



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  

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Environment Programme

# Creationtide and Environment

**Resources for worship and prayer**

# Introduction

Every act of worship should be one that is thankful for all of the mysteries and wonders of God's creation but, in a special way, Creationtide follows the Psalmists' call to join our song of praise with the forests, rivers and fields who bring their own praise to the Creator.

Our common home is crying out to be cherished and our thankful praise should stir us to action and to tread more gently on the earth and care for our shared environment.

The following guide offers some starter suggestions for worship and prayer exploring the themes of creation and the environment to help the whole church proclaim *'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.'*

The Church of England, has endorsed the observance of a "Time for Creation", from 1 September (the first day of the church year for the Orthodox Churches) to 4 October (the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi).

During this season congregations are encouraged to give particular focus to environmental issues. Time for Creation links in naturally with the time when we celebrate harvest thanksgivings.

## Old Testament

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Genesis 1:26-31            | <i>The story of creation</i>                              |
| Genesis 1.1-2.3            | <i>A cosmic hymn of praise</i>                            |
| Genesis 6:11-21            | <i>The story of Noah and the Ark</i>                      |
| Genesis 8.12-22            | <i>Creation restored after the deluge</i>                 |
| Genesis 9. 8-17            | <i>God's promise to sustain creation</i>                  |
| Exodus 16.11-15            | <i>God's provision</i>                                    |
| Job 12:7-10                | <i>In God's hand is the life of every living creature</i> |
| Isaiah 24:1-23             | <i>A vision of a desolate land</i>                        |
| Isaiah 55:11-13            | <i>The trees and the fields shall clap their hands</i>    |
| Deuteronomy 6. 9-14        | <i>God's gifts to the redeemed</i>                        |
| Deuteronomy 8.7-18         | <i>The gift of the land</i>                               |
| Deuteronomy 11:10-15       | <i>A land for which the Lord cares</i>                    |
| Deuteronomy 24:19-22       | <i>People are told not to exhaust the harvest</i>         |
| Deuteronomy 26.1-11        | <i>Offering of the first fruits</i>                       |
| Leviticus 25:2-5           | <i>The Lord commands rest for the land</i>                |
| Leviticus 23.33-43         | <i>A feast of fruitfulness</i>                            |
| Leviticus 26.1-13          | <i>The promise of a fertile land</i>                      |
| Amos 9.13                  | <i>The promise of restoration</i>                         |
| Hosea 2.18-23              | <i>The covenant of peace with all creation</i>            |
| Hosea 14.2-10              | <i>Repentance and restoration</i>                         |
| Isaiah 11.1-1a             | <i>The harmony of animal kingdom in the messianic age</i> |
| Isaiah 25.6-9; 55.6-11     | <i>Feasting in God's presence</i>                         |
| Isaiah 35.1-7              | <i>The blossoming of the wilderness</i>                   |
| Jeremiah 32.6-15           | <i>A sign of a fruitful future</i>                        |
| Ezekiel 34.25-31           | <i>God promises his people a peaceable land</i>           |
| Ezekiel 37.1-14            | <i>The hope of humankind restored</i>                     |
| Ezekiel 47.6-12            | <i>A vision of waters restoring the land</i>              |
| Ecclesiasticus 42.15-43.12 | <i>The wonder of creation</i>                             |
| Song of Songs 4.12-13      | <i>A garden as symbol of divine love</i>                  |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Ruth 2.1-13           | <i>Kinship and the land</i>                       |
| Job 14.7-10           | <i>Defiant nature and the hope of immortality</i> |
| Job 38. 1-11, 16-18   | <i>God's majesty and creation's marvel</i>        |
| Proverbs 8.1-4, 22-31 | <i>God's wisdom and creation</i>                  |

## **The Psalms**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Psalm 8   | <i>In praise of the wonderful order of creation</i>  |
| Psalm 19  | <i>The heavens are telling the glory of God</i>      |
| Psalm 24  | <i>The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it</i> |
| Psalm 65  | <i>The meadows and valleys shout for joy.</i>        |
| Psalm 104 | <i>The Creator God sustains the earth</i>            |

