



## Sing for Creation: A Hymn Festival of Thanksgiving

by Nancy Raabe

*For use on or before Thanksgiving, or at any time of the year when we desire to celebrate the beauty of creation and to strengthen our commitment to the preservation of the earth's resources.*

Compiled and annotated by Nancy M. Raabe, and incorporating creation-based readings absent from the Revised Common Lectionary<sup>1</sup>

For a Word document that contains this outline with full texts of the readings, please go to <http://www.nancyraabe.com/freedownloads.html>



L: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: I believe that God has made me and all creatures; has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them, and in addition, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all goods; provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life; protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this I am to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.<sup>2</sup>**



I. **Job 26:7-14** (The vastness of God in creation)

### HYMN:

“Creating God, Your Fingers Trace”, ELW 684 (text: Jeffrey Rowthorn; music, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*)

*Verses 3 and 4 can be sung unaccompanied in two-, three- or four-part canon at the distance of one measure.*

### OR

“Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid,” LSB 500 (text: Rabanus Maurus; music, *Gesangbuch...Psalmen, Geistliche Lieder*)

*Use of the zimbelstern is appropriate for the concluding verse, which articulates the Trinity. The congregation may also be asked to rise for this verse.*



**II. Genesis 3:8-24** (Nakedness, blame, expulsion from Eden)

*This reading may be presented by four readers for the four parts – the narrator, God, the man and the woman.*

**HYMN:**

“In the Shattered Bliss of Eden”, LSB 572 (text, Stephen P. Starke; music, C. Hubert H. Parry)

*Verse 2 may be sung by men and verse 5 by women, with verse 4 sung in four-part harmony.*

**OR**

“There in God’s Garden”, ELW 342 (text: Király Imre von Pécselyi; music, K. Lee Scott)

*Sopranos in the congregation may be invited if they so desire to sing the tenor line transposed up an octave as a descant on verse 4.*



**III. Isaiah 24:4-8, 19** (Suffering of the earth under human sin)

**HYMN:**

“Your Heart, O God, is Grieved”, ELW 602 / LSB 945 (text: Jiří Tranovsky; music, Transocius)

*A cantor sings the petition opening each verse. The congregation may be invited to respond in four-part harmony. In the petition, the first measure may be rendered freely with the second measure sung at the tempo in which the congregation will respond.*



**IV. Isaiah 30:18-26** (The promise of Earth’s healing)

**HYMN:**

“Light Dawns on a Weary World”, ELW 726 (text: Mary Louise Bringle; music, William P. Rowan)

*It is important that this hymn be sung with great breadth. An elaborated accompaniment resplendent in arpeggiated chords is appropriate. You might experiment with compound duple figurations, which when joined to the moving eighth notes in the melody produces a shimmering three-against-two effect.*

**OR**

“Word of God, Come Down on Earth”, LSB 545 / ELW 510 (text: James Quinn; music, Johann Rudolph Ahle)

*A rainstick used on verses 1 and 4 underscores the beautiful images of the descent of living rain and of the indwelling Spirit.*



**V. Ezekiel 47:1-12** (Water flowing from the temple to make all creation new)

## HYMN:

“Fruitful Trees, the Spirit’s Sowing”, LSB 691 (text: Timothy Dudley-Smith; music, Ralph C. Schultz)  
*Verse 3 may be sung in unison, unaccompanied, underscoring the message of our deep rooting in Christ.*

## OR

“The Word of God is Source and Seed”, ELW 506 (text: Delores Dufner; music, David Hurd)  
*The tempo of this hymn should be “in one” but taken at a tempo slow enough that the effect is one of great spaciousness.*



## PRAYERS

### THE LORD’S PRAYER

### BENEDICTION



## CLOSING HYMN:

“Let the Whole Creation Cry”, ELW 876 (text, Stopford A. Brooke; music, Jakob Hintze)  
*Consider having the congregation sing this fourth verse, with men singing verse 2 and women verse 3. The zimbelstern or randomly rung handbells or tone chimes underscore the celebratory nature of the text. The congregation may also rise for this verse.*

Sing to God with hearts ablaze!  
Heaven’s dome resounds with praise!  
Father-, Son- and Spirit-led,  
By God’s mercy we are fed.  
God is love, forgiveness free,  
Undeserving though we be.  
Three in one, for thee we long,  
Be our poem, prayer and song!<sup>3</sup>

## OR

“Beautiful Savior”, LSB 537 / ELW 838 (text: Münsterisch Gesangbuch; music, Silesian)  
*Many congregations enjoy singing this cherished hymn in four-part harmony. At least one verse should be sung unaccompanied.*

## OR

“Touch the Earth Lightly”, ELW 739 (text, Shirley Erena Murray; music, Colin Gibson)  
*This offers a gentle close to the hymn festival as a moving reminder to those in the congregation to remain focused on care for the world and all who dwell therein. Gibson’s setting does not tolerate much elaboration and should be rendered simply yet with great feeling.*



- 1 I am grateful to Dr. Lisa E. Dahill, Associate Professor of Worship and Christian Spirituality at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, for bringing these readings to my attention through her work on ecological-based themes in Scripture.
- 2 Martin Luther, Small Catechism: The Creed, First Article (translation adapted by NMR).
- 3 Copyright Nancy M. Raabe, 2009. Permission is granted to use this verse in the context of the hymn festival suggested by this outline.