

2022

Earth Day Sunday

Resource Packet for the Local Church

Dear Pastor and Leader.

We at Nazarenes for Creation Care want to encourage you as you lead your congregations into spring. We have created this Resource to help you cultivate a service this Earth Day Sunday. Included are resources from N4CC as well as other organizations partnering in the work with us. Take what you would like and adjust it to your congregational needs.

May God our Creator fill you and your congregation with a song of joy and a renewed sense of purpose in this time.



Grace,
The team at Nazarenes for Creation Care

Earth Day Sunday

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Created to Worship

The season of spring is the gift that reminds us of God's faithfulness. Just when we believe we can go no further in the cold and darkness, the days warm, the flowers bloom, the birds sing, and the bees go buzzing. Bright green signs of hope burst open around us in a call to worship of our God the Creator!

We are reminded of our story in Genesis and the unfolding beauty of the Creator's art over those days of creation. Sky, seas, and land are filled with life as creation bursts forth and learns to sing God's praise in a song that we are still singing! And on the final note of the last day of creating, God creates humanity, to oversee this beautiful liturgy and song that is God's world.

We find that we are here on Earth not as owners but as stewards. As John Wesley stated in his sermon on The Good Steward, "A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as he pleases, but as his master pleases." We learn this on the very first page of Scripture as we are created and immediately given the sacred tasks of being caretakers of creation. What a wonderful role!

Perhaps though, more than other generations before us, we are isolated from the natural world. Our electricity, our screens, our modes of transportation, and our homes can often insulate us from going out and engaging with creation. When was the last time you laid in the grass? When was the last time your hands scooped the soil? How frequently does your environment beckon you to worship the Creator and Sustainer of all life?

It is of the utmost importance as the people of God that we set aside times like this to remember our original role here. To "serve and keep" (Genesis 2:15) this garden we call home. Earth is not something we simply live "upon" grazing it for our daily needs. No, we are connected as a part of the rest of creation. Humanity lives within the framework of environments and ecosystems. We are in fact dependent upon those bees. God has created with purpose and each piece of this vastness is interconnected with the other! Only God could accomplish such a miracle!

This April, may spring come again for you, reminding you of God's goodness. May you see God's love that flowers yet again and calls all creatures of our God and King to give praise! And may the remembering of your role here on Earth beckon you to worship our God in faithfulness with all that is in your hands!

Visit NazarenesforCreationCare.com to learn more about caring for God's good creation!



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Songs



The Earth Is Yours **By Gungor**

Your voice it thunders
The oaks start twisting
The forest sounds with cedars breaking
The waters see You and start their
writhing
From the depths a song is rising

Now it's rising from the ground

Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
The earth is Yours
Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
The earth is Yours
The earth is Yours

Your voice it thunders
The ground is shaking
The mighty mountains now are trembling
Creation sees You
And starts composing
The fields and trees they start rejoicing.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness – Asbury **Hymnal**

Verse 1:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my
Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions,
they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy
faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath
provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Verse 2:

Summer and winter, and springtime
and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and
love

Verse 3:

Pardon for sin and a peace that
endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and
to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside

All Creatures of our God and King
by William Henry Draper, based on a poem
by St Francis of Assisi.

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
alleluia, alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heav'n along,
alleluia, alleluia!
Thou rising morn in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for thy God to hear,
alleluia, alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
that givest all both warmth and light,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

Dear mother earth, who day by day,
unfoldest blessings on our way,
alleluia, alleluia!
The flow'rs and fruits that in thee grow,
let them God's glory also show,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

And ev'ryone, with tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
alleluia, alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
sing praise and cast on God your care,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

And thou, most kind and gentle death,
waiting to hush our final breath,
alleluia, alleluia!
Thou leadest home the child of God,
as Christ before that way hath trod,
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship God in humbleness,
alleluia, alleluia!
To God all thanks and praise belong!
Join in the everlasting song:
O sing ye, O sing ye, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia!

Prayers



Wisdom to Care for the Earth

Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it.

Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures.

