

LITURGY FOR THE GOD OF SPACE AND TIME

1. **Greeting:** 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:**

Sun and moonshine, stars in flight,
minutes making eon's length:
all bring gifts if we are ready.
Praise the giver of such gifts.

Birth and promise, youth and health,
Learning, aging, quiet death:
all bring gifts if we are ready.
Love the giver of such gifts.

3. **Intentions and Hopes:**

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 live in right relationship with all of them, and with each other. May her playfulness lead us to joy. **(Music)**

At this time we seek to enter more fully into her life through the contemplation of the particular gifts of time and space. These were conceived so long ago that our minds can barely stretch so far. They brought with them continual flux, both loss and gain. Now, we humans perch precariously on the present minute, remembering our past, living our present, imagining our future. Time and space give us the gift of story. **(Music)**

We are held and nurtured by mother earth, our days ordered by the turning of earth's face to the sun. Our lives are held by the dependable web of earth's seasonal orbits. We are given our place by the structure of planets and stars and galaxies. We learn to know ourselves through these contexts of time and space. **(Music)**

Because we are not yet familiar with the infinite, but only before and after, and our lives are brief, we look for meaning also in loss and death. The familiar cycles of nature delight and feed us, but we no longer wholly belong within them. Our knowledge of death sets us apart. We will look to your gifts of space and time for the stories in which we hope to find meaning for life and death. **(Music)**

4. **Story-telling:**

A long time ago, when the earth was without form, and lifeless, the Spirit hovered, brooding, over the waters. Her warm breast and sheltering wings brought life into being. Love drives creation- a love too vast to comprehend, which yet infuses the smallest particle, giving oxygen to lungs, water for thirst, food for all mouths, offers fulfilling joy, and then receives all deaths.

Our tribal story of time past delights in the birthing time when light and darkness, earth and water, plants and all creatures came into being. Then was formed the paradisaical balance between life and death which enables all life to be and constantly sustains the cosmos. And it was good.

The story also tells of deception, envy, pain and fear, and of destruction by flood and war, embodying the discord which brings premature death.

It speaks of human effort and sacrifice and renewal, when life again finds the wholeness that Love desires. We celebrate the wisdom of this story because it shaped our past, gives meaning to our present, and is our gift to the future.

All:

Let us celebrate the endless cycles of nature's life-
in which decay and death
equally with birth and health,
are givers of food and shelter
for new life.

Let us celebrate the capacity of our minds
to stretch beyond these cycles
through imagination and story.

Our time-tethered minds
reach through the ticking clock
to sense the infinite

Song:

Limitless space and endless time
we struggle to comprehend.
To sense our little lives
are rounded by the love
that birthed the universe-
this is good.

Limitless space and endless time
we struggle to comprehend.
To know that life flows on
through times of birth and death
that love threads through the whole-
this is good.

5. Celebration:

In the beginning God groaned
belly deep
panted hard and pushed
legs spread limitless and long,
birthing earth from black and starry womb.

Refrain: Time and space give us the gift of story.

The world wails loud its birth
still slippery wet and shrouded in soft cloud
tumbling in unknown space
turning now dark now light
laughing wild and wide
at moon and sun hung upon nothing.

Refrain:

Time-tethered minds reach through the ticking clock
to touch the infinite.

Slowly now
singing spheres turn
dreaming descends like night
and wakes new visions.

Refrain:

Time and space give us the gift of story.

Saltsharp oceans now shot through with sleek and shining fish
look up at birdwing threading blue with colour,
wise tree and booming mountain plant deep feet
and ringing, leap to sky,
seeds rain down jungling green
plain and restless desert run searching far and fast
soft fur behind a tiger's ear

a feather falls top-like through the air.

Refrain:

Time-tethered minds reach through the ticking clock
To touch the infinite.

Guided Meditation:

Ritual: Leader: I invite you to take a few moments to think about your story. Then on your piece of paper write a word or symbol indicating a significant turning point in your story, which perhaps helps to make sense of it for you.

Action: When you have finished, put your piece of paper in the basket in the centre, and take a piece of rosemary for remembrance.

When this is concluded, we will all say together: **We give thanks for time and space which give us the gift of story.**

Story Song:

Once upon a time
gathered round a fire,
stories were born
to comfort and explain.

Hardship has a story,
anger has a story,
sorrow has a story:
stories tell us where we fit
and who we are.

Stories change and grow,
challenge our beliefs,
teach us to know
the whole world as our kin.

Birthing has a story,
loving has a story,
laughter has a story:
stories tell us where we fit
and who we are.

6. Catharsis:

Let us lament our blindness, which robs many human stories of fulfilment, making of death a painful waste, and unbalances the cycles of our planet:

We lament our failure to manage our needs, allowing
rage which leads to violence between individuals and nations;
fear which makes us bigots and racists;
greed, which fosters injustice;
failure to love, leading to abuse and deprivation,
lack of compassion for others and ourselves, so that
we damage the wholeness of which we are capable.

We lament our failure to honour

the created earth in its beauty and wholeness;
the marvellous cycles of heat and cold, wet and dry, life and death;
the continuous renewal of air and water;
the molecular dance at the heart of all and,
at our death, earth's healing silence.

Ritual: Leader:

We affirm the many paths humans may follow in our search for the story which gives meaning to our lives: some of these paths are honoured in our centrepiece. We affirm also the unique gifts each one brings to this search. I invite each of you to bring your rosemary to the centre, and place it there, symbolising your individual contribution to the human search for meaning. You may like to say: "**I add my story to the whole**" as you place it.

7. Transformation and Thanksgiving:

Sophia/God, we each live richly in this moment, in this place, and we give thanks for that. But we also have the unique gift to go beyond the present, and in that we are blessed beyond other creatures.

When we imagine how place is for you: unbounded, intimate, all-enveloping, we are dazzled, transported.

Sophia/God, you who dwell in our hearts, in all creatures and beyond all universes, we praise and thank you for your gift to us of space, its certainties and challenges.

When we imagine how time is for you: eternal, unlimited, whole, we gasp in amazement. Sophia/God, you who are with us now, who have ever been and ever will be, we praise and thank you for your gift to us of time, its limits and its stories.

8. Blessing

May the stories that we tell
strengthen us and allow us to grow.
May the path that we choose
through the hours and minutes of our lives
lead us to Sophia, the Eternal Now.
Then, our love for this planet
will be as generous as its care for us,
our justice as reliable as the dawn,
and our compassion as unfailing as the shining stars.

Song: Refrain:

Together
we make stories:
together
we birth love.

From the stars
from the deeps
from the years-
out of the life that is given,
we make our thoughtful stories:
we birth love.

Refrain.

Sophia Liturgy Group 2006

We invite you to use this liturgy and adapt it, if you wish, to your own circumstances. Please acknowledge that you received it from **Sophia Women's Spirituality Centre**, Adelaide, South Australia