



Lutherans Restoring Creation

www.LutheransRestoringCreation.org

Lutherans Restoring Creation is a grassroots movement promoting care for creation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We accomplish this by cultivating a community of dedicated stewards of earth and neighbor who proclaim God's promise of hope and healing for all.



Thank you for joining us for worship this morning and for supporting this important creation-care work.



WELCOME (*see page 11*)

Phoebe Morad

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Kwame Pitts

Come, worship the God of all Creation.

We gather to praise the Creator, the continuous source of all living things.

Come, worship our God who breathes life into being.

We praise the Creator who fashions the forests, whose trees clean the air of this world.

Come, worship our God who forms life out of soil.

We praise the Creator whose land brings nourishment.

Come, worship our God who receives our lament in the wilderness.

We praise the Creator whose Son brings healing to all Creation.

Come, worship our God who sends waters flowing with life.

We praise the Creator whose baptism unites us to be one in the Body of Christ with all Creation.

OPENING SONG (*Introduction, see page 11*)
Sing Out Earth and Skies

Marty Haugen

Come, O God of all the earth;
come to us, O Righteous One.
Come and bring our love to birth;
in the glory of your Son.

Chorus
Sing out, earth and skies!
Sing of the God who loves you.
Raise your joyful cries,
Dance to the life around you.

Come, O God of wind and flame;
fill the earth with righteousness.
Teach us all to sing your name;
may our lives your love confess.

Come, O God of flashing light;
twinkling star and burning sun.
God of day and God of night;
in your light we all are one.

Come, O God of snow and rain;
shower down upon the earth.
Come, O God of joy and pain;



God of sorrow, God of mirth.

Come, O Justice, come, O Peace;
come and shape our hearts anew.
Come and make oppression cease;
bring us all to life in you.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who so loves the world and all who live in it. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God, Creation, and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,
we expect nature to serve our needs, and we have damaged it in the process. We trample every wild place and pollute your waters. We abuse your good Earth until it cries out in pain. Forgive us, loving God. Remind us of the covenant you made with the whole Earth. Nourish us so we can restore your awe-inspiring Creation. Amen.

Christ, the one who was buried into the heart of the Earth and then raised up to new life, forgives you all your sin. Freed from your burdens, be led by the Spirit to do God's healing work in the world. Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (lyrics, *see page 12*)

Rev. Dr. Leah Schade

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*see page 11*)

Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Rebekah Bruesehoff

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.



The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

PSALM

Psalm 145:1-8

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you,
and praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,
and I will declare your greatness.
They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:21-30

Rev. Lenny Duncan

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this



is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

CHILDREN'S SERMON (see page 13)

Rev. John Stevens

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

SERMON (see page 14)

Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing

PEACE

Lutherans Restoring Creation Board

OFFERING

Offerings to LRC can be given at www.LutheransRestoringCreation.org

or check mailed to LRC c/o Phoebe Morad, 22 Waldron Road, Braintree, MA 02184

OFFERING PRAYER

Rev. Sarah Locke

Loving Creator,

**All Creation comes from you – forests, lands and prairies, wild places, rivers and streams. As we bring our offerings to you, we ask that you bless them so that your kingdom comes on Earth as it is in heaven; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Rev. Emmy Kegler



We believe in the debonaire God who clothes the wild flowers dressing them so superbly that they outdo Solomon in all his glory; who is the true Friend of all creatures great and small, who feeds magpies and laughing kookaburras, and even doleful ravens and drongos.

We believe in the God of Christ Jesus the Source of abundance, full of grace and truth.

We believe in the extravagant God who turns the other cheek, goes the second mile, turns water into the best wine, brings healing with his every touch, and who welcomes a woman's of love as she fills the house with unforgettable fragrance.

We believe in the faith-full God of Jesus Christ, who sweated blood in an Olive Grove, and kept the faith to the very end.

We believe in the redeeming God who spared no cost, forgave even his brutal crucifiers, had time for a dying thief at his side, and who on the third day did a thing so prodigious that even his friends were dismayed with joy.