Help us to become instruments of a new creation,

Founded on the covenant of your love.

Amen.

- The Cry of the Earth

The Beauty of Nature

O God, we thank you for this earth, our home;

For the wide sky and the blessed sun,
For the salt sea and the running water,

For the everlasting hills

And the never-resting winds,

For trees and the common grass
underfoot.

We thank you for our senses

By which we hear the songs of birds,

And see the splendor of the summer fields,

And taste of the autumn fruits,

And rejoice in the feel of the snow,

And smell the breath of the spring.

Grant us a heart wide open to all this
beauty;

And save our souls from being so blind

That we pass unseeing

When even the common thorn bush

Is aflame with your glory,

O God our Creator,

Who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Amen.

- Walter Rauschenbusch

Your Creation

O Lord, grant us the grace to grow
deeper in our respect of
and care for your creation.

Lord, hear our prayer.

O Lord, help us to recognize the
sacredness of all of your
creatures as signs of your wondrous
love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

O Lord, help us turn from the selfish
consumption of resources meant for all
and to see the impacts of our
choices on the poor and vulnerable.

Lord, hear our prayer.

A spoken prayer by Fyodor

Dostoyevsky

Lord, may we love all your creation, all
the earth and every grain of sand in it.

May we love every leaf, every ray of
your light. May we love the animals:

you have given them the rudiments of
thought and joy untroubled. Let us not

trouble it; let us not harass them, let us
not deprive them of their happiness, let

us not work against your intent. For we
acknowledge unto you that all is like

an ocean, all is flowing and blending,
and that to withhold any measure of

love from anything in your universe is
to withhold that same measure from

you. Amen.

Prayers of the People

One: For all those around the world who have lost their homes, livelihoods, or communities to the climate crisis.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For our nonhuman siblings whose habitats are destroyed by the effects of greed and accumulation.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For decision-makers, that their choices might create a more beautiful, whole, resilient world.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

One: For our own church, that we might be bearers of hope and resilience in our community, a place of refuge in the midst of crisis and disaster.

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Prayer of Absolution

Creator, forgive us for our sins against you and your Creation.

In your Name, may we turn from our sins and work towards a new creation, one in which all creatures are freed from the bondage of greed and accumulation and are able to flourish into their creatureliness.

May this church be a site of redemption, resilience, and hospitality; an extension of your love to all who are affected by the climate crisis.

In this land, this structure, this community, this worship, may we love you more fully by seeking justice for our neighbors.

Amen.

An End to Waste

Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation.

For access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it into our care so that, in obedience to you, we might serve all people:

Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom, and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all;

That, trusting in your bounty, all people may be empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.

God, our Creator, as we reflect on the mystery of our fragile planet, we celebrate the wonders of Earth as our home. Help us to discern how we have polluted our planet and to empathize with the groaning of creation beneath us. Teach us to sense the presence of God pulsing through Earth as a living green blue sanctuary.

Teach us to love Earth as our home. In the name of Christ, the Word of God, who is the creative impulse in all creation. Amen.

Liturgy

Gathering

One: In the name of God, who creates planets,
the name of Jesus Christ, born on planet Earth,
and the name of the Spirit who envelopes our planet. Amen.

All: Holy! Holy! Holy!

Earth is filled with God's presence.

One: Christ, we come to into your presence, today, to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,

All: Holy! Holy! Holy!

Earth is filled with your presence.

Call to Worship

Like Job in the whirlwind, or Jonah in the storm at sea, we come before you in awe of your power, God.

We recognize that today's storms and whirlwinds are not your judgment on your people, but the distortion of natural systems through our own sin and hubris.

As the storms and whirlwinds of the climate crisis accelerates around us, may our sanctuary be a place of refuge and resilience, where all of God's creation might be protected and sustained, and from which we, People of God, might be sent forth to bring healing and justice.

