

***Prayers for the Earth
and
God's People***



Contents

Congratulations!

*Congratulations to
Peggy Drew
and
Rev. Gezu Mossissa,
award winners for this issue!*

This booklet is a project of Circle Faith Future and the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement. These prayers, written by United Methodists across the world, were collected for publication on the occasion of Earth Day, 2024, and the Earth Day Vigil for Creation at The General Conference of The United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, April-May 2024.

Rev. Richenda Fairhurst, Editor

Thank you to Grace Pugh Hubbard, Mary Beth Downing, and Elizabeth McCormick for their support of this project.

For more information and to connect with the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement,
link to umcreationjustice.org.



United Methodist
**Creation
Justice**
movement



Voices in Our Tradition	1
Weaving Hope, Patterns of Peace.	3
Prayers for Earth Day & Its Beings	4
Earth Day Litany	5
Creation Care Prayer	6
Preserve the Creation	7
Iridescent	8
Beautiful Day.	9
Earth Day Sunday Prayer	10
A Prayer for Ethiopia	11
A Prayer for a Forest Fire.	17
In Praise of the Forest	19
A Meditation in Nature	21
Earth Day Vigil Liturgy.	23
Permissions, Printing, & How to Use this Resource	27 - 28

Voices in Our Tradition: An Earth Litany

Creator God,
You have called us to this moment, to this Life. You have called us to seek your wisdom and will. We search your Holy Word for guidance. In your Holy Word, we find stories of faith and courage for times like these.

Lord, like Abraham, you have called us to travel to a new land, to an unknown and uncertain future. We are at the crossroads for change.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, like Daniel, you have called us to seek, serve, and love you first. Amidst the distractions of our lives, you have called us to put our relationship with you first, second, and even third in our hearts and mind.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, like Noah, you have called us to prepare. Our present time is full of suffering and loss. The way forward is also full of suffering and loss for many. Guide us as we prepare for the transformed world.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, unlike Noah, we are followers of the Way. Our Lord calls us to prepare, but calls us to open our ark. We are to invite others in, Find the miracles and fellowship of community and compassion.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, like Job, you have called us to a time of great suffering. We witness the loss of beauty, comfort and security. Like Job you call us to healing by calling us to pray for our friends. It is in our outward focus that we are healed by your love.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, and like Jesus, you have called us to the healing power of nature. Through the desert and through the garden you have called us to strength. May we so order our lives that we breathe in the healing power of your creation every day and embrace restoration within our souls and within the world.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

And finally Lord, like Joseph, you have called us to act. When our Lord was a small child, vulnerable and hunted, Joseph acted to save him. You have also called us listen to our dreams and the angels in our lives. You have called us to act to protect the vulnerable and to not sit and wait for the army of angels. You have reminded us that we are that army of earthly angels. We are your voice, your hands, your feet.

Lord, strengthen our faith.

Lord, may we take courage from these voices in our faith tradition. When we are discouraged, remind us that the Way has never been the easy way. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

— Mary Beth Downing
Mountain Sky Conference



Weaving Hope, Patterns of Peace

Spinner of Universes, Creator God, thank you for all you have made! Bless our intertwined lives. Weave us together in beauty, remembering stories from various continents.

We confess our tendency to ignore gifts and warning signs shared with creation. We distract ourselves and stop our ears to symptoms, setbacks, and cries from those closest to rising tides.

Tether us to hope. We seek guidance from ancient water and Spirit among us. Inspire new patterns, limits, and accountability. Author of Grace, celebrate with us when we care well.

Generous Friend, strengthen faith in us as we move through crossroads of change.

Please give us compassionate hearts for the cosmos. Fashion stories of truth from our stillness and courage.

You are God and we are yours. Guide us to love, tend, restore and preserve, planet and peace. Open our hearts to birdsong and life as we step carefully into sustainable gardens. Singing we serve, we honor you as we live out your justice and joy! Amen.

