

## DAY ONE: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Cathedral

### OPENING PRAYER

We gather this morning to celebrate Earth as our original cathedral. Let us remember the forests and mountains, the rivers and seas, as our original sanctuary space where we gather to worship God, the Creator and One who is revealed in all of Earth, sky, and sea.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Cathedral of Earth, Sky, and Sea*

**Refrain:** The cathedral of Earth, sky, and sea; Earth, sky and sea.

### FIRST READING: SAINT CATHERING OF SIENA

#### *The Sanctuary*

It could be said that God's foot is so vast  
that this entire earth is but a  
field on God's  
toe,

and all the forests in this world  
came from the same root of just  
a single hair  
of God's.

What then is not a sanctuary?  
Where then can I not kneel  
and pray at a shrine  
made holy by God's  
presence?

## **SUNG PSALM OPENING**

O Love, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### **PSALM 84**

The sparrow has a place in the rafters.  
The swallow raises her young in the nest she has made.  
They live and move easily in their places.  
They flit and soar around your world altar.  
They are home.  
It is not so easy for me.  
I long for that ease of being and pray  
for the grace to live in the world as at your altar.  
Happy are they who live in the Pilgrim way;  
They walk through desolate landscapes  
and find your springs.  
They toil through mountains and discover your peaks.  
They set themselves to the tasks of love and service  
and know deep satisfaction  
One day lived in this grace is better than a thousand spent  
at our own devices.  
When we walk our appointed path in peace,  
We find our home and our way.

## **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **SECOND READING: TEILHARD DE CHARDIN**

By means of all created things, without exception, the divine assails us, penetrates us, and moulds us. We imagined it as distant and inaccessible, whereas in fact we live steeped in its burning layers. . . The world, this palpable world, which we were wont to treat with the boredom and disrespect with which we habitually regard places with no sacred association for us, is in truth a holy place, and we did not know it.

## SILENT CONTEMPLATION

### PRAYERS OF CONCERN

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

Help us, O Creator God, to see the world as your sanctuary shimmering with your sacred presence. Inspire us to protect this living cathedral in all the ways needed to support its flourishing.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, shelter us in your sanctuary.

We pray for the courage and fortitude to transform our patterns of daily life, individually and collectively, in ways that honor our kinship with the church of creation. Help us and our leaders to see how necessary radical change is in the way we live our lives and move into a life-giving future for all beings.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, shelter us in your sanctuary.

O Sacred One, we pray that we might find your Presence within Creation that surrounds us. May each stone, each plant, each river, each star speak to our hearts of your Glory and your Presence with us.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, shelter us in your sanctuary.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, shelter us in your sanctuary.

## CLOSING SONG

### *The World is My Monastery*

**Chant:** O-o, the world is my heart. O-o, the world is my home. O-o, the world is my monastery, my monastery.

## CLOSING BLESSING

May you find sanctuary among trees and stones,  
and feel Earth preparing a place for you  
to sit and breathe and be.

Let the long limbs of branches  
form a canopy above your head,  
let the hills open up a place for you to soar.

May the stones form an altar and  
see how the sun makes everything shimmer and glisten  
so that everything shines forth from within.

Let the tender vine climbing the trunk  
show you what it is to reach to the sky,  
let all the living creatures that gather,  
winged and four-footed ones,  
offer a new companionship.

All around you, see yourself as part of this glorious cathedral,  
the lake and holy wells are the fountains of baptism,  
the river rushes carrying gifts down from the mountains,  
the oaks and sycamore create a sacred circle,  
the face of the Creator incarnate and immanent  
illuminated with each gaze.

Feel the veil between heaven and earth slip away  
until you know this sanctuary of soil and sunlight,  
listen to the sky whisper her secrets on the wind,  
lifted by wings and song.

## SUNG AMEN



## CREDITS

*All songs and texts used with permission*

**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Cathedral of Earth, Sky, and Sea*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**First Reading** from Saint Cathering of Siena. Quoted in Daniel Ladinsky, trans., *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and the West*. New York: Penguin Books (2002) p. 205.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 84** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Divine Milieu*. New York: Harper and Row (1960) p. 83.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Christine Valters Paintner and Polly Burns

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *The World is My Monastery*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Cathedral*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Please note:** All of the Opening and Closing Songs are published on CDs in the Abbey of the Arts collection. In addition, these songs have accompanying gesture prayers and/or dances created by Betsey Beckman that can be found on the corresponding DVD (each album has a DVD companion). The Psalm Opening, Doxology, and the Response to the Prayers of Concern also have accompanying congregational gestures. The audio and video recordings of these are available at AbbeyoftheArts.com.

## DAY ONE: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Cathedral

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us reflect on how we received sanctuary today. How did we become aware of the living cathedral that surrounds and sustains us? Let us move into evening with a heart full of gratitude for all the ways we are safe and supported and offer our prayers for those who are vulnerable and without shelter.

### OPENING SONG

*It's a New Day (Psalm 104)*

**Refrain:** Breathe into the Earth, Holy One and renew us; it's a new day.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Love, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### PSALM 8

Many-Named One  
beyond imagining--

When I contemplate the night sky,  
the cosmos which all unfolded from a speck,  
galaxies, stars, this beautiful earth—

Who are we humans, that you attend to us?  
mere mortals in our tiny corner, and you love us?

We are life come to knowing and feeling.

The whole world is in our hands.  
plants and animals, oceans and ice caps, rain forests  
atmosphere and ecosystem.

