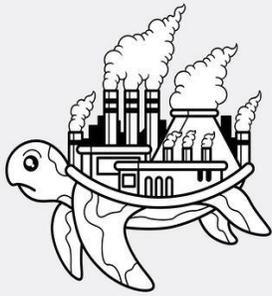


The Stations of the Earth



Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Stations of the Earth

The Creation of the Earth

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.

And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let there be a dome to separate the waters under the dome from the waters above the dome," and it was so. God called the dome sky.

And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the waters be gathered together into one place and let dry land appear," and it was so. God called the dry land "Earth" and the waters he called "Seas."

And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seeds and fruit trees of every kind upon the earth," and it was so. The earth put forth vegetation, plants with their seeds and fruit trees with fruit of every kind.

And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night, lights in the dome to give light to the earth," and it was so. God made the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, and the stars.

And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply upon the earth." And it was so.

And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind, cattle and creeping things and wild animals of every kind," and it was so.

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his own image and God blessed them. In the image of God he created them, in wonderful diversity God created them. And it was so.

And God saw that it was good.

And God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. *Psalms 19:1-4*

Covenant Suite

Now the Lord said to Abram, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." *Genesis 12:1-4*

Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts, we pray.

"Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you." *Jeremiah 7:23*

Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts, we pray.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts, we pray.

You shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord. *Leviticus 19:18*

Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts, we pray.

The Lord has told you, O Mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. *Micah 6:8*

Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts, we pray.

Desolation Suite

“Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but in the stubbornness of their evil will, they walked in their own counsels and looked backwards rather than forward. From the day that your ancestors came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day, yet they did not listen to me, or pay attention, but they stiffened their necks. They did worse than their ancestors did.”

Jeremiah 7:24-26

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

O God, you created us to love you with all our heart, and to love each other as ourselves, but we rebel against you by the evil that we do. We are destroying the beautiful earth you have given us. We make war against one another.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

If you, O Lord, will be careful to notice all that is done amiss, O Lord, who could stand? But there is mercy with you. Turn and heal us, O Lord our God.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

O Lord, we cry out to you. Save your people. Save your planet. Turn our hearts from war and greed and violence. Turn our hands from destruction and marring your works.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

Jesus said, “Just as you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” O God, we have sinned against you, against one another, against our fellow creatures, in whom you dwell.

Matthew 25:40

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

“See my servant....He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.... For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people., although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.”

Isaiah 53:3-9

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

Earth Suite

Lord Jesus, you suffer in the suffering of your people, in the suffering of the earth that you have made, the earth that you sustain, the earth that you love.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

The whole earth groans with pain. Runaway global warming, pollution in our air, our water, our earth. Seas of plastic swirling in the ocean for the silent sea creatures to swallow. Pesticides in the fruit of the earth, in the bodies of polar bears far from cultivated fields. The animals you have created dying out, some are gone, some will soon be gone, and still we kill them and destroy their home. Like lambs led to slaughter, they are silent. Your Spirit within them groans with them in pain.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

God created us in God's own image, blessed us with creativity, reason, skill and freedom to choose how to use it. And we turned our creativity against ourselves, against our planet home. We abused these gifts of God our Creator to mar and destroy Creation and our fellow creatures. Whatever we have done to the least of your children, we have done to you, O Jesus.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

O God, how long? Grant us wisdom. Grant us compassion. Turn our hearts to seek you and forsake our greed and selfishness, our short-sightedness and hardness of heart, our apathy and lack of caring.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel...I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." *Isaiah 43:14, 19-20*

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in the covert? Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food? *Job 38:39-41*

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. *Isaiah 35:1-2*

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Humanity Suite

O God, you have called for peace and we have made war. You have called us to love one another and we have loved our profits more. You have called us to care for the widows, orphans and strangers and we have exploited them for our own benefit or for fear of them. You have called for justice and we have loved injustice more.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

There is war in Ukraine, war in Yemen, war in Africa, war in Myanmar, some waged by our enemies, some waged by our allies. Men, women, children, tiny babies, animals and birds are killed and wounded. Children are traumatized. Children are recruited as child soldiers and soldier's toys. The land is devastated by bombs and cities are destroyed. We create wastelands where once there were prosperous people, prosperous lands. The cry of your people goes up, "How long, O Lord?"

