

ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE

Introduction

We encourage you to use this prayer service to mark the beginning and the 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.

Hosting a prayer service is a meaningful and unifying way to celebrate the Season of Creation. This season provides a unique opportunity to connect with Christians from different denominations and traditions. Contact clergy or justice coordinators from other local Christian communities to invite them to collaborate in co-hosting a prayer service. Share a link to the Season of Creation website <http://seasonofcreation.org/> and other information about the season to provide context and encourage participation.

In light of this year's theme, consider intentionally involving groups and individuals engaged in social justice, peace-building, and environmental advocacy. Their perspectives and contributions can enrich the prayer service and emphasize the need for collective action in caring for our common home. You may also consider organizing a donation collection to support a related cause.

Encourage all participating communities to actively promote the event through social media, print, and online platforms to ensure broad engagement and a diverse, dynamic gathering. Sample promotional materials and other useful resources are available on the official website <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>.

For the service itself, appoint a team of clergy and lay people from participating churches to lead the prayers and reflections, fostering a truly ecumenical spirit.

As you plan your service, consider showing both examples of the beauty of Creation and examples of damage caused by human conflicts with Creation (pollution, overexploitation, mutation, etc.). Such examples could represent this year's symbol "Peace with Creation", inspired by Isaiah 32:14-18, and your community's intention To act for justice and make peace with Creation.

You may also wish to decorate the space with natural items that represent the diverse destruction or pollution to land or water or biodiversity and other "peoples" from the beloved community of Creation. You can find more concrete ideas in Addendum 1 on how to incorporate this year's symbol (page 41).

*Portions of the service read by one person (or leader) are in regular font, **congregational responses are in bold.***

Opening words

These opening words are a suggestion for an introduction to frame the celebration as part of this year's Season of Creation.

Throughout history, many human activities have contributed to the destruction of Creation. Yet today, more than ever, some human activities take the form of a war against Creation. Some hold greater responsibility for this crisis—elite consumption, exploitative business models, and economic theories prioritizing profit over sustainability. Pollution, health crises, deforestation, and mining in conflict zones worsen the situation.

Yet there is hope for a peaceful Earth. Isaiah 32:14-18 envisions a peaceful Creation where God's people live only when justice is achieved. The Lord's justice will dwell in the desert, God's righteousness lives in the fertile field (Isaiah 32:16). In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "Hope is being able to see that there is light - despite all the darkness."

We hold our prayer service today as part of the ecumenical Season of Creation, a season of prayer and action for our common home that takes place every year from September 1 to October 4. The theme for the Season of Creation this year is "Peace with Creation", and the symbol is "The garden of Peace", inspired by Isaiah 32:18: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest".

A creation-themed hymn can be included here.

Greeting and Call to Worship

One: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

One: Come, let us worship God, the Creator of all things, who calls us to dwell in peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

All: We gather in gratitude for God's creation, longing for justice and peace to abide in the land.

One: Come, let us follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who reconciles all things and leads us in the way of righteousness, so that the wilderness may become a fruitful field and the fruitful field be deemed a forest.

All: We come to walk in the footsteps of Christ, seeking healing for creation and peace for all people.

One: Come, let us move with the Holy Spirit, the breath of life, who is poured out upon us, bringing renewal to the earth and restoring the harmony of Creation.

All: We praise God, who revives the land and calls us to be peacemakers with all of Creation.

One: The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

All: God of justice and peace, we gather in Your presence, united with all living beings. We come in hope, in worship, and in commitment to live as caretakers of Your world.

One: May our prayers rise like incense, and our worship be a song of love for all Creation.

All: We thank the Lord for giving life to all Creation! We thank God for our neighbours' life, human and non-human alike.

One: As we gather, we share the hope and the sufferings of our sisters and brothers in the whole Creation.

All: In communion with the waves of the sea, with the waves of the trees, we recite Psalm 139:14 together: "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." We love you, God! Amen.