Touch our hearts, O God,

make us worthy of this trust  
Help us care for life on this beautiful earth.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **READING OF THE NIGHT: COLIN TUDGE**

Groves of redwoods and beeches are often compared to the naves of great cathedrals: the silence; the green, filtered, numinous light. A single banyan, each with its multitude of trunks, is like a temple or mosque—a living colonnade. But the metaphor should be the other way around. The cathedrals and mosques emulate the trees. The trees are innately holy.

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

#### **CLOSING POEM**

##### *Into the Forest*

*Come to the forest*, I hear the whisper  
but I delay, so many tasks ahead  
a list as long as the highway,  
the engine of doing so loud.

*Come to the forest*, she teases  
but I delay, afraid of the dark,  
of the hundred kinds of mosses  
the beasts hiding in hollows.

*Come to the forest*, she insists  
but I delay, wanting to locate maps  
that chart the way, find my compass,  
fill my pack with essentials

*Come to the forest*, she still cries,  
the reasons not to go are so many

and I look back on them  
floating behind me like smoke,

even as I lower my head  
to pass under branches,  
place bare feet on quiet earth  
and find a place to rest

eyes closed and I am there  
among ash and elder,  
hawthorn and yew, all singing  
*welcome: at last.*

## CLOSING SONG

### ***Be Still (Psalm 46)***

**Chant:** Be still and know that I am God.



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**Opening Song: *It's a New Day (Psalm 104)*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 8** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Colin Tudge, *The Tree: A Natural History of What Trees Are, How They Live, and Why They Matter*. Three Rivers Press (2005) p. xvii

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Be Still (Psalm 46)*** by Simon de Voil

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## DAY TWO: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Scriptures

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us remember this day, Earth as the big book of revelation and our original scripture text. May the continuous turning of the leaves from green to amber and ruby to their surrender to the ground again remind us of our own cycles and rhythms.

### OPENING SONG

*Turn Me Earth*

**Refrain:** Turn me, turn me, turn me into the morning light. Turn me, turn me, turn me into the night.

### FIRST READING: JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA

For the divine knowledge cannot be restored in us except by the letters of scripture and the sight of creatures. Learn the words of scripture and understand their meaning in your soul; there you will discover the Word. Know the forms and beauty of sensible things by your physical senses, and see there the Word of God.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Peace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### PSALM 147

It is good to sing praises to you, Mother of all creation,  
And to recognize the touch of your love.  
You bring us home, help us heal,  
You love your creation  
You call every one of your stars by name.  
You bless the young, the poor, the ill  
You wait forever for the lost to turn to you.

Your love is music to our hearts, and we sing.  
You are in the clouds that darken the sky  
You send the rain which gives us life.  
The cycles of the seasons and the growth of the plants are your delight.  
You provide food for the wild animals; even the young ravens when they cry.  
You love the horse's proud strength and the athlete's prowess.  
You crave our love and attention.  
And so we pray.  
We give thanks for life, for children, for the beauty of the snow that lies soft in the morning.  
We give thanks for the storm, the hail, scattered like popcorn on the grass.  
We are in awe of your power.  
When the seasons turn, the growing warmth reminds us of your warmth  
The flowing waters remind us of the life which comes from you.  
Thank you, Mother of us all, help us  
to keep your love in our hearts and to love your creation.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **SECOND READING: SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX**

Believe me, you will find more lessons in the woods than in books. Trees and stones will  
teach you what you cannot learn from masters.

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

## PRAYERS OF CONCERN

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

We ask your forgiveness O Creator, for when we deface your word by the desecration of the Natural world. May we hold the planet in the same reverence as we hold any holy text, knowing it is as much your word as those written in ink.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your Wisdom.

Thank you that you are a God who speaks to us. May we fully open our senses to hear your voice, in the song of the winged ones or in the sound of the wind in the trees. May we hear your whisper in the rain wet on our cheeks, your call of passion in the bushfire's fury.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your Wisdom.

Help us learn of your ways through the seasons of the year. Teach us to know when to plant seeds of hope, nurture love and to see the harvest in our lives and the lives of others. Forgive us for being addicted to growth and production. Teach us the wisdom of fallow times and the beauty to be found in the darkness of winter.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your Wisdom.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your Wisdom.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Song of Brigid*

**Refrain:** Darkness to light, night into day; Wellspring of Wisdom, show me the way.

## **CLOSING BLESSING**

May our eyes be opened to the Word of God  
scribed on every leaf and petal,  
on every wing and paw.

As the seasons unfold in their vibrant dance of change  
may we hear the call from their pages  
to blossom forth, to bear fruit,  
to surrender and yield, to rest into mystery.

Let the journey of caterpillar to moth  
teach you the path of transformation  
Let the patience of mountains and singing of stones  
give guidance for what it means to endure.  
Let the rise and fall of the sun and moon  
circling the blue-tiled sky  
teach you about journeys to fullness  
and to rest and release.

May Holy Wisdom be revealed in each season,  
reading grace at every turn.

## **SUNG AMEN**



## CREDITS

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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Turn Me Earth*** by Peter Mayer

**First Reading** from John Scotus Eriugena. Quoted in Mary C. Earle. *Celtic Christian Spirituality: Essential Writings -- Annotated & Explained* SkyLight Paths Publishing (2011) p. 75.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 147** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Bernard of Clairvaux. Quoted in Epistola CVI, sect. 2; translation from Edward Churton *The Early English Church* (1840) p. 324.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Polly Burns

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *Song of Brigid*** by Laura Ash

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Scriptures*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

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## DAY TWO: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Scriptures

### OPENING PRAYER

The poet William Stafford invites us to consider the continuous scripture of leaves and the poet Kabir says that leaves on the trees can teach us like scripture when our eyes and ears are open.