Also Psalms 80, 90.1-6, 13-end, 100, 103, 106, 107, 112, 126, 136.1-9, 23-26, 146, 147.1-13

## **New Testament**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Matthew 6.25-34              | <i>Sufficiency of resources and simplicity of lifestyle</i> |
| Mark 4:1-9                   | <i>Exploring the miracle of growth</i>                      |
| Mark 4.35-41                 | <i>The Lord of nature brings peace to violent discord</i>   |
| Mark 4.30-32                 | <i>From the seed to a tree of life</i>                      |
| (Luke 13.18-19; Mt.13.31-32) |   |
| Luke 13.6-9                  | <i>Nurturing the fig tree</i>                               |
| John 6.1-13                  | <i>Hungry people fed on Christ's abundance</i>              |
| John 15. 1-17                | <i>God's people as a fruitful vine</i>                      |
| John 20.15                   | <i>The Risen Christ appears in the garden</i>               |
| John 21.1-14                 | <i>The risen Christ and the abundance of life</i>           |
| Colossians 1:15-20           | <i>All things in heaven and earth are reconciled</i>        |
| Colossians 1.1-15            | <i>Christ as the new creation</i>                           |
| Romans 8.18-22               | <i>The natural world longing for liberation</i>             |
| 2 Corinthians 9.9-11a        | <i>God's generosity and human gratitude</i>                 |
| 1 Timothy 6.7-10,17-19       | <i>Sufficiency of resources and simplicity of lifestyle</i> |
| Revelation 2.1-7             | <i>The promise of paradise restored</i>                     |
| Revelation 22.1-5            | <i>Creation renewed for the healing of the nations</i>      |

# Hymns and Songs

For the beauty of the earth, Great is thy faithfulness,  
Shout to the Lord, All things bright and beautiful,  
Now the green blade riseth, Dance and Sing all the earth,  
Creation sings the Fathers Song,  
Rising, What can I do (When I see the sky),  
Thou whose almighty word, As the deer pants,  
God is Good, his the care,  
Beauty for Brokenness, O God of earth and altar,  
We sing the Greatness of our God,  
All creatures of our God and King,  
We plough the fields and scatter, Morning has broken,  
For the fruits of his creation,  
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, You shall go out with joy,  
How Great is our God, Praise God from whom all blessings flow

## **Songs for children**

Who made the twinkling stars?  
Think of world without any flowers  
Who put the colours in the rainbow  
My God is so big, If I were a butterfly  
Autumn Days, Push little seed  
When God made the garden of creation  
Over the earth there is a mat of green

## **Taizé chant**

Misericordias Domini, See I am near, Laudate omnes gentes

## **Listening to Classical & Popular music**

Joseph Haydn, *Creation, Oratorio*

Gustav Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth)*

Benjamin Britten, *St Nicholas: Setting of 'All Creatures that on Earth Do Dwell'*

John Tavener, *The Lamb; The Whale*

Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons*

John Cage, *Litany for the Whale*

John Rutter, *A Gaelic Blessing, For the beauty of the earth.*

Eric Whitacre, *The Seal Lullaby, Cloudburst*

*The British Library has a catalogue of recordings of animals and birds which you can listen to online*

# Prayers for the Earth

based on the fifth mark of mission

*To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

## **To Strive...**

God, creator of the universe,  
Fill us with your love for the creation,  
for the natural world around us,  
for the earth from which we come  
and to which we will return.  
Awake in us energy to work for your world;  
let us never fall into complacency, ignorance,  
or being overwhelmed by the task before us.  
Help us to restore, remake, renew. Amen

## **To Safeguard**

Jesus, Redeemer of the World,  
Remind us to consider the lost lilies,  
the disappearing sparrows;  
teach us not to squander precious resources;  
help us value habitats:  
seas, deserts, forests and seek to preserve this  
world in its diversity.  
Alert us to the cause of all living creatures  
destroyed wantonly for human greed or pleasure;  
Help us to value what we have left  
and to learn to live without taking more than we  
give. Amen

