# Worship Planning

# Creation Time in the Season of Pentecost

## What Is Creation Saying to Us?

# First Sunday, Year c: enjoy my songs!

Texts (non-lectionary): Exodus 15:20:12; Psalm 57:7–10; Psalm 98:4–6; Ephesians 5:19–20*a;* Luke 15:25

Submitted by Elaine Graham and Valerie Pitt

### We Gather

(*The following scripture passage is read from the back of the church.*)

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing (Exodus 15:20).

(*If you have someone in the congregation who performs liturgical dance, he or she might dance up the aisle or the children and youth might process into the church waving streamers and playing musical instruments as they and/or the choir sing Psalm 100.*)

#### Processional

Psalm 100 “Make a Joyful Noise” (*Voices United* page 820)

#### Words of Welcome

God creates the universe and with it the possibility of being and relating.

God tends the universe, mending the broken and reconciling the estranged.

God enlivens the universe, guiding all things toward harmony with their Source.

Grateful for God’s loving action, we cannot keep from singing. (A Song of Faith)

#### Call to Worship

(based on Psalm 98)

With all Earth we gather in worship making a joyful noise to our God,

**singing a new song,** **for God has done marvellous things.**

With songs, trumpets, and horns we ring out our thankful praise,

**singing a new song, for God has done marvellous things.**

With the roar of the sea and all that fills it, we celebrate God’s presence,

**singing a new song, for God has done marvellous things.**

Let rivers clap their hands as we join our voices together,

**singing a new song for our God has done marvellous things.**

Come let us worship our God.

#### Opening Prayer

Holy One,

through the call of birds

in the early morning mist,

we hear your voice singing today.

Through the rhythm of the seasons,

the ebb and flow of the tide,

we feel your melody.

From dawn until dusk,

your heartbeat harmonizes the universe

and birth music in our hearts

stirring us to sing a new song:

a song of abundance, a song of hope,

the song of life.

Be with us as we worship you. Amen.

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#### Opening Song

(*some suggestions*)

“Come, Let Us Sing” (*Voices United* 222)

“All Things Bright and Beautiful” (*Voices United* 291)

“Morning Has Broken” (*Voices United* 409)

#### Learning Together

(*Children come to the front—but all are encouraged to participate.*)

Have on hand musical instruments such as a rain stick, an ocean drum, a frog stick, a shell, some sticks, and a jug of water at the front of the church. The water could be poured into the font.

Have a conversation with the children about the different sounds of nature that make music; make sure you include the sounds of insects and birds. During this time the children—and others—could try out the different musical instruments. The congregation could also participate by making the chirping sounds of birds, the hooting of owls, and any other sounds they can think of that make music. Then together you could, with the help of your organist/pianist, play a song of praise to God. You could talk about what a joyful sound we make with nature when we live in harmony and respect with one another.

You might close this learning time with a prayer about all the marvellous sounds that God inspires in creation and in your church, your community, and your life.

#### Songs for Learning Time

“It’s a Song of Praise to the Maker” (*More Voices* 30)

“God of the Sparrow” (*Voices United* 229)

### We Engage

#### Scripture Readings

(*If there are four readers, they might read from different places in the church, and a soloist might sing the refrain from another location.*)

**Voice One:**

My heart is steadfast, O God,

my heart is steadfast.

I will sing and make melody.

Awake my soul!

Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord,

among the peoples;

I will sing praises to you among the nations.

For your steadfast love is as high

as the heavens;

your faithfulness extends to the clouds (Psalm 57:7–10).

**Musical Refrain:**

Sing a new song unto God, who has done such marvellous things. (*Voices United* page 818, Psalm 98, refrain 1)

**Voice Two:**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,

with the lyre and the sound of the melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn

make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord (Psalm 98:4–6).

**Musical Refrain:**

Sing a new song unto God, who has done such marvellous things. (*Voices United* page 818, Psalm 98, refrain 1)

**Voice Three:**

As you sing psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God (Ephesians 5:19–20*a*).

**Musical Refrain:**

Sing a new song unto God, who has done such marvellous things. (*Voices United* page 818, Psalm 98, refrain 1)

**Voice Four:**

“Now, his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing” (Luke 15:25).