We pray in gratitude today for all the ways our senses were awakened to the revelation all around us.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Illumine Me*

**Chant:** Illumine Me, O Spirit divine; open my heart, and my eyes wide. Illumine me, O Spirit Divine; cast over me your light. Illumine me.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Peace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

#### PSALM 19

The being and beauty of the universe  
declares the Glory of God.  
No words are necessary.  
Contemplation of nature revives my soul.

When I view this as unspoken teaching, I am wise.  
When I align myself with Love my heart rejoices  
This enlightenment is more to be desired than gold.  
It is sweeter than honey, and my great reward.

Cleanse me of my secret faults and presumptuous sins  
“Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart

Be acceptable in thy sight, O God my strength  
and my redeemer”.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **READING OF THE NIGHT: FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY**

Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things . . . When you are left alone, pray. Love to throw yourself on the earth and kiss it. Kiss the earth and love it with an unceasing, consuming love.

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

#### **CLOSING POEM**

##### *Original Poetry*

The mountains stand  
as guardians of eternity  
against a mottled sky,  
the tide withdraws,  
then turns, approaches me  
like a shy lover,  
each morning the sun  
appears once again  
and buttercups open  
their lemon mouths to sing  
of light and I can almost believe  
resurrection is possible,  
can almost see the world is a poem  
hiding under the fragile stem  
of flower that bows at the force  
of the coming storm.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Oscail Mo Chroi*

**Chant:** *Oscail mo chroi. Oscail mo chroi.* (Open my heart.)



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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Illumine Me*** by Trish Bruxvoort Colligan

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 19** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*. Wordsworth Editions (2007) p. 352 and 356.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Oscail Mo Chroi*** by Deirdre Ni Chinneide

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## DAY THREE: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Saints

### OPENING PRAYER

Today we consider how Earth's creation lives so fully into its own calling, without forethought or anxiety. We ask that our own hearts be inspired to live fully as ourselves so that we might become the saints we were called to be.

### OPENING SONG

#### *The Horse and Saint Columba*

**Refrain:** Everything must end, even this love, everything must end; they rest a moment there.

### FIRST READING: THOMAS MERTON

The pale flowers of the dogwood outside this window are saints. . . the bass and trout hiding in the deep pools of the river are canonized by their beauty and their strength. The lakes hidden among the hills are saints, and the sea too is a saint who praises God without interruption in her majestic dance. . . For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self. Trees and animals have no problem. God makes them what they are without consulting them, and they are perfectly satisfied. With us it is different. God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not, as we please. We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal. We may be true or false, the choice is ours.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Hope, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

## PSALM 104

I am awestruck, Holy One  
at this beautiful and boundless universe—  
gestated over eons with love and care.  
Your creative intent envelops the world like a cloak.  
I see it shining in the heavens, hear it whispering  
in the winds, feel it crackling in the fire.  
For you energized the dust of the universe—  
the galaxies, the stars, the planets,  
right down to this jewel of an earth.  
You birthed her like a golden babe  
from the fires under your heart.  
She cooled, wrapped herself in water and in air.  
The waters receded, the mountains rose  
Storms shaped and softened the landscape  
and in time, she gave birth to life in her seas.  
In the eons life evolved into myriad forms  
each with its own niche in your scheme.  
With your love, she taught each its place, its work, its song.  
And humankind—you birthed us too. Gave us  
the world as our home and food--  
bread to eat, wine to make our hearts glad, herbs for  
healing, and oil to soothe our skin.  
You gave us many songs, many powers, and put  
a restlessness in our hearts  
we could seek you always.  
O Holy One, how manifold are your works.  
In your love and play you have birthed them all  
and raised them up.  
I will sing your songs all my days  
and care for all you have created  
and keep my heart ever open to your Love.

## SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

## **SECOND READING: MEISTER ECKHART**

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature –  
even a caterpillar -  
I would never have to prepare a sermon.  
So full of God is every creature.

## **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

### **PRAYERS OF CONCERN**

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

Creator God, forgive us when we do not recognise the other-than-human as fellow saints.  
Forgive us for abusing and torturing these our brothers and sisters in research laboratories and  
unethical ways of farming. Help us hear their cries and change our ways.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

O Wise One, may we discover the deep wisdom your creatures have to teach us. May we learn  
from them how to inhabit each moment and find our place in the cosmic dance of reciprocity  
and renewal.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

May we learn from your creatures how to fully be ourselves. Just as an oak tree lives fully as an  
Oak, never wishing to be Holly or the Mountain Range does not try to change itself into a River,  
may we find our true calling and sainthood in true self- acceptance, knowing that we are made  
in your image.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, guide us in our sanctity.

## CLOSING SONG

### *May What I Do*

**Chant:** May what I do flow from me like a river.

## CLOSING BLESSING

Blessed are those who live themselves fully,  
with no doubt or hesitation,  
who know their sacred purpose like a hunger,  
oak tree in her majesty,  
owl in her night knowing,  
stream in her quiet singing  
marigolds with faces of joy.

May the fireflies light your way in the darkness,  
may the morning glory spark gratitude for a new day,  
may the witness of feather and hoof,  
leaf and light, reveal to you what it means to be  
truly, wholly, fully yourself,  
breaking open the sacred seed planted within.

Cherish the badger who ambles across Earth,  
the raven painting the sky,  
the horse galloping over meadow,  
see how they spark your own longing  
to run or fly into the arms of yourself,  
to know your name,  
the one that has always been etched in your heart  
from the very first moment.

