

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



APRIL 17, 2016 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (C)

EARTH DAY

On Friday, April 22, people from diverse regions, cultures, and backgrounds will come together to celebrate our planet on Earth Day. As we reflect on the jagged magnificence of a mountain range, the holy solitude of a desert landscape, or the lush abundance of a rainforest, we rejoice in the beauty and diversity of the world we call home. In times of celebration, of prayer, or of quiet reflection, it is important to remember that we share Planet Earth with millions of other living species, and that these creatures are not simply co-habitants, but rather integral members of the community that God has created for us to reside within and to steward.

Take the honey bee, a diligent pollinator who transports crucial pollen and seeds from flower to flower, ensuring that each plant receives the fertilization that it needs to flourish. The honeybee's industriousness supports key crops that feed humankind, yet climate change, pesticides, and loss of habitat have significantly diminished the honeybee population, dually risking the future of both the bee and the human species.

Far north above the Arctic Circle, the Porcupine caribou herd provides critical food, clothing, and tools for the Alaskan Native Gwich'in People, allowing the Gwich'in to practice their subsistence lifestyle and sacred traditions as they have been doing for the past 10,000 years. Unfortunately, the caribou's habitat remains vulnerable to potential resource exploration, and oil drilling would endanger the survival of both the caribou and the Gwich'in people.

The African elephant and the marine pteropod, the wandering albatross and the pygmy sloth, all creatures slithering, walking, winging, or creeping, are essential members of the sacred web of life. This Earth Day, consider how you can be a better neighbor to the creatures who inhabit our common home. Consider advocating to your members of Congress to protect the Endangered Species Act, or planting a pollinator's garden on your church's property for the honeybees. On your way home today, take the time to notice the "bright and beautiful", the "wise and the wonderful" creatures who share our planet, and consider how their lives are intricately interwoven with your own.

Learn more about biodiversity and faith through Creation Justice Ministry's #EarthDaySunday Resource:

<http://www.creationjustice.org/earth-day-sunday.html>

To learn more about The Episcopal Church's environmental advocacy efforts, join the Episcopal Public Policy Network at:

<http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org/app/register?5&m=29629>

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