

Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Season of Creation

Listen to the Voice of Creation

In: official Guide of Season of Creation 2022, pp.29-36

We encourage you to use this prayer service to mark the beginning and end of the Season of Creation, at events that you host during the season, or to incorporate into your community's worship throughout the Season.

As you plan your service, consider featuring a Burning Bush in the midst of the prayer service as a symbol of the community's intention to remove our sandals as we recognize the Earth as holy ground, and listen for the voice of God, and the voice of creation praising God. You may also wish to set the space with natural items that ensure our worship includes the voice of the land and creatures who share our common home.

*Leader parts are in regular font, **congregational responses are in bold.***

Welcome

We gather in the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all creatures!

Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

Greeting

Greetings in the name of our God who is good:
whose love endures forever.

Greetings to you, sun and moon, you stars of the southern sky:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Sunrise and sunset, night and day:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, mountains and valleys, grassland and scree,
glacier, avalanche, mist and snow:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, kauri and pine, rata and kowhai, mosses and ferns, Baobab, fynbos,
yellowwood and aloe:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, dolphins and kahawai, sea lion and crab,
coral, anemone, pipi and shrimp:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, rabbits and cattle, moths and dogs
kiwi and sparrow and tui and hawk:
Elephant, lions, rhinos, and giraffes, ostrich, sheep, cattle
Scorpion and dung beetle:
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Greetings to you, women and men,
Elders and children, women and men,
Diverse cultures of this rainbow land:
Typists and teachers, cleaners, and clerks,

learners, job-seekers, TV and sports' stars,
All who care, who love and who pray,
Who laugh and learn, who rest and who play.
give to our God your thanks and praise.

(A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa page 457, Lynn Pedersen 2016, Inspired by Ps 148 & Song of Creation, New Zealand Prayer Book)

Psalmody

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of God's hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous. *(Psalm 19)*

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture

Thanksgiving for the Earth

Remember the fruits of the earth, for sowing and for harvest.

Remember the dew of the air.

Remember the downcoming of the rains and the waters and the rivers.

Remember the plants and the blooms of every year.

Remember the safety of humans and of animals and of me, your sinful servant.

For the rain, the wind of the sky, seed, plants, the fruit of the trees and also the vineyards, and for every tree in the entire world,

We are grateful

For the Holy Trinity who brings us to perfection in safety and peace, forgives us our sins, brings us up according to their measure that we may grow and prosper through your grace, who makes the face of the earth to rejoice, waters her furrows, lets her grain be abundantly multiplied and makes ready her seed-time and harvest,

We give You thanks

(adapted from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Pre-Anaphora, and Anaphora of Basil)

Song

Sing a hymn that praises God as Creator. If possible, find a hymn that is shared by all participating traditions. [Click here](#) for a list of creation-themed hymns.

Litany of lament and repentance

Three candles are lit to represent the voices of Indigenous people, women and biodiversity
God of our vibrant world,

You have given humans the responsibility to care for each other. Indigenous people have historical, spiritual, and personal ties to these lands on which we inhabit. But many of us have failed to recognise the presence of God in these traditions, and their voices have been silenced. We are thankful to Indigenous Nations for their continuing care and presence on the Earth. We all value the resilience and strength shown through the generations and today.

We turn to the Spirit who dismantles borders and celebrates life giving community.

Help us make a place where everyone is welcome and we acknowledge your grace at work in the ways of one another. Together, may we learn the spiritual richness of our relationships in the web of life.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

O God of the whole of creation.

You have created land and trees, animals and all living creatures on the earth. We are destroying the forests through poisons and logging, the voices of the birds, insects and forest dwellers are silenced

You created the wonders of the ocean, the fish, shells, reefs, whales, waves, corals. The oceans are warming and as they drown in plastic, their voices are being stilled.

We turn to you in sorrow and repentance.

