

## EARTH HOUR PRAYERS Sat 28<sup>th</sup> March

Even the Stones will Cry Out

When: March 28 from 8:30- 9:30PM local time



Materials you may need:

- \* Beeswax candles for the altar or centre table (fire)
- \* Hand bell or prayer bowl to use during the prayer of intercession (air)
- \* Stones for the altar (earth)
- \* Bowl or jug of water
- \* Since the next day is Palm Sunday, you may wish to include on the altar or hand out local evergreen branches to represent palm fronds for celebration

Scripture:

Reflection : Luke 19:28-40

Focus on the final phrase: “If these were silent, even the stones would cry out.”

Just as the stones are crying out – there is a great crying out by the world’s vulnerable people as action on climate change was called for, and went unheeded by the world’s wealthiest nations. During 2014, the Earth has continued to cry out. We have seen floods in Mozambique and Malawi, drought in Namibia. And in the last few days we have felt the pain of the Island Community of Vanuatu, battered by a hurricane (*add other extreme weather events*)

Yet we can celebrate with hosannas the continued witness of Island nations, poor communities, and Indigenous peoples, witness that calls the wealthy nations to account and challenges all of us to live more lightly on this Earth. We can celebrate their resistance to Empire and greed, as Jesus’ followers did on his entry into Jerusalem.

Some questions for reflection:

- \* Why are we here today?
- \* What brought us to be part of this celebration?
- \* How does it feel to be in our church/ home/ community hall praying by candlelight?
- \* What in the reading inspires us? Challenges us? Calls us to greater commitment to the Earth community?
- \* How will we act to bring this symbolic action of one hour into the rest of our lives?

### PRAYERS

Heavenly God, the morning stars sing together, the heavens rejoice, the earth is glad, and the people of earth chant to you a new song.

Joy pervading all the earth comes from you. You bid the sun to beam over the smiling earth and you light up our hearts with gladness. Whenever our souls rejoice may we learn to feel kinship with all your natural servants and grow aware of your gentle grace flowing within us. Admit us into your presence in times of joy, O heavenly God. We seek you that our joys may be hallowed with you, that our happiness may be deepened, that we may join the chorus of the universe, lands and oceans, the stars and infinite space in joyous adoration. Feast of the Universe Prayers.

## **Lighting of the Christ candle**

(Invite children, teens and elders to read.)

Voice 1: As we light this candle, we are reminded of the bush that burned but was not consumed. And God was present.

Voice 2: As we gather as a community to worship, let us trust and follow the voice of God in our midst. The Holy Spirit is present.

Voice 3: As we light this Christ candle, we confront injustice and walk the path of peace in these days and nights of Lent. And Jesus is ever present with us.

Voice 1: Let our ways be challenged, our minds engaged, and our spirits lifted at this sacred time, on this holy ground. Let us raise our voices in a shout for justice. Let us praise the God who leads us into paths of right relationship. **Amen**

This prayer comes from Samoa where the island people live close to the sea which—due to climate change and rising sea temperatures—is rising higher and higher each year, devouring more and more of the land.

Almighty God, your word of creation caused the water to be filled with many kinds of living beings and the air to be filled with birds. With those who live in this world's small islands we rejoice in the richness of your creation, and we pray for your wisdom for all who live on this earth, that we may wisely care for and not destroy what you have made for us and for our descendants. Amen.

## **Collect**

God, our Creator, as we reflect on the mystery of our fragile planet we celebrate the wonders of Earth as our home. Help us to discern how we have polluted our planet and to empathise with the groaning of creation. Teach us to sense the presence of God pulsing through Earth as a living green blue sanctuary. Teach us to love Earth as our home. In the name of Christ, the Word of God, who is the creative impulse in all creation. Amen.

The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly Commission on Liturgy.

We begin with a reminder from Indigenous people of planet Earth,

“...As caretakers of the earth our mother, we Indigenous peoples have observed and experienced the degradation of creation. We have experienced the highest levels of environmental racism. Despite pretences, all of humankind lives in absolute reliance upon nature. Because Indigenous communities live in intimate relation with the land and seas, we are the first peoples affected by the destruction of the creation. We know, however, that what happens to the least of these will also affect all.” (A bell is rung)

(After a time of silence the prayer leader says: Let us pray)

Creator, we begin with prayers for the “least of these” who are greatest in your sight.

We pray for vulnerable, poor and devastated communities who are already suffering the effects of climate change (Silence, then a bell is rung)

**ALL: Giver of life, sustain your creation**

For the land, the waters, the islands, the air, the animals and plants which struggle for survival as a result of human greed and abuse. Silently or aloud we name lands and creatures that are especially under threat. (Silence, then a bell is rung)

**Giver of life, sustain your creation**

We pray for industrialised nations which urgently need to make adjustments to their lifestyles and adopt strong environmental policies. We pray that we will be moved to press our governments to adopt just and strong environmental policies.

(Silence, then a bell is rung)

**Giver of life, sustain your creation**

For those developing nations whose national economy is largely dependent on earning from export crude petroleum and other polluting substances, who will have to diversify their economies. (Silence, then a bell is rung)

**Giver of life, sustain your creation**

For an increase in solidarity in all your people, and practical support with those communities most affected by climate change. (Silence, then a bell is rung)

**Giver of life, sustain your creation**

For ourselves, that we may change our lives to be in harmony with creation and that we may work for climate justice for all people. (Silence, then a bell is rung)

**Giver of life, sustain your creation**

All these prayers we bring together in the prayer Jesus teaches us (said in unison)

**The Lord's Prayer (Aotearoa/ New Zealand)**

**Eternal Spirit**

**Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
source of all that is and that shall be,**

**Father and Mother of us all.**

**Loving God, in whom is heaven.**

**The hallowing of your name echoes through  
the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples  
of the earth!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and test, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever.**

Amen.

New Zealand Prayer Book -Rev ed.: He Karakia Mihinare O Aotearoa. Church of the Province of New Zealand(Anglican)

Benediction:

Leader: May God free you;  
may God guard you night and day.

ALL: **May God set you in your right place,  
and may you spread out like the grass of the prairie.**

Leader: Spread out like palm leaves; continue your walk,  
and may life be with you.

ALL: **May God place you where God's stars are placed at dawn and night.**

Leader: Spread out like water of a lake.

Be numerous like the feet of a millipede.

May God raise you up above everything.

Spread out like the water of a lake.

ALL: **Be abundance that never ends, that never changes.**

Leader: Be like a mountain.

Be like a camel.

Be like a cloud—a cloud that always brings rain.

ALL: **And God promised that it would be so. May we go in peace to love God and all creation.**

Archbishop Emeritus Tutu



Adapted from Kairos Canada 2012

Green Anglicans 2015