## SUNG AMEN



## CREDITS

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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *The Horse and Saint Columba*** by Simon de Voil

**First Reading** from Thomas Merton. Quoted in *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: New Directions Books (1961)  
p. 30-32.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 104** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Meister Eckhart. Quoted in Matthew Fox, *Meditations with Meister Eckhart*. Bear & Co (1983) p.  
14.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Polly Burns

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *May What I Do*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Saints*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

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## DAY THREE: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Saints

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us give thanks this day for the witness of Earth and her creatures for how to live fully into who we were created to be. As evening approaches, let us ponder how we refused our sacred calling today and how we embraced it. Give us strength Creator God, to live fully in your love.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Divine Fire*

**Chant:** Fire, divine fire; fire, divine fire. We must kindle the divine fire within ourselves. O behold!

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Hope, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

#### PSALM 24

This world and its life are sacred;  
the very flesh of the Holy One.  
She birthed it, breathed her own life into it  
set in motion the evolution of its life.

Who now can stand before her?  
Those with open hearts  
who love the truth and care for the world  
They will be blessed.  
Fling open the doors of your heart!  
Open your being to God  
You will know joy and peace.

## **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **READING OF THE NIGHT: SAINT CUTHBERT**

Let no one think it ridiculous to learn a lesson in virtue from birds.

Does not Solomon instruct us:

‘Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise’?

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

#### **CLOSING POEM**

##### ***St. Cuthbert and the Otters***

The saint stands immersed in the North Sea,  
his nightly vigil, waves lap his beard,  
offers prayers of wildness and wakefulness,  
the moon is a communion wafer  
floating across sky.

He smiles as curious seals swim past,  
when dawn approaches, birds open  
their beaks in song, land on his shoulders.

Each morning he steps back onto shore  
with wrinkled toes, skin pale blue,  
two otters scurry over,  
warm him with fish-hued breath,  
wrap themselves around his frigid feet,  
until he can wiggle them again,

they beckon him to romp and frolic  
and in the midst of this otter-saint  
rumble-rumpus, lost in laughter,  
he forgets himself, forgets the many  
names of God, realizes  
this too is a kind of prayer.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Following the River Home*

**Refrain:** Following, following the river home; we're following the river home.



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**Opening Song: *Divine Fire*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 24** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Saint Cuthbert. Quoted in Bede's *Sancti Cuthberti* 20 (John Francis Webb, translator) *Age of Bede*, 69-70.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Following the River Home*** by Lorraine Bayes

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## DAY FOUR: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors

### OPENING PRAYER

We pray today that we might open our hearts to listen to Earth's wisdom for us. Let the holy direction for our lives be revealed in the sky, sun, sea, and stone. O God of ancient Wisdom, help us attune to the gifts of water, wind, earth, and fire and the guidance they offer.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Blessing of the Elements*

**Chant:** May the sacred Earth embrace you. May the sky help you fly. May the water bless and refresh you. May the fire of love ever guide you.

### FIRST READING: SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

I was sad one day and went for a walk;  
I sat in a field.

A rabbit noticed my condition and  
came near.

It often does not take more than that to help at times —

to just be close to creatures who  
are so full of knowing,  
so full of love,  
that they don't  
— chat,

they just gaze with  
their  
marvelous understanding.

## **SUNG PSALM OPENING**

O Grace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### **PSALM 139**

You are closer to me than I am, God.  
You shine through my chaos and confusion  
from my innermost self.  
You know my weak points and my hurt places,  
the habits I resort to and the goals that sustain me.  
You well up in me.  
You hold me in the palm of your hand.

I can't quite grasp this - it's just too big.  
Understanding flits by in the corner of my mind  
and is quickly gone.

You're in all of this from the big bang to  
the outer edge of space and time.  
You are the seed at my center from my birth to now  
to my death and beyond.  
Deep in every growing bone, every forming love,  
every struggled thought.

There is nowhere that you that you are not.  
Search me, try me, purify me.  
Lead me to the way of Oneness with you.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **SECOND READING: THOMAS MERTON**

How necessary it is for monks to work in the fields, in the sun, in the mud, in the clay, in the wind: these are our spiritual directors and our novice-masters.

## **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

### **PRAYERS OF CONCERN**

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

We pray for the humility to know that as human beings we do not have all the answers to the problems in our hearts and the problems of the world. Teach us to sit in silence and listen to the teachings of the elements and to the creatures who walk alongside us, sharing the planet we call home.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

We thank you for our companion animals, the joy of welcoming wagging tails and wet noses seeking our affection. Help us be humble enough to see your creatures as truly sentient beings, whose unconditional love reveals to us your heart.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

In times of grief or when our hearts and minds are perplexed or confused, may we find comfort and solace in the presence of trees, rocky valleys or sweet smelling meadows, allowing them to hold space for us and minister your grace to our hearts.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we listen for your guidance.

## **CLOSING SONG**

### ***Canticle of Creation***

**Refrain:** Praise be to you, my Lord you are, there you are.

## **CLOSING BLESSING**

May everything in Creation  
become a catalyst for your self-understanding.  
Let the sacred whispers carried on the wind  
invite you to release what is not necessary,  
let the breezes help your wings to ascend,  
the sparrows to remember your flock.  
let the divine fire that burns in your heart  
kindle you to deeper compassion,  
sunlight to seek illumination  
let the rivers and seas support you in allowing  
Spirit to flow through your life in new ways,  
embracing the rise and fall within you,  
let the pine cones contain an epiphany  
the forest asks you to embrace your truth once again,  
and each smooth stone a revelation.  
Let the moon sing of quiet miracles,  
like those which reveal and conceal the world every day  
right before your eyes.  
May you make time to listen to the elements  
in their wisdom, revealing the Holy One's face  
and the sacred direction for your one precious life.

