

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

*Devon Churches Green Action, The Old Deanery, The Cloisters,
Exeter, Devon EX1 1HS (e.mail:
martyn@exeter.anglican.org / www.exeter.anglican.org)*

South Street
Baptist Church



Celtic Connection

Devon Churches Green Action

God's Good Earth

Opening Words

Leader: 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.

Leader: The earth is the Lord's.

All: and everything in it.

Leader: Let all people give God praise:

All: and all creation bless God's name.

Song You are author and Lord of creation;
you are maker of life and of living.
And from deep in our hearts, wonder and love
Inspire our worship and praise.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
Hallelujah. Hallelujah.
Hallelujah. Amen.

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Prayer

All: **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.
Amen.

Confession (based on Isaiah 24)

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

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

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

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

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

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

A: Where wonder is witnessed,
B: Where loving concern brought to birth,
ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.

Simon Taylor

Song

The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you;
God's peace growing in you.

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Closing Words

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

Leader: Let us go in God's love to nurture the earth
as the earth nurtures us, now and for ever.

All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**



for human activity to work with Nature and not against her for hope for future generations who will need their roots to be earthed.

**ALL: 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.**

Litany of Hope

A: Where soil is cherished,
B: Where earth is nourished,

ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.

A: Where trees are planted,
B: Where animals are cared for,

ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.

A: Where seeds are watered,
B: Where rivers are kept pure,

ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.

A: Where wilderness is valued,
B: Where nature is befriended,

ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.

A: Where the harvest is shared,
B: Where peace is embraced and violence rejected,

ALL: let all in God's earth shout for joy.



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

**ALL: In the name of Jesus Christ
who brings new life to the earth. Amen.**

Reading 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.

Hymn Nourished by the rainfall

Reading John 12.20-26

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. 'Sir,' they said, 'we would like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.'

Reflection

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)

Symbolic Act

The Blessing of the Soil

ALL: God's blessing be upon the earth,
each ridge, each furrow,
each field, each pasture,
each garden, each wood.

**Bless each plant that grows in the soil,
each tree, each flower,
each grass, each bush,
nourish them by your loving hand.**

**Encompass each living thing in the soil,
the organisms that benefit the earth;
surround the flocks and the herds,
tend kindly the hand that tills the land.**

Above blessing © St. Michael's (Princetown) Trust

We are invited to collect soil that we can take back to bless and nourish our own gardens or pots.

Song

This is God's world, given on loan;
no other earth shall be our home;
so let us bless, honour and tend
what God in love created.

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Prayers

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ,
you walked this earth,
you touched the soil,
you watched the farmer's labour
you saw the growing crops.
We praise you that your life, death and resurrection
brings reconciliation and the hope of
earth renewed.

ALL: **Help us today Lord
to tread lightly upon the good earth,
to value every part of your creation,
to do good and not harm to our neighbor,
to consider carefully what is truly needed for
this day's tasks,
and to never needlessly waste the riches of
your creation.** *(Simon Taylor)*

Leader: 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