— Rev. Emily Hagan
Louisville United Methodist Church and
First United Methodist Church of Lafayette, CO
Mountain Sky Conference

Prayers for Earth Day and Its Beings

Oh God, the Father Almighty, we earnestly pray for all creatures, breathing, non-breathing, and invisible beings. We pray for their protection. You made them the way they are and you are very much delighted with them and your love for them is constant.

Oh Earth, don't hide the wrongs we have done to you, to the breathing and non-breathing creatures and invisible beings. You have not broken the covenant between you and the Creator of the universe (God the Father Almighty). But human beings have indeed broken their covenant, with their plans full of evil, deceit, injustice and destruction of the earth, inclusively.

Amen.

Please also pray for peace in Sudan.

— Peter Talbaki
Sudan District, United Methodist Church.
Uganda, South Sudan Conference.



Earth Day Litany

Holy One, our God, receive our thanksgiving for the wonders and beauty of nature. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Open our eyes to the intricacies and diversity among all living beings. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Remind us of our interconnectedness with each other and every created thing. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Forgive our actions and inactions that have harmed the earth and its creatures. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Grant us courage and hope in the face of climate change and climate injustice. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Strengthen us to participate in the mending of all that has been harmed on earth. Creator God:

Renew the earth.

Graciously accept this prayer through Jesus Christ, your Son, by whom all things on earth were created and in whom all creation holds together.

Amen

— Peggy Drew
for the Main Street UMC Green Church Team,
Nashua, NH, New England Conference

Creation Care Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, Creator God, thank you for blessing us with the beauty and wonder of your creation. It sustains us, it restores our souls, and it connects us to you.

Guide us to be the stewards you created us to be. Help us to share your bounty with others and use it as you want us to use it.

Amen.

— Sandra Howson
with the Fredericksburg United Methodist Church United
Women in Faith Green Team
Virginia Conference



Preserve the Creation

Dear Lord,
We care about preserving your beautiful creation.
Help us to see all the small things we can do to help:
Shut off the car engine; no idling while waiting.
Walk or bicycle instead of driving.
Combine errands; make fewer trips.
Bring our reusable shopping bags to the store.
Buy only as much food as we can eat.
Care for our neighbors with a food bank
and supportive agencies.
Recycle as much as possible.
Shop at a thrift store to reduce
petroleum use and waste.
Conserve water: short showers,
minimized use of phosphates.
Xeriscape our properties.
Tidy our yards with electric mowers
and weedwhackers.
Rake and sweep instead of using
a gas-powered blower.
Compost our yard waste,
unless that would endanger bears.
Prepare our yards to resist wildfires.
At heart, be kind to your creation and to
each other.
In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.

— Lela Criswell
Estes Park United Methodist Church
Mountain Sky Conference

Iridescent

Your grackles are back
All black and iridescent
Punctuation to end
The statement of Lent.
Their cluck-chuck and
Fluid flight makes them
More than periods. They
Are exclamation marks,
Marks of emphasis
As we defeat doubt
Once again and decide
To keep feeding your sheep
To keep tending your earth
And be led by the Lamb
Whom, yes, we do love!
Amen.



— Richard Frank Gillum
Good Hope Union United Methodist Church
Baltimore-Washington Conference



Beautiful Day

Thank you for the beautiful day you create;
For the peace that you offer through Jesus Christ!
We are grateful for the occasion to celebrate the Earth!
May your Spirit continue to inspire and your love continue always
To be our driving force as good stewards in faith.
Amen.

— *Karlah Yvonne Burton,*
Chairperson
Creation Care Ministry & Samaritan Garden
Saint Matthews United Methodist Church
Greensboro, North Carolina
Northern Piedmont District
Western North Carolina Conference
North Carolina Earthkeeper
Western North Carolina Creation Care Team Ministry

Earth Day Sunday Prayer

On this coming Earth Day weekend, Dear God, hear our prayers for a renewed and rejuvenated commitment to protecting our planet. The earth's natural resources are vulnerable and threatened. Climate, water, and natural resources are at risk. Open our hearts and our minds to the needs in our neighborhoods, in our country, and in our world. Amen.

