

September 20, 2026

Call to Worship Liturgy of Creation

In the beginning, all was darkness and God said, "let there be light,
and because God had said it, there was light.

In the beginning, all was silence and God sang the song of creation,
and because God sang,
all the stars and spheres vibrated to the music of God.

In the beginning, all was still and God laughed,
and because God laughed,
the waters took up the roar and the ripple of it;
and ebbed and flowed and seeped and swirled
and delighted in the ways of its being.

In the beginning, all was dull and God painted,
and because God painted, the sky became blue,
and purple, and pink,
and rainbows hung there.
The grass became green and flowers
and butterflies danced in the drips and settled like jewels on the earth.

In the beginning, all was unconscious and God breathed,
and because God breathed,
people woke up from their sleeping,
they breathed of the very life of God
and stood in wonder before the work of God's hands.
They beheld the glory of God in all that God had made
and they saw that it was very good.

~ posted on the Third Space website. <http://third-space.org.uk/blog>

Hymn

All things bright and beautiful

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Refrain

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful, in love God made them all.

1. Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colours; God made their tiny wings.

Refrain

2. The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden, God made them every one.

Refrain

3. The rocky mountain splendour, the haunting curlew's call,
the great lakes and the prairies, the forests in the fall,

Refrain

4. God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God almighty, who has made all things well.

Refrain

"All things bright and beautiful." Words by Cecil Frances Alexander. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of all creation,
you open the world around us and fill it with creatures of your love and purpose.
The wonder of each creature declares your praise –
the mountains state your majesty;
the ripened field, your generosity;
the oceans your power and the skies your grandeur.
Birds sing of your freedom;
the ant works with your persistence.
We pray that our work will honour your justice and mercy,
and our relationships speak of your love and compassion.
So may we praise you, O God,
not just in this hour of worship, but in all our waking and our working.
May we live your praise and promise through Christ,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and always.
In confidence of your grace, we confess to you our sins:

**God, you are the giver of all good gifts,
yet our generosity is often limited.
We complain about our circumstance.
We compare ourselves to others
and see what they have that we do not.
We share some of what we have,
but we worry about running short.
Forgive us our jealousy and greed
and give us generous hearts that trust in you day by day.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 17th Sunday after Pentecost. September 20, 2026. Year A

Assurance of Forgiveness

God's love is for everyone and when we know we have done wrong
and tell God how sorry we are, God forgives us.
It means we try to do better every day,
trusting that God will help us and guide us.
Thanks be to God for such amazing love and hope.

Joyce Yanishewski written for Sunday September 20, 2026

Scripture Reading Psalm 104

¹⁻¹⁴ O my soul, bless GOD!

GOD, my God, how great you are!

beautifully, gloriously robed,

Dressed up in sunshine,

and all heaven stretched out for your tent.

You built your palace on the ocean deeps,

made a chariot out of clouds and took off on wind-wings.

You commandeered winds as messengers,

appointed fire and flame as ambassadors.

You set earth on a firm foundation

so that nothing can shake it, ever.

You blanketed earth with ocean,

covered the mountains with deep waters;

Then you roared and the water ran away—

your thunder crash put it to flight.

Mountains pushed up, valleys spread out

in the places you assigned them.

You set boundaries between earth and sea;

never again will earth be flooded.

You started the springs and rivers,

sent them flowing among the hills.

All the wild animals now drink their fill,

wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Along the riverbanks the birds build nests,

ravens make their voices heard.

You water the mountains from your heavenly reservoirs;

earth is supplied with plenty of water.

You make grass grow for the livestock,

hay for the animals that plow the ground.

¹⁴⁻²³ Oh yes, God brings grain from the land,

wine to make people happy,

Their faces glowing with health,

a people well-fed and hearty.

GOD's trees are well-watered—

the Lebanon cedars he planted.

Birds build their nests in those trees;

look—the stork at home in the treetop.

Mountain goats climb about the cliffs;

badgers burrow among the rocks.

The moon keeps track of the seasons,

the sun is in charge of each day.

When it's dark and night takes over,
all the forest creatures come out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
clamoring to God for their supper.
When the sun comes up, they vanish,
lazily stretched out in their dens.
Meanwhile, men and women go out to work,
busy at their jobs until evening.

²⁴⁻³⁰ What a wildly wonderful world, GOD!
You made it all, with Wisdom at your side,
made earth overflow with your wonderful creations.
Oh, look—the deep, wide sea,
brimming with fish past counting,
sardines and sharks and salmon.
Ships plow those waters,
and Leviathan, your pet dragon, romps in them.
All the creatures look expectantly to you
to give them their meals on time.
You come, and they gather around;
you open your hand and they eat from it.
If you turned your back,
they'd die in a minute—
Take back your Spirit and they die,
revert to original mud;
Send out your Spirit and they spring to life—
the whole countryside in bloom and blossom.

