

Earth Day Resources, 2014

New Heaven, New Earth

Suggested Scripture readings

- Psalm 104 *“When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.”*
- Isaiah 65:17-25 *“For I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth....”*
- John 1:1-14 *“All things came into being through him....”*
- Colossians 1:13-20 *“Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether
on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”*
- Revelation 21:1-8 *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth....”*

*But new creation has already begun.
The sun has begun to rise.
Christians are called to leave behind, in the tomb of Jesus Christ,
all that belongs to the brokenness and incompleteness of the present world ...
That, quite simply, is what it means to be Christian:
to follow Jesus Christ into the new world, God's new world,
which he has thrown open before us.”*

~ N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*

Prayers and Worship Resources

Responsive Call to Worship

Praise be to God,
**who rescues us from the power of darkness;
who redeems us, and sets us free!**

Praise be to Jesus Christ, the first born of all creation,
**through whom all things were made,
in heaven and on the earth.**

Praise be to the Spirit of God,
**whose presence sustains us,
and whose breath renews all creation.**

Behold! I am making all things new!
**Come, O God, and make your home among us.
Pour out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

Scriptural Litany

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He existed in the beginning with God
and God created everything through him. (John 1:1-3a)

**Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God.
He existed before creation began,
for it was through him that everything was made,
whether spiritual or material,
seen or unseen.** (Colossians 1:15-16a)

Nothing was created except through him.
The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone. (John 1:3b-4)

**Every detail was crafted through his design,
by his own hands and for his purposes.
He existed before anything else began,
and he holds all creation together.** (Colossians 1:16b-17)

O Lord, what a variety of things you have made!
In your wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures.
Every one of them is dependent on you
to give them what they need to survive.
When you send out your breath, life is created,
and the face of the earth is made beautiful
and is renewed. (Psalm 104:24, 27, 30)

**May your glory endure forever, O God,
and may you find joy
in the splendor of your own creation.** (Psalm 104:31)

Prayer of Confession: Isaiah 65

Creator God,
You made this day, this life,
this planet and all that is in it.
All is a gift from you.
All of creation is holy
and you have given it into our care

And yet we must confess:
our careless actions wound and scar our earth home.
Forgive us, Holy One,
You, who are always creating a new heaven and a new earth!

We rob and do not restore life-giving riches to our lands and waters:
Forgive us, Holy One,
You, who invite us to a feast of justice on your holy mountain!

We foster systems which fail to house and feed and heal all our people:
Forgive us, Holy One,
You, who promise a world in which people build houses and inhabit them,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Risen One,
Teach us that your resurrection brings new life to all creation.
Today of all days, empower us with vision and courage;
let us work for your realm in which there is justice for all;
where everyone has enough, sharing your abundant life.
Save us, God from our mistakes.
Teach us to be a resurrection people,
rising from the ashes of our errors
to live in a new way on this Earth. Amen.

Words of Assurance

In the Risen Christ we are forgiven,
and empowered again to be builders
of that new heaven and new earth.
For that good news we say, "Alleluia!"¹

Prayers of the People

Let us open ourselves to the grace of God,
to the brokenness of our world,
and to the call to be agents of healing and recreation.

Where human greed has stripped the world of beauty and life,
and robbed people of dignity and subsistence,
**We pray, O God, for a new vision of abundance,
and a new commitment to nurture the world that feeds us
and share with those who do not have.**

Silence

Where human hatred has severed relationships,
and broken the connection that unites creation,
**We pray, O God, for love to be renewed,
and compassion to draw us back into union.**

Silence

Where human loneliness, weakness, sickness and grief,
and the suffering of our planet and its inhabitants
hide the signs of your life,
We pray, O God, for healing, comfort and strength

and for the courage to keep hoping in the renewed creation to come.

Silence

**O God, restore our faith,
revive our hope,
rekindle our love,
and hear our prayer;
for we offer it in Christ's name.
Amen.²**

Affirmation of Faith: New Creation

We believe that God creates all things,
renews all things
and celebrates over creation.

We believe Earth is a precious sanctuary,
a sacred planet filled with God's presence,
a home for us to share and to care for.

We believe that God became fully human,
became a part of Earth,
shared family life,
and celebrated with friends and community;
suffered and died on a cross for all humanity
and for all creation.