(adapted from WCC Ecumenical Centre's Morning Prayer, Geneva, Led by ACT)

Responsive Psalm

Psalm 148:1-13 (Bible reference: NRSVUE)

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

**Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!**

Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!

**Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.

**He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

**fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!**

Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

**Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!**

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

**Young men and women alike,
old and young together!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;

**his glory is above earth and heaven.
Praise the Lord!**

A creation-themed hymn can be sung here.

Introduction to the Confession

All Creation is full of God's praise,
and we are called to join in with joy,
righteousness and peacefulness.

Yet as we look around us,
we see conflict and destruction.

We acknowledge: We ourselves cause conflict and destruction, and often fail to walk the path of peace. Everywhere on the planet, humans cause great harm, even as we know that the scope of destruction varies, and that everywhere human beings are among the victims of our deep conflict with Creation.

All too often, we fail to live as we are called to live. We fail to be ambassadors of peace, righteousness and reconciliation.

Let us confess our sins. Let us come before the Triune God and as for forgiveness and renewal.

Prayer of Confession

(Led by two readers)

*Creator God, God of the oceans,
God of the land and all that is within it:
You created this world with the power of your word.
You formed humankind with your own hands,
and breathed your own breath into us.
You gave us these lands as a gift—
a source of our identity and sustenance.
You empowered us to be the guardians of what you have made.*

*Loving God,
we have failed you and abused the gift you have given us.
We have offended you and defiled what you have made.*

Forgive us for betraying your trust.
Forgive us for our greed and arrogance.
Forgive us for what we have done to your Earth.
Forgive us for what we have done to your oceans.
Forgive us for what we have done to your creatures—
on the land, in the sky, and in the depths.

*Hear, O God of Compassion:
The cries of the land—now a desert,
laid barren through corrupt agricultural practices,
pollution, mining, and deforestation.*

The cries of the islands—drowning in rising seas,
oceans swelling with melting ice.

The cries of distress from Mother Earth—
storm and drought.

God of Life,
 heal your wounded Earth.
 Empower us to choose the road that leads to life.
 Guide us in the paths of righteousness, for your name's sake,
 so that we may experience once again
 your *Shalom* in the land and in the sea.

This we ask in the name of the one
 who came that we may have life in abundance—
 your Son, our Saviour, Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

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source: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle/oceania>

Proclamation of Forgiveness

May our God have mercy on us, forgive us our trespasses and give us new life.

Indeed, God has promised grace and forgiveness to us:

"My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (Isaiah 32:18)

Let us rejoice and trust in our calling, live as we are called to live, reconciled with the Father, ambassadors for Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Sing a hymn that praises God as Creator. If possible, find a (Gloria-)hymn that is shared by all participating traditions.

Thanksgiving

One: God of life, God of love, God of Creation. Thank You for all the wonderful, great and immense creatures that You created.

All: We thank You that we have the opportunity to inhabit and enjoy the wonders of this world.

One: Thank you for giving us forests that provide our air and give us the shade we need on hot days.

All: Thank you for giving us the sun that shines brightly with its energy, as well as the rains to refresh and nourish the earth bringing a special scent.

One: Thank you for giving us the fertile soil to provide us with food and sustenance for many animals.

All: Allow us to recognize that the community of the earth is a democracy of life as a whole that is based on the living economies that are the local economies of those who work the land.

One: Give us the strength to defend diversity in nature and in the culture of each place by putting the common good first, knowing that all beings have a natural right to their sustenance.

All: Help us to value each species, people and culture, knowing that each has intrinsic value.

One: Help us to walk in this world with faith and hope. Sustain us to protect and care for your creation, respectful of the resources it provides for us and aware of the finiteness of Creation.

All: Give us the courage to fight for life and be resilient in the face of those who destroy Creation and those who profit from it for their own business.

One: Thank you for each of our lives which we give to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Source: United Evangelical Lutheran Church, Argentina and Uruguay.
Translation: Season of Creation.*

A creation-themed hymn can be sung here.

