout and bison, is the same One who made and loves each of us.*

**First Reading: Job 38:1-18**

*The Lord’s words to Job can seem harsh, since we know they are spoken to one who had suffered greatly. They are, ultimately, a comfort. A God this involved in creation is more than aware of and present to our pain and trials.*

Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind:

**2** Who is this darkening counsel

 with words lacking knowledge?

**3** Prepare yourself like a man;

 I will interrogate you, and you will respond to me.

**4** Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundations?

 Tell me if you know.

**5** Who set its measurements? Surely you know.

 Who stretched a measuring tape on it?

**6** On what were its footings sunk;

 who laid its cornerstone,

**7**  while the morning stars sang in unison

 and all the divine beings shouted?

**8** Who enclosed the Sea[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+38%3A1-18%09&version=CEB&interface=print#fen-CEB-13802a)] behind doors

 when it burst forth from the womb,

**9**  when I made the clouds its garment,

 the dense clouds its wrap,

**10**  when I imposed[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+38%3A1-18%09&version=CEB&interface=print#fen-CEB-13804b)] my limit for it,

 put on a bar and doors

**11**  and said, “You may come this far, no farther;

 here your proud waves stop”?

**12** In your lifetime have you commanded the morning,

 informed the dawn of its place

**13**  so it would take hold of earth by its edges

 and shake the wicked out of it?

**14** Do you turn it over like clay for a seal,

 so it stands out like a colorful garment?

**15** Light is withheld from the wicked,

 the uplifted arm broken.

**16** Have you gone to the sea’s sources,

 walked in the chamber of the deep?

**17** Have death’s gates been revealed to you;

 can you see the gates of deep darkness?

**18** Have you surveyed earth’s expanses?

 Tell me if you know everything about it.

**Psalm 19:1-8, 14**

*God’s graciousness prepared creation for flourishing and the wise heart meditates on this and finds joy and peace.*

**1** Heaven is declaring God’s glory;

 **the sky is proclaiming his handiwork.**

**2** One day gushes the news to the next,

 **and one night informs another what needs to be known.**

**3** Of course, there’s no speech, no words—

 **their voices can’t be heard—**

**4** but their sound extends throughout the world;

 their words reach the ends of the earth.

**God has made a tent in heaven for the sun.**

**5** The sun is like a groom

 coming out of his honeymoon suite;

  **like a warrior, it thrills at running its course.**

6 It rises in one end of the sky;

 its circuit is complete at the other.

 **Nothing escapes its heat.**

 **7** The Lord’s Instruction is perfect,

 reviving one’s very being.

**The Lord’s laws are faithful,**

 **making naive people wise.**

**8** The Lord’s regulations are right,

 gladdening the heart.

**The Lord’s commands are pure,**

 **giving light to the eyes.**

**14** Let the words of our mouths

 and the meditations of our hearts

 be pleasing to you,

  **Lord, our rock and our redeemer.**

**Second Reading: Revelation 4:1-2, 6b-11**

*The visions of Revelation remind us that there is more to creation than we can perceive or understand. Yet, there is no part of creation that is separate from the Creator. God’s presence- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- permeates all that is and all that will be, just as it always has been.*

After this I looked and there was a door that had been opened in heaven. The first voice that I had heard, which sounded like a trumpet, said to me, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” **2** At once I was in a Spirit-inspired trance and I saw a throne in heaven, and someone was seated on the throne.

**6** Something like a glass sea, like crystal, was in front of the throne. In the center, by the throne, were four living creatures encircling the throne. These creatures were covered with eyes on the front and on the back. **7** The first living creature was like a lion. The second living creature was like an ox. The third living creature had a face like a human being. And the fourth living creature was like an eagle in flight. **8** Each of the four living creatures had six wings, and each was covered all around and on the inside with eyes. They never rest day or night, but keep on saying,

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,

 who was and is and is coming.”

**9** Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one seated on the throne, who lives forever and always, **10** the twenty-four elders fall before the one seated on the throne. They worship the one who lives forever and always. They throw down their crowns before the throne and say,

**11** “You are worthy, our Lord and God,

 to receive glory and honor and power,

 because you created all things.

 It is by your will that they existed and were created.”

**Gospel: John 1:1-5**

*Before the incarnation, the Word of God witnessed the making of all things in love. The power of this Word of grace and hope eventually came in the flesh to make known, more fully, what has always been true about Divine love and will for creation.*

In the beginning was the Word

 and the Word was with God

 and the Word was God.

**2** The Word was with God in the beginning.

**3** Everything came into being through the Word,

 and without the Word

 nothing came into being.

