

Lent
a season
of
Growth and Love

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

February 17, 2021
Ash Wednesday

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Lent 2021: Growing Together

As we begin this Lenten Season, may it be a time for us to grow spiritually - closer to God and closer to one another – as we spend these 40 days in intentional prayer and service.

The People Gather

Presider In the name of God: Creator, Redeemer and Giver of Life.
People **Amen**

Presider Grace to you and peace from God our Creator, the love at our beginning and without end, in our midst and with us.

People **God is with us, here we find new life.**

Words of Welcome “Repent and believe in the Good News”

Presider We begin by recognizing our need for forgiveness and a true desire to turn towards God. Let us be thankful that God forgives and heals us.

People **We need your healing, merciful God:
Give us true repentance.
Some sins are plain to us; some escape us, some we cannot face.
Forgive us;
Set us free to hear your word to us;
Set us free to serve you.**

Presider God forgives you.
Forgive others;
Forgive yourself.

[Silence]

Through Christ, God has put away your sin:
Approach your God in peace.

We Listen to God’s Holy Word

Our 1st reading is from the Book of Genesis

Genesis 1:11-12

Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

**You care for the land and water it;
 you enrich it abundantly.
 The streams of God are filled with water
 to provide the people with grain,
 for so you have ordained it.[a]
 You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
 you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
 You crown the year with your bounty,
 and your carts overflow with abundance.
 The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
 the hills are clothed with gladness.
 The meadows are covered with flocks
 and the valleys are mantled with grain;
 they shout for joy and sing.**

The Gospel:

Matthew 13:31-32

The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew Glory to you, Lord Christ. He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.' Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Homily

The Rev. Hailey McKeefry Delmas

Prayers and Intercession

Deacon Gracious God, we give you thanks for the fruitfulness of the earth that nourishes our life and the life of all creatures. Bless our Lenten Journey as we Grow Together during this Lenten Season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Leader: For favorable weather, temperate rains, and fruitful seasons, that there may be food and drink for all your creatures,

People: we pray to you, O Lord.

Leader: For your blessing upon the lands and waters, and all who work upon them to bring forth food and all things needful for your people,

People: we pray to you, O Lord.

Leader: For all who care for the earth, the water, and the air, that the riches of your creation may abound from age to age,

People: we pray to you, O Lord.

Leader: For all your people whose deepest needs are known to you alone,

People: we pray to you, O Lord.

Deacon: Creator God, you have filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to recognize your gracious hand in all your works, that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of the One through whom all things were made, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Planting of Ashes and Seeds

Presider: We mailed ashes and seeds to each household. Ashes are a wonderful nutrient for the soil. We invite you to mix the ashes into the soil in your garden or your window boxes. As we place ashes into the ground, may we recognize God as the grounding of our lives. May we grow closer to God – and to one another – during this holy season.

We invite you to use this prayer as you mix the ashes into your soil:

Let us pray: As all the earth is a garden, Lord, we ask that you bless this small piece of the earth. As Your Light shines upon us and upon this garden, giving us life, likewise help us to give light and life to others.

Sweet Peas are among the first to bloom in our gardens. They need just the tiniest bit of soil as cover. With sunlight and the gift of water, may they burst forth from the ground so that by Easter they will show forth God's glory.

We invite you to use this prayer as you plant the sweet pea seeds.