Prayers:

For our earth and all of creation—we pray for changed hearts and minds in the care of our world and our universe. May each of us be good stewards diligent in our protection and defense of a healthy climate, clean and sustainable water, and diverse natural resources, protecting the need for a great variety of animal and plant species. Let us all work together this Earth Day and every day to be able to pass along a healthier planet to future generations. Amen.

—*Dona Shaw*
with the Caring Ministry
La Mesa First United Methodist Church
California - Pacific Conference



A Prayer for Ethiopia

Dear our Heavenly Father,
Creator God, Almighty, I come before you, my Lord
with an open heart to pray to you for your mercy
for the peoples of Ethiopia. I am praying to you
to protect our nation living in the Horn of Africa,
Ethiopia, from flooding that causes the destruction
of people's lives.

Lord, I humbly ask you to protect the people who
suffered and were lost in the floods. I pray for those
who lost homes, I pray for those who have lost their
families. Lord, have mercy upon all the family of
God who are suffering with flooding disasters.

Creator God, Almighty, hear the prayers of your
people for those who are living on the streets of
Ethiopia. Help us Lord to be in your mercy, give
us hope beyond our suffering from the flooding
disasters of East Africa and affecting Ethiopia. We
pray also for our neighbors living in Kenya.

Father, I pray today for our nation living in East
Africa, Ethiopia, to be protected from the disaster
at this critical time. Change this painful situation
by your presence to end the sorrows of the children
of God.

Almighty God, we have no strength in ourselves,
but by your mercy we turn our eyes to you to

acknowledge your son as Lord over these problems
that affect our nation in East Africa, Ethiopia.

Dear Father, renew our hope as we repent and
turn to your promises where our people are living
in disaster areas. Dear Lord, remind us of your
love with your love and mercy. Raise up your
peoples of Ethiopia, give us strength and ability to
pass through these challenges by your grace.

Forgive us Lord, for not caring for our creation and
for not using properly the natural resources given
free to your peoples. From the disaster of flooding,
God of mercy, we come before you with our hearts
filled with grief as we are suffering the flooding of
East Africa, Ethiopia.

Heavenly Father, you are our strength and
helper in times of disaster. Lord, we pray for your
presence and care for those who are suffering.
Lord, help the peoples of Ethiopia who lost family
members in the flooding and help them to be
restored. Lord, we pray that the victims do not fall
under illnesses because of these disasters.



Heavenly Father, we ask you to hear our prayers for all those affected by flooding in Ethiopia, to protect our nation, to bring relief to all affected regions in Ethiopia. Restore all those displaced families who are most vulnerable. Turn your face to us, your nation, for mercy and blessings.

Lord, we pray for the people whose lives are devastated by the flood in Ethiopia. We ask you to end the disasters, to bring hope for our nation living in Ethiopia.

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray to you to lift up the victims of the flooding, to recover and find hope for the future in Ethiopia. We come to you today to ask for your protection and mercy upon those who have been displaced. We ask you to bring your light into this dark time in our nation.

Lord, we ask you for your mercy for those who are suffering and for you to bring peace to our nation. Give us protection and strength and bring an end to human suffering and the destruction caused by flooding.