What came into being

**4**  through the Word was life,

 and the life was the light for all people.

**5** The light shines in the darkness,

 and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light.

**Week 2: God Delights in Creation**

*The created world functions in an interdependent way that mirrors the love that exists between members of the Holy Trinity. God’s joy in this relationship is revealed by creatures at play, the splendor of colors and textures, and the bursting forth of new life after natural disasters. Our Holy Parent delights in the well-being and interplay of creation and created beings.*

**Isaiah 55:10-13**

*Even the rain and the snow carry promises from God- promises of a nourished earth, as well as a dependable water table and water cycles. God’s promises are always for healing, wholeness, and hope.*

Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky

 and don’t return there without watering the earth,

 making it conceive and yield plants

 and providing seed to the sower and food to the eater,

**11**  so is my word that comes from my mouth;

 it does not return to me empty.

 Instead, it does what I want,

 and accomplishes what I intend.

**12** Yes, you will go out with celebration,

 and you will be brought back in peace.

Even the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you;

 all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

**13** In place of the thorn the cypress will grow;

 in place of the nettle the myrtle will grow.

This will attest to the Lord’s stature,

 an enduring reminder that won’t be removed.

**Psalm 65**

*God’s power is revealed in the power and majesty of creation. The energy of the earth’s abundance reflects a truth about the nature of the Divine and how Divine love finds joy.*

**1**God of Zion, to you even silence is praise.

 Promises made to you are kept—

**2  you listen to prayer—**

 **and all living things come to you.**

**3** When wrongdoings become too much for me,

 you forgive our sins.

**4 How happy is the one you choose to bring close,**

 **the one who lives in your courtyards!**

**We are filled full by the goodness of your house,**

 **by the holiness of your temple.**

**5** In righteousness you answer us,

 by your awesome deeds,

 God of our salvation—

 you, who are the security

 of all the far edges of the earth,

 even the distant seas.

**6  You establish the mountains by your strength;**

 **you are dressed in raw power.**

**7**  You calm the roaring seas;

 calm the roaring waves,

 calm the noise of the nations.

**8 Those who dwell on the far edges**

 **stand in awe of your acts.**

 **You make the gateways**

 **of morning and evening sing for joy.**

**9** You visit the earth and make it abundant,

 enriching it greatly

 by God’s stream, full of water.

You provide people with grain

 because that is what you’ve decided.

**10 Drenching the earth’s furrows,**

 **leveling its ridges,**

 **you soften it with rain showers;**

 **you bless its growth.**

**11** You crown the year with your goodness;

 your paths overflow with rich food.

**12 Even the desert pastures drip with it,**

 **and the hills are dressed in pure joy.**

**13** The meadowlands are covered with flocks,

 the valleys decked out in grain—

 **they shout for joy;**

 **they break out in song!**

**2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

*The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about their status as newly created people in Christ. God’s delight, poured out in the Incarnation, means that we see all of creation, including ourselves, in the dawning light of this fresh reconciliation.*

**11** So we try to persuade people, since we know what it means to fear the Lord. We are well known by God, and I hope that in your heart we are well known by you as well. **12** We aren’t trying to commend ourselves to you again. Instead, we are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us so that you could answer those who take pride in superficial appearance, and not in what is in the heart.

**13** If we are crazy, it’s for God’s sake. If we are rational, it’s for your sake. **14** The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: one died for the sake of all; therefore, all died.**15** He died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised.

**16** So then, from this point on we won’t recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn’t how we know him now. **17** So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

**18** All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. **19** In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people’s sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

**20** So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!” **21** God caused the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God.

**Matthew 6:24-33**

*Divine provision for the natural world reminds us that nothing escapes God’s notice. This provision is evidence of love, the eternal love that is the bedrock, source, and ultimate resting place of all things. Jesus tells those who listen of this love, encouraging them to let go of their worries and their illusions of control.*

[Jesus said,] **24** No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

**25** “Therefore, I say to you, don’t worry about your life, what you’ll eat or what you’ll drink, or about your body, what you’ll wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothes? **26** Look at the birds in the sky. They don’t sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth much more than they are? **27** Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life? **28** And why do you worry about clothes? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don’t wear themselves out with work, and they don’t spin cloth.**29** But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his splendor wasn’t dressed like one of these. **30** If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it’s alive today and tomorrow it’s thrown into the furnace, won’t God do much more for you, you people of weak faith? **31** Therefore, don’t worry and say, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are we going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’ **32** Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** Instead, desire first and foremost God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

