

Water, Holy Water: a service for the blessing of water

*This resource originates from **Creation Justice Ministries USA** which develops Earth Day Sunday materials each year to help congregations celebrate and care for God's Creation.*

www.creationjustice.org

Faith Reflection

“I don't know what tallies as sacred for you but if water doesn't qualify, you should check your pulse to see whether you are among the quick or the dead”

--Larry Rasmussen, Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary

Opening Words

We know that water is central to our existence and our health. It is also central to our spiritual lives and helps us to connect with God. From bathtubs to rivers, drinking glasses to waterfalls, and baptismal fonts to expansive seas, water is a gift from God.

John writes, “*Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’*” To have a resource so sacred requires acknowledgement of its importance and of our responsibility to ensure those long after us can access and experience this life-giving element.

Opening Prayer

Creator God,

We give you thanks for your creation and everything in it. Teach us to love and care for our communities and neighbours, near and far. Please help us to remember you and your gift of water now and always. May we recognize the holiness in all the earth's water and strive for care and protection. Amen

Call to Worship (from: “A desert faith in a desert time”, Ghost Ranch, 2013—PEC Ferncliff Conference)

We gather to worship God, Giver of Life,

God, give us the waters of new life.

In the deserts of our lives, in the wilderness within,

God, give us the waters of new life.

To give us hope when our lives run dry, to give us strength when our world seems barren,

God, gives us the waters of new life.

To let peace flow like a river and love spring forth like a fountain,

God, give us the waters of new life.

To make justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a living stream,

God, give us the waters of new life.

To give us- and our world- a second chance and a new beginning,

God, give us the waters of new life.

Come, people of God, open your lives to receive God's new life. Open your hearts to sing God's praise.

Scripture Readings (*may be dispersed throughout the service*)

Job 5:10

Isaiah 43:16-21

Ezekiel 34:18

Psalms 104:10-13

(*scroll down for full texts*)

Prayer for the Blessing of the Waters

(to be used for blessing water from a local stream, river, or lake)

Adapted from the rite of the *Great Blessing of the Water* as celebrated in the Orthodox tradition. (further adaptations have been made for *Worship Words*)

You are great, Eternal One, and your works are wondrous. You brought all things in to being from nothing. By your power you uphold the whole of creation, and order the world. The sun sings to you, the moon glorifies you, the stars meet together before your face, the light obeys you, the deeps shudder before you, the water springs serve you. Be present here now sanctifying this water with the blessing of Jordan. Make it a fountain of incorruption, a protection against disease, a destruction of demons. And may it be for us the cleansing of our souls and bodies, the healing of our passions, the sanctification of our homes.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

Forgive our neglect of what you have entrusted to us as stewards. We confess that we take your gift of water for granted and acknowledge the need for repentance and action. We are

reminded of your power and love with every nourishing drink and cleansing bath. Empower us to speak for those without, and work to ensure justice and access for all. Amen

Sending Forth

May we forever exalt God and creation.

Go in peace, enjoy God's gift of water, and work to preserve this sacred resource for today and the future.

Scripture Readings

Job 5:10

Go gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields

Isaiah 43:16-21

This is what the Lord says—he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.”

Ezekiel 34:18

Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?

Psalms 104:10-13

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.