

In our prayers today, let us remember the fish, the dolphins, the sea turtles, the crabs, the plankton, the birds, and all the creatures of the delicate Gulf ecosystem now endangered by this oil.

In our prayers today, let us remember all those who are working to stop the flow of oil, and all those who work to clean up the oil's effects.

And, to make a right beginning of all our prayers, let us confess our sins against God, our neighbor, and our environment.

(All who are able kneel.)

Officiant and People

God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We have overreached our just needs, and have exploited and endangered our fellow creatures in your earth and sea. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

Officiant

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, give us the wisdom and will to walk more lightly on this earth, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

(The congregation may be seated.)

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1-10, 20-22, 26-28

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the

waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

RESPONSE: "O all ye far-spreading lakes" (*Sung by the choir*)

Algonquin

MEDITATION

It all begins in water. According to the Book of Genesis, God brought the whole creation forth from water. According to modern science, life first began in water, and evolved in the sea for millions of years before it colonized the land. God gives us dominion over sea and land; but "dominion" comes from a word that means "house"; God calls us to be householders, caretakers, family-keepers of creation. Today we turn to the ocean for resources, we drill the ocean floor for oil. Our actions can bring destruction in their wake. As we see oil gushing from the seafloor of the Gulf of Mexico, as we see oil spreading on the face of the waters, as we see oil washing ashore on marshes and islands and beaches, we are aware of God's primordial creativity in the sea, and our own recklessness and waste of God's gift. Let us pray in humility before the deep mystery of Creation.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Creator God, in the beginning you called all things forth from water, and still from the depths of chaos you bring forth new possibilities for order and well-being; grant us grace to see your creative power at work even in those places where human sin has brought pain and death and brokenness, and help us to help all creatures fulfill your commandment to be fruitful and flourishing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SECOND READING: Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever. Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe. He gathered them out of the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Some went down to the sea in ships and plied their trade in deep waters. They beheld the works of the LORD and his wonders in the deep. Then he spoke, and a stormy wind arose, which tossed high the waves of the sea. They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; their hearts melted because of their peril. They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper and quieted the waves of the sea. Then were they glad because of the calm, and he brought them to the harbor they were bound for. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy and the wonders he does for his children. Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

RESPONSE: "God's Grandeur," Gerard Manley Hopkins

MEDITATION

The sea is a place with a life of its own, a place that is not limited or defined by human intentions. In the psalm, the sailors looked into the deep places of the sea and beheld the works and wonders of God; the knowledge was both exhilarating and overwhelming. Today we have looked into the deep places, and we have reached down into an environment that is complex and unpredictable and not limited or defined by our intentions. But we have failed to see God's grandeur in the deeps. In our ignorance we have done damage to the works and wonders of God that are beyond the scope of our understanding or control. Let us pray that God will deliver us from our distress.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its deep and inaccessible places, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we explore the mysteries of your creation, we may learn and act in all humility, so that we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRD READING: Exodus 15:22-27

Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" He cried out to the Lord; and the Lord showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you." Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there by the water.

RESPONSE: As longs the deer for cooling streams

HYMNAL # 658

MEDITATION

God provided Moses the means to purify the waters that had become bitter. God did not simply change the waters directly, as a single fiat from on high; but God called Moses to be a co-creator in the act, God worked through Moses to make the water pure; and in that co-creating, Moses was purified himself, made more able to listen carefully to the voice of God and to give heed to God's commandments. So too we pray that God will provide us with the wisdom and the will to purify the waters we have fouled, that God will call us to be co-creators in the cleansing work, and that in our co-working with God we may be purified as well, made more able to heed God's commandments, inspired to become better stewards and householders in the earth. Let us pray that God will guide us to purify the bitter waters.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty God, in entrusting to us the house of the earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOURTH READING: Revelation 21:2-5a, 22-26; 22:1-5

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

RESPONSE: "Come, thou fount of every blessing"

