Earth Sunday Scripture Suggestions (Earth Day is April 22nd—can be celebrated on the 19th or the 26th): Genesis 1:24-2:4a or 2:4b-25; Psalm 104; Colossians 3:1-15; Matthew 6:25-34

These are Scripture passages I have chosen for a possible Creation Care Sunday to correspond with Earth Day.

Genesis 1:24-2:4a describes the final day of creation and the Sabbath. On this day God creates all the creatures of the earth along with human beings, and human beings are made in the image of God. God calls the human beings to have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. Being made in the image of God, this dominion is in the same way God has dominion over the universe: we are called to care for all living things. It is clear that the world is not to be exploited, but all resources should be used for the goodness of creation.

The second account of creation that begins in Genesis 2:4b shows that the first human being created (the concept of gender doesn’t really exist yet, since there is only one human begin) is called to care for the garden of Eden, and names all the creatures. By giving them names, the human being knows them—as God knows us. And the human being is given a helper and there is man and woman. We were created not to be alone, but to work together, and our created intention is to care for creation.

Psalm 104 is a beautiful psalm about God as Creator. God has made the whole world, and we were created to be in relationship with God and with creation, and creation is good, even giant sea creatures and lions seeking their prey. All of creation rejoices in God, and God is worthy of praise.

Colossians 3:1-15 shares that in Christ we are a new creation, and the old divisions mean nothing for Christ is all and in all. In Christ we are one body, and we must end the ways of destruction and division in our lives to be one in Christ.

Matthew 6:25-34 is part of the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus declares that we should not worry, that God who cares for creation cares for us very much. God created a world full of beauty, therefore we should be less worried about material possessions and instead work for the kingdom of God, the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven. All things belong to God, and therefore to us.

The world was created by God, and it is good. We were created by God to be the earth’s caretakers, but we have instead lived for our own gain and desires, ignoring those in need around us, and we have used more of the earth’s resources than we have needed. We sin against God when we do not honor God’s creation and exploit it for our own use. This is not what we were created to be, but what we have become. We are called to repent and turn back to God, and we must also return to God’s created intention for us—to care for the world that God has given us, for the kingdom of God is drawing near

Call to Worship

God created the world, the stars and the sky;

**And God saw that it was good.**

God created all plants and life that grows;

**And God declared it good.**

God created all living creatures in the world;

**And God said “It is good.”**

We were created in the image of God;

**And God called us to care for the world.**

Let us celebrate God our Creator;

**May we live into the image of God, and care for all of creation as God cares for us.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Creator God, we confess that we have forgotten our created intention, to have dominion over the earth in the way You have dominion over us—to care for the earth and use its resources to sustain others. Instead, we have exploited the earth for our own gain, to the point we do not even recognize what we are doing. We fail to see how our way of life can harm others by our overuse of resources and needless waste. Forgive us. Bring us into awareness of our use and misuse of creation, and help us to restore and replant, to help provide and grow instead of waste and destroy. Call us back into our created intention, to be good stewards of all Your creation. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance of Pardon

The God of Creation is also the God of Re-Creation. In Christ we have new life. We have the opportunity now to change our ways and help heal and restore creation. You are forgiven by God—go and do the right thing, and live into God’s ways of love, restoration, and peace. Amen.

Prayer

Almighty God, we pray for the earth. We pray that it is not too late to undo the destruction we have caused. We pray for the means and the understanding to change our ways. We pray for our nation’s leaders, that they might consider future generations in their planning now. We pray for corporate leaders, that they would place health and safety over profits. We pray for all of us, that we might turn from selfish ways and instead look to ways of living that benefit others. Change our hearts, O God, to love the world that You created in goodness and to care for this world that You gave us, for all generations to come. In Your name we pray. Amen.