

Liturgy in the Forest 2002

Gathering Of the People in Creation

CALL TO WORSHIP

When all have gathered at Jenny's place, **Charles** says:

Listen to the word of the Poet:

I find you Lord in all things and in all
my fellow creatures, pulsing with your life;
as a tiny seed you sleep in what is small
and in the vast you vastly yield yourself.

The wondrous game that power plays with things
is to move in such submission through the world:
groping in roots and growing thick in trunks
and in treetops like a rising from the dead.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Book of Hours* (1905)

PROCESSIONAL

We shall process with instrumental music to the worship space where **Norm Stanley**
will mark our arrival with his didge. Then **Charles** says:

Come, let us sing a new song of praise
to the God who dies, and who rises in all creation.

SONG OF PRAISE *Let All Creation Dance*

1. Let all creation dance in energies sublime
as order folds with chance, unfolding space and time.

For nature's art
in glory grows and newly shows
God's mind and heart.

2. God's breath each force unfurls, igniting from a spark
expanding starry swirls with whirlpools dense and dark.
Though moon and sun
seem mindless things, each orbit sings
'Your will be done.'
3. Our own amazing earth with sunlight, cloud and storms
and life's abundant growth in lovely shapes and forms,
is made for praise
a fragile whole and from its soul
heav'n's music plays.
4. Lift heart and soul and voice in Christ all praises meet
and nature shall rejoice as all is made complete
In hope be strong,
all life befriend and kindly tend
creation's song.

Lyrics: Brian Wren Tune: John Darwall
© 1981 Hope Publishing Company.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Danni : Hail to the Maker, the Ancient One,
Mother and Father of all that was, and is, and will be!
Today we join with birds and trees and animals,
with rocks and rivers and mountains and the whole creation
to offer you our worship and honour.
Come to us, God of Life! We invoke you!
Come to fill us with your creative power,
with the pulsing lifeblood of ages.
Make us alive with celebration and with rejoicing!

The first incense bowl is lit.

AI : Hail to the Christ, the Compassionate One,
who was alive and was dead and now lives in the heart of all
things!
In the midnight of sin, you heard the cries of your people.
For us and for our healing,
you embraced that darkness with its loneliness and despair;
you surrendered to the crack which rends the cosmos.
Come to us, Suffering One! We invoke you!
Renew our yearning for emptiness and for silence.

The second incense bowl is lit.

Gaz : Hail to the Spirit Holy, messenger of God's Wisdom,
primal fire of creation and breath of life!
From the time of dreaming you made your home with holy
souls,
making them friends of God and prophets.
You invite us to join with you in the circle dance of trinity,
to die and be reborn in the whirling wheel of God.
Come to us, Spirit of Life! We invoke you!
Renew your people in the passion of the ancients:
make of us mystics and poets and prophets,
that the earth may be rekindled in love.

The third incense bowl is lit.

Blessed be God—Maker, Christ, and Holy Spirit—
As in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

WELCOME

Charles introduces **Brian Nelson** (Djadjawurong), who will give a welcome on
behalf of his mob.

LITANY OF CONFESSION

The Litany is punctuated with a sung response.

Gaz : In the beginning when the earth was made,
God brought forth life and light from the watery depths.
And God saw that it was good . . .
Anita : But look what we have done!
In the clouds of industry the light is hidden;
And life itself struggles for breath
amidst the stench of human greed.
God, have mercy on us!

All sing: *Kyrie eleison* (x3)

Gaz : In the beginning when the earth was made,
the land emerged and burst forth with vegetation.
And God saw that it was good . . .
Anita : But look what we have done!
With ‘green revolutions’ and the love of money
we’ve endangered the variety on which all life depends.
Christ, have mercy on us!

All sing: *Christe eleison* (x3)

Gaz : In the beginning when the earth was made,
the sea was filled with fish, and the sky with birds,
and the land with creatures from God’s secret purpose.
And God saw that it was good . . .
Anita : But look what we have done!
Our brother the Thylacine
and our sister the Pig-footed Bandicoot
wander the bush no more.
God, have mercy on us!

All sing: *Kyrie eleison* (x3)

SONG OF CONTRITION *Ashes*

1. We rise again from ashes
from the good we've failed to do
We rise again from ashes
To create ourselves anew
If all the world is ashes
Then must our lives be true
An offering of ashes
And offering to you.
2. We offer you our failures
We offer you attempts
The gifts not fully given
The dreams not fully dreamt
Give our stumblings direction
Give our visions wider view
An offering of ashes
An offering to you.
3. Then rise again from ashes
Let healing come to pain
Though spring has turned to winter
And sunshine turned to rain
The rain we'll use for growing
And create the world anew
From an offering of ashes
An offering to you.

by Tom Comry
©1978 New Dawn Music.

