# Worship Planning

# Creation Time in the Season of Pentecost

## What Is Creation Saying to Us?

# Fourth Sunday, Year B (or World Communion Sunday): Lend Me Your Voice!

Texts (non-lectionary): Isaiah 55: 12; Psalm 104; Romans 8:18–23; Matthew 24:32–36

Submitted by Richard Bott

*\*Indicates that the congregation is invited to rise as they are able.*

### God Calls Us Together

#### Greeting

One: God is with you.

**All: And also with you.**

#### \*Welcoming One Another in Christ's name

#### Musical Interlude

#### We Light the Christ Candle

#### Call to Gather

One: Listen! (*10 counts of silence*)

What do you hear? (*pause*)

The buzz of an airplane?

The whoosh of a car?

The hammering of nails?

The ticking of a clock?

**All: People sounds.**

**Every moment of every day.**

One: Listen—deeper! (*10 counts of silence*)

What do you hear? (*pause*)

The whoosh of the wind?

The rustle of the leaves?

The song of a bird?

The buzz of a fly?

**All: Nature sounds.**

**There, but hidden under our noise.**

One: Listen—even deeper! (*10 counts of silence*)

What do you hear? (*pause*)

The wash of the waves on a distant shore?

The grinding of rocks as tectonic plates shift?

The roar of a glacier as it calves off an iceberg?

The vibration of light as it travels the cosmos?

**All: Creation sounds.**

**Sounds of life**

**and death**

**and new life, born.**

One: If we listen—

**All: we hear creation speaking,**

**we hear creation shouting,**

**we hear creation crying.**

One: When we listen and speak what we hear,

when we help others to listen and speak what they hear,

when we speak with those who will *not* listen,

and with those not willing to hear—

**All: we worship God!**

**Alleluia!**

#### ****\*Opening Prayer****

**All: You are the God of sea and sky,**

**of rock and tree and creature—**

**and you are wonderful, God!**

**Would you bless us**

**with the knowledge**

**in our bodies, our hearts, and our minds,**

**that you are with us in this moment,**

**and in every moment?**

**Would you bless us**

**with your joy of all creation,**

**with your desire for its wholeness,**

**with your will for its renewal?**

**In the dance of the Spirit,**

**in the name of Christ,**

**we ask it.**

**Amen!**

#### \*Hymn

“River/Rivière” (More Voices 3; Nos voix unies 141)

#### Learning Together

As I was putting this service together, I wanted to help people see that not only a) adults can listen to the needs of parts of God's hurting creation, but also b) kids are sometimes even better at it than adults are. In my search, I found this article titled “Six Child Environmentalists That Have Already Changed the World”: [www.treehugger.com/files/2011/06/6-child-environmentalists-that-have-already-changed-the-world.php](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2011/06/6-child-environmentalists-that-have-already-changed-the-world.php)

I would suggest sharing one or more of these stories with the congregation. If you have projection technology and Internet access, consider using Birke Baehr’s Ted Talk (it runs for 5:04 minutes) and then invite a brainstorming session around the question “If the walls of our church suddenly turned clear and we could see everything around us, what are the hurting parts of God's creation that we could do something about?”

### God's Gifts Shared with the World

#### ****Minute for Mission****

**“Church Stand on Global Warming” (see below)**

#### Invitation to the Offering

#### \*Celebrating God's Gifts

“This Is God's Wondrous World” (Voices United 296; verses as necessary)

.

Or “Les cieux et la terre” (*Nos voix unies* 42)

#### Thanksgiving Prayer

**All: Everything that is, is yours, God.**

**You created it in love.**

**So we offer everything we have to you, God.**

**We offer it in love.**

**In our gathering, help us to touch Earth lightly.**

**In our sharing, help us to see the need of all creation.**

**In our using, help us to be people of justice and hope**

**for all you have brought into being.**

**Alleluia! Amen!**

### God Speaks Through the Voices of Creation

#### \*Bringing the Word into our Midst

“To Show by Touch and Word/Pour Mieux montrer” (Voices United 427; Nox voix unies 111)

#### Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 55:12

#### Response

One: Hear the witness of God’s people who listen!

