

2023 Earth Day Resources

Introduction

God's grace and peace to you!

The Circle for Reconciliation and Justice is pleased to share with you the following resources for Earth Day 2023. We are called to care for creation each and every day, so while you may want to use these resources on or around Earth Day (April 22nd), they can also be used throughout the year as we continue our work of stewardship for the earth, allyship and reconciliation.

You will find the following resources posted on the Eastern Synod website at the link provided below:

- Worship resources (including a children's message for use in worship)
- A booklist geared to children
- Links to further learning and advocacy opportunities.

Additionally, please see below, some ideas of how you can be an ally of Indigenous-led conservation efforts.

How to Be an Ally of Indigenous-led Conservation.

The land guardians are the “moccasins and mukluks” on the ground to help their own Indigenous Nations to care for the land and waterways in their communities. Using both Indigenous and Western science, and wisdom from their elders, they learn about their relationship with animals and changes to the land.

Climate change, disappearing wildlife and an increasing demand for resources, along with the legacy of colonialism in Canada, all combine to threaten Indigenous homelands and way of life.

It is not up to Indigenous nations to do this work alone. They need the help and support and accompaniment of allies. In this lead-up to Earth Day, please consider how you can be an ally in Indigenous conservation of the land, water and animals.

For more information, please visit this [link](#).

To print off a PDF on how to be an ally of Indigenous-led conservation, please follow this [link](#). You can find more resources posted on the Eastern Synod [website](#).

God bless you as you continue your journey of allyship and caring for creation.
~ The Eastern Synod Circle for Reconciliation and Justice

2023 Earth Day Prayer Card



Print off copies of this earth image and encourage people in your congregation to write a prayer for creation. Post these around your sanctuary, narthex or worship space!

2023 Earth Day Devotions

For additional worship resources, please look for the following posted at this [link](#) (2022, Season of Creation worship for small assemblies by Rebekah Ludolph; 2020 resources for National Indigenous Peoples Day)

Morning Devotion / Prayers

“Blessed are those who know their need, for theirs is the grace of heaven.” – Mt. 5:3

Prayer of Awareness

Light within all light
Soul behind all souls
At the breaking of dawn
At the coming of day
We wait and watch.
Your Light within the morning light
Your Soul within the human soul
Your Presence beckoning to us from the heart of life.
In the dawning of this day
Let us know fresh shining in our soul.
In the growing colours of new beginning all around us
Let us know the first lights of our heart.
Great Star of the morning
Inner Flame of the universe
Let us be a colour in this new dawning.

Be still and aware

Scripture and Meditation

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” – Ps 46:1

“Ask and it will be given you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.” – Mt 7:7

“For every soul there is a guardian watching it.” – Qur’an 86:4

Silent reflection

Prayer for the Life of the World

For the gift of this new day
For waking again from the dreams of the night
For our bodies strengthened and our minds renewed
Thanks be to you, O God.
You are the stillness of the night
You are the genesis of the morning
You are the moistness of new conception.
Let there be peace in the human soul
Let there be wakings to new consciousness
Let there be tears of love.
In the life of the world this day
And in our own hearts
Let there be fresh tears of love.

Silent prayers for peace

Prayer of Blessing

May the angels of light
Glisten for us this day.
May the sparks of God's beauty
Dance in the eyes of those we love.
May the universe
Be in fire with Presence for us this day.
May the new sun's rising
Grace us with gratitude.
Let earth's greenness shine
And its waters breathe with Spirit.
Let heaven's winds stir the soil of our soul
And fresh awakenings rise within us.
May the mighty angels of light
Glisten in all things this day.
May they summon us to reverence,
May they call us to life.