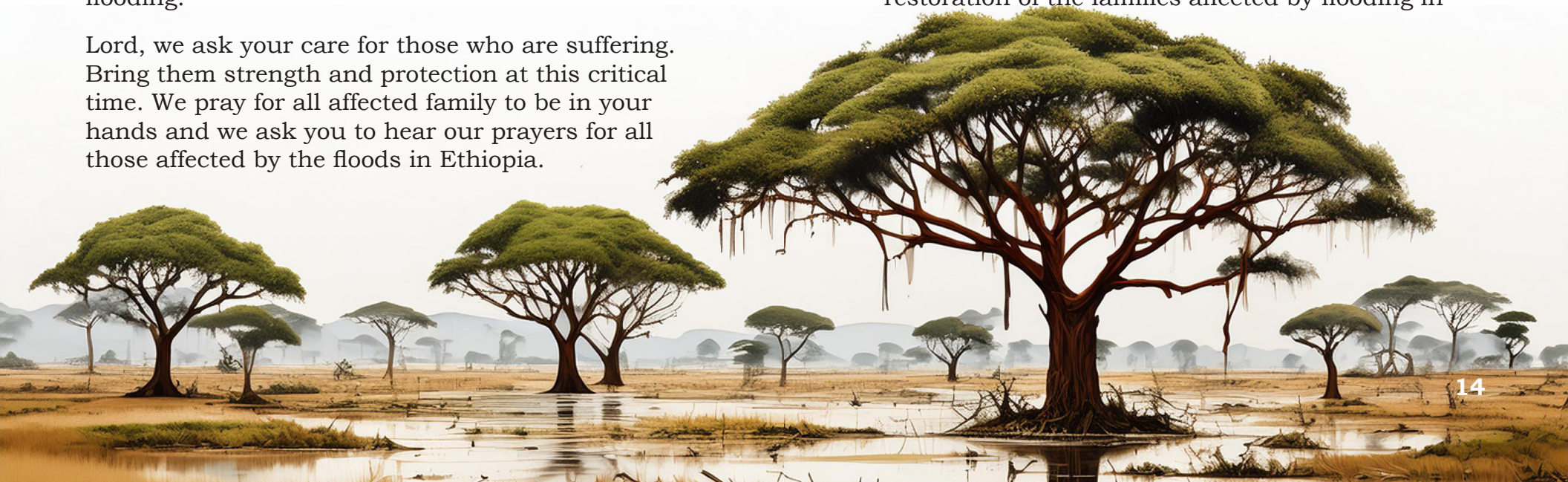
Lord, we ask your care for those who are suffering. Bring them strength and protection at this critical time. We pray for all affected family to be in your hands and we ask you to hear our prayers for all those affected by the floods in Ethiopia.

Dear God we pray for the people whose lives have been devastated by flood and we pray for protection and strength in your kingdom. We are praying to you for mercy from the devastating effect of the floods around us. We pray for your protection against the harmful impacts of the flood.

Lord, help us to protect all your children living in Ethiopia. Protect us from the challenges brought to us by climate crisis.

Lord, we trust in your goodness and love. We know that you are a loving God who cares for all your creation on earth. We ask you to protect our nation from the natural disasters around us. Dear God, we pray to you today with humble hearts, seeking your protection from the threat of floods to grant us the strength to nurture future generations.

Dear Father, we pray to you to bring an end the flood from Ethiopia and East Africa. We pray for restoration of the families affected by flooding in



East Africa, Ethiopia. We pray for your good hands and mercy for those who have been displaced by floods in Ethiopia.

Lord we pray and ask you to guide us to know your healing hands and blessings for the displaced families living in Ethiopia. Dear Father, we pray to you to bring freedom to your nation of East Africa, Ethiopia, free us from flooding and disasters.

Mighty God, bless our nation, bring hope to the hopeless, lift up the families who lost their family, bring help those who affected by flooding in Ethiopia. Lord, we thank you for your goodwill to save all your children living in Ethiopia.

Lord renew Ethiopia by your grace and through your power and teach us to love all that you have created and to care for the earth as your gift to our nation, praise you my lord with all your creatures We pray all this in Jesus name our Lord!

Amen and Amen!!!

Arise Ethiopia

— Rev. Gezu Mossissa
Ethiopia United Methodist Church
Kenya-Ethiopia Conference

About the prayer “A Prayer for Ethiopia”:

As the writer calls for prayer, so we must also call for action. Ethiopia and East Africa are among the most vulnerable places in the planet for the effects of the climate crisis. The people in these countries have had little to no part in the growing problems of oil and gas pollution, and yet they have disproportionately suffered from the effects.

Catastrophic flooding in Ethiopia and East Africa is now all too common an occurrence. As the author writes this prayer, Ethiopia and East Africa are again under floodwaters with hundreds of thousands of people displaced, including refugees from South Sudan who are sheltering in Ethiopia from drought and civil conflict in their homeland.

