

## Stewards of God's Grace: May 2021

### *Diligent guardians of God's good earth*

This year our province was hit with a heavy, wet snowstorm in the middle of April. In the days that followed, if someone complained about the cold winds or sloppy snow the response was often "It's good for the land. We need the moisture." We see in this exchange someone looking at the weather from the point of view of the earth and seeing blessing

in the spring snowfall. The Scripture is full of passages showing the Creator's care for the earth and through that God's care for us: "You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase." (Ps. 65:10) In creation we see God's creativity and we experience God's blessing in the abundant resources of God's good earth.



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The Bible teaches us that creation is a foundational gift of God without which we cannot exist. As the 'six days of creation' story in Genesis reminds us we as human beings come late in God's forming of creation. We cannot exist without it while creation can flourish without us. This means that we are uniquely placed as human beings to enhance or damage the gift we have been given. Basil of Caesarea (329-379 CE), also known as St. Basil the Great, saw God's abundant generosity in the diversity of plants and animals and he rejoiced in it. He also said that in our relationship with the natural world "we are to be diligent guardians of the resources given to us by God." Our stewarding of the earth is a responsibility and a privilege incumbent upon us as human beings, the creature to whom God gives the tending of the earth.

The church has within its wisdom resources that remind us of our identity as stewards of creation, guardians of the earth. The agricultural festivals of the church's calendar can teach us throughout the year how to be earth-stewards. For example, the three days before Ascension Day (this year May 10-12<sup>th</sup>) are Rogation Days—days of special prayer and supplication for 'seeds shown.' When farmers are seeding and gardeners are preparing the earth for planting we as people of faith will pray for the fields, gardens, and forests in which humans and plants are nurturing new life. Perhaps your parish will include prayers for the earth in the Sunday liturgy closest to the Rogation Days. Perhaps you will pray God's blessing on the seeds and plants in fields, gardens and planters and on those who tend them. Here is a prayer adapted from Common Worship of the Church of England that you might use:

*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:*

*for in your abundant care you have given us fertile land, rich soil, the seasons in their courses.*

*You provide seed for sowing, water, light and warmth to bring forth the miracle of growth.*

*You give us skill to work the land, to prepare and nourish it, that it may be fruitful.*

*By your blessing, let this seed [or plants] be a sign of all that you promise to us.*

*Prosper the work of our hands, and provide abundant crops for your people to share.*

*Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Blessed be God for ever. Amen.*

*Written by the Ven. Cheryl Toth, Stewardship Officer, Diocese of Qu'Appelle*