



WORLD OCEANS DAY

JUNE 8, 2023

LEADER: INTRODUCTION

“This year’s theme is “Planet Ocean: Tides are Changing”. In February of this year a treaty signed by all 193 nations of the UN declared that 1/3 of the sea (and land) by 2030 is now protected. This treaty protects 2/3 of the ocean that lies outside national boundaries and provides a legal framework for establishing vast marine protected areas against the loss of wildlife, and that resources of the high seas are to be shared. This multilateral cooperation strengthens our COP15 goal for 30% ocean protection by 2030.

The ocean is the sustainer of all life on earth. Ocean ecosystems produce 50% of the oxygen we breathe, represent 95% of the planet’s biosphere and soak up CO₂ as the world’s largest Carbon sink. So, protecting the high seas plays a critical role in the impacts of climate change. As the challenges to the ocean continue, so does our need to understand them and mobilize on a global scale.” ¹

OPENING HYMN: SONG OF THE WATERS

[Tune: “Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven” CBW III #565]

V1: View anew the dark blue ocean,
Whales cavorting, spraying foam;
God at play with deep sea monsters,
Feeling very much at home
Sing a song of laughing waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

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OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Swirling God, who at the dawn of creation swept over the face of the waters, hover over our oceans with your blessed presence.

Side 1: May each droplet of mist and sea be clean and fresh for all life who come in contact with these holy waters.

Side 2: Bless each cell and molecule of life below the surface of the waters who trust in you and us to create a prosperous world.

All: [Move us with urgency] to nurture creation, joining us together with humans all over the planet to covenant with one another and celebrate the gifts of ocean and sea that you have given us. ².

by Reverend Michelle L. Torigian (adapted)

EXCERPTS FROM 'HOPE MATTERS' By Elin Kelsey

Reader 1:

We need to acknowledge that the environmental crisis is also a crisis of HOPE. We know that bad news always gets more coverage than good news. There are many success stories due to the work of millions of people taking action to reduce the harm done to our planet. The care of our oceans has been taken on by many groups of scientists, researchers and ordinary humans who are all making positive change and involving many others in the effort to reverse the damage and restore the life of the seas. Social media is making searching for replicable solutions or finding people working on similar issues much easier, which translates into successful actions being reproduced and tailored to other solutions. The return of coral reefs, green sea turtles and blue whales are all success stories of work that has been and is being done. ³.



[Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

'Happy World Ocean Day' in many languages – We Need Global Solutions



OCEAN RITUAL: *(arrange a large glass bowl, with a pitcher of water and a smaller bowl with salt on a table set up for ritual)*

Leader: On our ritual table we have water – the life-giving element for all of creation and we have salt. In the scriptures salt is used to symbolize a covenant that is perpetual, not to be broken. On this World Oceans Day let us enter into a covenant with God and with all the peoples of the earth to protect the oceans and seas and all the life they sustain.

Reader 2: Greetings from China

(Reader pauses while one person pours water into the bowl and sprinkles some salt over the water). **Reader continues:**

A textile advocacy group called ILab is compelling people throughout China to take action in support of marine and coral protection. The coral reefs are the forests of the ocean and they are the most important component of the marine eco-system. They cover less than 0.1% of the ocean floor and yet they support at least 25% of marine habitats and the livelihoods of 500 million people worldwide. Without protection, it is projected that 60% of coral reefs globally are expected to be dead in the next 30 years. ILab is pursuing marine-friendly and coral-safe formulas in all of their products and is initiating environmental action such as coral planting.

Response All: **What a wildly wonderful world, God! You made it all, made earth overflow with your wonderful creations. Oh, look—the deep, wide sea, brimming with fish past counting, sardines and sharks and salmon.**

Reader 3: Greetings from Japan

(Reader pauses while one person pours water into the bowl and sprinkles some salt over the water). Reader continues:

Japan is an island nation with 30,000 kms of coastline, 100 major rivers and forests covering 2/3 of the land. Recent discoveries show that protecting watershed forests has impacts on marine habitat, keeping water clean for many threatened species. This discovery was made by fishing communities who for hundreds of years saw the relationship between healthy forests and healthy seas. Greater coastal forest cover correlates to an increasing number of vulnerable fish species in the watershed estuaries studied. Their government now protects certain “fish forests” based on the ecosystem services they provide and housing is restricted along many watershed coasts to maintain healthy seas.