HYMNAL # 686

MEDITATION

John of Patmos had a vision of the holy City of God, the place where people of all nations would be reconciled, the place where a renewed humanity would live in perfected harmony with the renewed earth. The center of this garden-city was the river of the water of life, flowing from God's throne, flowing out into the world to heal and purify all things. It is God's promise to us in Christ that we may have a foretaste of this water, and that we may be renewed to be agents of God's healing and creativity in our world. Let us pray for God's grace that we may participate in God's mission to make all things new.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and made us stewards over all the earth: Increase our reverence before the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, that with new wisdom and determination way may make provision for our future and the future of this planet in accordance with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ANTHEM: "The Tree of Life"

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(Sung by Constance Harrington, Kate Harrington and Lucy Ivey)

Unto him that overcometh shall be given of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. On either side of the river groweth the tree of life, the leaves of the tree are for thy healing. In the midst of that fair city flows the river of water of life clear as crystal. Who so will, let him take of the water of life freely. Who so drinketh of this water shall never thirst. Take thou the leaves of the tree of life. So shalt thou enter in through the gates of the city.

LITANY

(All who are able kneel.)

Officiant Let us pray to God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all the earth. In acknowledgement that the earth is yours, and asking for your forgiveness and mercy;

People ***We pray to you, O Lord.***

Officiant In our sin and resultant grief, for human life lost, for the death of creatures of the sea and coast;

People ***We pray to you, O Lord.***

Officiant In horror at our effects on your earth;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In humility at our inability to control the damage we have begun;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In wonder and awe at the sheer magnitude of the strength of the forces of
your earth;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In surrender to the size of your earth that dwarfs the human effort to control
her forces;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In sorrow for our indifference to the harm in which we participate by our
insatiable desire for more of everything, especially that which is extracted
from your earth;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In shame for all the ways in which we mistreat your earth, its soil and air and
water, and thereby mistreat our fellow human beings;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In embarrassment for our ignorance, our laziness and our selfishness regard-
ing our responsibility to be good stewards of your earth;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In commitment to a new day wherein we will take seriously our calling to
care for the earth which is yours and all its blessings and living things;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In promise to live in such a way that we celebrate and protect all your crea-
tures and the delicate environment in which they live and move and have
their being;

People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant In obedience to you, as stewards of your creation;
People *We pray to you, O Lord.*

Officiant Merciful God, hear us;
People *Merciful God, hear us.*

Officiant Almighty God, hear us;
People *Almighty God, hear us.*

Officiant All powerful God, hear us;
People *All powerful God, hear us.*

Officiant All knowing God, hear us;
People *All knowing God, hear us.*

Officiant By your mercy, forgive us;
People *By your mercy, forgive us.*

Officiant By your might, instruct us;
People *By your might, instruct us.*

Officiant By your power, transform us;
People *By your power, transform us.*

Officiant By your knowing, change our hearts and minds;
People *By your knowing, change our hearts and minds.*

Officiant

O gracious Father, you open your hand and fill all living things with plenty; Bless the lands and waters, the creatures and all that live therein; let your Spirit go forth, that it may renew the face of the earth; show your loving-kindness, that our land may give her increase; and save us from selfish use of what you give, that men and women everywhere may give you thanks; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant

And now, in the Name of the one through who all things are created and in whom all things hold together, let us pray together in the words our Savior Christ has taught us:

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Officiant

Now may the God of all Creation, the God of the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the air, the seas, and all that dwell therein, the God and Father of the New Adam, Christ our Lord, in whom all things are made new, surround you with a sense of the majesty of Creation, fill your mind with wonder at divine generosity, gladden your heart with the earth's beauty and diversity and dignity, and draw you ever more deeply into your calling to be a steward of this world; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Holy One, the Holy Word, the Holy Spirit, be with you and with all creation, this day and always. Amen.

(All who are able stand.)

CLOSING HYMN: All creatures of our God and king **HYMNAL # 400 (VSS 1,3,4,5,7)**

Service Participants

Officiants: The Rev. Dr. Paul S. Nancarrow; The Rev. Shelby O. Owen

Director of Music: Carol Taylor

Readers: Paul Bugas, Sally Mueller, Ted Jordan and Lee Nancarrow

GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God,
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all are seared with trade: bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And all for this, nature is never spent:
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings

...Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1918

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