

Worship at Home

Garden Reflections - Enjoying

27 June 2021

Welcome & Centring Time

Take this moment to centre yourself deeply in the love of God. Plant your feet firmly on the ground; feel your body and how you are sitting. Can you open yourself a little more to your breathing? Open your hands to give and receive God's presence. Let your in-breath bring awareness, let your out-breath help you to trust in God. Come into God's presence, let God be present in you.

Acknowledge the land you are on. This is the living land of the Creator. On this land are beings that move; feathered and furry, four legs and two legged, our companions. On this land are still beings; maple and oak, pine and fir, flowering and leafed, our wise and ancient siblings. On this land are the flowing beings; oceans and seas, rivers and lakes, ebbing and flowing, our source of being. Over this land blows the winds and breezes, our breath and life. We honour the traditions of our First Nations peoples who taught this wisdom, and we seek ways to rebuild our right relations with them in our worship and our work.

Focus & Candle Lighting

In the beginning, out of abundance and generosity, God planted a garden.

Here and now, among us, beside us, clearer than air, closer than breathing,

God tends the garden and all that depends on it.

In all that is to come, when we have returned to the earth, God will still be gardening.

Not despairing of earth, but delighting in it,

not condemning the world, but redeeming it through Jesus Christ,

by the power of the Holy Spirit, God plants, God tends, God gardens.

Song

In The Garden

We come to the garden to live, as participants, co-creators,
for God calls us here with a voice so dear "My Children love thy neighbours."

And God walks with us, and God talks with us, and God tells us we are her own;

And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

A Gardener's Delight

by The Uniting Church in Australia

from Harvest for the World by Geoffrey Duncan ©2003 The Pilgrim Press

Gardeners delight that God made people in many shapes and sizes, people of different colours and languages. Gardeners know that we flourish when we are in touch with others, when we share ideas and understandings.

Don't we?

Our Father who is in us here on earth
holy is your name in the hungry who share your bread and their song.
Your kingdom come, a generous land where confidence and truth reign.
Let us do your will being a cool breeze for those who sweat.
You are giving us our daily bread
when we manage to get back to our lands or to get a fairer wage.
Forgive us for keeping silent in the face of injustice and for burying our dreams.
Don't let us fall into the temptation of taking up the same arms as our enemy,
but deliver us from evil which disunites us.
And we shall have believed in humanity and in life
and we shall have known your kingdom which is being built forever and ever.

Song

In The Garden

We'll dwell the garden fore'er, so diverse with life so abundant.
It's a gift we're given, it is food from heaven; so lush and fresh and verdant.
*And God walks with us, and God talks with us, and God tells us we are her own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

Genesis 1.1-2.4

From Celtic Treasure by J. Philip Newell ©2005 by Novalis

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Before that there was only empty darkness and the deep eternal waters. But in the dark a wind began to stir. It was the breath of life. It was God saying, 'Let there be light.' And there was light. God saw that it was good. There was a time for light and a time for darkness. The light was called day and the darkness night. And there was evening and morning, creation's first day.

On the second day, the storm kept stirring. It was the wind of new beginnings. God was saying, 'Let there be a space for creation.' And the wind carved out a hollow in the deep waters. It was a cradle for life. Above, beneath and on every side of it were the everlasting waters. God saw that it was good. It was a place for birth and abundance. And there was evening and morning, creation's second day.

On the third day, God said, 'Let the firm earth appear.' So the wind gathered together the waters of life. The waters were oceans and the dry land was earth. The wind blew over its dark soil. Earth grew green. Flowers in their freshness opened. Colour and goodness burst from the earth. Young bushes budded. Trees were heavy with fruit and earth's seed was strong. God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, creation's third day.

On the fourth day, God said, 'Let there be lights in the heavens.' So the wind carried fire on its wings and scattered light through the skies. There was a great light to rule the day and a gentler light to rule the night. And there were glittering galaxies beyond number. The sun, the moon and the stars moved in harmony. They guided the seasons. They marked the days and the years. They shone on earth as signs of heaven. God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, creation's fourth day.

On the fifth day, God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures.' So the wind awakened the waters into life. Great sea-monsters were born. Gleaming fish swarmed the seas. Winged birds of every kind rose out of the waters. Creeping things crawled from the sea. Wild animals ran free. And cattle roamed the grasslands. God saw that it was good. Earth was alive with its creatures. And there was evening and morning, creation's fifth day.