Evening Devotion / Prayers

“Blessed are those who know their need, for theirs is the grace of heaven.” – Mt 5:3

Prayers of Awareness

As light gives way to darkness
And the busyness of day concedes to night's stillness.
As conscious thought surrenders to dreams
And our bodies long for rest
We pause to listen
For the beat of your Presence in all things
Pulsing in the light of distant galaxies
Sounding in the depths of our soul
Vibrating in each vein of earth's body.
One Sound as vast as the universe
One universe filled with Presence
One Life within every life.
In the darkness of night
In the stillness that surrounds us
In the unknown depths of our being
We pause to listen.

Be still and aware

Scripture and Meditation

“The compassion of God is for all that has been made.” – Ps 145:9

“Come to me, you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”
– Mt 11:28

“By the light of day and by the dark of night your God has not forgotten you.” – Qur'an
93:1-3

Silent reflection

Prayer for the Life of the World

In lives where love has been born this day

Thanks be to you, O God.

In families where forgiveness has been strong

Thanks be to you.

In nations where wrongs have been addressed

Where tenderness has been cherished

And where visions for earth's oneness have been served

Thanks be to you.

May those who are weary find rest this night.

May those who carry great burdens for their people find strength.

May the midwives of new beginnings in our world find hope.

And may the least among us find greatness

Strength in our souls

Worth in our words

Love in our living.

Silent prayers for peace

Prayer of Blessing

In sleep may we be made new this night.

In sleep may we let go of today

And release the worries of tomorrow.

In sleep may we know you

As Soul within our soul

As Guide within our dreams

As Lover within our longings.

In sleep may we be one with you

One with earth's darkness

One with heaven's shining

One with each creature dying

One with each newborn breath.

In sleep may we be one with you

And one with all.

2023 Earth Day Children's Time

Trashing the “sanctuary.”

You need:

- Anishinaabe Creation story (See below).
- Bag of not-wet trash/recycling
- Pictures: Before and after: God's creation - pollution/trash (google pictures ahead of time)
- Picture: Garbage pick up/sorting (google ahead of time)
- Blanket

Step 1:

Invite children, families to altar area. And read or tell this story of creation.

An Anishinaabe creation story

Pukaskwa National Park

When the Earth was young, it had a family. The Moon is called Grandmother, and the Sun is called Grandfather. This family is basis of all creation in the universe. This family was created by Gitchi Manitou, the Creator. Earth is said to be a woman. She preceded man and her name is Mother Earth because all living things live from her gifts. Water is her life blood. It flows through her, nourishes her, and purifies her.

Mother Earth, was given Four Sacred Directions – North, South, East, and West. Each direction contributes a vital part of her wholeness. Each direction and all things on Mother Earth have physical powers and spiritual powers.

When she was young, Mother Earth was filled with beauty. The Creator sent his singers in the form of birds to carry the seeds of life to all of the Four Sacred Directions. Life

was spread across the land. The Creator placed the swimming creatures in the water. He placed the crawling things and the four-legged animals on the land. He gave life to all the plants and insects of the world. All parts of life lived in harmony with each other on Mother Earth.

Gitchi Manitou took the four parts of Mother Earth and blew them into a Sacred Megis Shell. From the union of the Four Sacred Elements and his breath, man was created. It is said that Gitchi Manitou then lowered man to the Earth. Thus man was the last form of life to be placed on Earth. From this Original Man came the Anishinaabe people. This man was created in the image of Gitchi Manitou. Man was part of Mother Earth. He lived in brotherhood with all life that surrounded him.

Step 2

Show some before and after pictures. Talk about the differences in the two pictures.

Leader: *"It's like dumping trash here in the sanctuary. We would never do this, would we?"*

(Let children dump the trash in the altar area)

Leader: *"But you know what – the whole Earth is God's sanctuary. In the Anishinaabe creation story we just heard, we learn that Indigenous people see the earth as sacred. And how do we treat something that is sacred? [with care and respect]. We have much to learn from Indigenous people in our communities because they believe that the earth is indeed sacred and that we need to be careful how we treat the earth so it can continue to provide life for ALL living things – plants, trees, animals and you and I. We wouldn't spread trash around in this special place, in God's church, we also do not want to spread trash around God's Creation because it's just as sacred and special. What do you think we should do with all this trash?"*

"Cover it up? – what happens when we cover it up?" (cover with blanket) - give children- congregation time to speak

"Clean it up! - where should it go?" - recycle...