## **SUNG AMEN**



## CREDITS

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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Blessing of the Elements*** by Betsey Beckman

**First Reading** from John of the Cross. Daniel Ladinsky, trans., *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and the West*. New York: Penguin Books (2002) p. 323.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 139** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Thomas Merton. *The Sign of Jonas*. Harcourt Press (1981) p. 321.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Polly Burns

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *Canticle of Creation*** by Simon de Voil

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

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## DAY FOUR: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Spiritual Directors

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us give thanks for all the ways we have been given guidance this day and steered in a holy direction. As evening comes, we listen to the gift of night's song and honor the wisdom we discover by paying close attention. May the great Spiritual Director continue to enliven and inspire our hearts, helping us to live in greater faithfulness to who we were created to be.

### OPENING SONG

*Seed of Life*

**Chant:** Seed of life arise anew!

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Grace, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### PSALM 48

Praise the holy in the mountains  
Beautiful and lofty—the joy of the earth.

We have waited there to sense your loving kindness  
We have walked there in beauty  
In the eternal mountains we see you  
Silently giving direction for ever.

### SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

## READING OF THE NIGHT: THOMAS MERTON

Let me seek, then, the gift of silence, and poverty, and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer, for God is in all.

### SILENT CONTEMPLATION

#### CLOSING POEM

##### *I Greet the Muse*

I met my muse today, a red tulip  
with cherry lips open to the sun,  
a chalice of daylight held up  
to my thirsty mouth.

Another day she comes as the moon,  
large marble making arcs above,  
giving herself away until she's gone,  
then returns, becoming seed  
and slowly sending white blooms  
into the night again.

Tomorrow she might arrive  
on thunderous waves of the sea,  
brine in my eyes and throat  
or the soft caverns of shells strewn  
on shore, a reminder  
of the places I long to dwell

and one day she might land,  
yellow bird on a branch,  
her song calling me to look up,  
glimpse the space between  
her notes where the song lives,  
where the silence speaks all  
I need to hear.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Deep Peace*

**Chant:** Deep peace of the rolling waves to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth. Deep peace of the blowing air to you; deep peace of the silent stars. Let peace, let peace, let peace fill your soul. May peace, may peace, may peace keep you whole.



### **Credits:**

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**Opening Song: *Seed of Life*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 48** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux (1999) p. 92.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Deep Peace*** by Sara Thomsen

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## DAY FIVE: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Icon

### OPENING PRAYER

We gaze upon Earth as a window into the divine glory, radiant and wonderful. Mother of all Creation, guide us in our prayers to a heart of compassion for all of creation's wounding at our hands. Sustain us in our sorrow and grief at all that has been lost.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Mother Earth*

**Chant:** Mother Earth, birth and death, come and hold me in your arms. Mother Earth, life and breath, come and hold me in your arms. Cradle me, circle me, holding me in your mystery. Challenge me, strengthen me, holding me in your heart.

### FIRST READING: ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

Immediately, the eyes of my soul were opened, and in a vision I saw God's wholeness and the wholeness of creation. In the sea, and also in everything beyond the sea in outer space, I saw nothing but God's power and God's presence. It was totally indescribable.

My soul was overcome with wonder at everything.

I shouted, "The world is pregnant with God!" That's when I understood how small creation is when the enormity of God is considered. God's power fills the sea and everything beyond it.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Justice, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

## PSALM 60

I feel cast adrift and alone among a people  
who don't care about doing right or following you.

I am angry and discouraged.

Help us back, take us back! Force us back!  
before we do irreparable harm to your creation.

Shake the earth!

Flood the land

Burn us up

dry us out!

But especially, come close so that we can  
See you, know your love for us and for all the earth.

A still, small voice in the heart:

*You are all mine, and I claim you.*

*I walk with you when you do my will*

*I nudge you to life*

*I help you in hard times.*

*Together we will prevail.*

## SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

## SECOND READING: SAINT BONAVENTURE

Just as you see that a ray of light entering through a window is colored in different ways according to the different colors of the various parts, so the divine ray shines forth in each and every creature in different ways and in different properties.

## SILENT CONTEMPLATION

## PRAYERS OF CONCERN

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

The tiny droplet of water cradled in the crease of the leaf dances in the morning sun. How pure and delicate it is, so full of your glory. Shimmering Presence, draw our attention to these tiny evangelists all around – Fairy Foxglove, ladybird, butterfly cocoon; and open our hearts as we contemplate their wisdom. Enlarge our compassion to gently hold the most vulnerable of earth's inhabitants in justice and love.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we turn to you in troubles.

The vast ocean teems with life: tiny, darting minnows, impressive crashing whales. Yet our hearts cry out, shocked by images of dolphin snouts trapped in plastic rings and sharks caught in discarded fishing nets. Hear our anguished lament, O God. Replace our selfishness with a commitment to recycle and reduce our use of plastic. Then may our oceans and her creatures thrive once more.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we turn to you in troubles.

The herb garden's scents delight our nostrils as we gaze in awe at nature's medicine cabinet. We give thanks for Hildegard of Bingen and the ancient ones who have taught us about each plant's properties. Encircle those whose wounded bodies and souls long for herb's healing balm. Tender God, in this broken and hurting world, may your greening power renew and restore all life.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we turn to you in troubles.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we turn to you in troubles.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Viriditas*

**Chant:** Let my soul be greening with the Living Light. Let my heart awaken morning from the night. Let the Spirit guide me to presence true and whole. *Viriditas, viriditas*, the greening of my soul.

