

Introduction

Carl: Today's worship has been organised by the Uniting Church Earth Team. We are Christians with a passion for caring for God's creation, and today is a day for us to celebrate the gifts of the Earth, and also to celebrate some of the achievements of the team so far.

A Prayer for healing the Earth.

Sean: Let us pray.

Cath: Dear God
Please enter our hearts and bring us alive.
Take hold of our power and passion and put us to work,
To heal the Earth,
To comfort the sick,
To make a better world,
To love all those who need love.

Joel: Dear God
Thank you for Jesus,
Your gifted child, your voice,
Standing up and speaking out for love
In a world lost in confusion.

Carl: Dear God,
Please enter our hearts and heal our pain,
Simplify our lives and strengthen our love,
Encourage us, comfort us,
Guide us out of the dark, and into the light.

Sean: God of Life and the Living Earth,
Your home is our home,
We share this world with you,
And we are your loving servants.
Amen.

Responsive Prayer.

Sean: I'd like to invite you to read the responses in the order of service.

Sean: Be the saint
Who is never seen

All: **Be the one who loves,
But is never noticed loving**

Sean: Be the one who heals,
But is never named a healer

All: **Be the one who sings of love,
Then disappears into the crowd.**

Song: It's all sacred ground (On God's Earth)

Guitar: Joel Singing led by Sean, Joel, Cath and Carl:

It's all sacred ground, On God's Ea.....rth,
[C] [G] [C] [G]
It's all sacred ground, where we stand it's holy land...
[Am] [G] [Am] [Em]
It's all sacred ground, sacred water, sacred sand,
[C] [G] [C] [G]
It's all sacred ground, when you stand on holy land.
[Am] [G] [Am] [G] [C]

[Guitar keeps playing chord sequence, while prayer is read out]



Sean: God of everlasting love
We are children of the Earth.
We love this planet,
Please help us to save it
From the forces of darkness and destruction.
Help us to join together as Christians
And in our friendship and community,
Find the strength to build a better way of life.
Help us to change the world through love,
As did our Lord Jesus.

CHORUS

It's all sacred ground....

Sean: God we love you with all our hearts,
And we are sorry for our selfish actions.
Forgive us for neglecting you
And forgive us for neglecting the Earth.
God of everlasting power,
Take us out of our comfort zone,
And into your world of magic and love;
Where we see the connections between all life,
Where we care for the land
As we would care for a close friend in need.

CHORUS

It's all sacred ground.....

Readings

Sean: The Old Testament reading is from the 1st book of Samuel, chapter 3, verses 2:10.

Joel: The Gospel reading is from Matthew chapter 8, verses 23:27.

Meditation

Sean: I would like to invite you to light a candle, and spend a few minutes in silence, reflecting on the nature of what is sacred to you. The sounds you will hear in the background are from a recording of tropical storms in Northern Australia.

[The people are given candles, and asked to light them (from a central candle) and place them on a table. Lights are turned off. Then people are invited to meditate with the Ken Davis cassette tape playing in the background].

[Sound fades out, lights come back on. Candles remain burning].

Sermon

Sean: I'd like to give you an image to think about.

Today it is summer in Australia. We are on a small planet in a spiral galaxy. Our galaxy is spinning its way through space along with a hundred billion other galaxies.

We are small and frail, in comparison.

We live in a vast world of great beauty. We are small and we only see a tiny piece of the universe; we get to see perhaps one flower in the whole garden; one crystal in the great cave; we get to hear a few faint chimes in the great symphony of the universe.

We know all this beauty was created by God. But what is our experience of God? Is God somehow *outside* the world, watching with a remote-control and a video screen? Or is God *in* the world, in our hearts, in our land and in the sun and stars ?

Is the Earth a place where we can do what we like; just a background for our games and our business deals? A resource for us to use and a dumping ground for what no longer need?

Or is it possible, that we *are* the Earth; that we are *made of Earth*, that we are the Earth come to life and singing with joy? Is it possible that God created us to

experience the world, to be loved by the world, and to share and celebrate our feelings about this great beauty?

Is it possible, that we are not separate from the Earth, or the universe; that we are the universe speaking out God's name; that our very reason for being here is to find the words to speak about God, to sing about God and to dance about God ?

Today it is nearly 2000 years since our great teacher and saviour, Jesus Christ, came into our small world, to speak of love.

Today as we speak a vast drama of life is unfolding in the rainforests, in the arctic tundra, in the African desert, and in the deep ocean.

As God came to be in the world through Jesus, so God is in the world of the Earth and all its creatures.

What does this mean for us... that God is in the world? Doesn't it mean that everything is sacred? Doesn't it mean that we can if we wish, find God anywhere?

I'd love to be able to do that!!

Getting back to reality, God comes to us through special people, special places, or special words or music. We need this, we thrive on it. What is special to you is where God is speaking most strongly to you.

In my life, I find God in special places. Land, Forests, Oceans. In the eyes of a wild animal; in the wind gently whistling through the trees, in the starfish on a coral reef, in the clean air of a high mountain. I know I am not alone in this feeling.

So that's why we must protect these special places on the Earth. Our rainforests, our wilderness, even our city parks, are special, important places and need our love.

What is that's special to you? What is that's sacred to you? Seek it out and give it lots of love.

To God be all glory and praise. Amen.

Song: Canticle of Daniel (see insert for lyrics).

The Sign of Peace

Sean: Let us offer each other a sign of peace. [*The people shake hands.*]

Thanksgiving

Sean: The response to the thanksgiving prayer is in the order of service.

Let us pray.

Dear God,
We thank you for the work of the Earth Team members,
And we pray for the future of the Uniting Church
That some day there'll be no need for an Earth Team
Because all Christians will love the Earth as much as we do.

**All: Lord, be our guide,
Teach us to love, and show us the way.
Amen.**

Blessing of the people

Sean: God's blessing be with you all,
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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St. David's Uniting Church
160 Nicholson St Abbotsford

Presented by the Uniting Church Earth Team.
For more information contact Cath James on 9852 7433