**We believe in the God of Jesus Christ, the Source of abundance wherever we turn and no matter what we do.
Amen.**

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS
& LORD'S PRAYER

Savanna Sullivan
Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda
Elle Dowd
Rev. Jesse Canniff-Kuhn

O God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen: Your great love has placed us in your creation, and you commanded us to care for it. Your works declare glory and strength, and you call us to praise and reverence. Where we have degraded or destroyed earth's bounty, forgive us. Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us. Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet, grant us your peace.

Creator God, hear our prayer.

As we reflect upon our relationship with your creation, we know that there are many things that thwart our efforts and our responsibilities to all that you have made. For the openness to learn about environmental issues and concerns, and the courage to advocate for a protect all that has been entrusted to us, we pray:

Creator God, hear our prayer.

In such a great and complex world, we often feel so small and helpless, as if what we do has no impact on the rest of your creation. Yet we know that because we are created in



your image, we are connected with the entirety of creation, just as you are. For an awareness of how our own lifestyles can be modified to help protect the environment, we pray:

Creator God, hear our prayer.

In an environmental catastrophe, the people who suffer first and greatest are often the poorest of the poor. Yet we rarely hear their voices, silenced as they are by the realities of global life. For those who live in poverty and suffer the devastating effects of flooding, drought, and other environmental issues, we pray:

Creator God, hear our prayer.

In recent days, even the ground under our feet has begun to tremble, reminding us that we live together in a fragile community of life. For our own community, our city and state, and for those who suffer from sickness and death, we pray:

Creator God, hear our prayer.

God of the sun and the moon of the mountains, deserts and plains; God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams; God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air; Of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth. Help us to love and respect all that you have made. Help us to care for what you have made good and holy. Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our minds and hearts and our ways. Let us be the change we pray for, Bringing about ecological conversion which grows and spreads to every corner of the Earth For our sake now and for every generation which is to come. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,

**hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin

Almighty God, who breathes life into you and all living things, who heals all the world, and who sustains all Creation, give you peace + and purpose. **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

Rev. John Tirro



Even the Sparrows (Psalm 84)

Refrain (All):

E - ven the spar - rows, e - ven the spar - rows find a
home at your al - tar, e - ven the spar - rows find a home.

Cantor:

Blessed are they whose strength is you, whose hearts are the highways of Zion;
as they go through the dry, dry land, they make it a place of springs.
They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

Refrain

Cantor:

Better to be one who waits outside the house of the Lord my God
than live in tents of wickedness, better to wait outside.

Refrain

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The Reverend Doctor Leah Schade, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship at Lexington Theological Seminary

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ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPTS OF SERMON ELEMENTS

WELCOME

Welcome to our creation-focused worship service. I am Phoebe Morad, Executive Director of Lutherans Restoring Creation. Our Lutherans Restoring Creation Board of Directors have graciously put this together and we thank all those that put their time and talents into making this a reality. Enjoy it. And I just wanted to let you know that right now I am welcoming you standing on the land that originally was kept by the Patuxet people, and I encourage you all to consider the people that originally cared for land that you now find yourself in.

MARTY HAUGEN'S INTRODUCTION

Hello, this is Marty Haugen. "Sing Out, Earth and Skies" was written in the summer of 1984, when our family was at Holden Village. The Holden community was planning a worship service that might move out from our indoor worship space in the village center, and end up in the midst of the beautiful wilderness surrounding Holden.

Because it was a portable song, it was written very simply. We accompanied it with only a guitar, a recorder, and a hand drum. Like so much of the art created at Holden, it reflected both the values and the vision of the community, and it was never intended to have a life beyond the community at that moment.

I am so grateful that I am able at this point to contribute to Lutherans Restoring Creation, and I hope that your vision of restoring creation might not only be a season, but at the very heart of what we celebrate whenever we gather.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Creator of life, of relationships, of healing, at your word, the earth brought forth plants yielding seeds, and trees of every kind bearing fruit. Through the planetary cycles of renewal and growth, you open your hand and give creatures food. But these days, our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. During this season of creation, we ask you to grant us courage to observe a Sabbath for our planet. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. And as we proclaim a Jubilee for the earth, send your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation. In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation: Jesus Christ.

Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

“Earth and All Kin”

Lyrics Copyright 2013 by Leah D. Schade (with thanks to the original lyricist, Herbert F. Brokering). Sung to the tune of “Earth and All Stars” by David N. Johnson

Earth and all kin! Loud clapping sea waves!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Wind through the trees, mountains and green fields,
Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain: Earth contains marvelous things!
I, too, will praise God with a new song!

Plankton and krill, colorful coral,
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Seaweed and sponge, seahorse and blue whale,
Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain: Earth contains marvelous things!
I, too, will praise God with a new song!

Microbes in soil; earthworms and beetles,
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Spiders and bees; ants and all insects,
Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain: Earth contains marvelous things!
I, too, will praise God with a new song!

Lizards and frogs, reptiles of all scale,
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Eagle and wren; ostrich and penguin,
Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain: Earth contains marvelous things!
I, too, will praise God with a new song!

New lambs in spring; puppies and kittens,
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Horse and giraffe; God-fashioned humans,
Sing to the Lord a new song!

Refrain: Earth contains marvelous things!
I, too, will praise God with a new song!

CHILDREN'S SERMON

My name is John Stevens and I'm Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Oregon City, Oregon, and I want to talk to you about the Gospel lesson today. Jesus tells a story about some workers that go out to a farm and they get hired.



And I brought along with me some things that will help me: there are three different pieces of rope. And we've got a long piece of rope, and this is talking about the guy that got hired at the very beginning of the day, and he worked ALL day long. And there's a medium-sized rope, and this is about the other guy, the other person that got hired to work about half of the day. And then there's the last person that got hired to work just a little bit, just the very end of the day, So we got that short rope for the short time of workin', we got the medium size rope for the medium half day workin' and then we've got a long rope for the person that worked all day long.

This actually reminds me a little bit about you and I. You know, there's people, maybe you're, really, really young and you're like, "I don't know what I can do to take care of the earth," -- because today we're looking and celebrating the earth and creation and all of that around us -- and "I don't know what I could do, because I'm pretty little." Or maybe you're a little bit older than that, and you're like, "Well you know, I know some stuff, I might be able to do *some* stuff." And then then there's the people that have been doing it for a long time, and they're like "I could do it all by myself!"

Well, we hear at the end of the end of that story that everyone gets paid the *same*, because that's the way God's grace and mercy works, is that we're loved the same, it's all based on the God that loves us. It's not based on what I do, it's based on what *God* decides to do, and God decides to love you, and me, and you and you and you and you!

And then you and I, we're then called to take care of this world. We're called to take care of the earth -- and whether you're little, or you may be a little taller, you've been around for a while, or maybe you're older -- whether you've got a lot of time that you've done stuff, or you've got a little bit of time you've done stuff, you know the thing is, we need each other.



And like how we had these ropes that are different length, well, God calls us all into this world the *SAME* -- God looks at us through the *same* eyes; God loves us the *same* amount.

And then we work together, you and I, we work together to make this world a better place. All of us, together. And together we *can*; we can do that. We can show God that we love this earth, that we love the God that created it, and we can say "thank you" to God, for loving us first.

SERMON

My dear friends in Christ grace to you and peace from God and from our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, I'm preaching about the prophet Jonah, and about the good news for us in this moment of environmental crisis.

First question is: Who are we in the story of Jonah?

As a seminary professor and preacher, I typically see myself in the role of Jonah, a reluctant prophet, called to preach to Nineveh, the evil city. And I've seen myself as needing to be taught a lesson by that plant that God sends, to teach Jonah that God's grace is bigger than he imagines.

But what if, instead of seeing ourselves in the role of Jonah--the prophet called to preach repentance to the great city that needs to turn--what if we see *ourselves* as that great city, that great city that needs to turn and repent. What if we see ourselves as Nineveh?

Just to review, Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. You can read all about its sins in the prophet Nahum:

“Ah, city of bloodshed, utterly deceitful, full of plunder, who enslaves nations and peoples. Your merchants multiply like the stars of the earth.”

