

Litany for Bell Ringing Ceremony

Sunday, Dec 13, 2009

Sponsored by Micah Centre, The Kings University College, Edmonton, Alberta

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Litany excerpts are taken from the World Council of Churches website, "Our World Belongs to God (Christian Reformed Church of North America) and liturgies from Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

Participants sit/stand in a circle. In the middle of the circle place is a tablecloth with symbols of the earth e.g. a jug filled with clean water, a candle, and a male pheasant standing guard over a female on her nest.

Leader:

Welcome to this bell ringing ceremony. We are responding to an invitation by the World Council of Churches to churches around the globe to ring bells or drums 350 times at 3 pm on this day. Today marks the mid-point of the United Nations talks on climate change occurring in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Why 350 times? The number 350 refers to 350 parts per million, the safe upper limit for CO₂ in our atmosphere according to many scientists, climate experts, and progressive national governments. For all of human history until about 200 years ago, our atmosphere contained 275 ppm of CO₂, but now the concentration stands at 390 ppm. Unless we are able to rapidly reduce CO₂ levels again, we risk reaching tipping points and irreversible impacts such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and major methane releases from increased permafrost melt.

Bells and drums have been used to for thousands of years to warn people of imminent danger as well as to call them to action. The repetitive use of the drum signifies the regular heartbeat of the earth, the created order of the universe as created by God. It's an order we need to respect, or we risk destroying it.

We will begin with some readings of Scripture, then the drumming/ringing of bells 350 times, a prayer and a song from Justine VanderGrift (and David?). After the ceremony you are invited for coffee and hot chocolate with cinnamon buns generously provided by the Micah Centre here at King's.

During the readings, a bell will signal when you are asked to respond with the words, "Lord, have Mercy."

Pour water from pitcher into a basin, light candle.

Creator God, you have placed us

in the vineyard of your world

and call us to tend and care for it.

As we mourn the distress and wounds of God's creation,

we are sustained and nourished by God's presence and love.

And God weeps with us.

(bell ring)

People: Lord, have mercy.

As we face rising waters, hunger, and displacement,

As we expose and challenge climate injustice,

As we strive to build alternative communities,

Help us offer your gifts to all.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

Forgive us for abusing your world

and inflicting usury on its people...

for ignoring your Jubilee call.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

God, you breathed life into the world,

But we confess that we have poisoned the air,
That we have not cared for the fragility of creation.

We have chosen death, forgive us.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

Reader

Deuteronomy, Chapter 30

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life, so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying God and holding fast to God; for that means life to you and length of days.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

Exodus, Chapter 23

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

For six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your home-born slave and the resident alien may be refreshed. Be attentive to all that I have said to you. Do not invoke the

names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

Reader

Isaiah, Chapter 24

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

The earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled,
and few people are left.

(bell ring)

Lord, have mercy.

Though darkness covers the earth,
though clouds can quench the fire of our love,
You, O Christ, come to us in glory,
to pierce the darkness of our world.

To all creation you give protection.

Your people find refuge

in the shelter of your wings.

Reader

Psalm 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul.

O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honour and majesty,

O LORD, how manifold are your works!

In wisdom you have made them all;

the earth is full of your creatures.

Yonder is the sea, great and wide,

creeping things innumerable are there,

living things both small and great.

There go the ships,

and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

These all look to you

to give them their food in due season;

when you give to them, they gather it up;

when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed;

when you take away their breath, they die

and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit,* they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.

Reader

From “Our World Belongs to God”

As followers of Jesus Christ,
living in this world—
which some seek to control,
but which others view with despair—
we declare with joy and trust:
Our world belongs to God!
Amen!

Psalm 146

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.
Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith for ever;
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Bell Ringing (365 times)

Select a cross sectional grouping of young people, children with their parents, aboriginal, etc.

Song ?

Prayer (Leader):

Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world:

There's a ringing in our ears and our hearts throb
as temperatures rise.

Almighty, love, Jesus Christ,

You who are the truth, the way and the life!

Show us your way again. Give us the will to follow it.

Give our politicians and parliaments the will and courage

To choose and want to walk your path,

Where all people are equal,

Where everything you created flourishes in its own right in your honour

There's a ringing in our ears and our hearts throb.

But let bells ring across the land and through cities ring

350 chimes of beautiful sound for the health of the earth

in your honour.

God, you are the source of living water,

We confess our inadequate ways of dealing with the world's water.

We have chosen death, forgive us.

God, creator of earth, air, fire and water,

We give ourselves to you and cry with all creation:

Free us from our misuse of the precious riches of the earth. *(bell)*

Have mercy on us, Lord, and forgive us.

Amen.

All Sing:

He's got the Whole World in His Hand