Please help us to care for the oceans, the land and the forest, and to recognise that it is your blessing for us. Creation is speaking to us, but their voices have been silenced by the roar of our greed

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Mothering Earth, our Sister, you sustain and govern us. We have silenced the voices of your people, especially the voices of women - protectors of the Earth who have been killed by land grabbers, mining companies and oil companies. Many are the voices of our sisters who have been silenced by flooding, hurricanes and drought as the earth's warming brings destruction. May we listen to the voices of our mothers and sisters and learn to treasure and protect the web of life.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We turn to you in sorrow and repentance.

Please, Creator God, forgive us for the human activities which have overpowered the weather and caused destruction of our environment.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

(Adapted from a Prayer of Lament written by members of the four Religious Orders in the Anglican Church of Melanesia. Melanesian Brotherhood, Society of St Francis, Community of the Sisters of the Church, Community of the Sisters of Melanesia)

A time of silence is kept as people go forward to extinguish candles in memory of communities that are being wiped out by environmental degradation and creatures that are becoming

extinct. For the voices of women, indigenous people and creation that have been silenced.
We sing: Senzeni na? – What have we done?

Turn us O God, from our desire to turn in upon ourselves, refuse to hear the voices of our cocreatures. Call us again, open our ears. Gather us in to relationships of mutual care and listening. Enlighten us by your Spirit that renews the face of your Earth. Amen.

Reading of Scripture followed by preaching or reflections

We listen to the voice of God through the book of Scriptures. See the thematic readings offered at Preaching for God's World, or locally designate a text that reflects the particular context of your prayer service.

Song

Sing a hymn that praises the biodiversity of creation. If possible, find a hymn that is shared by all participating traditions. [Click here](#) for a list of creation themed hymns in multiple languages, or these thanks to Interfaith Power and Light.

Profession of Faith

We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptises this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee,
who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day
God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

(Gurukul Theological college, India / adapted by Keld B. Hansen 2009)

Offering and offertory prayer

You may want to have an offering, perhaps to collect money for a particular project or ministry that contributes to ecological restoration, or an aspect of climate justice that is significant in your location. You may want to listen to birdsong or showcase local plants, animals from your area as a way to raise awareness by listening to the voices from your local ecology praising God and calling us to care.

Intercessory Prayers

Loving God, even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she places her young near Your altar. You are attentive to all you have made.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, help us provide refuge to every animal and plant with whom we live. Help us be

attentive to all you have made.

God, in whom all creation subsists,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, when Jesus cried out and gave up his Spirit, the earth shook and the rocks split.

You are known by the whole of creation that listens to you.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, help us hear and know you just as the earth and rocks do. Help us to learn from the way in which we see creation recognise your glorious beauty.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, you are present in your creation and seek to heal her wounds. You can be found walking in the garden. Open our eyes to see you, the gardener.

God, who is present with your creation,

Help us be present too.

Loving God, we often abandon your creation and cause its wounds. Help us to follow in your footsteps and learn to walk in the garden like you.

God, who is present with your creation,

Help us be present too.

Loving God, who hears every voice, knows each cry of injustice, and is attentive to the suffering of the earth: teach us to listen. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may listen to the world you have created and not close ourselves off from it. Reveal to us the ways in which we have failed to hear your voice in how we treat the earth.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Amen

The Lord's prayer:

We pray our common prayer that Christ taught us. *(or use the following adaptation)*

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your beloved community of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Amen.

(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. This version of the Lord's prayer was influenced by Maori theologians)

Sharing of the Peace

If we are in Christ, we are becoming a new creation.

We see God around us. We see God within us. We give thanks to our Creator.

Let us show the caring nature you have instilled within us by greeting each other as a sign of God's justice of peace, love, forgiveness and grace. The peace of our Creator be with you in all things.

And also with you.

You are invited to care and share peace with your neighbor, and speak a word of peace to the land in which you gather, and the creatures who share this common home.

(adapted from Celebrating Creation: Honoring Indigenous People, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, ELCA)

Benediction

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation.

(adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)