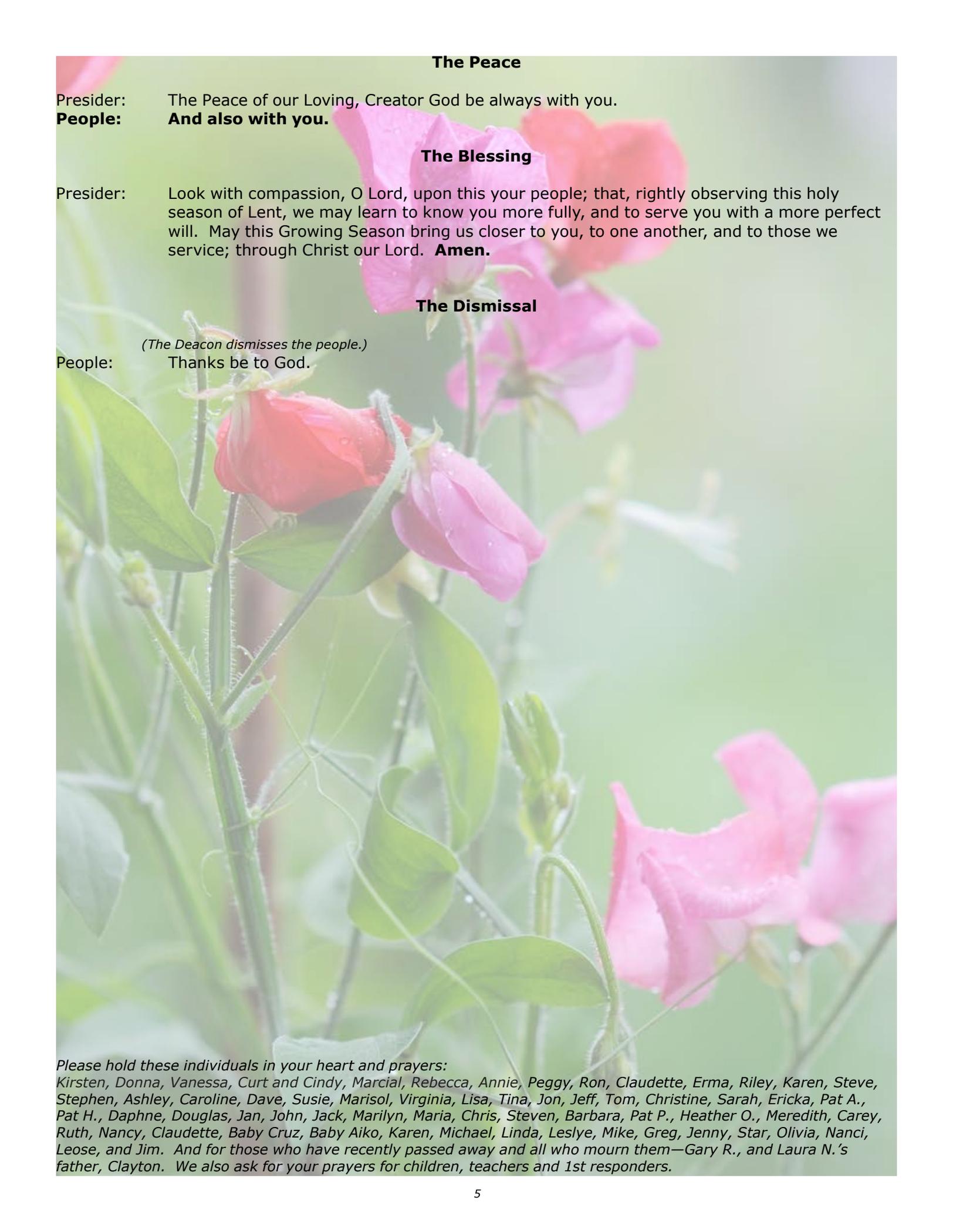
Blessing Prayer for Seeds

Let us pray:

**God, Source of all life,
who did hide your seeds in all that lives,
be present here
as we greet these tiny seeds
with their gifts of life.
Seeds of Life, so small,
and yet, in the mystery of death and burial,
you will produce life tenfold and more.
We sprinkle you with water,
sacred sign of life,
asking that you may be
embraced by our mother the earth,
fed by rain
and kissed gently by the sun.
In caring for you
we shall experience
the most ancient profession of the human family,
the primal vocation
of being workers in the garden.
Soon you will be our pride and joy.
Soon you will be [our food]
as we give up your life
that we may live.
Seeds,
pregnant with life,
teach us the Easter Secret of Life,
as we ask God to bless you.
Amen.**



As your sweet peas blossom and grow, please take photos and send them to us. Perhaps this year we will 'flower the Cross' at Easter with photos as well as real flowers from our Gardens.

The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of pink flowers, likely sweet peas, with water droplets on their petals and green leaves. The lighting is bright and natural, creating a serene and fresh atmosphere.

The Peace

Presider: The Peace of our Loving, Creator God be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

The Blessing

Presider: Look with compassion, O Lord, upon this your people; that, rightly observing this holy season of Lent, we may learn to know you more fully, and to serve you with a more perfect will. May this Growing Season bring us closer to you, to one another, and to those we service; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

(The Deacon dismisses the people.)

People: Thanks be to God.