On the sixth day, God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image.' So the wind grew strong over the swelling sea and from the moist earth humanity was born. Spirit and flesh were formed in the likeness of God. Male and female came forth together. And the words of heaven were spoken on earth, 'Be fruitful and multiply. The earth is yours and you are the earth's, the seeds, the seas, the creatures, everything that has breath and every plant that grows. Be strong in my likeness and guard the unity of life.' God saw all that had been created and it was very good. The relationship of earth and woman and man had begun. And there was evening and morning, creation's sixth day.

On the seventh day there was silence in heaven. The mighty wind of life was still. The sea was calm. The morning stars glistened. The earth slept. The work was finished. Creation had been born. And the mother of all things rested. It was a holy day. The heavens and the earth were still. God saw its fullness. And there was evening and morning, creation's seventh day.

Another Voice

Robin Wall Kimmerer

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants ©2013 by Milkweed Editions

"Of an inanimate being, like a table, we say "What is it?" And we answer Dopwen yawe. Table it is. But of apple, we must say, "Who is that being?" And reply Mshimin yawe. Apple that being is.

Yawe—the animate to be. I am, you are, s/he is. To speak of those possessed with life and spirit we must say yawe. By what linguistic confluence do Yahweh of the Old Testament and yawe of the New World both fall from the mouths of the reverent? Isn't this just what it means, to be, to have the breath of life within, to be the offspring of creation? The language reminds us, in every sentence, of our kinship with all of the animate world."

Reflecting Song

We Met You

Minister's Reflection

Offering Time by John Johansen-Berg from Harvest for the World by Geoffrey Duncan ©2003 The Pilgrim Press

What should we give to the land?
Perhaps some return of the abundance we receive.
The land blesses us with grain, bread of life;
the sky blesses us with rain, water of life.
The land gives us abundant fruit, food of life;
the air gives us oxygen to breathe, spirit of life.
How can we number the blessings of earth?
It daily grants us gifts beyond counting.
The generosity of mother earth surpasses our expectation.
What then shall we give to the land?
Surely nothing less than the best stewardship that we can offer
through all the talents we possess.

Offering Prayer by Kalinga, the Philippines from Harvest for the World by Geoffrey Duncan ©2003 The Pilgrim Press

If the land could speak, it would speak for us.
It would say, like us,
that the years have forged the bond of life that ties us together.
It was our labour that made her the land she is;
it was her yielding that gave us life.
We and the land are one!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry;
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
What we do here, we do in imitation of what Christ first did.
To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command
rooted in the experience he shared with his disciples
in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.
That night Jesus looked around the table and knew who he would be betrayed.
knew he would be deserted.
He knew who would be too weary to watch for him.
Yet, he looked at each of his friends with love.
In our weakness, in our failings, in our weariness, we are still loved.
We give thanks for this sacrament that unites us with Jesus and each other,
and that, even though we cannot gather in person,
our souls are restored and spirits, nourished.

As we virtually share this feast today, may we know the depth of healing,
the extravagance of loving and the abundance of restoration
that is possible in the new life we are offered.

In the core of our being we know God's healing and love
flooding our lives with warmth,
and overflowing into the communities we serve.

We remember those who live in fear, those who live without hope,
those who live without love.

God of Life, breathe your Spirit into the bread and wine
wherever we are, that we may know your risen power
infusing all that we do and share together,
enabling us to breathe new life into the world, even in isolation.

Breaking and Sharing

Jesus, looking into the eyes of those he knew would fail him, took break.
In love, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me.’

Then, Jesus took the cup, already tinted by betrayal, and, in love,
chose to show forgiveness and the way to God’s new kingdom, and said:

‘Drink from it all of you.’

In this bread and wine we are offered new life today.

We do this to remember him.

We do this to remember his love, his wisdom, his faith.

We do this to transform our world, for the Risen Christ stands among us;
arms wide open, heart overflowing with love, life abundant.

Communion

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Prayer After Communion

For the bread we have eaten, for the fruit of the vine,
for the life we have received, we thank you God.

Grant that what we have done and have been given here,
may so put its mark on us that it may remain always in our hearts,
in Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Sung Blessing

written by Rev. Darryl Macdonald to the tune Dark Isle

May the love of Christ Jesus be with you this day;
the Spirit to guide you each hour and each way;

God’s shield to protect you wherever you go; God blessing you forever more.