

## 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR EARTH



1. Remember that your earth, and all that lives in it, is precious
2. Don't imagine that your soil can't be as good as anything you may see on 'Gardeners' World'
3. Do not denigrate soil by calling it names such as dirt or muck; it's a precious asset
4. If you have a garden or allotment, spend some time out there at the weekend as part of your recharging of the spiritual, mental and physical batteries
5. Spend some special time each week cherishing your soil and keeping it healthy; speak well of it for it offers the gift of life
6. Do not squeeze the life out of your soil by tramping on it when it's wet; this is the most effective way of rendering it sterile and useless
7. Do not imagine that the grass is greener on the other side of the garden fence; obtain satisfaction from improving the quality of your own soil
8. Avoid importing soil conditioners, especially peat which is best left in its bog habitat, where it supports wildlife and locks up carbon which would otherwise add to greenhouse gases and hasten climate change; supply your soil with carbon (organic matter) by composting your own kitchen waste and most of the content of your 'green bin'
9. Don't tell people your soil is bad or useless; any soil can be improved with a little advice and care
10. Do not get in a state because your soil is not as good as some others you come across; there's plenty of advice available on how you can improve the quality of yours (David Hogan)

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## Devon Churches Green Action

### ***GOD'S GOOD EARTH***

**JPC Chapel, Exeter Cathedral**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009, 12 noon**

***Please join in words in italics***



### **Gathering Music**

### **Introduction**

God is the Rock – the ground of our being who shapes our humanity from the red clay in the form of Adam, and whose purposes extended to the soil of Gethsemane, the hill of Calvary and the stone of the resurrection cave.

In God's hand are the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains, and the dry land.

The Earth is God's and all that is thereon...

## Collect

*This we know: the Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth. And the Earth is God's.*

The Earth is at the same time mother,  
She is mother of all that is natural,  
Mother of all that is human,  
She is the mother of all,  
For contained in her  
Are the seeds of all.

The earth of humankind  
Contains all moistness,  
All verdancy,  
All germinating power.

It is in so many ways fruitful.  
All creation comes from it.  
Yet its forms not only the basic  
Raw material for humankind,  
But also the substance  
Of the incarnation  
Of God's son.

(Hildegard of Bingen)

## Thanksgiving

*Creator God,  
who lifted up the mountains and formed  
the dry land,  
whose hands have shaped us out of  
the dust of the earth,  
who has formed the soils and made this earth  
a place of beauty and abundance:  
We give you thanks for the gift of soil.  
Create in us  
such a sense of wonder and delight  
in this and all your gifts,  
that we might  
receive them with gratitude,  
care for them with love,  
and generously share them with all your*

*creatures,  
to the honour and glory of your holy name.*

## Blessings

Hail Mother, who art the earth,  
Hallowed be thy soil, rocks and flora  
That nourish and support all life.  
Blessed be thy wind that gives us breath  
And thy waters that quench, bathe and refresh  
All living things.  
Holy Earth – as one with God – we praise your majesty,  
grace and wonder.

(Bill Faherty)

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Be a gardener.  
Dig a ditch,  
Toil and sweat,  
And turn the earth upside down  
And seek the deepness  
And water the plants in time.  
Continue this labour  
And make sweet floods to run  
And noble and abundant fruits  
So spring.  
Take this food and drink  
And carry it to God  
As your true worship.

(Julian of Norwich)

## Dismissal

Let us go in God's love to nurture the Earth  
as the Earth nurtures us, for ever and ever.  
In the name of Christ. *Amen.*

## Closing Music

as dry fields weep with rain.

## **Symbolic Act**

***(soil is shared)***

To be of the Earth is to know  
the restlessness of being a seed  
the darkness of being planted  
the struggle toward the light  
the pain of growth into the light  
the joy of bursting and bearing fruit  
the love of being food for someone  
the scattering of your seeds  
the decay of the seasons  
the mystery of death  
and the miracle of birth.

(John Soos)

*Look – this is the earth God sets before us!*

**(Deuteronomy 1:8)**

## **Litany: Earth Teach Us**

Earth teach us stillness  
as the grasses are stilled with light.

*Earth teach us suffering*

*as old stones suffer with memory.*

Earth teach me humility  
as blossoms are humble with beginning.

*Earth teach us caring*

*as the mother who secures her young.*

Earth teach us courage  
as the tree which stands all alone.

*Earth teach us limitation*

*as the ant which crawls on the ground.*

Earth teach us freedom  
as the eagle which soars in the sky.

*Earth teach us resignation*

*as the leaves which die in the fall.*

Earth teach us regeneration  
as the seed which rises in the spring.

*Earth teach us to forget ourselves*

*as melted snow forgets its life.*

Earth teach us to remember kindness

## **Confession (based on Isaiah 24)**

The earth dries up and withers,  
The world languishes and withers;  
The heavens languish together with the earth.

*We confess that our lifestyles are focused on  
ourselves and not on God's love.*

The earth lies polluted  
Under its inhabitants;  
For they have transgressed laws,  
Violated the statutes  
Broken the everlasting covenant.

*We confess that our lifestyles are focused on  
ourselves and not on God's love.*

The earth is utterly broken,  
The earth is torn asunder,  
The earth is violently shaken.

*We confess that our lifestyles are focused on  
ourselves and not on God's love.*

O God forgive us our shortcomings as we  
forgive those who fall short to us.

*In the name of Jesus Christ*

*Who brings new life to the Earth. Amen.*

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Here we are, God - a planet at prayer.  
attune our spirits that we may hear your harmonies  
and bow before your creative power  
that we may face our violent discords and join your Energy  
to make heard in every heart your hymn of peace.

Here we are, God – a militarized planet.

Transform our fears that we may transform our war fields into wheatfields, arms into handshakes, missiles into messengers of peace.

Here we are, God – a polluted planet. Purify our vision that we may perceive ways to purify our beloved lands, cleanse our precious waters, de-smog our life-giving air.

Here we are, God – an exploited planet. Heal our heart, that we may respect our resources, hold priceless our people, and provide for our starving children an abundance of daily bread.

(Joan Metzner)

### **Reading 1:** Leviticus 25: 1-7

The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying: Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a Sabbath for the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for the Lord; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine: it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. You may eat what the land yields during in Sabbath – you, your male and female slaves, your hired and your bound laborers who live with you; for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food.

### **Silence**

### **Reading 2:** Luke 22: 19-20

Then he took a loaf of bread and said: 'Blessed are you Lord God, King of the Universe, who brings forth food from the earth'. Then he broke it and gave it them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'. And he did the same with the cup after supper saying, 'Blessed are you Lord God, King of the Universe, who brings forth the fruit of the vine. This cup that is poured out for you is the new partnership in my blood.'

### **Silence**

## **Reflections: The Common Living Dirt**

(Marge Piercy)

### **Prayers**

Let us pray:

- for respect for the Earth that God creates and provides for living communities
- for a ceasing of the wanton contamination of land, air and water
- for a fresh cleansing of the planet's polluted soils
- for a sustaining of the balance of all life on earth
- for human activity to work with Nature and not against her
- for hope for future generations who will need their roots to be earthed

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Creator God  
you made all things  
and all you made was very good.  
Show us how to respect  
the fragile balance of life.  
Guide by your wisdom those who have power  
to care for or destroy the environment,  
that by the decisions they make  
life may be cherished  
and a good and fruitful earth  
be preserved for future generations;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord  
*Amen.*