## **Integrity of Creation**

Spirit of the Living God  
At the beginning you moved over the face of the waters.  
You brought life into being, the teeming life  
that finds its way through earth and sea and air,  
that makes its home around us, everywhere.  
You know how living things flourish and grow  
How they co-exist; how they feed and breed and change  
Help us to understand those delicate relationships,  
value them, and keep them from destruction. Amen

## To Sustain...

God, of the living earth  
You have called people to care for your world –  
you asked Noah to save creatures from destruction.  
May we now understand how to sustain your world –  
Not over-fishing, not over-hunting,  
Not destroying trees, precious rainforest  
Not farming soil into useless dust.  
Help us to find ways to use resources wisely  
to find a path to good, sustainable living  
in peace and harmony with creatures around us. Amen

## To Renew

Jesus, who raised the dead to life  
Help us to find ways to renew  
what we have broken, damaged and destroyed:  
Where we have taken too much water,  
polluted the air, poured plastic into the sea,  
cut down the forests and soured fertile soils.  
Help all those who work to find solutions to  
damage and decay; give hope to those  
who are today working for a greener future. Amen

Anne Richards, Mission Theology Advisory Group,  
The Dispossession Project: Eco-House  
Resources available on [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

## Quotes

The world has been created for everyone's use, but you few rich are trying to keep it for yourselves. For not merely the possession of the earth, but the very sky, the air, and the sea are claimed for the use of the rich few... The earth belongs to all, not just to the rich.  
*St. Ambrose of Milan (340-397)*

Let us be 'protectors' of Creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world!" *From the Installation Mass Homily of Pope Francis, (2013)*

We need an imaginative commitment to new ways of approaching the subject of climate change that does not accept a deterministic or selfish nationalistic policy. We cannot simply look at ourselves and say, 'we must do better', and kick the ladder away from the vast majority of humankind that is struggling to find the prosperity that we enjoy so richly. This is not a standalone issue. It cuts across all we do. *Archbishop Justin Welby (2015)*

# Further Reading

Sharing God's Planet: A Christian Vision for a sustainable future, Claire Foster (CHP) (2005)

Creation in Crisis Christian perspectives on sustainability Eds Robert S White (SPCK) (2009)

A Political Theology of Climate Change, Michael S. Northcott, (SPCK), (2014)

Together for a season series, using Common Worship through the year. (CHP) (2007)

Seven Songs of Creation: Liturgies for celebrating and healing earth, Ed: N.C.Habel, Pilgrim Press, (2004)

Renewing the Face of the Earth: A theological and pastoral response to climate change David Atkinson, Canterbury Press, (2008)

The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary' Eds: Habel, N.C., Rhoads D., Santmire, H.P. Fortress Press, (2011)

Places of Enchantment: Meeting God in Landscapes, Usher, G.B. (SPCK) (2012)

Planetwise: Dare to care for God's world, Dave Bookless, Intervarsity Press (2008)

On Earth as in Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Ed J.

Chryssavgis Fordham University Press, (2012).

Laudato Si', Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on care of our common home. (2015)

## Links to worship and study resources

A Special Example: All Creation Worships (Holy Communion) New Patterns for Worship (CHP), p458: [www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/newpatterns/sampleservicescontents/npw22.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/newpatterns/sampleservicescontents/npw22.aspx)

Roots on the web [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)

European Christian Environmental [www.ecen.org](http://www.ecen.org)

Network

Arthur Rank Centre [www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk)

Shrinking the Footprint [www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint)

Christian Aid [www.caweek.org](http://www.caweek.org)

Tearfund [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)

Operation Noah [operationnoah.org](http://operationnoah.org)

Churches Together in Britain and <https://ctbi.org.uk/dispossession-project>  
Ireland

A Rocha and Eco-Church initiative <http://arocha.org.uk>

Anglican Environmental Network <http://acen.anglicancommunion.org>

Common Worship: Times and Seasons also has a rich selection of resources on pages 599-606 and 623-632. Those who pray the daily office may wish to use the material on pages 536, 537 and 541 of in Common Worship: Daily Prayer to add a seasonal flavour.