Flooding is happening on a bigger scale and more often in places around the globe, such as Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, and Africa because of climate change. This flooding disrupts communities, destroys crops and croplands, forces migration, increases vulnerability for women and girls, and causes disease.



A Prayer for a Forest Fire

Protector God, stay with me today, be near me in the night. The heat pushes in. Calm the hair rising on the back of my neck. Keep the little ones close in, let us be fed, let us find water, O Lord, in your mercy, keep the girls and their mothers safe from harm this day.

Storming God, bring the rain to cool the fire in the forest, we call to you! Soothe the flames, let the water sink deep through the moss and lichen, under the roots, let the trees draw it up, let the rain quench the fire.

Sheltering God, the air is hot, the fire-wind pushes us down, the animals scatter, no bird sings, only the heat has voice. Lead us to water, to safety, to cool fresh air.

Creator, save your forest! Keep the trees from burning. Defend the fire fighters who swelter, dig

ditches, and hack at undergrowth. Bring them safe home again. Let us find home again.

Almighty God, we are your people, this is your forest! Defend it from the crisis, from the greed, the oil, the wicked ones who will not stop the drilling, extracting, and flaring, even when the world is burning.

Cleansing God, let the tears in my eyes clear out the smoke. Let me find a pool where I can draw in a clean breath. Hear my lament for the trees turned to ash. There is ash on my clothes, my shoes, my hands...

Restoring God, how long will you let the oil and the fire burn! Refresh us with rain. Restore us with new growth. Let the flowers come. Let the branches grow, each reaching for the sun! Let the cool mist live again in the forests, your forests.

God of all! In your name, hear your people pray for relief, for safety, for shelter, for renewal, and for your good earth. For you are the everlasting God of Glory, of heaven and earth. In you, every foundation is laid, and every promise kept. Amen.

— Rev. Richenda Fairhurst
Greater Northwest Area
of The United Methodist Church



In Praise of the Forest

God of all Creation, by whom the skies, soils, and seas are made, we praise you for this wondrous green planet and its sturdy, misty forest! A forest so rich that, on forest soil, each stone overturned reveals a network of life, fungus, beetles, and seeds.

All seeing God, you made each branch of every evergreen to boast of caterpillars that will be moths and of hatchling birds to fly and thrill the timber with their songs. You breathed and the forest gave life!—with squirrels to race along every trunk, while the woodpecker hammers, the koala sleeps, and the sloth slowly makes its way along the vines.