Readings of Scripture

A short silence for reflection can be held after each reading.

First Reading – Isaiah 32:14-18 (NRSVUE)

Theme text of the Season of Creation 2025

For the palace will be forsaken,
the populous city deserted;
the hill and the watchtower
will become dens forever,
the joy of wild asses,
a pasture for flocks;

until a spirit from on high is poured out on us,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

The effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Silent reflection

Second Reading – Philippians 4:5-7 (NRSVUE)

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Silent reflection

Third Reading – John 14:15-17 (NRSVUE)

Jesus said:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

Silent reflection

Preaching or participatory Reflection

Reflection on Isaiah 32:14-18, on the theme “Peace with Creation”, and on the symbol.

A Creation-themed hymn can be included after the Reflection.

Profession of Faith: Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Source: English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988 ecumenical version
of the Nicene Creed ([link](#))*

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, or you may want to showcase local plants, animals from your area as a way to raise awareness of the peace and rest your local habitats need.

A Creation-themed hymn can be included during the collection of the offering.

Intercessory Prayer

O Lord, our God, help us to call you in the communion of your Church with one heart and one soul, according to your will.

We pray for your created world. You created the universe and all that lives and exists in it. The earth is filled with your creations. You make the grass, plants, and fruit-bearing trees grow, you feed the birds of the sky, you care for all your creatures on Earth. Out of your love you created human beings, give us the strength to faithfully till and keep your created world according to your will.

For Jesus Christ we ask,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for humanity, for every community, and every person in it. Grant that we may treat our fellow human beings with respect: that we may accept all in their diversity, that we may support and uphold the human dignity of our neighbours. Give us a grateful heart, that we may see ourselves as part of the great and rich whole of which you have created humanity. Grant us understanding, responsible thinking, and valuable work.

For Jesus Christ we ask,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for your Church, that she may be a messenger of life and an agent of your love throughout the world. Instill courage in the hearts of those who follow you, that we may dare to proclaim hope to those who live in fear, encouragement to those who doubt, comfort to those who despair. Give your Church the strength of unity to proclaim your Gospel in word and deed as part of the world in crisis.

For Jesus Christ we ask,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, the destitute, the oppressed and the vulnerable. We pray for our fellow human beings and for all fellow creatures affected by war, conflict, genocide, and ecocide. Serve justice to those who cry out to you, and to those who have no ability to cry out. Humble our hearts to relate to our fellow creatures in distress as true brothers and sisters. Give us the courage to act on behalf of those who silently endure injustice and guide our steps in the way of righteous and long-lasting peace. Act in our world your life-giving will.

We ask for Jesus Christ,
Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, grant that the future of the world, of humanity, of the Church and of all people may be in your hands, and that we may live in true hope, justice, and peace for the sake of our living Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Source: Oratio Oecumenica; Zsuzsa Koltai, Ecumenical Working Group for Season of Creation, Hungary. Translation: Season of Creation.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together.

Conclusion and Benediction

One: Let us give thanks and praise to the Most Holy and Glorious Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: It is right and just.

One: Truly it is right and just to glorify you, bless you, praise you, adore you, and give you thanks, O Maker of all things, visible and invisible. The highest heavens and all its powers praise you; the sun, the moon, and all the stars; the earth, the seas, and all that is in them, the heavenly Jerusalem and the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven; the angels, archangels, and heavenly hosts all sing, praising your majestic glory with triumphant hymns, with never ending voices, and with acclamations.

All: It is right and just.

One: With them and with all Creation we cry out and proclaim:

All (thrice): Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us.

One: Go in peace, brothers and sisters, live in peace with Creation...
And may the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity accompany you: The Father,
and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one God, to whom be glory, for ever.

All: Amen.

*Source: Liturgy of the Antiochene Syriac Maronite Church. Anaphora of
Saint James, Brother of the Lord.*

