

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY

April 22, 2016

Justice Ministries

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul... (Psalm 23:1-3 NRSV)

Each year our church, Trafalgar Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ontario, hosts a site for a local Earth Week cleanup. Families head out to the park and spend three hours together caring for God's beautiful earth. It is hard work picking up all kinds of refuse: old coffee cups, candy wrappers and even broken furniture. We often end the day tired and muddy. The funny thing is that we always end the day profoundly grateful and happy, too!

Our God knows that to spend time close to creation is good for us. It offers restoration and leads us to gratitude. In a world that is increasingly disconnected from the earth, we need to go outside and take notice of the green pastures and still waters. This is how God comforts us and inspires us. This is how God reminds us that the gift of creation is precious and worthy of our care.

The Rev. Kristine O'Brien is the minister at Trafalgar Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ontario. She is the author of the blog bloomingreverend.com



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Responsive Prayer

L: For the gift of creation
we give you thanks, O God:

**P: For dew on the grass first thing in the morning
and pink sunsets at the end of the day;**

L: For fresh water lakes
and oceans full of fish;

**P: For the green shoots of spring
and the warm winds of summer.**

L: For time spent in creation
we give you thanks, O God:

**P: For long walks in the woods
and brief glimpses of rainbows;**

L: For bike rides in the neighbourhood
and soccer matches in the school yard;

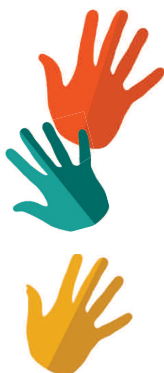
**P: For afternoons in the garden
and nights under dazzling stars.**

L: Because we mistreat your creation
we need your help, O God:

**P: Instill in us a great love
for earth, sky and water;**

L: Remind us of our calling
to be good stewards of all your gifts;

**P: Teach us to walk gently on the earth
and invite others to walk alongside us. Amen.**



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