

Worship in a box 2020

Uniting Earth

unitingearth.org.au

Breathe

Dr Byron Smith

Introduction

Byron Smith talks about how our breath - the very thing that keeps us alive - connects us deeply with all the rest of God's Creation.

This liturgy assumes that you are participating online in some form, but is easily adapted for use in a physically gathered group. Sentences in italics are comments to the worship leader.

The liturgy is designed so that you can pick it up and run with it straight out of the box, clicking on the video links as you get to them. If you have more time for preparation, of course, feel free to edit, adapt, and use whatever parts you find helpful.

If you are meeting by zoom you could just screen share this liturgy so people can read along, which will also make clicking the links for the sermon and songs easier.

You will need a candle, and ask everyone to have a flower with them.

Opening meditation

Ask each person to bring a flower with them as they log in.

Allow time between reading each of these paragraphs for contemplation.

I invite you now into a time of prayer involving breathing and imagination. To begin I invite you to each take up your flower.

Sit in a way which is comfortable and relaxed with your hands cupped, gently nursing your flower and resting in your lap and your eyes closed.

Be aware of the sounds around you, can you hear any traffic, can you hear people moving around you?

Be aware of what you can hear and gently and quietly bless that which you can hear and let it go. Allow it to slip from your awareness.

Focus on your own breathing, feel the breath as it slips in and out of you. The air that you breathe surrounds you, enters you, fills your lungs and flows through your body bringing you life.

It is air we share and which connects us with each other and all of Earth. Imagine, as you breathe, the air as a metaphor for God's grace surrounding you, filling and flowing through you, sustaining you and connecting you.

Imagine your own blessings upon all creation being sent forth with each breath you exhale.

Allow your attention to focus upon your cupped hands and the flower within it. Imagine the petal as a symbol of your life in its beauty and fragility full of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, triumphs and frustrations.

Exhale into your hands as an act of breathing your blessing and in the moisture of your breath something of your very self upon the flower. Place the flower under your monitor, to remind you this week of surrendering yourself in trusting belief to the stream of life, to God.

Sit comfortably and relaxed, remain aware of your breathing. You are present in and with a community immersed and connected within the grace of God

Adapted from : <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/information-and-action-resources/item/950-world-environment-day-2014>

Taize Hymn: Bless the Lord, my soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4Svh-9ohg4>

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Creator God,
out of the darkness,
life emerged

.

A candle is lit
In light and breath
You gave birth to the world

.

Take a deep breath in and out
Jesus is the light of the world.
In him all things are made whole

Source: UnitingJustice

God, you created the world and sent your own Son to live among us, made of the same stuff, breathing the same air, marvelling at sunrise and sunset just as we do. Help us to participate in the life around and within us as your life, as you living in us and we living in you and in each other.

God of love and life, restore us to your peace, renew us through your power and teach us to love all that you have created and to care for the earth as your gift and our home.

Amen

Source: <https://ecochurcheswadotnet.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/ss2016-week-1-worship-resource.pdf>

Song: For the beauty of the earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpEbQGsPqHE>

Prayer of Praise

O God who gives birth
to all that we see, all that we know, all that we dream

We praise you

For all that is unseen, unknown and unimagined,

We praise you

For your life that holds and nurtures the universe,
And your love which joins creation as one

We praise you

For your life which is incarnated in Christ
and which is revealed in every created being;

We praise you

Prayer of Confession

But even as we receive again your vision of life,
we recognise that we have been blind to its universal heartbeat;
Even as we remember the connectedness of all things,
we acknowledge that we have divided and separated ourselves,
and forgotten our part in your creation;
Even as we are energised by your breath within us
we confess our destructiveness,
and repent of the harm we have done to ourselves and our world.
For the sake of Jesus,
the firstborn of all creation,
who, in death, disarmed all that is evil,
and, in resurrection, stripped death of power.

Source: <http://sacredise.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/A-Liturgy-of-Creation-and-Communion.pdf>

Declaration of Forgiveness

Redeemer of all creation.

We receive your grace to us,
and your love for us as we are.

Change us now into what you would have us be

Make us ready to work for the good of all creation

Through the love and power of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Source: adapted from <http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/written-prayers-prayers-in-response-to-climate-change.pdf>

All Age Video – Maria Williams (5:21)

<https://youtu.be/4AMNIwnpwXM>

Bible Readings:

Genesis 2.7; Psalm 104.27-30; Romans 13.10

Hymn: Look at the World

<https://youtu.be/4AMNIwnpwXM>

Video Sermon – Byron Smith (7:49)

<https://youtu.be/t3EM0uPTTBs>

Discussion Question options

1. What did you think was the most significant idea in this message?
2. What 'junk' is your life breathing out?
3. What fresh breeze from God have noticed recently?
4. How might seeing the Holy Spirit as the Breath of Life shape our worship?
5. How might it affect our patterns of life together as a local/national/global community?
6. How might thinking about the Holy Spirit as the breath of life affect our approach to spirituality?
7. According to the World Health Organisation, approximately seven million people die annually from air pollution (with coal a major contributor). Globally, Australia is the second largest coal exporter and per capita the highest coal extractor. We're adding carbon to the atmosphere faster than at any point in known geological history, undermining the stability of our planet's habitability. How might you answer someone who says that Christianity should stay out of politics?

The Lord's Prayer

You may like to use this alternate version:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
 sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen

Source: <http://originalblessing.ning.com/profiles/blogs/the-lord-s-prayer-new-zealand-style>

Offering

If you are trying to engage with the offering online somehow, now might be the time

Song- All Creatures of our God and King

<https://youtu.be/0d3gO6qDLNA?t=28>

Intercession

Lead a time of open prayer for the world, and for those who struggle to breathe freely for whatever reason.

The logging off

The whole creation is held in the hand of God

the whole creation is filled with the love of God;

The whole creation has been restored by the work of God

the whole creation is filled with the love of God;

The whole creation will be renewed according to the promise of God

the whole creation is filled with the love of God;

The whole creation reflects the glory of God

the whole creation is filled with the love of God;

So now we go from this place back into the world,
to proclaim the saving message of God,
in word and action, in challenge and compassion,
to all creation.

And we go in the confidence that comes from knowing that
Christ's limitless grace,
God's infinite love,
and the Holy Spirit's relentless companionship,
always encompass us,
and are always within us.
Amen.

Adapted from: <http://sacredise.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/A-Liturgy-of-Creation-and-Communion.pdf>