

**Earth Day Prayer Service
St. James's Church Piccadilly
22 April 2018**

Gathering in the Garden

Blessed be all your creation, O God.
Blessed be the fields in harvest,
Blessed be the animals we befriend,
Blessed be the seeds we plant and the food we eat.
Blessed be all the goodness of the world, O God.

Hymn: Here in This Place

A Reading from Job 12:7-10

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of God has done this?
In God's hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

Silence is kept.

Letter to All the People

Attributed to Chief Seattle (1786-1866)

"The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky, the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water, then how can you buy them? Every part of this Earth is sacred to my people; every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and

experience of my people. We know the sap that courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are a part of the Earth, and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle: these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and humans all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves from the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each ghostly reflection in the lakes tells of memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give to the rivers the kindness you would give to any brother.

If we sell you our land remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all of the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred as a place where people can go and taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers".

Walking Meditation

"Will you teach your children what we have taught our children: that the Earth is our mother? What befalls the Earth, befalls all the children of the Earth. This we know: the Earth does not belong to us; we belong to the Earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Humankind did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand of it. Whatever we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves. "One thing we know: our God is also your God. The Earth is precious to God, and to harm the Earth is to heap contempt on its creator

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of humans? Where will the thicket be? Gone. Where will the eagle be? Gone. And what is it to say good-bye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival!

We love this Earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your memory the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land for all children and love it as God loves us all. As we are part of the land, you too are a part of the land. As the Earth is precious to us, so is it precious to you.

One thing we know: there is only one God. No one, be they red or white, can be apart. We are kindred after all".

Silence is kept

Depart

Holy God, the stars over the heavens are Yours,
and Yours are the grasses of the earth.
You are older than all need
Older than all pain and prayer.
As we depart your sacred garden,
Holy God, teach us to walk the soft earth
as relatives to all that live. **Amen.**