Another type of Fish Forest are Mangrove Forests. Watch this video to see their importance for marine habitat (4'03") <https://youtu.be/cwTZhyA57mA>

Response All: There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number - living things both large and small. *Psalm 104:25 (MSG)*

Reader 4: Greetings from Canada



This polka dot wonder, a species of nudibranchs, was seen off British Columbia near Pender Island.

(Reader pauses while one person pours water into the bowl and sprinkles some salt over the water). Reader continues:

Oceana Canada was established in 2015 to restore Canadian oceans to be as rich, healthy, and abundant as they once were. It is now also part of the largest international advocacy group dedicated solely to ocean conservation. It is collaborating with many other agencies to protect over 50 reefs around the world.

Off the coast of British Columbia underwater mountains, called seamounts, can be found. They are massive, fascinating and crucial to the health of the ocean. Everything from octopuses to rockfish are connected to these ecosystems and depend on them to thrive.

*Glass sponges were once thought to be extinct. The glass sponge reefs live in the Pacific Northwest. **They are thought to be the only living such reefs left in the world.***

Optional Viewing: Seamounts – 1'24".
<https://youtu.be/9V8DDzd7UfM>



Response All: Sing a new song, for God has done wonderful things! Sing to God all the earth, sing praise and songs of joy! Let the oceans roar and all the creatures that live within it give praise! (*Psalm 98 adapted*)

Leader: REFLECTION:

Ponder for a short time, “**What good news stories about caring for the oceans are you aware of that gives you hope for us today and for future generations?**” Share with your neighbour or with your group.

PSALM OF GRATITUDE:

Leader: We give thanks for God’s gift of water seen in the beauty, power and integrity of our ocean world.

All: With grateful hearts we pray.

Leader: We thank you that the ocean teaches humanity, humility and awareness of the fact that we share this world with trillions of other living creatures.

All: With grateful hearts we pray.,

Leader: We thank you for the beautiful habitats, fascinating creatures and natural resources that the ocean provides.

All: With grateful hearts we pray.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: We join in praise of the Divine Love that holds all in cosmic communion.

All:

We give thanks, Creator God, for the bountiful gifts of the Oceans and Seas, their beauty, wonder and strength. We pray for all the marine life and human life that are sustained by these life- giving waters.

As we commit, on this World Ocean Day, to the restoration and life of our oceans and seas for future generations of all creatures, remind us always that each part of creation and its whole reflects You. Amen

CLOSING SONG : Song of the Waters v2

[Tune: "Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven" CBW III #565]

V2: Feel the breath of God move softly,
Gentle mists that brush the skin.
Earth is breathing God's own spirit,
Life renewed from deep within.
Sing a song of living waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

**What is so important is how we take care of
the waters that take care of us! ⁸**

What We Can Do:

1. Follow <https://www.oceana.ca> to view videos and learn more. Sign petitions:
 - i. <https://act.oceana.org/page/70940/petition/1?locale=en-US> to rebuild wild fish populations
 - ii. <https://act.oceana.org/page/42963/petition/1?locale=en-US> to protect seamounts
2. Register now to watch the virtual World Ocean Day event at the UN on **Thursday June 8**
<https://unworldoceansday.org/un-world-oceans-day-2023>

Credits:

1. Introduction: <https://worldoceansday2023.org/>
2. Opening Prayer: <https://michelleorigian.com/2017/06/08/a-world-oceans-day-prayer/>
3. Elin Kelsey, excerpts; Hope Matters; Greystone books/David Suzuki Institute Vancouver, 2020
4. Poster: Happy World Ocean Day: <https://worldoceansday2023.org/>
5. China and Japan information: *ibid*
6. Canada information: <https://oceana.ca>
7. Photo credits: [nudibranch](https://www.nudibranch.com) & glass sponges: <https://oceana.ca>

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