-Creation Justice Ministries

Confession and Assurance

One:

Made in God's image, we are called to be grateful caretakers of God's creation, tending it with love and care. But we have rebelled against our Maker. We have lived as if the creation belongs to us, becoming estranged from God, from the creation, and from one another. Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

All:

Creator God, you made us rulers in your creation, placing its care and wellbeing in our hands. But we have betrayed your trust. Desiring control, we recklessly exploit its resources and make idols of the things we produce from it. In your great love, forgive us, O God, and remake us in the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

-Time for silent confession-

One:

People of God, put your faith in Jesus Christ. He is the true image of the invisible God. Through his death on the cross, he paid for our sins. By his resurrection, he restored us to our human dignity. In his ascension, he promises a new creation. Thanks be to God!

- John VanOene

Eucharist:

One: We give thanks to God that our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom and for whom all things were made, gave us this memorial of his sacrifice until his coming again. On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

All: We who are many are one body for we all share the same loaf.

One: After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

All: The cup which we all share is our fellowship in the blood of Christ.

One: Remembering God's faithfulness to us and to all of creation through Jesus Christ, let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Spoken Word: Lord Of All Creation

-Julie Heisey

Oh Lord of all Creation,
Of water, earth and sky.

The Heavens are Your tabernacle,
but we've made the earth groan and sigh
With the abuse of our consumption,
our waste lots and want more.

We love you oh Lord,
our Maker and our Creator.

We love you,
but we need a refresher
on loving our neighbor.

Let us see with our eyes,
and feel with our hearts,
and live through our actions -
A repentance of the hurt that we've caused
Your believed creation.

Let us be humble in these confessions.

Whether we use plastic or edible plates,
to-go cups or a battered Contigo,
Help us to graciously show,
And invite ALL our community into
this act of restoration of creation with
unity.



Creation Litany and Call to Worship

To be used in an outdoor worship gathering ◦ for two voices ◦ written by David Schelhaas, 2014 ◦ based on: Psalms 19, 23, 104, 118; Song of Solomon 2; Matthew 6; Job 39; Habakkuk 2 ◦

Speaker 1: This is the day that the Lord has made,

Speaker 2: let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Speaker 1: The heavens declare the glory of God--

Speaker 2: not in words but in a glorious technicolor light show, every day shouts in wordless language that God, Almighty God, made it all.

Speaker 1: "Morning has broken, like the first morning, blackbird has spoken, like the first bird. Praise for the singing, praise for the morning, praise for them springing, fresh from above." (Eleanor Farjeon)

Speaker 2: Blackbird has spoken and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in the land.

Speaker 1: Look at the birds of the heaven, Jesus says in his Sermon, take a lesson from them.

Speaker 2: Consider the stork, God says to Job. When she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider.

Speaker 1: One of our old confessions tells us that "the universe lies before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God" (Belgic Confession).

Speaker 2: Jesus says, "Consider the lilies" to make us ponder the invisible things of God-- his providential care and his love of beautiful things.

Speaker 1: When Jesus walked the earth,

Speaker 2: he walked the earth!

Speaker 1: His feet were dirty with the dust of the earth.

His sermon illustrations were about flowers and trees and seeds and vineyards and birds and fish and sheep and goats and pigs.

Speaker 2: The Psalmist lies down in green pastures beside still waters and he finds peace.

Speaker 1: He imagines God dressed up in sunshine with all heaven stretched out for his tent.

Speaker 2: He imagines God laughing as his pet dragon, the leviathan, frolics in the sea.

Speaker 1: And he exclaims, "What a wildly wonderful world, God! The glory of the Lord, let it last forever."

Speaker 2: We are gathered here this morning, on this green pasture with the tent of the sky stretched above us, to worship the creator of the universe.

Speaker 1: The Lord is in his holy temple

Speaker 2: and that temple is the whole blooming creation.

Speaker 1: The Lord is in his holy temple,

Speaker 2: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Speaker 1: Let's say it together:

Congregation: The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.