**All: Alleluia!**

#### Psalm

Psalm 104, Parts One and Two (*Voices United* pp.826–827)

#### Response

One: Hear the witness of God’s people who love!

**All: Alleluia!**

#### Epistle

Romans 8:18–23

#### Response

One: Hear the witness of God’s people who speak!

**All: Alleluia!**

#### Gospel

Matthew 24:32–36

#### Response

**One: Hear the witness of God's people who serve!**

**All: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Thanks be to God!**

#### Reflection

Some points to think about:

▪ While caring for creation isn't something new (people who live directly off the land have had to be caring and careful about their relationship with it for generations) *environmentalism* is. In many ways, this movement comes out of two things: the fact that many of us are separated from intentional day-to-day interaction with the rest of creation and that we’ve come to recognize that the world around us is finite.

▪ What could we do to make this “World Communion Sunday” about recognizing our deep interconnection with *all* of creation—not just humankind?

▪ In Matthew's gospel, Jesus used the image of the fig tree as a teacher and messenger of what is to come next. If we were truly listening to what creation was saying to us, what do we believe that message would be? Would it be a message of celebration and hope? Would it be a message of challenge?

▪ With whom do we need to share the message that the rest of creation is offering us? The psalmist recognizes the deep connection between creation and its Creator. Perhaps part of our responsibility is to be the voice for the parts of creation that cannot speak with our words.

▪ How might we go about speaking what we are hearing? What kinds of changes to our life might God, through the voice of the rest of creation, be calling us to? Are we ready to live it?

#### Anthem

#### Silent reflection

#### ****\*Hymn****

“Touch the Earth Lightly” (Voices United 307)

### God Invites All to the Table

#### Invitation

#### ****\*Hymn****

**“Each Blade of Grass” (*More Voices* 37)**

#### Communion Prayer

One: God is with you.

**All: God is with all creation.**

One: Lift up your hearts!

**All: We lift our hearts to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to God:

Creator of all that is,

Christ that calls us to wholeness,

Spirit that blows us where it will.

**All: Thank you, God!**  
One: We thank you, God—for everything.  
A long time ago, you decided to start something new.  
Out of that newness came all that exists.  
Out of that newness came the stars in the sky,  
the planets, and moons. The water, the air—and life!  
**All: Thank you, God!**  
One: Here, in this place,

on *this* planet,  
you created life that took many shapes.  
Single-celled creatures that became many-celled creatures.  
Many-celled creatures that became plants, became animals,  
became us.  
**All: Thank you, God!**  
One: Throughout our history, we human beings  
have tried to understand how we came to be,   
and why we came to be—  
and how to be in relationship with all creation—

and with each other.  
Throughout our history, we human beings  
have tried to understand how all things came to be,   
and *why* we came to be,   
and *how* to be in relationship with you.  
Sometimes, we’ve not done a good job of listening.  
Sometimes, we’ve not done a good job of loving.  
Sometimes, we’ve not done a good job of being in relationship  
with you,

with what you have created,   
or with each other.  
**All: We are sorry, God.  
We ask for your forgiveness.  
We ask for your help.  
Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts,   
and our minds—  
so that we might listen to your call,**

**so that we might listen to the needs of what you have created,**

**so that we might speak those needs**

**and live your love.**  
One: When our ancestors made mistakes,   
you sent them guides to help them on their way—  
priests and prophets, teachers and healers,   
grandmas and grandpas,   
who called people back to your love.  
And in Jesus the Christ   
you were with us  
to teach us, to love us, to save us from ourselves.  
**Thank you, God!**  
**All: Thank you, loving God!**  
One: Jesus laughed with those who laughed,   
and cried with those who cried.  
He learned what it meant to be part of your creation

and tried to teach us with stories of seeds and sowers, of bushes and birds;   
in his love, he called us back into relationship with you.  
And so we pray the words he gave to all of his disciples,  
the ones that remind us that you love us  
with all the love a mother can give,  
with all the love a father can give, saying  
**All: Our Father, who art…**  
One: On the night that Jesus was taken away,   
by people afraid of what he was teaching of your love,   
he gathered with his friends.  
He took a loaf of bread and gave thanks to you,   
saying, “Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe,   
who brings forth grain from the earth.”  
**All: Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe;**