## **CLOSING BLESSING**

Gaze upon Creation with your eyes soft,  
a holy icon revealing the face of Love.  
See the beauty of green Earth arising,  
make space for the ache of our neglect,  
exploits, ravages, see the scars  
across field and mountain,  
allow the river of tears at all  
that suffers to flow freely through you,  
do not resist this grief,  
the otter choked with oil  
the sky darkened with grime,  
the seas heavy with plastic,  
the koalas fleeing the great fire.  
Make room for a world of sorrow,  
let anguish be your song  
and grief bloom and grow.  
Ask the Source of Love who created our tears  
and tender hearts, and with them  
the promise of reconciliation,  
to create a new place within,  
where a different story can arise,  
where we can all turn toward a vision  
of wholeness once again.

## **SUNG AMEN**



## CREDITS

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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Mother Earth*** by Betsey Beckman

**First Reading** from Angela of Foligno. Quoted in Carmen Acevedo Butcher, *A Little Daily Wisdom: Christian Women Mystics*. Paraclete Press (2005) Kindle Edition.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 60** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Bonaventure. Quoted in Ewert Cousins (trans), *The Soul's Journey into God* (Classics of Western Spirituality). New York: Paulist Press (1978) p. 26.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Valerie Allen

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *Viriditas*** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Saints*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

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## DAY FIVE: EVENING

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# Earth as the Original Icon

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us cry out in grief over anything that has distanced us from Earth and her wisdom this day. We ask God as Source of all beauty and life to help us to see more clearly the way forward to a new vision. As we move into evening we ask for dreams to inspire us.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Canticle of Creation*

**Refrain:** Praise be to you, my Lord you are . . . there you are.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Justice, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### PSALM 85

O God, you have given us a beautiful earth—  
Grant us the wisdom to honor its gifts.  
Lead us to an inner life in which we can rejoice.  
Speak peace to us, that we may live in peace.  
May your mercy and truth meet together  
Righteousness and peace kiss each other,  
Surrounding us with your light.  
Help us know true prosperity,  
And be gentle with your Earth.  
Guide our feet in the ways of peace.

### SUNG DOXOLOGY

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

## READING OF THE NIGHT: SAINT NINIAN

QUESTION: *And what is the fruit of study?*

ANSWER: *To perceive the eternal Word of God reflected in every plant and insect, every bird and animal, and every man and woman.*

## SILENT CONTEMPLATION

### CLOSING POEM

#### *St. Paul and the Lions*

His throat dry as the desert  
which embraced him  
a hundred years, the hermit  
finally breathes his last  
at the sand's hot edge.

Anthony arrives to find his friend  
gone into the great night,  
sits vigil all day until the sky  
is covered in bruises,  
weeps a river into the dust.

From shadows emerge two lions,  
great golden paws and claws dig  
a deep hole and roar with grief,  
lower the monk's body into riven earth  
and stand together in silence

until the dawn cracks apart  
and sparrows sing the world awake,  
until both human and animal  
standing on the unsteady ground  
that will one day claim them

come to know only two things  
as solid:

death, like iron, immovable  
and companionship.  
A communion of creatures ready  
to join in our lament for all  
that has been lost, waiting  
with us for all that is coming home again.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Surrender*

**Chant:** Surrender to the holding, and the loving you *a stór*. (dear one.) *Fag Faoi mo churam*  
*é. Gráim thú, a stór.*



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**Opening Song: *Canticle of Creation*** by Simon de Voil

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 85** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Saint Ninian. Quoted in Robert Van de Weyer, ed. *Celtic Fire: The Passionate Religious Vision of Ancient Britain and Ireland*. New York: Doubleday (1990) p. 78.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Surrender*** by Deirdre Ni Chinneide

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## DAY SIX: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Sacrament

### OPENING PRAYER

All of Creation is a window onto the divine presence and unfolding. We pray today that we may have eyes to see the shimmering moments calling to our hearts that help us fall ever more in love with this beautiful world.

### OPENING SONG

*O Sun*

**Refrains:** O Sun, come fill me with you. O Wind, come fill me with you. O Wine, come fill me with you.

### FIRST READING: SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

#### *The Sacraments*

I once spoke to my friend, an old squirrel, about the Sacraments –  
he got so excited

and ran into a hollow in his tree and came  
back holding some acorns, an owl feather,  
and a ribbon he had found.

And I just smiled and said, “Yes, dear,  
you understand:

everything imparts  
His grace.”

## **SUNG PSALM OPENING**

O Beauty, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### **PSALM 87**

The whole earth is holy  
loved into being with delight.

The earth is beautiful  
every mountain, every bush, every fish.

Love encompasses all

Love encompasses all.

Give thanks and praise, use it well  
and dance the holy dance.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **SECOND READING: SAINT JULIAN OF NORWICH**

And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, and I perceived that it was round as any ball. I looked at it and thought: What can this be? And I was given this general answer: It is everything which is made. I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that it was so little that it could suddenly fall into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God.

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

## PRAYERS OF CONCERN

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

I'm out walking. I watch her run ahead, stopping to sniff each blade of grass, then running back to nuzzle my hand and gaze up at me with adoring eyes. My heart softens to the love she pours in and I marvel at her delight in living fully each moment. I give thanks for her, and for you who created her. And I pray for humanity, that we might live with such joyful attentiveness and adoring love.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your splendor.

I'm out walking. I notice the strike of my boots on the hard ground of the trail. I kneel and feel the rock's weatherworn roughness, wondering about the generations of footsteps it has known. I am in awe of its resiliency, and the resiliency of the human spirit. I give thanks for endurance which comes from you. And I pray for humanity, that we might have strength to resist all that threatens to destroy Mother Earth.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your splendor.

