

Lenten Triad Liturgy

Focus on the Environment – a Lenten Discipline

Offered by Rev. Gayle MacDonald

This is the liturgy I used for the Lenten Triad (candles) and the Prayers of Confession. The prayers of confession could also be used in a series, I would think, without the lenten triad. I could also see it as a long liturgy of lament with some re-working. The italicized line from the prayer of confession is a adaption of lines from a prayer in Celebrate God's Presence.

I am not sure about the photos in the slide show (Lent 2). I think it is o.k. to show them, but I don't have all the credits given. The National Geographic one has its own credit. The one with the birds covered with oil is a time magazine or time-life photo. The others are pretty much available on a web search. I'll send the slide show which I used in week 2 as a separate file. With more time, I would have produced slide shows for some of the other Sundays. It was very effective with Leonard Cohen's "Land of Plenty" playing in the background.

The earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.

Psalm 24:1

Lent 1 - Water

**Blue Gold - World Water Wars - movie trailer (There is a downloadable Quick Time version on the right column under marketing materials at: <http://www.bluegold-worldwaterwars.com/>)*

Reader: As we extinguish this candle, we acknowledge the justice and poverty caused by greed and lust for power.

(1st purple candle is extinguished)

Let us join in our Prayer of Confession:

Prayer of Confession (unison)

We confess, God, that our country has had abundant water and we have been careless in protecting it. We confess, too, that we have failed to heed the early warning signs of polluted water systems and the subsequent depletion of water supplies. We have been slow to understand the ramifications of "water for sale" and the injustices created by the privatization of fresh water. Forgive us. Teach us to treasure this natural resource even as we work to insure its fair and just accessibility to all who need it. Giver of life, in the midst of poisoned and privatized waters we groan with creation: have mercy on us. Amen.

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* **111**

Practical Suggestions

Don't drink bottled water. Respect water by using only what you need

Lent 2 – Transportation

Slide Show (*I created a slide show using images of traffic jams, an airplane taking off, an airplane graveyard, an oil tanker, an oil spill on water, a sign saying beach closed oil spill, a clean up showing oil covered birds (from Time/Life), a man leaning against car in parking lot, a large parking lot, a salvage yard, some old, rusting cars dumped into a river, another traffic jam*)

While the slide show was playing, Leonard Cohen's "Land of Plenty" was playing in the background. I told the congregation before the slide show began the refrain was "with what's left of my religion, I raise my voice and pray: May the lights in the land of plenty shine on the truth some day."

Reader: As we extinguish this candle, we acknowledge the pollution on land, sea and air as our result of our demand for the fuel needed to get us more places, faster.

(2nd purple candle is extinguished)

Let us join in our Prayer of Confession:

Prayer of Confession (unison)

God of mercy, we confess that we are used to a world of speed and convenience. For years, we did not know the damage our modern transportation was causing in air pollution, fossil fuel depletion, ozone depletion and non-biodegradable waste. Now we do know and what we know disheartens us. And yet, we confess, it is difficult to give up hard-earned luxuries and convenience. Forgive us. Help us to make reasonable and life-give choices for the sake of the your creation and for the health of one another. Giver of life, in the midst of a plundered resouces and polluted air, we groan with creation: have mercy on us.

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* 111

Practical suggestions: Drive less. Walk, bike or use public transportation. Combine errands into one outing. Pick one day a week to not use your car.

Lent 3 - Waste and Pollution (*Project picture of turtle with plastic bag in mouth*)

Reader 1: We have become a throw-away society. From dumps littered with broken cell phones, VCR's, stereo equipment, outdated televisions and computer – to tons of paper, and garbage filled with food thrown away. This week, we have decided to hone in on one thing, a beginning place: we are focusing on plastic bags and the environmental damage this small, household items causes.

Reader 2: The help wildlife web site at www.helpwildlife.com gives us these facts:

- According to the United States Department of Environmental Protection somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. Less than 1% are recycled.
- It costs \$4,000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastics bags, which can then be sold on commodities market for only \$32.
- Plastic shopping bags are made from polyethylene: a thermoplastic made from oil. Reducing plastic bags will decrease foreign oil dependency. China will save 32 million barrels of oil a year due it is ban on free plastic bags.
- Plastic bags have been banned in Bangladesh and Rwanda, are taxed in Ireland, must be purchased in China and are either banned or there are proposals to ban them in Israel, Canada Western India, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Reader: As we extinguish this candle, we acknowledge that we have burdened creation with mountains of waste and pollution

(3rd purple candle is extinguished)

Reader: Let us join in our Prayer of Confession:

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

God of creation, as we wend our way to Easter on this Lenten journey, we begin to see that creation is, indeed, groaning under the weight of our excesses. We have not meant to be wasteful or destructive, but we confess now that we have been slow to adopt new habits and mend our wasteful ways. We convince ourselves that our small, individual excesses don't hurt that much. Forgive us and show us that we are not too old to change. Help us to collude in the restoring of the health of the planet and in just distribution of resources for all. Giver of life in the midst of mountains of waste we groan with creation: have mercy on us. Amen.

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* **111**

Practical Suggestion: Take you own shopping bags to all stores.

Lent 4 – Energy Consumption and Deforestation ~ Climate Change*

Reader: Carbon dioxide and other gases warm the surface of the planet naturally by trapping solar heat in the atmosphere. This is a good thing because it keeps our planet habitable. However, by burning fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil and clearing forests we have dramatically increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere and temperatures are rising. This contributes to global warming and climate change.