³¹⁻³² The glory of GOD—let it last forever!
Let GOD enjoy his creation!
He takes one look at earth and triggers an earthquake,
points a finger at the mountains, and volcanoes erupt.
³³⁻³⁵ Oh, let me sing to GOD all my life long,
sing hymns to my God as long as I live!
Oh, let my song please him;
I'm so pleased to be singing to GOD.
But clear the ground of sinners—
no more godless men and women!
O my soul, bless GOD!

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Message A Wildly Wonderful World!

Consider for a minute, pull from your memory, a moment in time when you stood in the midst of creation and something, a sight, a smell, a sound, maybe even a touch or taste made you stop, take a breath, and stand in awe of what you were experiencing. I have

been fortunate enough to have had many of those experiences, from ocean front beaches in Cuba, to a cloud forest in Costa Rica. Though it has happened over many years, I have literally seen Canada from shore to shore and in that traveled to Vancouver Island, through the Rocky Mountains, the Prairies, the Canadian Sheild, been to Niagara Falls, and the Bay of Fundy. The views and vistas, the sounds and sights, the heights and depths, have given me many moments to stand in awe of what I experience as God's creation.

But one need not go far from home to experience the expanse, the awesomeness, and joy of nature. Just in this area around Thunder Bay there are lakes upon lakes to be explored. With Lake Superior, we have the largest freshwater lake, by surface area, in the world at our doorstep, and the powerful and mesmerizing Kakabeka Falls just down the highway. There are hundreds of trails to be walked, biked, or hiked, and roads to drive. This city has parks with flower beds, gardens, trees, birds, and animals. You can even readily find deer in places of this city.

I haven't even mentioned the hunting, fishing, farm fairs, and farmlands one can visit!

We often forget just how fortunate we are that all of this is so accessible to us. We can be so rushed to get to the next thing or recuperate from that string of appointments or commitments, that we forget that creation is there for us to enjoy. In fact, it was created out of joy and for joy.

As people who believe that we are created in God's image, we then also see or view creation as God's creation. Through the lens of faith, we read Psalm 104 as an ode and a prayer regarding God's creative power in all that has been and is being created and God's ongoing care for that very creation.

If you have not taken the time to read Psalm 104, please go and read it so that you can see what I am talking about. The imagery, the expansiveness, and expressiveness of the Psalm is truly beautiful. I have to say, up until preparing for this sermon I couldn't have even told you what Psalm 104 was about, but now I don't think I will forget.

When reading it, take your time. In your mind's eye, try to comprehend the vastness of phrases like,

Dressed up in sunshine,
and all heaven stretched out for your tent.
You built your palace on the ocean deeps,
made a chariot out of clouds and took off on wind-wings.
You commandeered winds as messengers,
appointed fire and flame as ambassadors.
You set earth on a firm foundation
so that nothing can shake it, ever.
You blanketed earth with ocean,
covered the mountains with deep waters;

Then you roared and the water ran away—
your thunder crash put it to flight.
Mountains pushed up, valleys spread out
in the places you assigned them.

The Psalm continues with line after line giving us another image of what God has done and what God continues to care for and about. Humans are included in this creation; however, we are not put in a position over it. All of it, along with us, is God's good creation.

What is different for humans in contrast with all of the rest of what has been made is that humans alone are said to be the image bearers of God. We see that in Genesis where God says, we will make human beings in our image, in our likeness. This does not put us above the rest of creation but rather gives us the unique position of having the capacity to care for creation as part of God's continuing work in the world.

Minister and professor, Scott Hoezee writes about our human capacity as caregivers of creation saying,

One of the most interesting features to being God's image-bearers is precisely our ability to pay attention to others the same way God does. So far as we know, no other creatures in the world are able to make a study out of others. But we can and we do. Go to most any library and you will find whole sections devoted to books that catalog different types of grasses, trees, fish, grasshoppers, ants, birds, and flowers. No other species on earth bothers to look at anything else. Fish in the Caribbean spend their lives on the reef and yet they never try to study different kinds of coral. But we humans do study both coral and the fish that live amidst the coral. That's the God-likeness in us at work! We can rejoice in God's works in a similar way to how God himself rejoices in them!¹

It is because we are capable of studying creation, plants, animals, earth, and sky that we are also very aware of how deeply injured creation can be due to human activity. Only humans exploit the earth for our personal gain. It is not that we cannot use the resources of the earth to enjoy life and provide us with sustenance, but have we demanded so much from the earth that now the earth is groaning under our constant use, misuse, abuse, and consistent demands that it produce and provide all that we desire.