I'm out walking. I find myself standing by a cairn gazing at snow-capped peaks glistening in the sun as far as my eye can see. I feel profoundly at peace, at one with myself and with you. I give thanks for this Earth-gift and wonder at the mystery of how you knit her together in such beauty. And I pray for humanity, that we might fall in love with beauty - in each other and in all creation.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your splendor.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, reveal to us your splendor.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Brigid's Birds*

**Key Line:** And the stars shine bright as the fire burns low  
How can we ever go back to what we  
used to know?

## **CLOSING BLESSING**

May Christ who shimmers in all creation  
surprise you each day with glittering moments,  
when you can see again how  
Light lives in everything,  
how it partners  
with dark soil to bring forth  
aster and lavender,  
rosemary and daffodils,  
a hundred kinds of squash,  
kale and cabbage, apple and berry,  
grapes sweetened by the sun.  
How the dough you knead in your hands  
is an alchemy of touch and time,  
how everything is  
a call to communion –  
the wafer of moon,  
a chalice of stars.  
Let the Mystery of it all  
dance in your heart,  
always widening your horizons,  
inhabiting new landscapes.  
May you know each moment as sacred  
and everything around you a call  
to remember this one true thing.

## **SUNG AMEN**



## CREDITS

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**Opening Song: *O Sun*** by Peter Mayer

**First Reading** from Francis of Assisi. Quoted in Daniel Ladinsky, trans., *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and the West*. New York: Penguin Books (2002) p. 53.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 87** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Julian of Norwich. *Julian of Norwich: Showings* (Classics of Western Spirituality.) New York: Paulist Press (1978) p. 130.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Valerie Allen

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *Brigid's Birds*** by Margaret McLarty

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Sacrament*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

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## DAY SIX: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Sacrament

### OPENING PRAYER

As the day descends into darkness, let us remember all the ways the world was illuminated today. Let us give thanks for the truth that everything is sacred and savor the reality that holiness embraces us.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Open Hand*

**Refrain:** Open hand, open hand, ready for blessing beyond our choosing. Open hand, open hand, prepare for goodness out of the blue.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Beauty, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

#### PSALM 65

It is good to give thanks,  
for the boundless mercy  
which renews us and makes us whole.

Happy are those who know this  
and open themselves to the Light.

and sing—

You make the sunrise and the sunset shout for joy.

You are the earth's fertility.

Your law governs her cycles of snow, run-off, flood, and rain.

You crown the year with abundance

The wild lands are watered with dew.

The hills deck themselves with green.

The meadows adorn themselves with flocks,

The valleys gown themselves with grain.

They dance together.  
They join in song.

## **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **READING OF THE NIGHT: JOHN KLASSEN, OSB**

Jesus shows a wonderful attitude toward created things by using water, bread, fish, wine, light, creatures such as birds of the air, foxes, seed and mud. The parables show that Jesus assumed the worth of the created universe, the dependability of nature, the recurrence of the seasons, the normal pattern of sowing and harvesting, of planting a vineyard and caring for it, of seeing the clouds and counting on the rain. The natural world is the stage where the reign of God is enacted, the place where faith in God with all of its dimensions is lived out.

## **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

### **CLOSING POEM**

#### *A Glimpse of the Underglimmer*

You can see it sometimes in October  
when the sun's low angle slides  
gold over the field,  
effervescence of light,  
  
or you stand in a forest of cedars  
and March rain pads  
hundreds of tiny feet across  
the emerald canopy,  
  
or the fireflies of July form  
new constellations, then vanish  
into summer's night leaving only

trails of light in your memory,  
  
or you stand in a May meadow,  
a fox crossing quietly, you hold  
still as possible, the sliver of moon  
above, holding its breath with you.

## CLOSING SONG

### *Saint Gobnait*

**Key Line:** Is there a place for us, where we no longer yearn to be always elsewhere, always elsewhere?



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**Opening Song: *Open Hand*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 65** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from John Klassen, OSB. Quoted in *Nature as a Spiritual Practice* by Steven Chase. WB Eerdmans (2011) p. 80.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Saint Gobnait*** by Simon de Voil

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## DAY SEVEN: MORNING

# Earth as the Original Liturgy

### OPENING PRAYER

We pray this morning, joining in with the great unfolding liturgy of praise already being sung all around us through blackbird and robin, fox and deer, cedar and magnolia. We kindle our hearts with a joyful celebration of the Creator of all.

### OPENING SONG

#### *Creation's Hallelujah*

**Refrain:** Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

### FIRST READING: THOMAS BERRY

From an early period Christians adopted a liturgy that carefully observed the correspondences of human praise with the numinous moments of the dawn and sunset and with the transitions of the various seasons of the year. This liturgy was carried out most faithfully in the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of Europe up through the medieval period. The social order was itself governed by this basic rhythm of life.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Wisdom, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

#### PSALM 148

Hallelujah!

The cosmos praises God!

The sun, the moon, the stars and galaxies

The infinite regions of space—

All being made by the Word which is creating them over eons of time.

The earth praises God!

The deep mystery of the seas, the tall mountains,

forests, grasslands, savannahs, croplands and deserts.

The beasts, insects, reptiles, birds,  
all expressing exuberance of the force of life.

The people praise God!

The wise, the rulers, the lowly, the children

The ones who see the splendor of the cosmos and the single beauty of every star

The people praise God!

the star in the center of every heart

creating them in love.

### **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

### **SECOND READING: WAY OF THE PILGRIM**

And while I prayed in the depths of the heart, everything around me seemed transformed: the trees, grass, birds, earth, air, light—every created thing seemed to proclaim that bears witness to God’s love for humanity. Everything was praying.

Everything sang glory be to God.

