



Hope for Our Planet

April 22, 2022

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We begin our time together by recognizing the traditional keepers of Turtle Island, guardians of the lands and waters.

For many years, before the arrival of settlers, Indigenous Peoples called our local areas, their home. Ontario is still home to many Indigenous Peoples. There are over 120 Nations in the Province as a whole as well as Metis and Inuit Peoples.

We acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples' deep connection with Mother Earth and their long-standing protection of its many lifeforms.

We humbly and sincerely admit that as people of settler origins we have not always fulfilled our responsibilities as treaty people.

We have seldom fully appreciated Indigenous wisdom, their ways and their valuable contributions to the fabric of our country.

To move from words to action we commit ourselves to truth-seeking, to self-reflection, and to building right relationships between ourselves and Indigenous Peoples and individuals.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Leader:

Elin Kelsey in her book, *Hope Matters*,¹ tells us that, “What we pay attention to shapes our lives no matter what species we are.” In these times, the grieving we feel over the plight of the planet so easily

overwhelms us with fear, anger and despair. With the environmental crisis and the exhaustion of widespread tragedies we are also experiencing a crisis of hope. Kelsey asks if this is the only story to be told, one of doom and gloom, or can we counterbalance this by, “looking at the capacity of this glorious complex planet,” and letting it move us into a narrative of hope for the planet.

HYMN: Now Thank We All Our God *(verse 1)*

[tune: Now Thank We All Our God, CBW III #535]

Now thank we all our God
In whom this Earth rejoices,
For creatures great and small
Who now have lost their voices;
And species calling us
Before they disappear,
To love this fragile Earth
That God would have us share. (2X)



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OPENING PRAYER

Leader: All-powerful God,
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
and be filled with awe and contemplation
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature. *Pope Francis, Pentecost 2015*

Hymn: Repeat singing v1 above

RITUAL

Calling on the Four Elements

(for the Facilitators – see the ritual set up on the last page)

Leader: Let Us Begin

The natural world continually reflects hope to us. Let us celebrate and listen to its voice in our ritual, as we pray for the grace to grow a story of hope for our beloved planet.

Reader 1:

AIR: O Ruah, Breath of Life, release our capacity to be life givers,

we pray:

ALL: We join with the earth and each other

One person now comes forward ringing the chimes and places them on the ritual table.

Reader 1 continues:

Air carrying all wing-ed creatures:

Did you know that hundreds of new species of birds and thousands of new insects are discovered each year?

We pray:

All: We join with the earth and each other in hope.

Reader 2:

FIRE: O Living Flame, Guiding Light, fill us with compassion for all of creation, ***we pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other

Another person now brings the candle into the centre and places it on the ritual table.

Reader 2 continues:

Did you know that humpback whales are capable of compassion, and will intentionally move in to save other species, such as seals, being attacked by killer whales? ***We pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other in hope.



A new species:
Meratus jungle
flycatcher from
Indonesia
Photo from
Google

Reader 1:

WATER: O Deep River, Living Water, may we refresh and restore what is broken, ***we pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other

One person now brings the vessel holding the water into the centre and places it on the ritual table.

Reader 1 continues:

Did you know that coral and fish offspring inherit from their parents, who severely suffered from climate change, a capacity to adapt to the environmental changes they are facing, such as warming water temperatures, and are thriving? ***We pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other in hope.

Reader 2:

EARTH: O Sacred Earth, Our Home, let us be ground, humble and fertile, ***we pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other.

One person now brings the earth or plant into the centre and places it on the ritual table.

Reader 2 continues:

In 2018, after decades of work with many organizations, Chiribiquete National Park in the heart of the Colombian Amazon was expanded by 50% and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

And as of Jan 2022, there have been 224 new species of animals and plants discovered in the world. ***We pray:***

All: We join with the earth and each other in hope.



Leader:

From these examples and many more, Elin Kelsey shows us that, “hope exists within the agency of animals, plants and countless other life-forms that populate this remarkable planet.” Hope begets hope when we manifest this “wild contagious gift” that lives inside each one of us. Let us collectively celebrate hope in all the environmental successes and solutions we see around us.

READINGS

Reader 1: In This Earth

In this Earth
In this Soil
In this Pure Field
Let's not plant
Any seed
Other than the seeds of Compassion and Love (and Hope).



Rumi (adapted)

Reader 2: Romans 5:5

... and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. *(New American Standard Bible)*

REFLECTION

Leader: The great Catholic writer Ernesto Cardenal in *Abide in Love* observes: "Everything in nature has a trademark, God's trademark: the stripes on a shell and the stripes on a zebra; the grain of the wood and the veins of the dry leaf; the markings on the dragonfly's wings and the pattern of stars on a photographic plate; the panther's coat and the epidermal cells of the lily petal; the structure of atoms and galaxies. All bear God's fingerprints."

Leader: Take 2-5 mins to ponder and then share with a neighbour:

Where do you experience hope for our planet?

Leader: “Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.” *Pope Francis, Pentecost 2015*

LITANY IN RESPONSE:

Voice 1:

May we use the world’s resources we need with love, humility, and thoughtfulness, without waste.

All: May we live in harmony with the earth.

Voice 2:

May we live together with animals and plants with which we share this planet, being careful not to harm them or their habitats.

All: May we live in harmony with the earth.

Voice 1:

May we respect the waters and life in our lakes, rivers and oceans, using them with care and being mindful in our efforts not to pollute them.

All: May we live in harmony with the earth.

Voice 2:

May we learn to live within our means, by using less, by reducing our waste and continuing to reuse and recycle all that we can.

All: May we live in harmony with the earth.

Voice 1:

May we implement plans to leave the world in a state for future generations to enjoy.

All: May we live in harmony with the earth.

Living in Harmony (Adapted from Words for the Journey for Teens by Lisa Freemantle, Les Miller & Melinda Rapallo-Ferrara)

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray

God in your infinite goodness you have lovingly formed our universe and all manner of life within it.



All: Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. *Pope Francis, Pentecost 2015*

BLESSING

Leader:

As we prepare to leave and embrace the challenges of our lives and our world, let us ask for God's blessing.

May God bless us with wisdom to care for our Earth and may we share a commitment to live in hope.

All: Amen.

HYMN

SONG OF EARTH *verses 1 and 3*

[tune: Jesus Christ is risen today, CBW III #389]

Hail the Earth that first appeared. Alleluia!
When a word from God was heard. Alleluia!
Let the Earth arise and be. Alleluia!
Filled with living mystery. Alleluia
Hail the planet blue and green. Alleluia!
Where the face of God is seen. Alleluia!
Glory filling all the Earth. Alleluia!
Celebrating every birth. Alleluia



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1. Elin Kelsey, *Hope Matters: why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*; Davis Suzuki Institute, 2020
 2. Pictures without credit are from Pixabay
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RITUAL SET UP

*Have the 4 elements on a table outside the gathering space: **Air** - something that makes a sound such as a chime bar, a bell, wind chimes, a singing bowl, a rain stick, a musical instrument; **Fire**: a burning candle; **Water**: a glass bowl or pitcher with water; **Earth**: a plate with soil or a plant*

These elements will be brought up one at a time and placed on the prepared ritual table.

An alternative to this is to have each person with the symbol, when called, weave through the participants to the ritual table. If on Zoom the Leader can hold each symbol up at the appropriate time.

There are 3 opportunities for Readers Voice 1 and Voice 2. From 2-6 readers can be assigned.