We believe that the risen Jesus
is the Christ at the centre of creation
reconciling all things to God,
renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

We believe the Spirit renews life in creation,
groans in empathy with a suffering creation,
and waits with us for the renewal of creation.

We believe that with the Cosmic Christ we will rise,
and with the Creator God we will celebrate the new creation.³

Intergenerational Prayer for the Offering

God of all creation,
Thank you for the wonderful things you have made.
Thank you for the universe full of stars and planets.
Thank you for our world, full of life.
Thank you for making each one of us.
Thank you for loving each one of us.
Take these gifts we now offer back to you.

May they be used to the glory of your name.
We offer you ourselves,
and all the gifts you have blessed us with.
Take us and use us to share your love with the world.
Amen⁴

Prayer of Commitment

Merciful Redeemer,
we know Your surrounding love gives us hope of a new Creation.
We know that through Your love You have given the power of resurrection;
resurrection that reaches out beyond humanity and extends to all of Creation.
This power of resurrection you have placed in our hands and feet.
It lies deep within our hearts
and now, Creator of Life, we must not sit idly by.
You have called us to be your vessels;
to be beings of resurrection.

And so, Almighty God,
we partner with You to be a blessing to all of Creation;

that one day our children may play in clean rivers and streams,
that crops around the world may produce enough food
for all of God's children to have their share;

that the oceans might again be full of Creation,
a life source reflecting the Creator;

that the land may provide spaces for commerce
and also recreation and solitude;

that life giving breaths may come from clear skies
that allow the natural flow of heat to and from the Earth.

Today, Almighty God,
we lift up our prayer for resurrection,
a new Creation,
a hope that you continue to reveal yourself
so that we may see the glory of your Creation.⁵

Closing Prayer

In a world that selfishly lives for the moment,
without thought for whatever evil we may be causing the future,
we thank you, God, for commanding us to be people of hope.
Do not allow us to be conformed
to the present short-sighted, self-serving attitudes,
but open our eyes to see all the things that are possible
through Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Give us a sure commitment to your new heaven and new earth
by living some of the promised future in the here and now:

giving with no thought of reward,
reaching out to the forsaken,
bandaging the wounded,
challenging injustices,
fostering seeds of faith,
caring for mother earth,
exposing pride and greed,
building bridges of understanding,
and loving our neighbours of the future.

Stretch our vision to include the improbable
and strengthen our wills to take the next step on your road.
Assure us again that you can do exceedingly more
than we can ever ask or imagine.

Glory be to your loving purposes, now and forever! Amen.⁶

Benediction

May the blessing of God, Creator of heaven and earth,
rest upon you and upon all that God has made;

May the Risen Christ Jesus transform your life and your vision,
so that you may live in reconciliation with all things; and

May the power of God's Holy Spirit move over this whole earth,
like the breath of spring,
to renew the earth and all its people,
so that all creation may join together in praise to God's holy name!

Almighty God, + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever. Amen.⁷

Song Suggestions

Traditional Hymns:

All Creatures of Our God and King
All Things Bright and Beautiful
Fairest Lord Jesus
For the Beauty of the Earth
He's Got the Whole World in His Hand
How Great Thou Art
I Sing the Mighty Power of God,
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

*Morning has Broken
Let All Creation Bless the Lord
Let All Things Now Living
Let the Whole Creation Cry
Praise the Lord! O Heavens, Adore Him
Praise the Lord, Sing Hallelujah!
This is My Father's World*

Contemporary Hymns:

New Earth, Heavens New

New earth, heavens new,
Spirit of God moving;
new seed, creatures new,
Spirit of life moving;
new man, woman new,
image of God moving.

*Sing a new song to the One who has said,
"Behold, I make all things new."*

New love, mercies new,
Spirit of God moving;
new strength, hopefulness new,
Spirit of life moving;
new name, spirits new,
image of God moving.

New minds, wisdom new,
Spirit of God moving;
new law, covenant new,
Spirit of life moving;
new name, nature new,
image of God moving.

New earth, heavens new,
Spirit of God moving;
new birth, creatures new,
Spirit of life moving;
new men, women new,
image of God moving.

~ Harris J. Loewen. Words copyright © 1982 Hope Publishing Company. If you use this hymn in worship, be sure to report it on your CCLI license.