Sermon Texts

God Created Everything

Genesis 1:1-2 Job 12:7-10
Job 38-41 Psalm 104
Mark 13:19 Job 33:4
Isaiah 40:26

God Loves Creation

Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 136
John 3:16

God Has an Ongoing Relationship with Creation

Numbers 22:22-39

God Owns Creation

Leviticus 25:23
Psalm 24; 89:9-11; 95:4-5

Creation Has a Relationship with God/Creation Praises God

1 Chron. 16:32-33
Ps 19:1-4; 65:12-13; 66:1-4;
Ps 96:11-13; 98:7-9; 148:3-4,7-13; 150:6
Isaiah 55:12-13
1 Corinthians 10:26
Revelation 5:13

A Relationship with Creation Is Connected to a Relationship with God

Genesis 4:10-11
1 Kings 4:29-34
Ecclesiastes 3:18-22
Romans 1:20

Jesus Prays in Wilderness

Mark 1:35
Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28; 22:31-41

Caring for Creation and Caring for the Poor Are Interconnected

Exodus 23:10-11
Leviticus 19:9-10; 25:1-17

Human (Dis)Obedience to God's Commandments Has Consequences for Creation

Deut. 11:13-17; 28:4,18
Isaiah 24:1-3; 44:1-5
Hosea 4:1-3
Micah 7:13
Zechariah 8:12
Galatians 6:7-9

Jesus as Part of Creation

John 1:1-10; 17:24
Colossians 1:15-17
Hebrews 1:2

Jesus as Redeemer of Creation

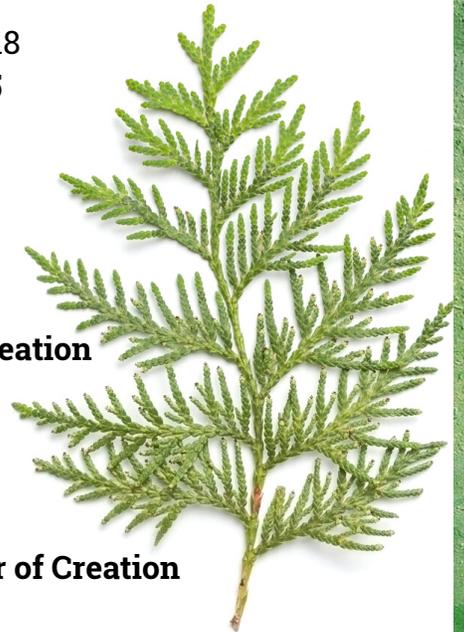
Mark 16:15
John 12:47
Romans 8:18-23
Ephesians 1:10
Colossians 1:19-20

Future Vision of a New Creation

Isaiah 11:1-16
Ezekiel 17:22-24; 36:33-36
2 Corinthians 5:17-19
Revelation 21:1-22:7

Human Response: A Simple, Equitable Life for All

Exodus 16	Ezekiel 34:11-31
Deuteronomy 2:7	Micah 4:1-4
Nehemiah 9:20-21	Matthew 6:25-34
Proverbs 6:6-8	Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-36



Action Items

Find more day-to-day practical tips from N4CC by clicking [here!](#)

Adopt lifestyles that renounce habits of consumption that are destructive or polluting

Exert legitimate means to persuade governments to put moral imperatives about political expediency on issues of environmental destruction and potential climate change

Recognize and encourage the missional calling both of (i) Christians who engage in the proper use of the earth's resources for human need and welfare through agriculture, industry and medicine, and (ii) Christians who engage in the protection and restoration of the earth's habitats and species through conservation and advocacy. Both share the same goal for both serve the same Creator, Provider and Redeemer

- National Association of Evangelicals

Partner with a local organization to install natural climate adaptation solutions. In coastal areas, these might be oyster beds, sea grasses, or mangroves. In inland areas, it might be native plants and trees.

Learn about the original peoples of your community: Find federal and state recognized tribes through the National Conference of State Legislatures. Check out online resources like <https://native-land.ca> to learn about the indigenous caretakers of the land you inhabit, and, if applicable, where their descendants may reside today.

Encourage collective action and a sense of community by praying together, adopting a spirit of reference to creation and to one another, creating awareness about environmental migrants, sharing knowledge, fostering dialogue and making space to hear community concerns.

Develop a resilience and disaster preparedness plan for your church. Then, invite your congregants to develop one for their household.