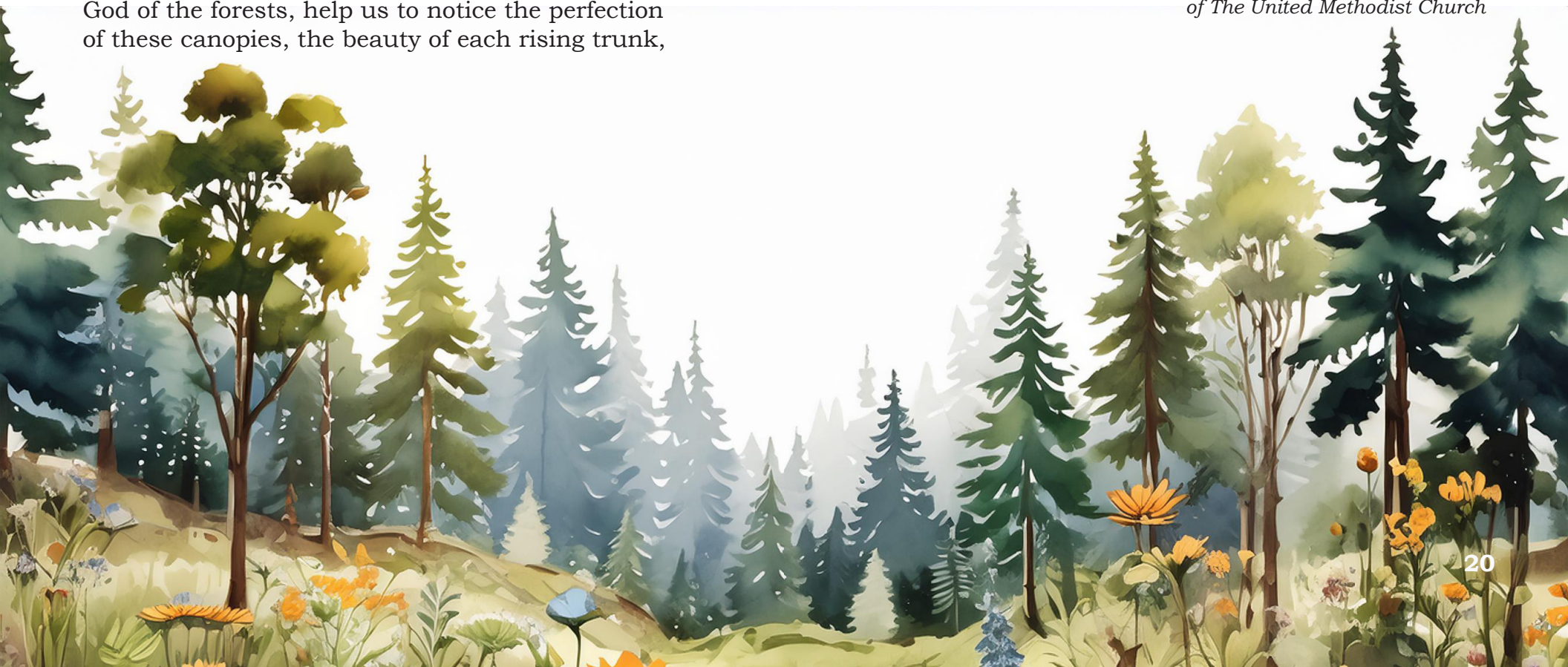
God of the forests, help us to notice the perfection of these canopies, the beauty of each rising trunk,

the Spirit in each sunbeam that warms the forest down to the mossy tree roots. Help us reclaim knowledge of and love for these deep natural places you have carefully made and that you love.

God of life, bring your Spirit down on us. Convict us with your power that we must act to preserve the life you have made, of every imaginable kind, all for your glory. Teach us to be righteous beings within your created world, and to walk with justice as creatures of the trees.

Everlasting God, we shall sing your praises and the praises of the forest! We will rejoice in all you have made. Amen.

— Rev. Richenda Fairhurst
Greater Northwest Area
of The United Methodist Church



A Meditation in Nature

Take a few moments to experience this meditation in a natural place:

Find a seat in a green space, outdoor place, or park. You might be under a canopy or near a flower bed.

Be glad that you are outside your house, office, or any building, and away from that climate-controlled box for a while. Appreciate the bugs and the sounds around you.

Contemplate this thought:

Can human beings exist apart from nature?

Imagine that you are one of the flowers nearby.

Imagine that you are rooted in the soil and open to the sun.

Pray with me:

Source of Life,

spill over creation your vision of harmony.

Let the voice of the smallest bird

take the lead in singing a song of praise.

Now we add our sigh in perfect blend
as we hear you exclaim,
“Well done, good and faithful ones.”
Amen.

(Take time to breathe.)

When you are ready, stand up and look for a way to walk outside a little. Perhaps there is a path, or a way to meander in this green space.

As you walk, hold this prayerful time in your heart. Make a prayer in two phrases. Say one half of the prayer on inhalation and the other half of the prayer on exhalation. For example: (*inhale*) “God, what you create,” (*exhale*) “I will love.”

Inhale. Exhale.

Use this as a breath prayer as you walk.

—Rev. Nancy Blade

This prayer is one of six meditational prayers created by Rev. Blade, Upper Room Ministries, and the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement for Delegates and others at General Conference in 2024. Find the set at umcreationjustice.org/walk



Earth Day Vigil Candlelight Liturgy

We give our gratitude to God for the wonder of creation: for our fellow creatures—the eagles that swoop and soar—the gazelles that leap and run—the fish that teem in the rivers and seas; for the landscapes in which we dwell—gentle meadows—mountains majestic in their presence—forests diverse in life—deserts with their stark beauty.