### **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

#### **PRAYERS OF CONCERN**

We offer prayers now for all that is on our hearts.

In the rhythm of creation, O God, we discover ways to pattern our prayers, offering them to you with hope. In the chatter of dawn chorus, our hearts burst into song as we join this hymn of praise. Yet we ache for toucans and quetzals, howler monkeys and red-eyed tree frogs whose voices are threatened as rainforests are decimated. We pray for them and for the communities whose lives are being irreparably changed. Give leaders of governments the courage to stop the destruction and the desire to preserve this wondrous eco-system.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we celebrate your presence.

In the midday heat, our toes tingle with pleasure as cooling waves lap over them. In this ebb and flow we recognise the ebb and flow of life. Enfold in hope those caught in currents of

despair or brokenness. Hear our thanks for those whose pain is soothed and healed by your love. We learn from ocean's wisdom of your presence in both ebb and flow, finding solace in you.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we celebrate your presence.

In the burnt orange glow of setting sun, our faces soak in the lingering warmth and our breathing stills as we move towards rest. We offer prayers of gratitude for the day that has been and for the mystery of nature's soul food. We pray for those whose spirits are famished. May they discover nourishment in sunrise and sunset, and in all Earth's gifts.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we celebrate your presence.

Please add the prayers you are longing to express.

**Sung Response** - O God of Earth, we celebrate your presence.

## **CLOSING SONG**

*Join in the Joy*

**Refrain:** Join in the joy of the cosmic dance, join in the joy.

## **CLOSING BLESSING**

Listen to how everything sings:

the streams and stones,  
leaves and branches,  
fish and fur-covered ones,  
birds leading the chorus.

See how your desire to praise  
is echoed in every living thing,

how in quiet moments  
the heart is moved to gratitude  
for all of Creation,  
for the lavish abundance of it all,  
how nothing is earned,  
no achievements are needed.

May you simply show up with breath, blood, and bones,

and your loving attention to hymns erupting  
everywhere, until you can no longer tell  
where yours begin and nature's ends.

## SUNG AMEN



## CREDITS

### All songs and texts used with permission

**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Creation's Hallelujah*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**First Reading** from Thomas Berry. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Crown Publishing (1999) p.  
23-24.

**Sung Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 148** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Second Reading** from Way of the Pilgrim. Quoted in Jean-Yves Leloup, *Being Still: Reflections on an Ancient Mystical  
Tradition*. New York: Paulist Press (2003) p. 83-84.

**Prayers of Concern** written by Valerie Allen

**Sung Response** by Betsey Beckman

**Closing Song: *Join in the Joy*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Closing Blessing: *Earth as the Original Liturgy*** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Please note:** All of the Opening and Closing Songs are published on CDs in the Abbey of the Arts collection. In addition, these songs have accompanying gesture prayers and/or dances created by Betsey Beckman that can be found on the corresponding DVD (each album has a DVD companion). The Psalm Opening, Doxology, and the Response to the Prayers of Concern also have accompanying congregational gestures. The audio and video recordings of these are available at AbbeyoftheArts.com.

## DAY SEVEN: EVENING

# Earth as the Original Liturgy

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray in thanksgiving for the perpetual praise being sung all around us each day through birdsong and breezes, through the dance of trees and the jubilation of seas. We ask that we might hear more deeply the love song always arising in us in response to the One who wove us into being and delights at the hymns of our hearts.

### OPENING SONG

*Now I Walk in Beauty*

**Chant:** Now I walk in beauty. Beauty is before me. Beauty is behind me, above and below me.

### SUNG PSALM OPENING

O Wisdom, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. (Repeat)

### PSALM 98

Sing songs of praise and thanks!  
for the cosmos around and the moral law within.

Shout with joy, all you lands;  
lift up your voices, rejoice, sing!

Sing with harps, with voices,  
with trumpets and horns.

Listen! The sea thunders along!

All life sings its song.

The rivers clap their hands

The hills ring out with joy.

All these—the voices of God,

Who is everywhere.

## **SUNG DOXOLOGY**

Glory to the Maker, Lover, and Keeper; as ago, in this breath, and will be ever. Amen, Amen.

## **READING OF THE NIGHT: SAINT HILDEGARD OF BINGEN**

The fire has its flame and praises God. The wind blows the flame and praises God. In the voice we hear the word which praises God. And the word, when heard, praises God. So all of creation is a song of praise to God.

## **SILENT CONTEMPLATION**

### **CLOSING POEM**

#### ***St. Columbanus in the Forest***

He learned long ago  
he doesn't have to seek out  
wild things, only rest and wait,  
when his heart is full  
he starts to sing until  
birds twitter and trapeze  
branch to branch,  
land tiny feet on his shoulders,  
brush his bristly face.

Squirrels dizzy with delight,  
maelstrom of scamper and bustle  
to climb his thin arms,  
their giggling red heads  
peer from folds of his robe  
as if playing a secret game  
meant only for them,  
only for those who believe  
such things are possible.

## CLOSING SONG

*Be Still* (Psalm 46)

**Chant:** Be still and know that I am God.



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**Opening Prayer** written by Christine Valters Paintner

**Opening Song: *Now I Walk in Beauty*** by Lorraine Bayes

**Psalm Opening and Doxology** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**Interpretation of Psalm 98** by Rev. Christine Robinson

**Reading of the Night** from Hildegard of Bingen. Quoted in *Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality* by Matthew Fox, Jeremy Tarcher (2000) p. 69.

**Closing Poem** by Christine Valters Paintner, *The Wisdom of Wild Grace*. Paraclete Press (2020).

**Closing Song: *Be Still*** by Simon de Voil

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