Charles says :

Listen to what God says:
A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
He shall not judge by rumour or by so-called 'common sense'.
With righteousness he shall judge for the little ones,

With justice he shall decide for the one most vulnerable.
The dingo shall live with the kangaroo,
the calf and the croc and the emu together;
and a little child shall look out for them.

Isaiah 11.1, 3, 4, 6

Therefore Christ has this word of grace
for all who lament their complicity with all that is wrong in the world,
who come to God with a broken and contrite spirit:

Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

THE PEACE (*Charles*)

Christ is the true Vine of God

And we are the branches.

The peace of Christ be with you all

And also with you.

A sign of peace is shared amongst the people.

SONG FOR CHILDREN (and the young at heart) (*Gaz*)

Refrain: *The sounds in God's world all agree
God made it up so beautifully
More there is to hear when we
Stop still and listen very carefully.*

1. Listen to the surf, listen to the surf
The breakers crash while the sea-swell bends
Some of God's big things seem to never end
How great that the maker of the sea wants to be our friend.
2. Listen to the wind, listen to the wind
It whispers and it rustles, it howls and it whines
And where goes to, who can find?
Let's listen for the wind of God stirring in our mind.

We Listen for the Word of God

THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Ryan says:

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet

A light to our path.

A reading from the Book of Wisdom, chapters 7 & 8 (7.25 – 8.1)

Let us listen for the word of God.

She is the breath of the power of God:
pure emanation of the power of the Almighty;
Nothing impure can find a home in her:
She is a reflection of the eternal light,
untarnished mirror of God's active power,
image of God's goodness.
Although alone, she can do all:
herself unchanging, she makes all things new.
In each generation she passes into holy souls,
making them friends of God and prophets,
for God loves the one who lives with Wisdom.
She is indeed more splendid than the sun,
she outshines all the constellations;
compared with light she takes first place,
for light must yield to night,
but over Wisdom evil can never triumph:
for she deploys her strength in all the world,
ordering all things for good.

(7.25 – 8.1)

Charles says:

Let us respond to the hearing of God's word by attending to Sean Walsh's meditation in movement upon the 8th Psalm.

(dance by **Sean**)

Danni says:

A reading from the Book of Romans, chapter 8 (verses 18-25).

Let us listen for the word of God.

All stand for the reading of the Gospel.

Danni says:

A reading from the holy Gospel of John, chapter 1 (verses 1-5, 10)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel is read in the midst of the people. **All** will hold the gospel book.

Danni says:

Lord, may your word live in us

And bear much fruit for your glory.

REFLECTION: Mr. Brian Walters

SONG FOR MEDITATION *Born of Water*

1. The fertile Spirit's surging love
engulfed the unformed earth;
the currents carved out rocks and sand,
the pregnant sea pushed forth the land,
and brought all life to birth,
and brought all life to birth.

2. The ocean womb that gave us birth
evokes both love and fear -
it haunts our words, it fills our breath
a place of legend, life and death
whose timeless call we hear

whose timeless call we hear.

3. The reed-filled streams, the rivers deep,
invite us to their space,
sing lullabies of healing peace,
let earth renew, let sea increase,
let's find our rightful place,
let's find our rightful place.

4. Our lives surrendered up at last,
the depths become our tomb,
but over us the Spirit broods,
love surges forth, we rise renewed,
born from creation's womb,
born from creation's womb.

5. Once born of water, still we live
the birth pool's sacred vow -
her depth and love, her changing face,
her well of nurture, waves of grace
surge through us even now,
surge through us even now.

Lyrics © 2000 Gordon Thompson & Nathan Nettleton
Tune: REPTON

REFLECTION: The Rev'd Alistair Macrae

We Respond to the Word of Life

PRAYERS FOR THE CREATION & THOSE WHO TEND IT

Garry says:

God of life

You gather us into the circle dance of your life;

You spin your web of love in the fabric which is our bodies,
the bodies we share with brother sun and sister moon.

Now we gather in the communion

which is the body of Jesus our Lord.
We bring our concerns and our hopes,
our despair and our dreaming,
asking that, in Christ, all this wonder about us,
this fragile earth
may be renewed in love.