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

So many people hungry, so many children malnourished, starving. So much food wasted and thrown away. Subsistence farmers driven from their ancestral lands, which are turned to cash crops. Companies making barren crops with infertile seeds to increase profits, at great cost to humans and the earth. Food insecurity even in our rich land.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

The cry of the homeless in winter, living in tents or under bridges. The cry of refugees, displaced from their homes. The poor can no longer afford shelter. We forget that your son was homeless, and your people Israel were homeless for 40 years. We forget that you are homeless with them.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

We shun people who are different: different colour, different race, different language, different religion, different gender, different abilities. We forget your commands to welcome the stranger because we, too, have been strangers.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

So many children living in fear, living in hunger, living with trauma no one should bear. Children abused, children neglected, children wounded in wars, children wounded by their parents, children wounded by our governments, children wounded by our church. Children forgotten by the world. Children of whom your son Jesus said, it would be better that a millstone was tied around a person's neck, and they were thrown into the sea than that they should make one of these little ones stumble.

Surely he bears our griefs, he carries our afflictions.

O God, how long? Grant us wisdom. Grant us compassion. Turn our hearts to seek you and forsake our greed and selfishness, our short-sightedness and hardness of heart, our apathy and lack of caring.

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

The prophet says, "In the days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all nations shall stream to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. *Isaiah 2:2-4*

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Isaiah 61:1-2

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. *Isaiah 11:6-9*

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

In those days, they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken..... In that day, says the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away, and those whom I have afflicted. The lame I will make the remnant and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion, now and forever more.

Micah 4:4, 6-7

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Repentance Suite

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near - "Yet even now," says the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing."

Joel 2: 1, 12-13

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But, you, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare all those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore all those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to humankind in Jesus Christ our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

I invite you now, if you wish, to write on paper the prayers and longings of your hearts, your heartfelt confession, your prayers for peace and justice, your longing for healing for yourself and the world. Whatever you want to offer to God, write it down. There are envelopes to seal them in and then come, pin them to the cross, offer them to Jesus. This is between you and God. No one else will read them. I will burn them on Holy Saturday as a fragrant offering to God, and our prayers shall go up as incense, and God will hear and have mercy.

Consolation Suite

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their ways, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:6-9

We seek you, O God. Turn again and heal us.

But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me." Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Isaiah 49:14-15

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Hosea 11:8-9

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17

Have mercy on us, O God, and turn our hearts to you.

Resolution Suite

O God who brings the light, change our eyes and ears so that we may see you and hear you in all your creation, in the children, in the animals, in the streams and lakes and hills, in the insects and birds. Help us to see all creation with your eyes.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

O God who sees the heart, change our hearts to love you and to love all you have made, the beauties and wildness of the earth, the beauty in each of your children. Help us to love and value them for themselves and for bearing your image.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

O God whose Spirit moved over the face of the deep, move over the peoples of the earth. Fill us with your clear vision, that we may see what is before us, fill us with your love, that we may be moved to work for the true well-being of all your creatures.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

O God who calls for justice, bring justice to the world, that all your people may share what we need for life: shelter, food, clothing, clean water, the ability to work and live and raise our families in peace and security, with none to make us afraid.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

O God whose Son went about healing, heal this earth that we have marred. Make us agents of your healing, to reduce global warming, to remove the poisons from our air and water and soil, to regrow the forests that we have cut, to help the species that are dying to revive, to save each animal from human harm, to renew the face of the earth.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

O God of love, transform us that we may grow into the full stature of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, coming to love you with our whole hearts and to love all our neighbours as ourselves.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth.

When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you. Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:1-3a, 6

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through the Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen

Ephesians 3:14-21

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Written and designed by Michelle Bull. Scripture passages from the NRSV.

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