So Nineveh's bad-- full of brutal violence, economic injustice, slave labor, greed. And now Nineveh, this toxic, killing system, has come to God's attention. Nineveh is coming under judgment. But God doesn't want Nineveh to be destroyed; God wants to save Nineveh. God wants Nineveh to turn and repent.

There is so much good news in the book of Jonah for our times that can help us today in our time of multiple crises.

The fact is that we, too, live at a time when God wants the greatest powers on earth to turn. We see imperial systems exposed, laid bare today by multiple crises. God wants us to turn, change course--that's the biblical word *shuv* in Hebrew, or in Greek it's *metanoia*--to turn around, so that we and our beloved world will not be destroyed. We face multiple crises today that are killing people. You know them: interconnected systems of violence, structures of violence that are destroying lives unequally, especially black and brown people's lives; the coronavirus pandemic, the sin of white supremacy and racial injustice and violence, the sin of economic injustice, economic inequality, causing suffering.

And at the same time the sin of environmental injustice, the slow-moving looming climate crisis manifested in droughts, hurricanes and floods in Puerto Rico, in Iowa, in India; heat waves and wildfires in California, last year in Australia, terrible fires. This is the crisis that carries the most perilous long-term consequences for hundreds of millions of refugees around the world, people fleeing crop loss in their homelands, crossing borders to find food because their land can no longer support farms anymore; like the people in the Bible, Naomi and Ruth, Jesus, crossing borders for safety from violence.

This is the global climate change crisis, overheating our planet, the result of burning of fossil fuels.

The world is ill; we are ill; we need turning, like that song the Canticale of Turning. The world is about to turn, and we pray that it will turn in time to be saved. I've met Central American farmers who are no longer able to raise their crops because the rains don't come when they should anymore. I've met Tanzanian Lutherans from mountain villages who've never had malaria mosquitoes before global warming, and now they're losing children to malaria death. I've met Lutheran families from Alaskan villages, whose houses are falling into the ocean, because of melting permafrost, and loss of sea ice. And this is the great injustice of climate change, that the people in communities who have done nothing to cause the problems are the ones who are being hardest hit with greatest suffering. That's not fair.

Jonah finally got the message; he was turned back in the correct direction.

Jonah reluctantly then went to Nineveh, preaching, "In just 40 days, this great city will be destroyed." But prophecy doesn't mean *prediction*, that's the mistake Jonah made. Prophecy means *warning*, it means wake-up call; there's still time to repent and turn. "In just 40 days," he said. In just 10 years, our best scientists are saying--that's the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. And I believe the scientists, I believe their wake-up call. I hope you believe them, too.

So we face a *kairos* moment; that's the biblical word that Greek Orthodox Patriarch Archbishop Art Solomon uses to describe our moment in time. So he founded The Season of Creation. That's what we're observing now, the Season of Creation, joined by all our churches: the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic churches, Pope Francis, Lutherans Restoring Creation, your congregation, all of us.

Kairos is a biblical word that means "an urgent moment in time," that is now. The time to turn is *now*, if we want to hope to keep global temperature rise under a 3.6 degree increase, a safe level to avert disastrous consequences, to protect the oceans, to protect these beautiful forests that are the lungs of our planet. The time is *now* to clean up the air and water, so our children and grandchildren inherit a livable planet.

We must follow the path that our best policy leaders say is possible. We must turn away from burning fossil fuels; electrify everything. Make a just transition to clean, renewable energy, protect the most vulnerable people and communities, provide for those who lose their livelihoods as a result; we've got to flatten the curve of carbon emissions.

It's urgent, and we can do it.

The Book of Jonah has so much good news for us in this moment of crisis; that's why I'm preaching on Jonah.

Three things. The first good news: God loves Nineveh This hated foreign city, God loves it. God's heart is moved to compassion by the more than 120,000 people who live there, plus the many animals. This is good news for us. God does not want Nineveh to be

destroyed. God wants people there to listen, to change, to avert the catastrophe. God is gracious. God loves Nineveh, and us, and the whole creation, passionately.