¹ Hoezee Scott. *Psalm 104:24-34, 35b: How Many Are Your Works?: Pentecost C.*

[Psalm 104:24-34, 35b: How Many Are Your Works?: Pentecost C - Center for Excellence in Preaching](#)

Accessed September 19, 2026.

It makes one wonder if that one negative line in the whole Psalm, that seems to come out of nowhere, is about that very thing. In verse 35 we hear, “But clear the ground of sinners— no more godless men and women!”²

Now I realize that I benefit from all that the earth produces along with everyone else. It is why it is so difficult for many of us to both name and pay attention to that which is excess and harmful. What are we willing to change in order to protect and care for creation? I know this does not have an easy answer, and given the many opinions flying around about good energy and bad energy, what works and what doesn't work, all of this can be confusing and overwhelming.

Yet, are there some things we can do, some action we can take? What we all can do is pay attention, get informed and stay informed. We can stop hiding from difficult conversations and difficult questions. Creation is counting on us to get this right, to speak up for the creation that cannot speak for itself or defend itself. And trust me, this message is as conflicting for me as it could be for anyone because I enjoy the many things that I get to do, including travel, that are reasons the earth is moaning under our demands. And we can't just think about our Canadian context. The whole world is God's good creation. Every person is an image bearer of God. As people of faith and followers of Jesus, we have to care, we have to notice, we have to pay attention, and we have to act.

What that means for me and for you may be different things. Which means each of us has a role to play in this continuing story of creation. Each of us is called to be sensitive to the pain of the earth and of our fellow human beings. This means calling out those things that we determine are creating pain and suffering for people and this planet we call home.

God has given us life, has given the world life, from the blades of grass, to the birds of the air and fish in the ocean. We praise God for this wildly wonderful world! God made it all, with Wisdom at his side and made earth overflow with wonderful creations.

Thanks be to God and may we set our hearts, minds, and bodies on doing our part to speak up for the creation that cannot speak for itself. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of mystery and wonder,
we look around at the beauty of the world
and sense that you have given each precious thing its place
and a way of sustaining itself.
Thank you for your attention to the details of creation.

Yet we also see an aching world
and sense that many precious things are under threat.
Bless the work of faithful people everywhere to care for the climate and environment.

² [The Message](#) (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

Show us how we can protect what is at risk
for the health of your whole creation.

God of energy and life,
We look around at the peoples of this world
and see your imagination and dignity in every variety of face and culture.
Thank you for the gifts you plant at the heart of humanity.

Yet we also see the aching of the hungry and hurting,
and hear the groans of parents whose children die in their arms
and the cries of children who fear tomorrow.
Bless the ministries of your church across this country and around the world
that bring healing and hope to lives at risk.

God of promise and possibility,
We look around at the places where people collide with each other
and hear the grumbling of nations locked into old rivalries and new grievances.
We watch the bickering of leaders impressed more by polls than effective policies.
We worry about the future of our communities and our children.
Thank you for the ministries of support that the church takes on
and the witness for justice and peace we make together in Jesus' name.

God of faithfulness and surprise,
We look at ourselves
and sometimes doubt we can make a difference or have an impact.
Challenge us to recognise the kinds of power we do have:

The love and compassion,
The courage and commitment,
The laughter and friendship,
The generosity and mercy.

In all of these gifts we know your power is at work within us and among us.

Call us to keep serving together,
trusting you can do more than we can ask or imagine
through your church, our congregation, and our own lives,
blessed by the grace of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray:

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Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Invitation to the Offering

The Bible begins with the story of God giving us everything that is.
Our experience of the God who gives without condition continues to this very day.
Our response to such incomprehensible generosity
is what makes God's kingdom here on earth a reality
—our time, our talents, and our resources.

Let us now respond to God's grace through the presentation of our tithes and offerings.

—Mark J. Davis. [Earth Day – Ministry Council of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church](#)

May you be encouraged to visit our website at [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#) and give a financial gift to support the work of this ministry.

*Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

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1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation.
my soul, praise God who alone is your health and salvation.
Come, all who hear, sisters and brothers draw near,
joining in glad adoration.
2. Praise to the Lord, who in all things so wondrously reigning
hides you with sheltering wings, ever gently sustaining.
Have you not seen how your heart's wishes have been
granted through God's kind ordaining?
3. Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work, who defends you;
surely God's merciful goodness here daily attends you;
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
when in great love God befriends you.
4. Praise to the Lord, and with all that is in me adoring,
all who have life and breath, come with glad
praises outpouring! Let the Amen sound from God's people again:
now and forever adoring!

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty." Words by Joachim Neander. Translation by Catherine Winkworth.
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Benediction

God, our creator,
thank you for all that you have made,
and help us remember every day
always to take care of your world for Jesus' sake.

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And as we go out from this place may the
The grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you
the Holy Spirit keep you
now and forevermore. Amen.