We give our gratitude to God...

We give our gratitude to God for the wonder of creation: for the gentle rain, the sunlight that glistens on the leaves, the breezes that cool us; for all the waters—streams and rivers, ponds and lakes, seas and oceans; for the grass soft on our feet—and the soil, which provides sustenance.

We give our gratitude to God...

We give our gratitude to God for the wonder of creation: for the harvests that feed us; for the cool water that quenches our thirst; for the air that we breath in and out. We recall that all of this sustains us, passes through us, surrounds us, and connects us to all our fellow creatures.

We give our gratitude to God...

We lift our lament to God for a damaged creation:

that the skies are filled with fossil remains that fever the earth; that the glaciers, which provide water to drink and to irrigate fields, are melting down; that heat islands form in our cities—threatening the health of the poor and elderly; that fierce storms and floods grown from rising heat threaten our coastlines.

We lift our lament to God...

We lift our lament to God for a damaged creation: for the ever-expanding extinction of our fellow creatures; for the multiple species of birds and fish, toads and salamanders, bears and rhinos that will never know life—and for the silent void that follows; for the greed and neglect that cause this mass extinction; for the distractions that cause many not to notice or care.

We lift our lament to God...

We lift our lament to God for a damaged creation: for the fact that it is the poor who suffer the first and worst from this damage; that those who cause the least harm will often suffer the most; that those among us from the Global South are most threatened by rising temperatures and the resulting drought; that Africa is the most vulnerable continent in our depleted world.

We lift our lament to God...



We offer our devotion to God so that we might faithfully care for and protect creation; that we might take time to open our senses that we might see, hear, and feel the suffering and breakdown around us; that we might open ourselves up to the cry of those in need and to the cry of our fellow creatures; that we might slow down, pause, and then discern how we might live lives of care and restraint.

We offer our devotion to God...

We offer our devotion to God that we might faithfully care for and protect creation; to include our concern in our work, in our play, and in our rest; to include our concern in our congregations—in our worship, in our fellowship, in our study, in our service; to include our concern in our communities through a circle of care for our neighbors, our fellow creatures, and the landscapes in which we depend and dwell; to include our concern in our advocacy and in our witness to the nations.

We offer our devotion to God...

We offer our devotion to God that we might faithfully care for and protect creation: that we might remember that care for creation is central to our discipleship; that we might find ways to restore the landscapes that we share with our fellow creatures; that we might pray for and care for our neighbors

in need; that we might commit ourselves to living lives of witness and the needed sacrifice in this present age.

We offer our devotion to God...

We give our gratitude to God for the wonder of creation. We lift our lament to God for a damaged creation, and we offer our devotion to God that we might faithfully care for and protect creation.

Amen.

Dr. Daniel Joranko, Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.
Earth Day Candlelight Liturgy was one of the prayers raised during the Earth Day Vigil for Creation at First United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, during the 2020/2024 General Conference of the United Methodist Church.



How to Use This Resource:

This resource was compiled to support the effort in churches and congregations to celebrate the creation on Earth Day and everyday. Included are liturgies and prayers of praise, as well as prayers of lament. Some prayers imagine restoration, while others cry out from the middle of climate-fueled disaster.

You are free to use these prayers in the life of the church. You may reprint these prayers in bulletins and church newsletters, share them in Bible studies, and at mission events, potlucks, and worship. You can show them in PowerPoints and livestreams, and in general we hope you will find good places to offer these prayers wherever they may be helpful to your community of faith as we learn to celebrate and be accountable to this creation God has made. Wherever these are used, be sure to credit the author of the prayer and this resource whenever you can.

No commercial permissions are given. Each individual author retains the rights to their work. For further use permissions, please contact the author.

Printing this Resource:

The layout for this resource is two pages on every letter-sized sheet in landscape orientation.

To print a copy, link to umcreationjustice.org and download the booklet printing options.