**everything you have created is blessed.**  
He took the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples  
saying, “Take this, all of you, and eat it.  
This is my body, given for you. Each time you eat it…remember me.”  
**All: Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe;**

**everything you have created is blessed.**  
He took a cup full of wine and gave thanks to you,   
saying, “Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe,   
who brings forth fruit from the vine.”  
**All: Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe;**

**everything you have created is blessed.**  
He took the cup and gave it to his disciples  
saying, “Take this, all of you, and drink it. This is my blood.  
My forever promise to you and to everyone.  
Each time you drink, remember me.”  
**All: Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe;**

**everything you have created is blessed.**  
Blessed are you, God most holy.  
We ask that you would send your Spirit upon this bread and this cup  
that they, and we, might be the body of Christ—hope in the world,

speaking, acting, and living the change that brings healing and wholeness.  
In this hope, your people praise you:   
**All: Holy God! Holy One! Holy Three!  
Praise now and forever!  
Amen. Amen! AMEN!**

#### Communion Is Shared

#### Prayer after Communion

**All: This bread we have eaten**

**comes from the earth.**

**The wine we have tasted**

**comes from the soil.**

**Thank you, God, for sharing it all.**

**Help us to lend our voice in caring for Earth.**

**Help us to see the birds of the air,**

**the fish of the water,**

**the plants and animals that live with us**

**as part of our communion in your love.**

**In Christ’s name,**

**we ask it. Amen.**

### God Sends Us Out to Live the Call

#### ****\*Hymn****

“As Long as We Follow / Na nzela na lola” (More Voices 140)

(suggestion: verse 1, verse 2—pray, verse 3—speak, verse 4—act out)

#### \*Commissioning and Benediction

One: God *is* leading.

We do know this.

We need to listen—

to the cries and songs of creation,

to the moving Spirit of God.

We need to speak up—

to give voice to the voiceless,

to call out for healing and harmony for all.

We need to act—

filled with the love of the Creator,

filled with the peace of the Christ,

filled with the passion of the Holy Spirit.

**All: We go,**

**knowing that we are**

**blessed and blessing,**

**knowing that we are**

**ears and lips and hands for creation,**

**and knowing that God is with us**

**every step of the way.**

One: Alleluia!

**All: ALLELUIA!**

#### Sung Response

“You Shall Go Out with Joy” (Voices United p.884)

#### The Farewell

Worship Leader: God is with you!

**All: And with your spirit!**

Member of Congregation: And the people said:

**All: Amen!**

#### Postlude

### Minute for Mission

#### Church Stand on Global Warming

Global warming is unequivocal and threatens the world as we know it, says the United Church’s General Council. Global warming is largely and increasingly caused by human agency, requires a paradigm change, and must be tackled on a priority basis with special attention to the poor and most vulnerable everywhere.

The environment is an important concern in the work of the church, not only at the meetings of General Council, but also as part of church program and policy. This is recent work for the church and requires new attention, expertise, and funding. Your support is vital.

In 2009 several environmental decisions were made:

· encouraging congregations to significantly reduce their environmental footprint

· requesting that the federal government subsidize alternative and environmentally friendly forms of energy rather than continuing to subsidize the uranium/nuclear industry

· urging the federal government to greater investment in wind and other forms of renewable energy

· calling on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to make health the primary determinant for setting air quality standards and asking that adequate resources be put in place to monitor and enforce these standards

· asking the federal Department of Agriculture and Agri-food to carefully examine the proposals in Bill C-33 by conducting a comprehensive study of bio-fuel production

· calling on the federal government to fully support the complete abolition of nuclear weapons

· reviewing current policies of the church related to toxins and the environment

· pressuring the federal government toward compliance with the Kyoto Protocol

This discernment and discussion is part of the Mission and Service of our church. The work undertaken will be possible with Mission and Service donations.

Please join us by speaking out and financially supporting the environmental work of the United Church.

(*Credit: Mission & Service Fund writer, The United Church of Canada*)