

Season of Creation - Let Justice and Peace Flow

The Swimming Ones

Leader: In this second week of The Season of Creation, we focus on ‘the swimming ones’ and all ocean life.

Opening Prayer – All:

Creator God, all your works are wonderful. The earth and the oceans are yours. You breathed on them and filled them with life both big and small. The oceans tell of your glory and we are amazed by the beauty you have placed in them. (adapted)¹

Song: All the Ends of the Earth (Breaking Bread, #551, Bob Dufford, sj)

Refrain: All the ends of the earth, all you creatures of the sea, lift up your eyes to the wonders of the Lord. For the Lord of the earth, the master of the seas, has come with justice for the world.



Reader 1

Most of the water on Earth is contained in the ocean. Not only does this water help to regulate Earth’s climate and atmosphere, it also provides a habitat for life. In fact, 80 percent of life on Earth is found in the ocean, spread across countless ecosystems throughout millions of square miles covering Earth’s surface. Life in the ocean ranges from the smallest microscopic bacteria and viruses to the largest animal ever to have

¹ <https://www.arocha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Prayer-for-the-Oceans.pdf>

lived on Earth-the blue whale. The wealth of life forms (biodiversity) include variation in plants, different animal species, fungi, and microorganisms living within ecosystem. These live within sandy and rocky shores, kelp forests, mangrove and estuarine habitats, coral reefs and polar seas. Marine life may travel between these habitats for birthing or feeding needs, and have, therefore, adapted for survival in these habitats.²

Response – All: Glory to You, Creator God for the gift of oceans and the swimming ones.

Reader 2

Canada’s coastline is as long as six trips around the earth. Marine waters in Canada are vast, home to countless species and relied upon by thousands of coastal communities.³

Response – All: Glory to You, Creator God, for the abundance of our fresh and salty waters and life within them.

Reader 3

Atlantic salmon reside on Canada’s East Coast, in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as off the coast of Quebec and the Maritimes. It also exists outside salty waters. In B.C. the wild salmon face stressors



of warming waters, habitat degradation, fish farms, overfishing, poor water management and climate change impacts... Now, science shows that hatchery fish increase the risks of disease and parasites in wild salmon.⁴

² <https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/file/one-ocean-chapter-3.pdf>

³ (February 3, 2023, Vancouver, British Columbia, Parks Canada) <https://www.impact5.ca/2023/02/09/leadership-forum-conclusion/>

⁴ https://watershedwatch.ca/watershed-watch-salmon-society/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIInfaG-bD4_wIVHfvjBx3N-QD3EAAYAAEgJLlVd_BwE

Response – All: Creator God, forgive us for the harm that humans have done to the waters and the swimming ones.

Reader 4

How do salmon take care of their ecosystems? Their bodies give back to the forest and to the species that inhabit it. They nourish trees, insects, algae, mosses and shrubs by enriching the rainforest’s living soil with nitrogen, sulfur, carbon and phosphorus. This process takes place when other larger species, like bears and wolves, drag their carcasses through the forest. Because salmon are at the centre of an essential system taking place in the rainforest, they are often considered a keystone species.⁵ For centuries, salmon have been a spiritual and cultural part of BC’s Indigenous peoples.



Response – All: Glory to you, Creator God, for the gift of salmon.

Reader 5

“The ocean is the life support system of our planet,” said Boris Worm, a marine biologist at Canada’s Dalhousie University. “For the longest time we did not feel that we had a huge impact on the high seas. But that notion has changed with the expansion of deep sea fishing, mining, plastic pollution, climate change and other human disturbances.” he said.⁶

Response- All: Creator God, forgive us for the ways in which humans have blindly used and abused your creation.

⁵ https://www.oursafetynet.org/2020/11/20/salmon-run-season-witnessing-the-remarkable-resilience-of-chum/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMlnfaG-bD4_wlVHfvjBx3N-QD3EAAAYAiAAEgLeofD_BwE

⁶ http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/98081037.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Reader 6

In 2019, Oceana reported that in Canada, only 34 per cent of fish populations are healthy and more than 13 per cent are critically depleted.⁷

Response – All: Creator God, give us the wisdom to turn from our ways and find new ways of cooperating with your creation.

Reader 7

Recognition of the urgent need to protect and restore ocean health surged globally over the past year, with numerous international forums increasingly addressing ocean conservation. In December 2022, at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Fifteenth Convention of the Parties (COP15), the global community established a new marine protection target of 30 per cent by 2030. IMPAC5 built on this momentum just six weeks later, bringing together the largest-ever gathering of ocean conservation professionals to share their commitment, lessons learned and best practices, and to chart a course to achieve the new target. COP15 established what target to aim for; IMPAC5 focused on how to achieve it.⁸

Response – All: Creator God, lead us to continuing conversion and respect for the gift of the ocean and all the life that it supports.

Leader: Let us reflect on what has touched us. You are invited to share with the person next to you.

Closing Prayer – All:

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

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

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

⁷ <https://oceana.ca/en/our-campaigns/rebuild-ocean-abundance/>

⁸ <https://www.impac5.ca/congress-details/summary/>

Note: (IMPAC) means International Marine Protected Areas Congresses

Continually nudge us to nurture the gift of the oceans, joining together in covenant relationship to celebrate and safeguard the life which the oceans nurture.

Amen.⁹ (adapted)

Note: Although Bob Dufford's version of psalm 98 in hymn # 551: *All the Ends of the Earth*, is our preference, another version can be found in CBW III # 548. Some verses of the hymn can be used for a closing hymn if you choose.

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⁹ <https://michelleorigian.com/2017/06/08/a-world-oceans-day-prayer/>