**Week 3: God Does Not Delight in Destruction**

*Trusting in the truths that creation belongs to God and God delights therein, we cannot also hold that God rejoices in destruction. We look to the scriptures to understand that pain in creation is never God’s desire nor God’s will. Even when the scriptures indicate that God is the cause of destructive elements, God’s grief is part of the story. Neither passive nor intentional human destruction of creation is part of God’s instructions for stewardship of the earth.*

**Genesis 9:8-17**

*The flood narrative shows two aspects of God’s grieving. God ached for the wickedness evident in human behavior and God grieved the destruction of creation, which included people, plants, land, and non-human animals. The covenant with Noah reveals a truth about Divine Love. This Love does not find joy in destruction and covenants for flourishing with all life- not just people.*

**8** God said to Noah and to his sons with him, **9** “I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, **10** and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you. **11** I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

**12** God said, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation. **13** I have placed my bow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth.**14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, **15** I will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures. **16** The bow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring covenant between God and every living being of all the earth’s creatures.” **17** God said to Noah, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth.”

**Psalm 33:13-22**

*Wars and disasters are never God’s desire for creation. The Holy Spirit is always on the move, providing more than we need. This same Spirit works continuously to make us aware of God’s power and presence in the world.*

**13**The Lord looks down from heaven;

 he sees every human being.

**14 From his dwelling place God observes**

 **all who live on earth.**

**15** God is the one who made all their hearts,

 the one who knows everything they do.

**16 Kings aren’t saved by the strength of their armies;**

 **warriors aren’t rescued by how much power they have.**

**17** A warhorse is a bad bet for victory;

 it can’t save despite its great strength.

**18 But look here: the Lord’s eyes watch all who honor him,**

 **all who wait for his faithful love,**

**19**  to deliver their lives from death

 and keep them alive during a famine.

**20 We put our hope in the Lord.**

 **He is our help and our shield.**

**21** Our heart rejoices in God

 because we trust his holy name.

**22 Lord, let your faithful love surround us**

 **because we wait for you.**

**Colossians 1:15-23**

*Christ’s relationship with people is one revelation of God’s love for the whole creation. The distance perceived between people and their Creator is a function of people’s misperceptions, not God’s desires. The everlasting love revealed in Jesus is God’s eternal refutation of the implication of a destroyed relationship between the Divine and creation.*

**15** The Son is the image of the invisible God,

 the one who is first over all creation,

**16** Because all things were created by him:

 both in the heavens and on the earth,

 the things that are visible and the things that are invisible.

 Whether they are thrones or powers,

 or rulers or authorities,

 all things were created through him and for him.

**17** He existed before all things,

 and all things are held together in him.

**18** He is the head of the body, the church,

who is the beginning,

 the one who is firstborn from among the dead

 so that he might occupy the first place in everything.

**19** Because all the fullness of God was pleased to live in him,

**20**  and he reconciled all things to himself through him—

 whether things on earth or in the heavens.

 He brought peace through the blood of his cross.

**21** Once you were alienated from God and you were enemies with him in your minds, which was shown by your evil actions. **22** But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death, to present you before God as a people who are holy, faultless, and without blame. **23** But you need to remain well established and rooted in faith and not shift away from the hope given in the good news that you heard. This message has been preached throughout all creation under heaven. And I, Paul, became a servant of this good news.

**Mark 4:35-41**

*The disciples were dismayed that Jesus seemed unaware of their distress and fear. Yet, Jesus was truly with them the whole time. In Jesus’ presence, we have One whom even the winds and the waves obey. For He, as part of the Godhead, is their source. Neither Holy Parent, Holy Son, or Holy Spirit rest in the presence of destructive forces.*

**35** Later that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the lake.” **36** They left the crowd and took him in the boat just as he was. Other boats followed along.

**37** Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped. **38** But Jesus was in the rear of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. They woke him up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re drowning?”

**39** He got up and gave orders to the wind, and he said to the lake, “Silence! Be still!” The wind settled down and there was a great calm. **40** Jesus asked them, “Why are you frightened? Don’t you have faith yet?”

**41** Overcome with awe, they said to each other, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

**Week 4: God Equips us for Creation Care**

*Creation belongs to God. God delights in creation’s flourishing and does not find joy in its destruction. Through our life in Christ, rooted in our baptisms, we are invited into caring for creation with the Spirit’s help and guidance. Caring for creation is more than an action here or there, but is rather part of the shape of our vocation as children of God. We can no more ignore this calling than we can, in good conscience, set aside any of our other baptismal vows.*

**Genesis 1: 26-30**

*In the first creation account, people are made in the divine image. This is not about how people look, but about the skills and desires they have been given. People are made with the skills and desires to create and to help creation flourish, just as God had done in the previous five days. The blessing to care for the earth and all therein is anchored in our creation in the image of God.*

**26** Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”

**27** God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.

**28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.” **29** Then God said, “I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food. **30** To all wildlife, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food.” And that’s what happened.

