**Earth Day 2025 Worship**

**Resources for liturgy for a service on Earth Day (The Tuesday of Easter Week, April 22, 2025) or on the following Sunday, April 27, the Second Sunday of Easter.)**

**Theme: Divine Mercy to All Creation**

**Introduction**

Our siblings in the Roman Catholic tradition of the universal church celebrate the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. This is in response to a popular movement among Catholic laypeople to honor a twentieth century saint, Faustina, canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000. Her visions of Jesus with Divine Mercy flowing from him in streams of light became the focus of so much devotion in the early 20th century that the Vatican banned them for a while! But later they were accepted and incorporated into the liturgical life of the church.

I decided to take the theme of Divine Mercy for this year’s Earth Day service in part as an ecumenical witness. But even more, in this Easter week, Divine Mercy Sunday provides us with a vision of the Risen Christ through whom all are saved and renewed by God’s Mercy streaming from the heart of love: not only humanity, but all of creation. As we contemplate, with shame and grief, the destruction and danger that human life has brought to the natural world, we may receive new strength and hope when we seek and find God’s mercy in Christ. What’s more, we can rejoice in the knowledge that the Resurrection life is offered not only to humans but to the whole community of living beings, and indeed to all that God created.

Among the readings and prayers suggested for this service are selections from the Papal Encyclical **Laudato Si** issued by Pope Francis in 2015, which is a beautiful document calling for Christians to unite in “care for our common home.” The texts of all the readings are on a separate page. –Jenny Reece+

**Suggested Order of Service**

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

**Hymn of Praise (**I am leaving hymn selections to the musicians and worship leaders. Easter hymns that include creation in their praise include (’82 Hymnal) #175, 176, 179 (v, 1,2,3 &5) 204, 210, 211. #686 is also appropriate)

**Acclamation**:

Celebrant: Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

People: **Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia.**

Collect for purity (optional)

**Collect for the Day** (based on the Divine Mercy Sunday Chaplet)

God of abundant mercy, fountain of life, who in the death of your only begotten Son on the cross made yourself known as the source of life gushing forth for all; and who in his Resurrection opened up the ocean of your divine mercy for the whole world, empty yourself out on us we pray, and embrace the whole creation. Grant us to so trust and love you that we will walk in harmony with you, with each other, and with all that you have made, for the sake of that same Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, **Amen.**

**Gloria:** Canticle 12 A Song of Creation (selections)

**Readings: (the texts for the readings are on a separate page)**

Pope Francis: selections from ***Laudato Si***

Psalm 36: 5-10

**Epistle:** Colossians 1: 9-23

**Sequence Hymn**

**Gospel** John 20:19-31

**Sermon**

**Response**

The Nicene or Apostles’ Creed,

Or this, from indigenous American traditions:

**Earth, Teach Me—a prayer of the Ute nation**

Earth teach me quiet ~ as the grasses are still with new light.
Earth teach me suffering ~ as old stones suffer with memory.
Earth teach me humility ~ as blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring ~ as mothers nurture their young.
Earth teach me courage ~ as the tree that stands alone.
Earth teach me limitation ~ as the ant that crawls on the ground.
Earth teach me freedom ~ as the eagle that soars in the sky.
Earth teach me acceptance ~ as the leaves that die each fall.
Earth teach me renewal ~ as the seed that rises in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget myself ~ as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness ~ as dry fields weep with rain.

**Prayers:** Below are some prayer resources. You may pick and choose from among them, or use them all.

**Litany of Confession and Hope**

Leader: Creating God, we thirst for power and not for righteousness.

People**: In your divine mercy, God, renew us.**

L: We are quick to show our dominance, but hide our dependence.

P: **: In your divine mercy, God, renew us.**

L: We take what we want Without thought of what we should give back.

**P: In your divine mercy, God, renew us.**

L: We see your creation as resources Not members of our community.

**P: In your divine mercy, God, renew us.**

L: We remove mountaintops and clear-cut forests.

**P: In your divine mercy, God, forgive us and renew us.**

L: We drill for oil in land that should be protected.

**P: In your divine mercy, God, forgive us and renew us.**

We drain the earth to fuel our lifestyles.

P: **: In your divine mercy, God, forgive us, renew us**

**and fill us with your love.**

L: Transform our hearts and minds so that we might transform the world,

P: **Transform our hearts and minds so that we may do the work of justice and live in hope** .

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Celebrant: The God who creates in love has the power to heal, restore, renew and resurrect. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and renewed. People: **We are renewed in hope: Thanks be to God!**

**Prayers of the People**

**A prayer for the Earth**

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace*. Pope Francis,* ***Laudato Si.***

***Bidding Prayers***

 *for the nation and the local community*

*for all those who care for the Earth and its inhabitants*

*for those who are sick or in any need*

*for the departed and for those who mourn*

**Concluding collect**

Holy God, fountain of divine mercy, maker of marvels, you weave the planet and all its creatures together in kinship; your unifying love is revealed in the interdependence of all things in the diverse world that you have made. Save us from the illusion that humankind is separate and alone, and join us in communion with all inhabitants of the universe; through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who topples the dividing walls by the power of your Holy Spirit, and who lives and reigns with you, for ever and ever. Amen

**The Peace**

If this is a Eucharistic service, perhaps use a newer form of the Eucharistic Prayer such as Enriching Our Worship Form 1 or 2

**Benediction** (by Maren Tirabassi)

May God bless and keep in the ground –
the roots of old forests, the bulbs of next year’s flowers,
and fossil fuels — hallowed resting places
of trees that clapped their hands
and creatures of the sea that sported in the morning
of the shining face of God.
And may God lift up the light of a loving countenance upon you
who care for this earth —from this time forth and the children’s forevermore.

**Sources:** elements of these prayers and litanies were taken from or inspired by Episcopal, Presbyterian, Catholic and Native American and other sources:

Episcopal <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/loving-formation/> Presbyterian <https://pcusa.org/resource/power-god-extractive-theology-transformative-faith> Catholic Laudato Si, Papal Encyclical of Pope Francis. [https://www.chausa.org/prayers/prayer-library/prayer/a-prayer-for-our-earth-(from-laudato-si')](https://www.chausa.org/prayers/prayer-library/prayer/a-prayer-for-our-earth-%28from-laudato-si%27%29)

Resources for Divine Mercy Sunday. <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/chaplet-divine-mercy>

Maren Tirabassi <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2023/04/19/two-prayers-and-a-benediction-for-earth-day> *(scriptures used Numbers 6:22-24; Isaiah 55:12 and Psalm 104:26)*

[*https://peopleandcultures.blog/2018/07/30/a-ute-prayer-earth-teach-me-to-remember/*](https://peopleandcultures.blog/2018/07/30/a-ute-prayer-earth-teach-me-to-remember/)