

Welcoming Spring

Celebrating the Newness of Life



Theme

*“There is no time like spring,
when life’s alive in everything.”*
Christine Rossetti

Setting

*Chairs in a circle. Table in the center draped with colorful cloth.
Symbols of spring on the table; bowl of water; pot of earth,
packets of seeds, potted spring flowers..*

Opening

Presider Welcome

(Proclaim the theme and invite all present to invite into their hearts a symbol or thought that brings new life to them.)

Song *(Invite all to stand and move with the rhythm of the song.)*

“Canticle of the Sun”

by Marty Haugen, 1980 G.I.A. Publications
(Or other spring or nature song)

Presider

We have experienced the gift of winter days drawing us to reflect on the time of resting of the cold earth. Now we rejoice in the melting snows, the crocus proclaiming new life, familiar songs of returning birds, and new smells of the earth that greet us in spring’s arrival. Let us in silence reflect on what in us needs to leave with the melting snow and where we are called to openness to new life as we celebrate spring.

*Silent time for
reflection*

Presider Let us join our voices in prayer.

All

Spirit of Life, you hover over the earth with the breath of newness and call us to receive the gifts of this special season when all creation speaks of beauty and joy. Renew our hearts. Attune the depths of our being to listen, to be silent, to be open to the many ways you speak to us as all creation responds to the loving touch of the sun. May we join in the dance of life around us to give praise and glory to you Creator and Sustainer of all life. Amen.



Readings

Presider Let us listen to messages of God’s word among us.

Reading 1 Mohammed

Verily the earth hath a store of marvels for those who have faith to see.

Response Sing refrain from “Canticle of the Sun”

Reading 2 The Koran

If I had but two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul.

Response Sing refrain from “Canticle of the Sun”

Reading 3 The New Testament -- Matthew 6:28-29

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Response Sing refrain from “Canticle of the Sun”

Presider Poet’s, too, speak to us of spring and God’s word.

Reader 4 *Spring* by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as spring--

When weeds, in wheels,
shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrush’s eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring

The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they brush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness;

the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth’s sweet being in the beginning

In Eden’s garden. -- Have, get, before it cloy,

Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,

Most, O maid’s child,

thy choice and worthy the winning.

Sharing Time

Presider “Nothing is so beautiful as spring.” Reflect on what you experience as the beauty of spring. *(Short pause)* Share the images with the person next to you.

Presider “What is all this juice and all this joy?” What gifts does the season of spring bring to you? *(Short pause)* Share one gift with the person next to you.

Presider “sour with sinning” As we enjoy the beauties of the earth in spring, we are also mindful of the places and the ways we have destroyed the wholeness and beauty of our earth. How or where have you experienced this? *(Short pause)* Share with the person next to you one thought of how the earth has been harmed by human misuse or carelessness.

Prayer Intentions

Presider Let us pray for ourselves, for others, for the care of our earth.



God of all that is beautiful, we give you praise and thanks for the joys that this spring season brings to our lives. We ask that this beauty may enrich us so that we may share your joy with others.

Response God of Life, hear us.

Creator God, you gift us with new life in our children. Bless them as they grow in your grace and wisdom. May we teach them to be gentle and caring toward the earth that sustains us.

Response God of Life, hear us.

God of compassion, you shower your gentle love on the earth in refreshing spring rains. Teach us to value the gift of water and to find means that all who thirst may be satisfied.

Response God of Life, hear us.

O God, you nourish us through the fruits of the earth. Bless all those whose labors till the soil and sow seeds

for the harvest. May they find joy and fulfillment in their care of the earth.

Response God of Life, hear us.

God of mercy and forgiveness, we do not always care for the earth with love and often we exploit the land, the trees, the waters, and all growing things through selfishness and lack of concern. Help us to honor the earth and to restore what has been destroyed and polluted.

Response God of Life, hear us.



Generous God, many people give their time and talents to prevent further destruction in our rainforests, wetlands, waterways, and other fragile areas. Grant them peace and courage as they continue to educate others to preserve the gifts you have entrusted to our care.

Response God of Life, hear us.

All

O God of beauty and all that is lifegiving, our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude as we celebrate this season of springtime. We praise you anew for the smell of the fresh earth, for the beauty of the first pussy willows and crocus flowers, for the gentle rains, and the warmth of the sun. We thank you for the gift of each other and for all the caring people in our lives who bring us new life each day. We ask your blessing on each other now as we leave in joy and in peace that you alone can give.



Closing Blessing

An Irish Blessing *(Turning to one next to you, pray:)*

May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
The rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
May you be held in the palm of God's hand.

Song Sing refrain from “Canticle of the Sun”

Acknowledgments

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