Please hold these individuals in your heart and prayers:

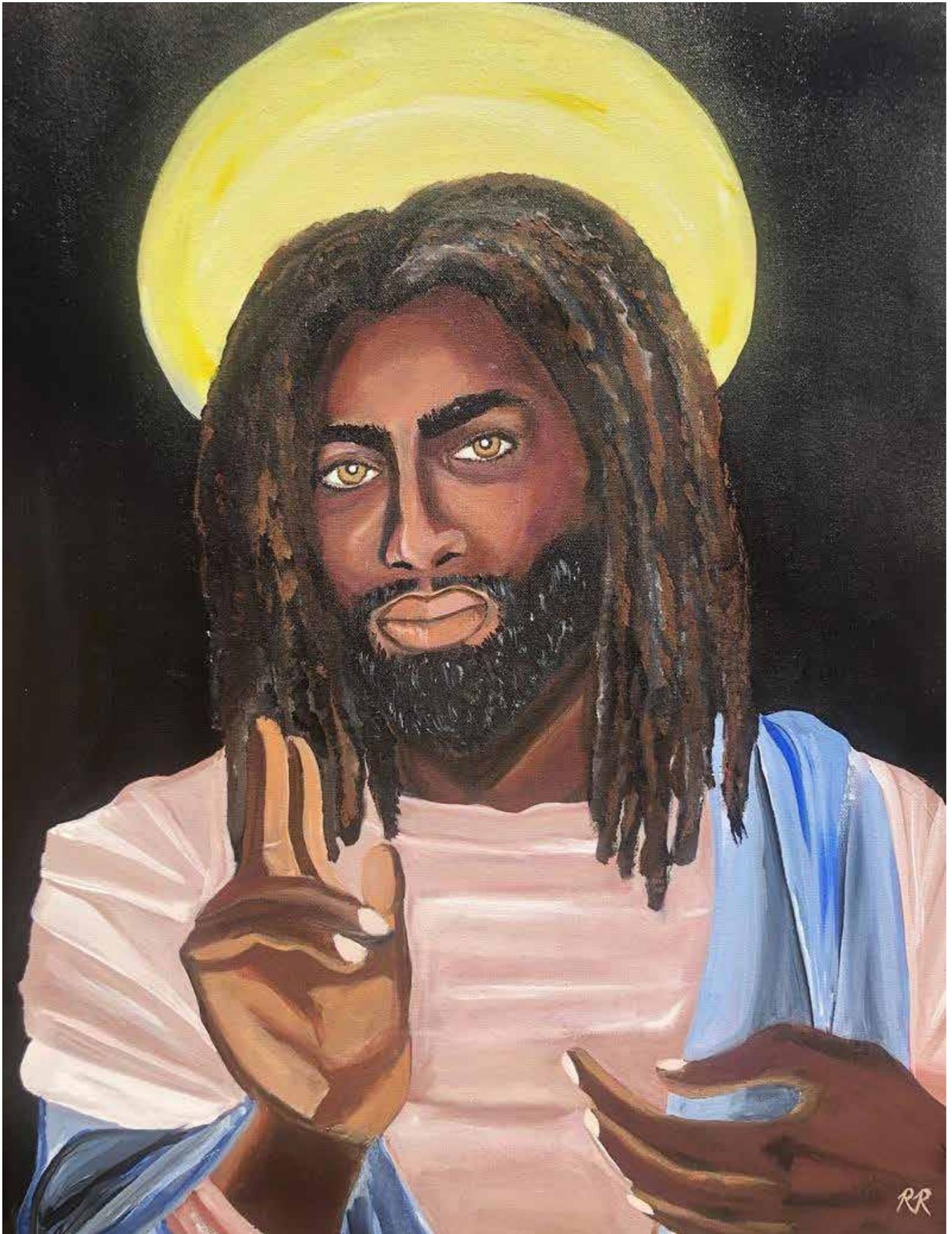
Kirsten, Donna, Vanessa, Curt and Cindy, Marcial, Rebecca, Annie, Peggy, Ron, Claudette, Erma, Riley, Karen, Steve, Stephen, Ashley, Caroline, Dave, Susie, Marisol, Virginia, Lisa, Tina, Jon, Jeff, Tom, Christine, Sarah, Ericka, Pat A., Pat H., Daphne, Douglas, Jan, John, Jack, Marilyn, Maria, Chris, Steven, Barbara, Pat P., Heather O., Meredith, Carey, Ruth, Nancy, Claudette, Baby Cruz, Baby Aiko, Karen, Michael, Linda, Leslye, Mike, Greg, Jenny, Star, Olivia, Nanci, Leose, and Jim. And for those who have recently passed away and all who mourn them—Gary R., and Laura N.'s father, Clayton. We also ask for your prayers for children, teachers and 1st responders.

"Liberating, life-giving God, help us to know that we and the world you have created are truly the work of your hands. Give us knowledge and wisdom to care for your handiwork now and for future generations. Amen." *Presiding Bishop Michael Curry*





Selections of our liturgy come from:
The New Zealand Prayer Book's Liturgy – A liturgy of Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption,
The Episcopal Church's Book of Occasional Services, adaptation of the Rogation Procession from Honoring
God in Creation
and Let All Creation Praise.org



San Diego Artist, Raquel Rhone