"Will you help me?"

(Show one or two pictures of people cleaning up parks, waterways, etc.)

Leader: *"This is what they are doing in this picture, too! Because God's house is in here – and out there."*

Step 3:

(Say a prayer for the church on the inside and God's sanctuary on the outside)

Leader: *"Dear God, we give you thanks for the beautiful world we live in, and we give you thanks for all those who seek to teach us about your Creation, like the Indigenous people in our community. Help us to hear new stories and new ways of caring for the earth so that everyone can live in peace and harmony with the plants, animals, water, trees and each other. Help us to be good partners in caring for the earth and one another. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN."*

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/04/earth-day-childrens-sermon-ideas/>

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/5-reasons-why/article/5-reasons-why-you-should-love-earth>

<https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/on/pukaskwa/culture/autochtone-indigenous/recit-story>

2023 Earth Day Learning and Advocacy

<https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/environmental-challenges/> (Article by John Kim Bell, Mohawk from Kahnawa:ke First Nation who writes about Environmental Justice).

<https://yourcier.org/> (CIER supports Indigenous people and communities to be leaders of positive environmental change, using the best of Western and Indigenous knowledge to create a world that is in balance and supports the well-being of all living things. Learn about the work they do!).

<https://netzerochurches.ca/> (an initiative of the Diocese of Montreal and Niagara, learn about how you can take actionable steps to help your congregation become carbon neutral).

<https://cpj.ca/minister-guilbeault-will-you-give-it-up-for-the-earth/> (write to Federal Minister, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault urging him to increase Canada's greenhouse gas emission targets, and honour the "perspectives, experiences and rights of Indigenous people in the quest for climate justice).

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/take-action-keep-up-the-pressure-on-bill-c-226-to-end-environmental-racism>

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/support-bills-to-end-environmental-racism-and-make-corporations-accountable>

<https://elizabethmaymp.ca/francais-bill-c-226-national-strategy-respecting-environmental-racism-and-environmental-justice-act/>

<https://act.newmode.net/action/kairos-canada/support-environmental-justice-bills>

(Introduced by MP, Elizabeth May - MP for Saanich Gulf Islands, Bill C226, if enacted, would task the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to come up with a strategy to examine the links between socio-economic status, race and environmental risk. The bill will receive its third and final reading in the House of Commons, likely near the end of April. A number of organizations (including Kairos) have mobilized to increase the pressure to help Bill C226 pass this final step before being referred to the Senate. Please see the above links for more information and for a template to write to your MP).

Grade 3-5

- Minnow: The girls who became fish Willie Poll
A young Indigenous water protector named Minnow goes on an underwater journey, learning from our ocean-living relatives. When she returns to the surface, she gathers her community to help make a change.

Grade 1-7

- Community Gardens, grow, eat, learn Judy Reuben
Community Gardens Grow, Eat and Learn by Judy Reuben, Mohawk of the Turtle Clan, is about the four kinds of plants on earth placed by the Creator. The grasses, trees, flowers and vegetables. First Nations have always had a unique connection to the land, and a responsibility to take care of Mother Earth. Joining a community gardening group is a meaningful way to re-connect with Mother Earth. "Just like the plants and medicines that the Creator gave us, we too, can live in harmony with our neighbours and support each other on our journeys to build a sustainable food system".

Grade 1-8

- Keepers of the Earth Joseph Bruchac
Native American stories combine with related hands-on activities to inspire children with a deep respect and interest in the Earth and in Native cultures in this popular and critically acclaimed book. *Keepers of the Earth* uses an interdisciplinary approach to introduce environmental concepts to children, aged five through twelve. The activities include theatre, reading, writing, science, social studies, and mathematics, and are designed to engage all of the senses