

## SUMMER SABBATH

Summer is often thought of as a time of rest. This prayer service is an invitation to rest and rejuvenate while savoring the gifts of God.

### Introduction

Leader: In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the idea of the Sabbath is central. The Jewish traditions in which Jesus grew up taught that the Sabbath is a time of rest and reward. The Sabbath is rooted in the seventh day of creation, when God did three things: God rested, blessed and made time holy. It was on the seventh day that God: rested in the wonder of creation. This is a Sabbath time for us. It is a time to stop and savor life in the summer sun. Let us use this sacred summer time to pause and acknowledge the good things in our lives and our lavish, wondrous Creator. In the Sabbath time we care for the seed of eternity planted deep in our souls. We make time holy, letting the fertile ground of our lives lie fallow. Unless we are willing to be still, to withdraw from our busy-ness, to rest in the way Sabbath teaches us, we will lose our very selves.

### Sabbath Prayer

Leader: May we be aware of God's presence along our way, helping us to discover the peace and rest some have lost or never known, renewing our covenant of peace with all created things.

**All: And may we become more than we have been, more than we are: reaching for a perfection beyond our grasp, growing and learning one day to make this day's peace a peace for all days, learning one day to do justly, and love mercy, and walk alongside the One who walks with us.**

### An Offering

Leader: There have been too many days when we have spent our time seeking, counting, measuring. We have exhausted ourselves and have grown weary.

**All: In this Sabbath time, we will seek not to acquire, but to share; not to toil, but to relax and to celebrate.**

Leader: Many a day we have failed to see the wonder, the grace, and the beauty of God's universe.

**All: In this Sabbath time, we stand in awe before the mystery of all creation and its Creator.**

Leader: There have been countless days when we have acted as if everything depended on us.

**All: In this Sabbath time, we know deep in our souls that we can do nothing without God's presence and love to sustain us.**

### In Thanksgiving

Leader: We welcome this summer Sabbath as a time of rest and renewal, a time to re-create ourselves. God of peace, we come to this Sabbath with grateful hearts.

Reader: For all the good things we have experienced with the change of each season.

**All: we give you thanks.**

Reader: For sustaining us through all the dark nights

All: we give you thanks.

Reader: For making us partners with you in the re-creation of the world

All: we give you thanks.

Blessing

Leader: let us bow our heads and ask for God's blessing. May the quiet moments of summer give us a Sabbath spirit. May this Sabbath strengthen us for the Challenges that lie ahead. May God, who calls us to this time of rest, be with us in the resting and in the rejoicing. May the blessings of the Sabbath soothe our souls and remain with us forever.

**All: Amen.**

LIVING WATER

Water as a life-giving source is the theme throughout this prayer service. Ideally, it should be celebrated where water can be a visual focal point. The sound of flowing water will enhance the setting even further. Consider a place outdoors or around a parish baptismal font.

Call to Worship

Leader: Let us come before the God of our longings.

**All: Inhabit our hearts, wondrous God of all creation, as once you inhabited living flesh.**

Leader: Open your eyes, your hearts, your minds and sense the good things we have from God.

**All: Blessed be God for the gift of water which cleanses and refreshes us, bringing us to new birth.**

Listening to God's Word

Leader: Let us be attentive as we hear the proclamation of God's holy word.

Reader: A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah 41:17-20

Response Psalm 147:1-8, 12-18

Side A: Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

Side B: The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

Side A: He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

Side B: He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Side A: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

Side B: The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre, He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills.

Side A: Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.

Side B: He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat. He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.

Side A: He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down hail like crumbs-- who can stand before his cold?

Side B: He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

Reader 2: A reading from the Gospel according to John 4:4-14

Prayers of Petition

Leader: We bring all that we have and all that we are before the God of Life. We bring the desires of our hearts and ask for God's saving grace.

Reader: God our life, there is evil in our world-hatred, bigotry, and exploitation

**All: cleanse our world with living water.**

Reader: God our life, when we become weary or complacent

**All: become a fountain of life within us.**

Reader: God our life, for the times we feel abandoned and afraid

**All: flood our souls with life-giving water.**

Reader: God our life, when the world is too much for us and we fall into despair

**All: be for us a river of hope.**

Leader: You, O God, are the source of all life. ' Nurture us and hold us close in your arms.

**All: Amen.**

Blessing

If water has been incorporated into the environment, the leader touches the water and continues:

Leader: God, you are the fountain of living water. Send down your blessing on this water and on each of us gathered here. Cleanse us of all that separates, destroys, and oppresses and make us living water to all who thirst for justice.

**All: Amen.**

The leader sprinkles all gathered.

Closing Prayer

**All: God our life, you quench our thirst and refresh our weary souls. Be a font of hope and healing for our world. Live in us so that we might bring comfort and sweet rejoicing into deserts of despair. Lead us guide us, and when our work on earth is through, bring us home to the eternal rest of your heaven. Amen.**