**Psalm 8**

*It is a blessing to be included in God’s work on earth by caring for creation. This God-given vocation stems from God’s love and trust in human beings and our capabilities.*

**1**Lord, our Lord, how majestic

 is your name throughout the earth!

 You made your glory higher than heaven!

**2 From the mouths of nursing babies**

 **you have laid a strong foundation**

 **because of your foes,**

 **in order to stop vengeful enemies.**

**3** When I look up at your skies,

 at what your fingers made—

 the moon and the stars

 that you set firmly in place—

**4  what are human beings**

 **that you think about them;**

 **what are human beings**

 **that you pay attention to them?**

**5** You’ve made them only slightly less than divine,

 crowning them with glory and grandeur.

**6 You’ve let them rule over your handiwork,**

 **putting everything under their feet—**

**7**  all sheep and all cattle,

 the wild animals too,

8  the birds in the sky,

 the fish of the ocean,

 everything that travels the pathways of the sea.

**9** Lord, our Lord, **how majestic is your name throughout the earth!**

**Acts 17: 22-28**

*The Athenians want to be sure they’ve covered all potential deity bases, so they even have an idol “to an unknown God”. Paul explains to them that the true God needs no idol because this God’s monuments are all around them. This God is the source of their life and all their good works. The same is true for us.*

**22** Paul stood up in the middle of the council on Mars Hill and said, “People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way.**23** As I was walking through town and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown God.’ What you worship as unknown, I now proclaim to you. **24** God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn’t live in temples made with human hands. **25** Nor is God served by human hands, as though he needed something, since he is the one who gives life, breath, and everything else. **26** From one person God created every human nation to live on the whole earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. **27** God made the nations so they would seek him, perhaps even reach out to him and find him. In fact, God isn’t far away from any of us. **28** In God we live, move, and exist. As some of your own poets said, ‘We are his offspring.’

**Matthew 6:7-15**

*We are “bold” when we pray as Jesus taught us because we are daring to ask that God use us in the accomplishment of the Divine will on earth, just as we trust it is accomplished in heaven. Participation in God’s kingdom and will includes caring for creation in accordance with the Love that made all things. We cannot pray this prayer without that awareness.*

[Jesus said to the crowd on the hill,] **7** “When you pray, don’t pour out a flood of empty words, as the Gentiles do. They think that by saying many words they’ll be heard. **8** Don’t be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask. **9** Pray like this:

Our Father who is in heaven,
uphold the holiness of your name.
**10** Bring in your kingdom
so that your will is done on earth as it’s done in heaven.
**11** Give us the bread we need for today.
**12** Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you,
just as we also forgive those who have wronged us.
**13** And don’t lead us into temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.
**14** “If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you don’t forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins.”

**Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness**

All praise, honor, and trust is due to God,

The source and ground of our being,

The + pioneer of our salvation,

The sustainer of all that is and will be. **Amen.**

God is present in contrite hearts. Longing for forgiveness is a sign of the Spirit’s work.

*Silence for reflection*.

God, our God, your mercy and love are beyond our understanding.

**Like a prairie thirsting for rain,**

**We are open to you, O Lord.**

**Nothing is hidden from you.**

**Revealed by your Love, we acknowledge**

**Our mistakes and our omissions,**

**Pain we have caused and callings we have failed to heed.**

**We confess all of this to you**

**And we admit that it is already known to you,**

**Along with those things we have forgotten.**

**Renew us by your grace**

**That we may live in harmony among ourselves**

**And with your whole creation.**

Beloved of God, it is the will of the Divine

That all may know the nearness of love and abundant forgiveness.

Like the rain and the snow, God’s word of grace pours forth

And does not return without accomplishing its task of healing and restoration.

You, beloved, are forgiven all your sins.

Go in the world, led by the Spirit, to be met by Christ in all you do.

Amen.

***OR***

**Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Gathered in the name of God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,

We give thanks for the water of life, into which we were born by grace

and which renews us again and again.

Glorious God of all rivers, streams, and creeks,

We thank you for your continuous, moving love from before the beginning of all things.

Your love is the source of our existence and sustains our hope.

On the currents of your mercy, we are borne through this life and we are never alone.

Generous God of ponds, lakes, and reservoirs,

Your holy stillness is an anchor for us in a chaotic world.

Held in the Spirit’s embrace, we become more aware of our deep connection

To you, to one another, and to the whole creation.

In an outpouring of your lovingkindness, we are made into community beyond our own understanding and definitions.

Gracious God of glaciers, aquifers, and clouds,

We are in awe of your power, might, and majesty.

Through the waters of our baptism,

Strengthen our awareness of your presence and your will.

Help us commitment ever more fully to the work

Of imitating Christ, loving our neighbors, and caring for the world you have made.

To you, Creator of the Universe,

All glory, honor, and praise is due

Now and forever.

Amen.

**Prayer of the Day (Week 1)**

Holy God, every aspect of creation belongs to you. What you have made out of your love and power is beyond our comprehension. Guide us into deeper understanding of your beloved handiwork and our place in it. All blessing, honor, and glory is yours, Holy Parent, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**Prayer of the Day (Week 2)**

God of our salvation, every part of creation is known to you- from the smallest feathers and scales to the tallest buttes and mountains. No part of what you have made escapes your care. Teach us to set aside our worries and to embrace the fullness of life in Christ, caring for others and the world that you have made. With the rivers and streams, we pour forth praise for you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Prayer of the Day (Week 3)**

God of power and might, we put our hope in your as our shield from all harm. We trust that you are indeed grieved by destruction and pain in the earth. Help us to perceive the presence of Jesus with us in times of pain and terror. Bring into our hearts and into all creation the peace that can only come from the One to whom the wind and the waves listen. Amen.

**Prayer of the Day (Week 4)**

God of all creation, through Jesus, you taught us to pray. As we ask for your will to be done on earth as in heaven, strengthen our courage, desire, and openness to be part of how that will is accomplished in our own homes, communities, and across the earth. Our highest allegiance is to your Divine will, poured out in love through creation, incarnation, and resurrection for all. Amen.

**Offering Prayer**

All that we have, O God, comes from you. Our time, our possessions, our skills, and our knowledge are gifts from your generous spirit. We offer to you what is your own that it may be used to your glory and for the good of your creation in this community and throughout the world. Amen.

**Great Thanksgiving**

The God of all creation be with you.

**And also with you.**

The presence of Christ fill you with peace and wholeness

**May it be the same for our neighbors and friends.**

The Spirit of holiness and restoration stir within you.

**Make it so for us and for all creation.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, by your very nature to receive glory and honor and power. Out of your wisdom and love, you created all things- seen and unseen. The scope of your creation is beyond our full understanding and we are in awe of your holy imagination. Out of this love for all things, Jesus came into the created world and lived among us- that we might grow in deeper awareness of the Divine presence, will, and love. All creation is redeemed through his life, death, and resurrection. And so, with singing plains and calling mountains, with whispering cottonwoods and swaying pines, with howling wolves and chattering prairie dogs, with all the saints who have gone before, we join in the song of all creation and sing your praise:

**[Holy, holy, holy]**

Indeed, you are holy, worthy of praise and our highest allegiance.

We cannot flee from your presence nor would we wish to.

You are present in the calmest of days and in the whipping of a windstorm.

You are present in the swirl of river rapids and in the cracked earth of a dried pond.

You are present in the in panting of a deer and in the screech of an osprey.

You are present in the tang of the huckleberry and the mildness of Montana wheat.

Your holy presence is most clear to us in Jesus Christ, the word made flesh and the pioneer of our faith.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and this cup, we give thanks for the Word living in and among us,

Full of wisdom and power.

We rejoice in our new life through his death and resurrection.

As we await Christ’s coming again in glory,

We pray for the Holy Spirit to empower us as his body on earth,

To do the work of caring for others and for the whole creation.

May his presence in this meal grant us the willingness and the strength to

Imitate him more fully in all things.

To the One who hears all our prayers,

At this meal, where you promise to meet us,

We offer our deepest gratitude, our most sincere awe,

And our humblest requests for your guidance and help.

Amen.

**Post- Communion Prayer**

Creator of all, at this table

You have fed our faith and given us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Send us out, renewed, into your world

That we may carry the good news of Christ’s love

And do the good work of his compassionate healing

Wherever the Spirit leads us.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

From the breath of the plains,

To the heights of the mountains,

There is nothing that can separate you from the love of God,

In whom you live, move, and have your being.

God- Creator, + Redeemer, and Sustainer of all creation- bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace to care for God’s creation.

**Thanks be to God.**