



Lament for Plastic Pollution - A Liturgy for Groups or Individuals

by Liuan Huska

Speaker

For the proliferation of plastic pollution in our waters and lands, from nurdles on beaches to bottles choking rivers to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, we grieve the damage we have caused to the beauty and functioning of ecosystems you so finely tuned to support diverse forms of life. We are truly sorry for how our carelessness has wounded life on your earth.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For the mussels, fish, turtles, and whales who have ingested plastic, and for the seals and dolphins entangled in plastic webs, we plead for your mercy. May we restrain the rampant flow of plastic to our seas, that its inhabitants may be fruitful and multiply, and enjoy life in abundance.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For the microplastics in our bodies, bloodstreams, and brains, we lament our shortsighted pursuit of convenience and profit over our children's and neighbors' health. May we have courage to resist habits and systems that needlessly generate more plastic waste. Give us persistence to form new habits — like using reusable cups, cutlery, and napkins — and creativity to work together to change these harmful systems.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For those who can't afford pricey switches to plastic-free products, or are too busy surviving to think about lifestyle changes, we acknowledge that going plastic-free is not always accessible. May those of us who are privileged with money, time, and resources use them for the common good of our communities, not just our own households. May we build relationships across socioeconomic divides that facilitate compassionate and equitable responses to the plastic crisis.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For the birds who collect shiny material in their beaks for nests, not knowing that these are plastic pieces that could get stuck in their bellies or entangle their young, we repent of our negligence that harms the community of creation. May our care for our common home include the habitations of birds and all the wonderful creatures you have made.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For our churches, communities, and households, where being neighborly and sharing food often involves disposable products, we are pained that our desire to welcome others to the table often generates more plastic waste. Equip us with courage, sensitivity, and fresh ideas to spur our communities toward sustainable hospitality.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

Speaker

For those who have the power to make or enforce laws, to shape company policies, or invest in research and development, we are incensed when such power is used for the good of few rather than the good of all. May our leaders be pricked by your spirit of righteousness, judgment, and truth to forward policies that move us away from harmful petrochemicals and toward renewable materials that do not harm our communities and ecosystems. May we all exercise our capacities as citizens, consumers, and members of the community of creation to push our leaders toward right relationships.

Congregation

Lord, hear our prayer.

All

¹ *We look around your good creation and lament that things are not as they should be.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will that all your creation should flourish,
and walk in your life-giving ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.*

¹ Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer.