

## Season of Creation-Let Justice and Peace Flow

### The Standing Ones

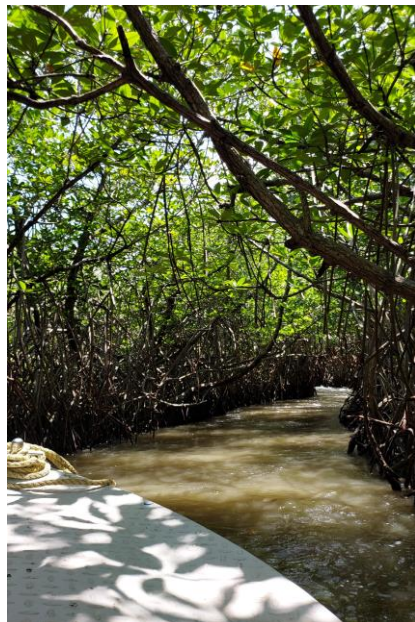
**Leader:** In this third week of The Season of Creation, we focus on ‘the standings ones,’ giving special attention to biodiversity in plant life.

#### Opening Prayer—All

Creating God, as your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you brought forth life in which you take delight. Your word called for vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth with seeds in it. And it was so and it was good. Then you called forth and created living creatures of every kind including us.

Ever since then the plants of your creating have nourished all and sustained all living creatures of the land, giving us air to breathe, homes to live in and food to eat. Help us to remember this gift of life that you have given so freely out of your infinite and lasting love. Amen

**Hymn: For the Fruits of This Creation (Breaking Bread #427) (CBW III # 532)**



**Reader 1:**

Mangroves are one of the world's most important ecosystems. Healthy mangrove forests are hotspots of biodiversity, cornerstone of climate resilience and a source of livelihoods for coastal communities worldwide. They are carbon stores, fish factories and coastal defences conveying incalculable benefits to both people and planet. Mangrove forests provide habitat for 341 species across the world.

**Response -All: Glory to you, Creator God for the abundance of vegetation that nourishes and shelters, protects and sustains us.**

**Reader 2:**

Climate changes especially rises in sea level and altered rainfalls presents major threats to mangrove habitat and loss of biodiversity. Other threats include urban development, aquaculture, mining and the overexploitation of timber, fish, crustaceans and shellfish. Habitat loss is typically associated with a loss in biodiversity itself.

Restoring forests is a slow and difficult work. However, today drones are used to carry and plant seeds in difficult-to-reach or dangerous areas. Scientific intervention is needed where there is advanced erosion of soil, loss of nutrients, and high levels of salinity or buildup of toxins.

**Response - All: Merciful God, you have set before us life and death. Too often we have chosen death. We have not loved the earth as you love it. We ask your forgiveness.**

**Reader 3: Reflection on Biodiversity**

"We are living in a period of transition, a period of 'groping' toward an uncertain future, which is asking those willing to move forward even when it can't be understood where we are going. It is a new dynamic in history. Encouragement is needed to trust the unknowable future, to grope toward it, knowing that the universe is always expanding into greater and greater differentiation and deepening spontaneity, which produces more intimate self-bonding of its component parts and allows each individual to become ever more itself. Each one of us is a unique expression of the universe with our special intelligence, emotions and imagination. We are integral with the universe, not separate from it. The human is always validated by the relationship with the earth with differences fulfilled within unity. ... Love is an inner presence to all things. ... Love is

foundational and must continue to go forth and create a new century in the direction of compassion for the earth. That's why we all must participate in the repair of our planet. We'll discover our identities as we grow in the same Divine direction through communion."<sup>2</sup>

**Questions to reflect on:**

In a time when we are faced with changes such as climate change, transitions in religious life and our church where is the hope that you find in this reading?

Like trees, how do we ground ourselves when we are facing anxiety, confusion or despair about the future?



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**Leader:**

Please share your reflection with someone near you.

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<sup>2</sup> Recovering the Sense of the Sacred: Conversations with Thomas Berry ©2012 Timberlake Earth Sanctuary Press p. 111

<sup>3</sup> Photo by Priscilla Solomon CSJ

## **Closing Prayer: All**

God of Love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference,

That they may love the common good, advance the weak and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the world are crying out.

O, Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us protect all life, to prepare for a future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you! Amen.<sup>4</sup>

## **Closing Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth (Breaking Bread #597) (CBW # 531)**

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<sup>4</sup> On Care For Our Common Home: Laudato Si' © 2015 Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Published by Pauline Books, <https://www.pauline.org>