For a PDF of the music, visit Hope Publishing Company's **Online Hymnody** website:
http://www.hopepublishing.com/media/pdf/hset/hs_5040.pdf

The God Who Set the Stars in Space

The God who set the stars in space
and gave the planets birth
created for our dwelling place
a green and fruitful earth;
a world with wealth and beauty crowned
of sky and sea and land,
where life should flourish and abound
beneath its Maker's hand.

A world of order and delight
God gave for us to tend,
to hold as precious in his sight,
to nurture and defend;
but yet on ocean, earth and air
the marks of sin are seen,
with all that God created fair
polluted and unclean.

O God, by whose redeeming grace
the lost may be restored,
who stooped to save our fallen race
in Christ, creation's Lord,
through him whose cross is life and peace
to cleanse a heart defiled
may human greed and conflict cease
and all be reconciled.

Renew the wastes of earth again,
redeem, restore, repair;
with us, your children, still maintain
your covenant of care.
May we, who move from dust to dust
and on your grace depend,
no longer, Lord, betray our trust
but prove creation's friend.

Our God, who set the stars in space
and gave the planets birth,
look down from heaven, your dwelling place,
and heal the wounds of earth;
till pain, decay and bondage done,
when death itself has died,
creation's songs shall rise as one
and God be glorified!

~ Timothy Dudley-Smith. Words copyright © 2003 Hope Publishing Company. If you use this hymn in worship, be sure to report it on your CCLI license.

Suggested tunes: 8.6.8.6.D. (Common Meter Doubled)

ELLACOMBE ("I sing the mighty power of God")
LANDAS ("My faith has found a resting place")

Contemporary

Creation sings the Father's song

Creation sings the Father's song
He calls the sun to wake the dawn
And run the course of day
Till evening falls in crimson rays
His fingerprints in flakes of snow
His breath upon this spinning globe
He charts the eagle's flight
Commands the newborn baby's cry

*Hallelujah! Let all creation stand and sing
Hallelujah! Fill the earth with songs of worship
Tell the wonders of creation's King*

Creation gazed upon his face
The ageless One in time's embrace
Unveiled the Father's plan
Of reconciling God and man
A second Adam walked the earth
Whose blameless life would break the curse
Whose death would set us free
To live with Him eternally

Creation longs for His return
When Christ shall reign upon the earth
The bitter wars that rage
Are birth pains of a coming age
When He renews the land and the sky
All heav'n will sing and earth reply
With one resplendent theme
The glories of our God and King

~ words and music by Stuart Townend, Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty. Copyright © 2008 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing). CCLI 5333798 If you use this song in worship, be sure to report it on your CCLI license.

Listen here: <http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1044317>

Other contemporary song suggestions:

All Creatures of Our God and King, Brent Milligan, David Crowder
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=564108>
At Your Name, Tim Hughes
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1841433>

Filled with Your Glory, Jon Neufeld, Tim Neufeld
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=564404>
Glory, Pete Kipley, Phil Wickham
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=2001668>
God of Wonders, Marc Byrd, Steve Hindalong
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=574211>
Indescribable, Jesse Reeves, Laura Story
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=563304>
Majesty of Heaven, Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1824691>
Praise the Lord who Reigns Above, John Hartley, Chris Eaton
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1011648>

Sources

New Heaven, New Earth was written and compiled by Christine Longhurst for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Thanks to the following individuals or organizations who contributed prayers or readings:

¹ *Prayer of Confession* was written by Reverend Meighan Pritchard in *Resurrection of All Creation: Service prayers for Easter Sunday*. Posted on the **United Church of Christ** website.
<http://www.ucc.org/earth>.

² *Prayers of the People* was written by John van de Laar, in *A Liturgy of Creation and Communion*. Posted on **Sacredise**. <http://sacredise.com/>

³ *Affirmation of Faith: New Creation* comes from the **Third Space** website. <http://third-space.org.uk/blog>

⁴ *Intergenerational Prayer for the Offering* from the **Diocese of Bath and Wells** website.
<http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/>

⁵ *Prayer of Commitment* comes from **Creation Justice Ministries**. <http://www.creationjustice.org/>

⁶ *Closing Prayer* was written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on **Bruce Prewer's Homepage**.
http://www.bruceprewer.com/b_p21.htm#_Toc273422939

⁷ *Benediction* was written by Kim Winchell, in *Living Earth: Creation Waits with Eager Longing*. Posted on the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** website. <http://www.elca.org/>