



## Genesis 2:4-15 (NRSV)

<sup>4</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the

earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,

<sup>5</sup>when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground;

<sup>6</sup>but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup>then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup>And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. <sup>10</sup>A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; <sup>12</sup>and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. <sup>15</sup>The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

## Connect Guide

Till And Keep: The Why Behind It All  
Week of Sunday, April 7, 2024

### Opening

- 1. Pray:** God of all Creation, of water, earth, and sky, let us see with our eyes, feel with our hearts, and live through our actions to care for and honor what You have made. We praise You who call us to live in harmony and explore how to better care for our common home. Help us to graciously show and invite all our community into this act of restoration of creation with unity. Amen.
- 2. Share:** Share one example of the consequences of environmental changes on the planet that impact our lives both locally and globally.

### Dive Into the Text

1. Which elements on Earth are mentioned in this creation story, and how do they relate to God and humans?
2. God was the first gardener in Eden, causing every pleasant and good tree to grow (v. 8-9). How does the image of God as the first gardener impact your understanding of God?
3. What does the text say about water, and how do we use it in our Christian worship, rituals, and sacraments? Do you realize water is holy, and how can we treat it respectfully?
4. God calls all humans to care for our common home, to “till it and keep it,” in verse 15. How would you like to differentiate “till it and keep it” from dominating it?

### ***Laudato si'***

Latin for “Praised Be,” *Laudato si'* is the name of Pope Francis’ encyclical on caring for our common home — planet Earth. The letter is addressed to “every person living on this planet” and calls for a global dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet through our daily actions and decisions. With this encyclical, Francis calls on the universal church, all believers, and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and join us in embarking on a new path.

Read the quotes below from *Laudato si'* about climate change, clean water, and air quality.

**“Our climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” *Laudato si'* (23)**

**“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right” *Laudato si'* (30)**

**“Our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”**

***Laudato si'* (2)**

Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato si': On care for our common home*. Retrieved from [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

### Go Deeper

1. At times, environmental changes on Earth may seem too vast for us to address, or we may feel unqualified to discuss them. What obstacles should we overcome, and what’s needed to grow our awareness to protect it?

**Use the quotes from *Laudato si'* in the box on the left to answer the following questions.**

2. What resonates with you?
3. What action can we take to defend life and stop global warming near and far?
4. Water is life-giving. How can we build community resilience through water-saving practices?
5. Think about how our lifestyle contributes to air pollution. How can we commit to personal changes to reduce emissions?

### Close in Prayer

Close your time in prayer together.