**Musical Refrain:**

Sing a new song unto God, who has done such marvellous things. (*Voices United* page 818, Psalm 98, refrain 1)

#### Reflection—Some Ideas

* Peruse for ideas the resource, *Raise a Song, Sound the Tambourine* (order from UCRD).
* Talk about how music stirs the soul, how deeply music can be felt. Invite people to share the impact that music has had on their faith.
* Share stories of transformation through music—times when music has brought comfort, inspiration, or laughter.
* Explore civil rights movements and protest songs that the movements have birthed.
* Look into hymns that have arisen out of struggles, e.g., the stories of the composers of “Now Thank We All Our God” (*Voices United* 236) and “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (*Voices United* 664).
* Talk about contemporary musicians who continue to raise awareness through their art.
* Reflect on people in scripture who expressed their faith though music, e.g., Mary, David, and Miriam.
* Think about ways that we praise God today and explore how we might further praise God.
* Ponder the fact that while we might live in difficult times globally, we are also experiencing an abundance of new hymns (e.g. songs of *More Voices*).
* Ask: What music and what groaning do we hear in creation today that we might not have heard before? How might the church sing a new song for the sake of creation?

(*Following the reflection, play a contemporary musical piece, or this might be a time of quiet reflection*.)

### We Respond

#### Prayers of the People

(*Have a CD of nature sounds playing in the background.*)

Creator of all, we gather here in your presence, surrounded by the music of your creation

–breathing in we feel the warmth of your embrace

–breathing out we release all that keeps us from you.

Together with all of your creation we offer you our thanks and praise.

Through the splash of the beaver and the mew of the kitten, the swish of grassy plants and the march of the orchestra, we witness your creative spirit. In the whistle of the wind, the crash of the waves, the eerie howl of the wolf, the screeches of the prairie hawk, the quiet of a farmer’s fields, and the crackling of ice on a branch, we experience your grandness and stand in grateful awe.

And yet in the midst of all this beauty we know that your Earth cries out in pain: the gasp of the last woodland caribou, a child’s cough from pollution, the crash of trees falling in the over logged forest. Compassionate One, breathe life into us that we might work for the places and spaces human greed has destroyed. As your breath brought calm over the chaos of the sea, we pray that we, too, may bring peace and harmony, compassion and justice to all creation through our words and actions.

We pray for the places and people in this world who hear only the sounds of conflict, strife, and violence.

**Response: Pausing in your love, we pray for wholeness, love, and peace.**

We pray for the places and people in this world who can only sing the lament of poverty, oppression, and hopelessness.

**Response: Pausing in your love we pray for wholeness, love, and peace.**

We pray for world leaders that they may change their tune and sing your shalom, working together to restore your creation.

**Response: Pausing in your love we pray for wholeness, love, and peace.**

(*Insert local concerns of your community and church.*)

Creator of all, hear these, the prayers of your people; help us hear your wisdom and bless us we pray with the sounds of your grace. May we find new ways to live and work with all of creation. All of this we pray in the name of Love. Amen.

#### Invitation to the Offering

Imagine for a moment that all creation were silent, extinct. (*pause*)

Yet God continues to do marvellous things: the call of the loon, the bleating of each new lamb, the sigh of a brown bear deep in his cave. With thanksgiving, let us respond to God by bringing our gifts. Our offerings will be received.

#### Offertory Music

“What Can I Do?” (*More Voices* 191)

“For the Gift of Creation” (*Voices United* 538)

#### Offertory Prayer

Most Holy One, we bring your our gifts of time, talent, and money. We ask you to bless them and transform us as we use them to make a difference in the world. In the strong and tender name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

#### Commissioning – Blessing

As Miriam took a tambourine to sing and dance in celebration, may we go into the world singing a new song and dancing to the songs of creation.

And may we be open to God, who continues to create harmony, rhythm, and melody to bless and encourage each one of us. Amen.

#### Going out Song

“You Shall Go Out with Joy” Isaiah 55 (*Voices United* page 884)

“Called by Earth and Sky” (*More Voices* 135)