

LITURGY: CELEBRATING WATER

1. **Greeting: All:**

We are gathered together to be mindful of the riches of creation and our interdependence with it and with each other.

May our time together in sharing this ritual bring us renewal in our daily lives.

2. **Song: We sing of water**

We sing of water,
essence of life.

We sing of water,
gracious gift.

We seek for water,
essence of life.

We seek for water,
gracious gift.

We sing of water,
essence of life.

We sing of water,
gracious gift.

3. **Intentions and hopes: All:**

May the earth, home to us and to the myriad of living and non-living creation, inspire us with wonder. May it lead us into the mysteries of Sophia, the wise and playful Creator, who is reflected in her creation. We pray that her wisdom may teach us to value her creatures and to live in right relationship with all of them, and with each other. May her playfulness lead us to joy.

At this time, we seek to enter more fully into her life through contemplation of the particular gift of water. Water is one of the vital essences of life. It is a shape-changer and a transformer of elements. We celebrate the beauty and the terror, the bounty and the harshness of water in its many forms, and know our vital need of it for health and life.

Voice of the Waters

Sophia: I speak with myriad voices:

1st voice: Thunderburst, when cracks and crannies fill,
deep roots listen, and darkly
seek the hidden breast.

2nd voice: Cruising the sibilant sea, a great grey whale
sings, sifting with its mouth
my lavish offerings.

3rd voice: Mystery of dark, still deep
in lake or pond: mirrored in me
see answers to your need.

4th voice: New rain on the roof-
strained nerves loosen at the first hard drops
and hope seeps back..

Sophia: Where my voice is heard, life is.

4. **Purification: Leader:**

Having recalled the wonder of creation, we come now to recognise our failings. Our prayer will be followed by a cleansing ritual.

All: We confess that we take water for granted. We waste it, heedlessly abuse its plenty in our cities, greedily use it for irrigation where crops are not meant to grow.

We have forced water from its natural courses, carelessly diverting it from other life forms, and damming it so that the land is out of balance. Salt rises and scalds the earth, river mouths silt and choke the cleansing flow.

We have failed to cherish and save the gift of rain. We pollute it in gutters and send it wastefully out to sea, where it damages other life.

Why do we not value our clean abundant supply? We know our sisters elsewhere spend half their days in fetching scarce water for their families.

We will be more aware of water's unique and precious nature, and conserve it for the use of all who need it.

Cleansing ritual: (With jug and bowl, pour water over each others' hands, and dry them.)

5. Story telling: Reader: Creation Story.

In the beginning there was no water, neither was there life. Eons rolled, rock cooled, fogs thickened- and then the first rains fell.

Barren peaks chattered with rivulets running together in rivers, pooling in lakes.

Slowly seas gathered and girdled the earth; land and sea were created.

Waters still warm, seething with matter, were energised by lightning, again and again. Somehow, somewhere, in these empty oceans, emerged a delicate cell: the first living creature. Delicate, but resourceful and tough, it split itself into two: then there were millions sifting through the waves of that vast sea.

As the future unfolds, this partnership never fails: always and forever, in the order of this earth, where there is water, there is life.

All in response: This we acknowledge.

Song: All: Clear Water Flowing

Clear water flowing
is what our dry land needs.

Clear water flowing-
a dream of our dry souls.

Clear water flowing
the tree will grow fresh leaves.

Clear water flowing
is love upon our lips.

Praise and Supplication:

(Spoken by **Sophia voice**, who follows with guided meditation)

Lakes, rivers, seas, a full jug on the table:
all waters can be tranquil.

Their smooth surfaces hold comfort
for our troubled minds.

Let us think of calm waters,
bring to mind the sea's serene horizon
with subtle shades of blue shading out to endless sky.

Let us hold within us that calm,
still our minds to the peace and promise
offered by water.

Guided Meditation: Water Replenishing the Parched.
(Please try to sit comfortably so you can relax. You may
like to close your eyes as you listen)

Imagine it is summer. A hot summer day with the sun
beating down. Feel the heat around you and on you.
You are looking out across a landscape, dry and almost
bare of trees and bushes.
The grass is yellow, dry, brittle.
Smell the air.
Feel the heat. What do you hear?