Make room for people who might be displaced by disasters. Consider options like: Stocking cots, sheets, toiletries (including menstrual products), and non-perishable food, installing showers in some of your bathrooms, and working with local emergency management so that people know they can come to you.

- Creation Justice Ministries

Giving Link

This Sunday consider a special offering for creation care!

Nazarenes for Creation Care is now an official 10% Giving opportunity through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries!
Scan the QR code to give.

You can also find a link to give on our [website](#).



Resolution 924

We are seeking to expand the Creation Care section (section 924) in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene at the 2023 General Assembly.

Proposed (For GA 2023):

924. Creation Care.

1. The earth is the Lord's, it is with deep appreciation of God's creation and its beauty, goodness, and glory, we believe we are called to join in God's purposes of stewarding and caring for the world [Manual 32]. Creation was declared good before the creation of humans, and therefore it has value for its own sake. Nature is a witness to the power and glory of God; viewing God's handiwork leads us to worship the Creator. Jesus' teaching 'Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven,' is woven into our prayer and practice as the holy people of God and includes our mandate to care for God's creation.
2. The Church of the Nazarene affirms its historic position of Christian compassion for all of God's created and has a particular emphasis on compassion for people who are poor and oppressed. Therefore, we call our people, particularly those who have greater resources, to care for and conserve precious resources as faithful stewards of all creation, being most mindful of those who will benefit from our wise use of God's gifts. This loving care extends to the earth in which we make our homes, to the generations which come after us, as well as to other species we live with and amongst.
3. Therefore, we are committed to the conservative use of creation's resources in a responsible, caring and loving way by joining in God's redemptive purposes as agents of reconciliation and ambassadors of grace for all of God's world.
4. As Christians we are called to selflessly participate in thoughtful holy living that demonstrates God's love for all the earth and all of its inhabitants. We embrace values that enable the regeneration of life on earth and, by God's grace, and recognizing our interdependence with creation, we accept the individual and collective responsibilities of conservation for the sake of this and unborn generations. We decry any policy or any practice that creates, or results in, conditions in communities that are inhumane, undignified and unlivable. Recognizing that actions which exploit or destroy the earth disproportionately impact the poor and oppressed, we implore Nazarenes worldwide to commit themselves to support concrete actions and moral and ethical policies and practices in business, cultural, ecclesial, governmental and global venues that honor the created and the creation, believing that this is an expression of Holiness.

(Genesis 1:21,25, 29-31; 2:15; Psalms 19; 24:1-2; 104, 148; Hosea 4:1-3; see Jer 12:10-11; John 6:12; Romans 1:20; 8:19-25; Colossians 1:15-20 and Revelation 11:18; 21:5.)

Resolution 924

Ways you can help make this very important change.

- Read through the resolution and become familiar with it.
- Talk to your District about supporting Resolution 924!

Scan this QR code to read
Resolution 924 on our [website!](#)



Fast Facts

Did you know.....

The Catholic Church alone owns an estimated 177 million acres of land. That is a lot of land for Christians to take care of!

Gravity pushes extra masses of water and earth into a bulge, or "spare tire" around our planet. At the equator, the circumference of the globe is 24,901 miles (40,075 kilometers). So the earth is not perfectly round! Bonus fact: At the equator, you would weigh less than if standing at one of the poles.

The ground you're walking on is recycled. Earth's rock cycle transforms igneous rocks to sedimentary rocks to metamorphic rocks and back again.

In total, the Bible references trees over 525 times (only humans are mentioned more often) and the Bible references 25 different species of tree. Trees seem important to God, don't they?

Bats tend to get a bad rap. The truth is, they gobble up lots of troublesome insects. In fact, they're so good at keeping pests away from our food crops that they save U.S. farmers alone at least \$3.7 billion on pesticides every year. This year, think about putting up a bat house for these hungry fliers.

Humans eat only 200 types of plants. Scientists estimate that there are about 400,000 different species of plants on Earth. The number of edible plants ranges from 80,000 to 300,000. It is time to try a new vegetable!