Reader: *We're already seeing changes. Glaciers are melting, plants and animals are being forced from their habitat, and the number of severe storms and droughts is increasing.*

- *The number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years.²*

- *Malaria has spread to higher altitudes in places like the Colombian Andes, 7,000 feet above sea level.³*

- *The flow of ice from glaciers in Greenland has more than doubled over the past 10 years.*

- *At least 279 species of plants and animals are already responding to global warming, moving closer to the poles.⁵*

Reader: The problem seems large, but we can all play a part in making the need changes. This coming Saturday we can take action very simply, but very powerfully. We can give a voice to the cries of creation and let our leaders know that we support changes that will address the global warming crisis in a positive way.

Reader: There is something we can do to show our concern. Saturday, March 28, at 8:00 p.m. is Earth Hour. Vote for the earth by turning out your lights for one hour.

Reader: This is the 3rd Earth Hour and it is gaining momentum. Millions of people around the planet are participating and the effect is immediate and visible.

Reader: As we extinguish this candle, we acknowledge that we have burdened creation with mountains of waste and pollution

(4th purple candle is extinguished)

Reader: Let us join in our prayer of Confession

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

God of love, once again, we are called to confess that we, knowingly or unknowingly have been part of the problem of global warming. Help us to be part of the solution.

(Silence for reflection).

Reader: Let us continue praying together

Forgive us and help us to work to correct past wrongs with hope and energy and love for you, for creation, for our brothers and sisters around the world. Giver of life, we who are made in the image of God have gone astray, and creation groans with us: have mercy on us. Amen.

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* **111**

Practical Suggestion: Participate in Earth Hours. Turn out your lights for one hour on March 29 at 8:00 p.m.

Lent 5 – Consumerism

Reader: Oh, dear. Our focus is consumerism. What's the problem with that? I mean we all have to consume stuff, don't we?

Reader 2: *'Consume' – 'to eat or drink something: to eat or drink something, especially in large amounts or to use something up: to use something in such a way that it cannot be reused or recovered afterward ' It's not the simple consumption that's a problem – it's the "large amounts" and using in such a way that it cannot be re-used or recovered which get us in trouble. We seem to have a voracious appetite for things – pretty things, sometimes, but often useless things. Things we don't need, maybe don't even want. For some of us shopping is entertainment, for some therapy. Like I said, it's not simple. (*slight pause*) . . . Ever darn a sock? Mend a mitten with a hole in it? Re-sole a pair of shoes?

Reader: Why would I do that?

Reader 2: To make less waste – you know, re-use. Besides, you'll save money. How much food do you throw away? How many TV's do you have? How many can you watch? How many cars? How many can you drive at once?

Reader: All right, all right! I get it. Like the carpenter who measures twice and cuts once, I should think twice and by once, or maybe not at all, or at least a little less. (*pause & thinks for a minute*) But what about the economy? Shouldn't we be buying more stuff to boost the economy?

Reader 2: It is complicated, but this much is simple: as my mother used to say – "waste not, want not". Anyway, should we be adjusting to the needs of the market place, or should the market place be responding to our needs & those of the planet. Maybe it does all start with us.

Reader: Maybe. I'll have to think about it.

Reader: As we extinguish this candle, we acknowledge that we have burdened creation with mountains of waste and pollution

(pink candle is extinguished)

Reader: Let us join in our prayer of Confession

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

God of abundant giving, we confess that our abundant living too often crosses the line into excessive living. Forgive us our excesses. Teach us to more carefully evaluate our needs, more cautiously make our purchases, more wisely re-purpose what is already ours and more generously share the goods we no longer use. Giver of life, in the midst of conspicuous consumption and plundered resources, we groan with creation: have mercy on us. Amen.

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* **111**

Practical Suggestion: Go an entire day without buying anything (or try 2 or even three days)

Lent 6 – War

Reader: Conflicts in the following list are currently causing at least 1000 violent deaths per year (a [United Nations](#) categorization^[1]). (Information from Wikipedia.com)

Start of Conflict #	War/Conflict #	Location #	Cumulative fatalities #
1983	Sri Lankan Civil War	Sri Lanka	80,000 (+/-) ^[2]
2004	Kivu conflict	Democratic Republic of the Congo	4,000,000 (+/-) ^[3]
2001	War in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	35,000
2003	War in Darfur	Sudan	500,000 (+/-)
2003	Iraq War	Iraq	103,359+ - 1,136,920+ (<i>see: Casualties of the Iraq War</i>)

1991	Somali Civil War	Somalia	300,000 ^[4] - 400,000 ^[5]
2000	Second Intifada	Israel & Palestinian territories	7,315 (+/-)
2006	Mexican Drug War	Mexico	8,400 ^[6]

Reader: We have welcomed into our midst the one we call "The Prince of Peace".

Reader: Today we celebrate his triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem, knowing that in a few days he will die as a traitor. His country was occupied by a foreign power and peace was maintained by military might.

Reader: Civil unrest, armed conflict and unjust use of power are still too common. Conflict plagues our planet. It destroys lives. It destroys natural resources. With the planet groaning under our excesses, we need to find ways to promote peace among all people, in all places.

Reader: As we extinguish this candle we acknowledge a world rife with wars and lament the terror and destruction caused by conflict.

(last purple candle is extinguished)

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

God of mercy, we long for peace in our own lives and among the nations of the world. We turn to you and confess those places where our resentment or prejudice make us slow to cooperate in efforts of reconciliation and peace. Forgive us we pray. *Giver of life, in the midst of a world at war we groan with creation: have mercy on us. Amen.*

Sung Response (v. 2) *As the Sun With Longer Journey* **111**

Practical Suggestion: Support the United for Peace Campaign