(Chant begins)

Men: *Da pac-em cord-i-um*
Da pac-em cord-i-um
Da pac-em cord-i-um
Da pac-em cord-i-um

Women 1: *Pa-cem, pa-cem, pa-cem*

Women 2: *Pa-cem in te-rra.*

(Translation: Give peace to every heart. Give peace in all the earth)

Adapted from a chant by Jacques Berthier
© Ateliers et Presses de Taizé

Danni :

God of the first day,

Spirit who brooded over the watery chaos and brought forth life in all
its fullness:

we pray this day for the complex ecosystems of our world,
threatened as they are by the arrogance of our desire
and the ignorance of our consumerism.

Protect and keep them, God,

hold them to your breast and cherish them.

CHANT: *Da pac-em cord-i-um . . .*

Al :

God of the village well,

river of life and mother to all who are poor:
we pray this day for the Indigenous peoples of the world
whose fragile kinship with the lands of their dreaming
are threatened today by the greed of big government and big business.
We remember in particular the custodians of this place,
the Djadjawurong people.
Protect and keep them, God,
hold them to your breast and cherish them.

CHANT: *Da pac-em cord-i-um . . .*

Danni :

God of the desert,
wild willy-wind of prophets and mystics:
we pray this day for all who seek to live their lives in solidarity
with the threatened species of our world,
for all who fight the good fight in season and out of season,
when it is popular to do so, and when it is not.
Protect and keep them, God,
hold them to your breast and cherish them.

CHANT: *Da pac-em cord-i-um . . .*

Al :

God of the Rabbi from Galilee,
friend of the godless and bringer of hope:
we pray this day for ourselves,
and for all who despair at the fact of our own apathy.
In your mercy, visit us with new stories of hope,
with mustard-seeds of possibility that might,
with prayer and careful nurture,
grow to provide shade for all the fragile species of this beautiful world.
Protect and keep us, God,
hold us to your breast and cherish us.

CHANT: *Da pac-em cord-i-um . . .*

After the petitions, you are invited to wander into the centre and place a leaf in the watery womb of creation (a glass bowl) as a sign of your own prayer. At the end of this time, the following collect will be said by Garry:

Great Potter
who moistens the dust of the earth
and creates, out of barrenness,
all that is alive and beautiful.
Take these prayers of ours,
these groans of fragile humanity
and make with them,
—against all we dare hope or expect—
make with them a peace which overcomes.
For we pray in the name of him who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

We Go to do God's Bidding

Charles says:

In this purple season of Lent, as we begin the journey with Jesus to Jerusalem and his baptism of suffering, let us listen for the stories he would tell us along the way:

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt 7.13-14).

“The reign of God is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a paddock; it is the most fragile of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest of shrubs, and becomes a tree in which many birds come to make their nests” (Matt 13.31, 32)

People of God, let us inscribe these stories on our hearts and in our minds; and may we be prepared to join with Christ in the painful labour by which the new creation is brought to birth.

SONG OF MISSION *The Tree of Jesse*

Juliette sings:

1. O Tree of Jesse, we are here before you
Teach us to find your voice in leaf and ground
To hear the crying of your wounded forest
To heed at last creation's deepest sound
Give us your strength that we may stand beside you.
To heed at last creation's deepest sound.
2. Open our hearts and fill them with your courage
Break down our walls of fear and despair
Then send us out to heal creation's wounds
Strengthened by hope and moved by loving care
Open our hearts and fill them with your courage
Strengthened by hope and moved by loving care.
3. Your stricken forests and the life within them
Plead for your help and shall we hear the call?
Your broken earth still nurses us in kindness
She feeds the body and delights the soul
Give us the grace in gratitude to love her
With love you give that makes creation whole.
4. O God of life who breathes in every creature
We now behold the beauty of your earth
Forgive us for the hurts we have inflicted
And give us grace to bring your will to birth
O God of life, your Spirit send upon us
And give us grace to bring your will to birth.

Lyric: Juliette Hughes. Tune: FINLANDIA

WORD OF MISSION

Charles says:

Go into the world in hope.
Don't give in to either despair or fanciful thinking.
Commit yourselves, in tough-minded love,
To all the good that is growing in the world.
Go from this place as people of the Spirit,
people unafraid to dream and to vision,
to lament and to protest,
to work and to pray until the reign of God is come.

And the blessing of God
—Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver—
Will surely pour down upon you,
Wildly, extravagantly, generously.

BLESSING OF THE EARTH (sung)

Please raise an arm in blessing for the earth beneath our feet.

*Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the gentle night,
 moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you.*

(repeat).

RECESSIONAL

Juliette sings *Hildegard von Bingen*

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Acknowledgements

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