

“God’s Good Earth: Praise and Prayer for Creation”

Liturgies for life and hope in an age of anguish

Purpose of the series:

*“To have our faith in God the Creator strengthened,
our gratitude for the wonders of God’s creation deepened,
and our commitment to act on behalf of God’s good earth enhanced.”*

NOTE TO PLANNERS: This series is inspired by a book of worship resources by the same title, [God’s Good Earth](#) (GGE). The book contains 52 full worship services, including prayers, scriptures, hymns, sermon starters, etc. We are not following any particular one of these 52 services for the weeks outlined below. In some cases, 1-3 different services will be relevant. In other cases, more than that.

I note after each service description which chapters in GGE you will likely find most relevant to your Sunday. These are starting points only. Feel free to explore other chapters and resources.

One copy of this book will stay in the church office throughout this entire series. You may take it to the conference room or library to peruse and ask the office staff to make any photocopies of resources you would like to take with you for your preparation. Please **DO NOT REMOVE THE BOOK FROM THE CHURCH BUILDING**, so it can be referenced continually by a variety of people throughout the series.

(Rowthorn, Anne W., and Jeffery W. Rowthorn. *God’s Good Earth: Praise and Prayer for Creation*. Liturgical Press, 2019.)

Sep-15 - God’s glorious creation

Sermon: Phil Kniss

In this opening worship service, we focus on the character and work of God as Creator and reflect on how God’s glory is reflected in all creation. All of God’s creation speaks to God’s glory!

GGE chs. 1-7

[Gen. 1:1-5, 26-27, 31a; Psa. 65:5b-7, 9-13 \(Judith 16:13-16\); Rev. 7:9-12; John 1:1-5](#)

Sep-22 - The physical universe

Sermon: Moriah Hurst

In this service we reflect on how the mysteries of God are made known in the real and present physicality of the universe, in all its rich variety of expressions on the earth and beyond it -- the mountains, oceans, sky, forests, deserts, as well as the physical universe beyond our planet.

GGE chs. 8-14

[Isaiah 41:18-20; Psa. 148:1-13a; Colossians 1:15-20; Matthew 6:25-29](#)

Sep-29 - Farms and human flourishing

Sermon: Paula Stoltzfus

Today we reflect on the practices of farming and agriculture, and the spiritual aspect of our partnership with God the Creator in every season, as we facilitate the fruitfulness of creation, and care for its long-term health.

GGE chs. 22-23

[Deut. 8:7-10, 17-19; Psa. 107:35-43; 2 Cor. 9:6b-11a; Mark 4:26-34](#)

Oct-6 - Nations and the rule of God [World Communion Sunday]

Sermon: Phil Kniss

This Sunday we think about the human construct of “nations,” and how the purposes of God are either enhanced or hindered by how these nations behave on the global stage. How do these ruling entities intersect with the rule of God? How does this relate to the redemptive work of Christ that we celebrate at communion?

GGE chs. 17, 26

[Micah 4:1-4; Psa. 33:8-17, 22; Matthew 25:31-36; Acts 17:22-31](#)

Oct-13 - Cities and the good society

Sermon: Phil Kniss

Does God's love of creation extend to cities? Urban spaces are human creations aimed at facilitating a good common life, but they are also intimately connected to the systems of the earth itself. How can we be partners in God's creative purposes as residents of urban environments?

GGE chs. 17, 21, 25

[Jeremiah 29:4-9; Psalm 72:1-4, 12-14, 16, 18-19; Matthew 9:35-38; Revelation 21:1-4](#)

Oct-20 - The diversity of creation

Sermon: Phil Kniss

Diversity is about the variety and richness of life on earth, from genetic variations within and between species, to the diversity of entire ecosystems. This is an opportunity to reflect on God's gift of diversity and explore God's intentions for such a diverse creation.

GGE chs. 15, 16

[Gen 1:11-12, 21-22, 24-25, 27, 29-31; Psalm 104:14-26; Romans 8:18-21; Matthew 6:25-30](#)

Oct-27 - The good earth in peril

Sermon: Phil Kniss (and others?)

Droughts, desertification, heatwaves, wildfires, rising sea levels, acidic oceans, devastating storms, the extinction of species—many ecosystems of the earth have already been affected by climate change. The human cost of global warming is borne disproportionately by the most vulnerable populations in the world. What is an appropriate Christian response and responsibility to this?

GGE chs. 35-36, 38ff

[Isaiah 24:1-6; Psalm 107:23-27, 33-34, 39-43; Revelation 18:1-8; Luke 21:25-28](#)

Nov-3 - Death and resurrection [All Saints Day]

Sermon: Phil Kniss

On this All Saints Day, we bring to mind not only our own loved ones who have gone before us. We also take time to reflect on the cycles of life, death, and resurrection, and how these relate to God's good purposes for creation.

GGE chs. 45, 30, 31

[Ezekiel 37:7-14; Psalm 90:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44a; John 12:23-26](#)

Nov-10 - Regarding the little ones

Sermon: Joyce Peachey Lind

On this Sunday we acknowledge our responsibility to care for our children and grandchildren who will inherit this earth and its systems, as well as others with us now who are comparatively "little" in power or resources, and whose present and future wellbeing rests largely in our hands.

GGE chs. 18, 17, 19, 37ff

[Isaiah 11:6-9; Proverbs 31:8-9; Mark 9:33-37; 10:13-16](#) (Deuteronomy 30:15-20???)

Nov-17 - From exploitation to stewardship

Sermon: Moriah Hurst

Today we acknowledge the constant temptation to “use” the earth for our own selfish purposes, to extract all we can from it, to exercise “dominion” over it. Instead, we must redefine our relationship to Creation. God is not only Creator, but continues to maintain ownership. We inhabit God's creation as God's trustees or stewards, not as owners.

GGE chs. 32-34, 46

[Isaiah 24:19-23; Job 24:1-4, 13, 18-20; James 5:1-6; Luke 6:20-26](#)

Nov-24 - Hope and healing [Thanksgiving/Christ the King]

Sermon: Phil Kniss

God's purposes for creation are always embedded in the concept of “shalom.” God’s major project in the cosmos is the restoration of shalom. We have reason for hope, even while there is anguish and suffering in creation. Our trust in God's continuing investment in this universe leads us to believe there is a future shalom yet-to-be-revealed. Our responsibility is to continue in our work of faithful tending, and to continue the practices of planting, cultivating, and harvesting.

GGE chs. 49-52

[Isaiah 58:6-7, 10-12; Psalm 85:7-13; Romans 8:18-25; Luke 2:27-33](#)

This worship planning guide prepared by Phil Kniss, fall 2019, for use at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, VA. This may be used and shared freely. Acknowledgment appreciated.