Second good news, and perhaps the most amazing: Change happens. Much to Jonah's amazement, even his chagrin the city of Nineveh does repent, they turn. A great turning. They turn around, they put on sackcloth and ashes, they repent, even the animals put on sackcloth and ashes (I don't know if you've ever tried to put clothes on animals, but that's pretty funny.)

The model of Nineveh as a huge imperial city, turning away from its path of violence and injustice, its unsustainable path, to a different path in just 40 days --this can serve as an inspiration for us, as a model of how our economies can shift. And if the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything good, it's that we have the ability to make drastic changes really fast. That's hopeful. We can do it, Nineveh, the giant ship of state, all the people, all the animals, everything, they changed their course, they turned around, they changed policy really fast. That's what repentance means.

How did they do it? How did change happen? Well, it was a people's movement. It's like what Congressman John Lewis called "good trouble." The change began with people who listened to God. They took to the streets, organizing good trouble to pressure their leaders to change. In response then to grassroots pressure the king listened, he repented, he got on board, he embarked on a fast-track campaign to change the empire away from injustice. "All shall turn away from their evil way and from violence," he said. "Perhaps we in time to avert the disaster," he made the case, "so we won't be destroyed." They even enlist the animals to join the turning, and so can we; everybody participates.

The third piece of good news here is that disaster *was* averted. This is what makes Jonah mad, in that hilarious pouting scene with the bush. "I *knew* you were a God slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and ready to relent from punishing." What an amazing confession of faith: "I knew you were a God of steadfast love."

Time is short. It's only 40 days for Nineveh; it's 10 years or so for us, but the good news we can learn from Jonah is that there is still time to avert disaster. Now, to be sure, global warming, coronavirus--these are not punishments from God. And we need to say that. That's a big difference from us and the Jonah story. God doesn't send sicknesses or catastrophes as punishment. That would be terrible theology.

But global warming does follow a logic of consequences, laws of physics and chemistry. We live on this beautiful finely-calibrated planet, with the perfect amount of carbon in the atmosphere. Most of our carbon isn't in the atmosphere, in fact, it's safely sequestered underground under our feet in rock layers--and I used to be a geology major, so I love this geology--most of the carbon is underground. And in this wonderfully-calibrated system, certain actions cause other actions. So you can't keep digging up the fossil carbon that's sequestered underground, and burning it and releasing it into the atmosphere without causing terrible consequences, without burning up the planet. For now, oceans are absorbing most of the carbon, but that, too, has consequences, and we have to stop.

The good news is God has built this amazing planet with powers for healing and resilience. Scientists tell us there's still time to change, that nature can help us heal, we can draw down carbon. This is one of my favorite books, *The Drawdown Project*: 100 ways to draw down carbon below these levels we're at now--440 parts per million and increasing. All of us can be part of the turning, all of us can be part of the drawdown, supporting a transition to renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, battery storage technology, advocating for putting a real price on carbon that reflects its externalities, its true costs. We can pay farmers to sequester carbon in the soil and forests as carbon stores.

We can build resilient communities, green teams in our congregations and synods, we can share a vision of turning, what abundant life for all creation looks like, Jesus' vision for abundant life. That's what we're working on with Lutherans Restoring Creation, with our Congregational Green Team Program, the Green Shepherds program. That's God's world, how to trouble the waters with *good* trouble, for justice for God's people, and for all creation.

The prophet Jonah can serve as a parable for us, for church, for all of us. Nineveh, that huge world trading empire that God did not give up on, can be an inspiration for us today for system change, for urgent repentance, for turning our economy away from injustice and violence. This is a *kairos* moment for us in these next crucial years. And we can do it. So there's unbelievable good news for Nineveh in this story, good news that we can all take to heart. Surely, we can do as well as Nineveh. We can do better. The prophet Jonah is still speaking today. God still loves us so much that God pleads with us to turn. It's not too late. God is a God of generosity, full of compassion. God is still teaching us lessons, through the plants, the bushes, the animals, the ecosystems, through nature that can heal us.

Turn us, oh God of great compassion, turn us. Turn us to you, in Jesus name. Amen.