

We live at a dangerous and wondrous moment in the history of our planet. Our willingness to exploit earth's resources and its other inhabitants for the benefit of a select few has long been apparent. For the first time, however, our technological capability has placed the earth and ourselves in such peril that survival of life on earth, as we have known it is in question.

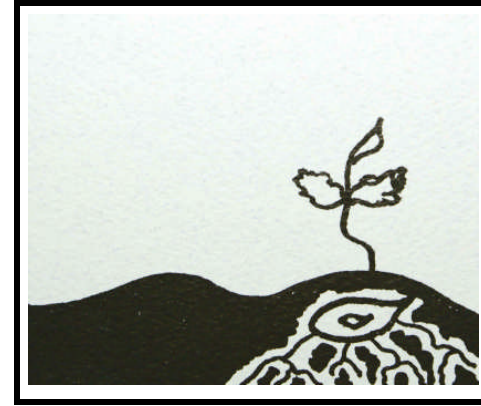
In the midst of the danger, there is great new possibility. As Thomas Berry says it, "Either the human and the natural world will go into the future as a single sacred community, or we will both perish in the desert." The vision of a sacred community of all created life, though newly appropriate, is an ancient one. Saint Paul saw a day when, "All things in heaven and on earth might be brought into unity in Christ."

Our transformation from exploiters to keepers of the earth can only happen as we reawaken to God's spirit, which is daily being poured out through all created things. It can only happen as we come home to communion with earth, with God, and with each other. In this homecoming we remember God's covenant with Noah and with every living thing, and we make this covenant with each other.



## Contemplation

We covenant together to deepen our relationship with God through a contemplative journey into God's creation. Just as Jesus went up into the hills to pray, so, too, we will watch the hawk circling over the fields, stand in God's towering forests, listen to the river's roar, go into all the wild places, where we can learn to hear God. We will honor each word of God uttered in blackbirds, in moths, in streams, in meadows



## Intercession

We covenant together to pray for the healing of the earth and the healing of our relationship with the earth. We will pray for the soil, the water, the air, the ozone layer, the ocean. We will pray for the victims of environmental abuse -- people here and in other parts of the world whose air and water are dirty and whose lives and neighborhoods have been spoiled by the greed of "development."

We pray for forgiveness for the damage that has been done, for not knowing and not caring, for living excessively at the expense of others and of the earth.



## Restoration

We covenant together to participate in the restoration of both the exterior landscapes of the earth and the interior landscapes of our souls. We recognize the deep connection between the restoration of God's creation and the restoration of human creativity. Without rivers how could there be poems? Without forests, deserts, mountains, prairies what will awaken, what will nourish the seed of divine imagination planted within us?

On a global scale, we know that every effort must be made to preserve what remains and to reclaim what can be reclaimed. Cities can be reforested, parking lots replaced by trees and grass, farms can exist where poverty now rules in the inner city. In our own neighborhoods we will replant vacant areas, rebuild soil, maintain wild areas, and preserve wildlife habitat.



## Life Changes

We covenant together to make those changes which will bring our lives into harmony with the earth, abandoning practices that exploit the earth and adopting practices that sustain both the earth and ourselves. We will be mindful of what we are doing - the energy we use in our homes and in our transportation, the foods we eat, the purchases we make, and the trash we generate. We will seek to keep the Sabbath for both ourselves and for the earth. As we examine our lives, we will look for life changes that will improve the quality of our lives as well as benefiting the earth. Whenever it is right for us, we will make those changes.



## Education

We covenant together to become earth literate -- to learn all we can from the earth, and from what the earth has taught poets, scientists, theologians, activists, farmers, politicians, naturalists, foresters about the care of the earth and how to preserve what remains of earth's original blessing. We seek a new consciousness -- one that understands that our survival and that of many other forms of life are deeply connected; one that can unlock the vision, creativity, and moral energy that we need.



## Celebration

We covenant together to take the rich traditions of our faith -- songs, scriptures, and sacraments -- and bring them out into the natural world, laying written Scripture beside earth scripture, and eating the bread and drinking the wine on the land from whence they came.



## Witness

We covenant together to witness to the proper stewardship of the earth. We will teach and preach whenever and wherever possible both the immense threat to our planet and the joy, beauty, and possibility that are at the heart of creation. We will engage daily in the practice of hope. We will discover the particular form of public witness that is right for us, such as starting an earth literacy program, doing organic farming, creating forests and wetlands, leading retreats and vision quests, creating songs, stories, rituals and works of art, or engaging in political action.

## A Lectionary For Earthkeepers

Does God's plan for redemption include only the human, or does it include all created things? What does a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ have to do with a rock, a river, a tree? What does the written Word of God, to which we have always listened, say to us now?

These pairs of scripture texts from the Old and New Testaments were selected because they frame and illuminate such earthkeeper - Christian questions. Some pairs seem to be in harmony; others pull against each other. All of them invite us to hear afresh God's Word and to explore the revelation and the mystery of God contained therein.

Job 38:1-33

John 1:1-5

Genesis 1:26-31

John 13:1-17

Genesis 8:21,22 and 9:12-17

II Peter 3:5-13

Exodus 23:10-12

Matthew 6:25-34

Leviticus 25:1-13, 23-24

Luke 4:18-19

Isaiah 24:1-6	Luke 19:41-44
Jeremiah 4:19-31	Romans 8:18-25
Hosea 2:18-23	Ephesians 1:4-10
Ezekiel 47:1-12	John 4:3-15
Psalms 65:9-13	Luke 1:46-50
Isaiah 40:21-31	Matthew 13:11-17
Isaiah 55:10-13	Hebrews 4:12-13
Isaiah 65:17-25	Revelation 21:1-5
Psalms 148	Revelation 5:11-13

Prepared (1988) and revised (1997) by the Earth  
Ministry Mission Group of Dayspring Church.

The earth ministry mission group meets weekly to discover the word that God is speaking through earth scripture and Biblical scripture, to learn what it means to be earthkeeping members of the earth community, and to pray for healing of the relationship between people and the earth.