Look closer at the ground. Much of the grass has
broken, fallen over, its seeds lying on the hard earth, or
perhaps blown away in the searing wind.
What else do you see?
Dirt shows through the grass: baked dry and cracked.
Imagine that you are the earth. Feel its dryness, feel
your body without moisture.
How do you feel?
Perhaps there is a sense of isolation. Do you enjoy this
stillness and aloneness?
Or perhaps you feel sad, missing company, missing
growth.
Perhaps you feel a nothingness, an emptiness.
Let the feelings come. Don't judge them. Listen.

You notice the day has begun to cool a little. The sun is
less powerful.
Clouds cover its fierceness, and a little shade falls upon
you.
Then a drop, big and heavy. It is rain, falling in
splotches.
You feel it fall upon you and roll off. This earth so hard
and dry has no place to let it in
and it rolls away as it would off glass or metal.

More drops, they fall hard and shatter into a thousand little droplets.

You watch them, watch their transparent beauty.

How do you feel?

But here or there, a drop rolls toward a crack, a place that had seemed like a wound in the surface. It rolls in and down into the dark earth. Down into the open wound.

And another drop.

Perhaps this water would never have penetrated otherwise.

Or here and there, where grass has been uprooted, left to die, water has trickled in,

down where the roots once were.

Drop upon drop begins to seep in.

What does it feel like, now, after such a season of dryness?

Here a seed begins to moisten and swell.

And here another.

Deep in the darkness of the soil, dormant roots awaken to water.

Listen. What do you hear?

Smell the air, the soil. What is it like now?

There is a sense of change, of awakening.

How do you feel about that?

Delighted? Afraid? Hesitant? Welcoming? Anticipating?

Listen to all the feelings. Allow yourself to feel them.

Do not judge. Simply allow them to speak.

(Stay with your feelings for a few minutes. Gradually become aware of your body, perhaps move your hands or your feet; then become more aware of people around you, and this room, and open your eyes, so that you are back in this space.)

Prayer: All:

Sophia God, friend of creation, ground of reality, wellspring of wisdom, we praise you for the life-giving gift of water. Strengthen our efforts to work with you in cherishing, respecting and sharing your gift.

Ritual: (move to central table and pour small glass of water for person next to you, who drinks it, and then does the same for you. All take turns. During the ritual, the following is sung:)

Song: Shape-changer.

Shape-changer water
comfort and terror;
shape-changer water,
genesis of life.

Shape-changer water-
from deeps to high clouds;
shape-changer water-
mystery distilled.

6: Thanksgiving:

Chorus 1:

We are thankful for water
in spring and fountain, pond and stream, pool, creek and dam,
in river and torrent, waterfall and geyser, artesian basin and
sea.

Chorus 2:

We give thanks for water's clarity, beauty, power, and gift of life,
for its gentleness as rain on tree and flower, its savage force in
storms,
its soothing relief from drought, its buoyancy which carries us
on journeys.

Chorus 1:

We give thanks for water which nurtures, cleanses,
quenches thirst and douses fire,
and offers meditative loveliness under still skies.

Chorus 2:

We give thanks for water as a precious habitation
for fish, mammals, plants and myriad creatures;
and its mighty predominance as the vast oceans of the earth.

Transformation Prayer-All:

Cleansed and renewed,
we joyfully honour water
as a sign of the Creator,
who lovingly fashioned it
to nurture life.

May our new recognition
of water's beauty, endurance,
and capacity to renew,
stay with us in our everyday lives,
enriching us and reminding us
of our own potential
for beauty, endurance and renewal.

7: Blessing: (Leader)

The blessing of water is in our mouths
Co-creators with the infinite Source
which offers us water for our human needs,
may we strive to use it wisely.
May we respect the power of water to harm and to heal.
and on our skins.
May we share its blessing with all others,
with generosity, as it has been given to us.

Song: All: repeat "**We sing of water**".

Speakers required:

Sophia voice- also speaks Praise, and Guided Meditation.

Voices 1,2,3, and 4.

Leader- also speaks Purification and Blessing.

Reader- Creation Story.

All- other responses. Also divided into **Chorus 1, Chorus 2.**

Articles needed: Table in centre of circle of chairs.

Water jug and bowl, towel, for washing ritual.

Water jug and glasses, for drinking ritual.

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