

The Water-Poverty Connection

- 80 percent of disease in two-thirds of the world is related to poor drinking water and sanitation.
- One-third of the world's households must use water sources outside the home. Girls and women in East Africa now walk an average of 21 minutes from home just to get water.
- The world is running out of water. Half the world's poorest countries will face moderate to severe water shortages by the year 2025.
- Around the world there is a cumulative pollution of aquifers and water sources by agricultural, industrial and mining waste.
- Reduction in water-retention capacity of the earth's soil is due to 80 percent of the forests of the world being destroyed.
- Poor management of water resources has led to degradation of the environment and loss of natural resources on which people in rural and remote areas depend for livelihood.
- Excessive consumption in the North, and wasteful overuse, especially by agribusiness, has significantly depleted the world's water resources. One toilet flush uses as much water as the average person in a developing country uses for a whole day's drinking, cooking, washing and cleaning!
- Effects of global warming, such as rising sea levels and altered seasonal patterns, are having a debilitating impact on freshwater resources.

This year's Earth Day theme coincides with The United Nations General Assembly proclamation of 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater. Resources and information on Earth Day 2003 are available at www.webofcreation.org/ncc

Earth Day Sunday 2003



Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory that is due the holy name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
*the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over the mighty waters.* — from Psalm 29

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord, my God, you are very great.

*You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.*

By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.

*From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.*

— from Psalm 104:1, 10-13

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.”

And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

*Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift.*

— Revelation 22:17

(Can be read responsively with congregation.)

Responsive Prayer

Creator God,
whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters,
who gathers the seas into their places
and directs the courses of the rivers,
who sends rain upon the earth
that it should bring forth life:
we praise you for the gift of water.

Redeemer God,
who spared Noah and creatures of every kind
from the waters of the flood,
who led your people over dry land through the sea
and across the Jordan to the land of promise,
who marks our adoption as children
with the sign of water:
we thank you for the gift of water.

Sustaining God,
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 honor and glory of your holy name.*

— Litany by the Rev. John Paarlberg