



**SEASON OF  
CREATION**

# **SEASON OF CREATION CELEBRATION GUIDE**

LET JUSTICE AND PEACE FLOW





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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

Welcome to this year's Season of Creation. Thank you for bringing your community together for this special season of ecumenical solidarity. We emerge from it with a stronger sense that we share one common home, and of the urgency to protect it together.

Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for this worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common call to care for creation. We are co-creatures and part of all that God has made. Our wellbeing is interwoven with the wellbeing of the Earth.

We rejoice in this opportunity to safeguard our common home and all beings who share it. This year, the theme for the season is "Let justice and peace flow". This guide will help you learn about the season and plan to celebrate it. More resources, including webinars and prayer services, sample flyers, bulletin inserts, and the official Season of Creation social media channels, are available online. Please visit [SeasonOfCreation.org](https://SeasonOfCreation.org) to access all the materials.

In Christ,

*Season of Creation Ecumenical Steering Committee Members*



# ECUMENICAL FAITH LEADERS INVITATION



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration to pray and respond together to the cry of Creation: the ecumenical family around the world unites to listen and care for our common home, the Oikos of God.

The Season “Celebration” begins 1 September, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations.

Following the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere, we began in February the Season of Creation “Preparation” to reach local leaders and call our communities to participate actively by raising awareness of the theme, and how to respond to the cry of creation where the Lord calls us in our diverse contexts. The stage of “Preparation” is key to prepare together for the Season of Creation, creating bonds and relationships as the People of God caring for our common home.

This year we will unite around the theme “Let Justice and Peace Flow” with the symbol of A Mighty River. Ecumenical faith leaders from across the world have prepared a [special video](#) to invite you to take part in this season.

Many have also shared their reflections to inspire our ecumenical family in this journey forward as Christians everywhere prepare to witness the power of working together to let justice and peace flow as we care for our common home. We invite you to reflect with their words below:

***“The Season of Creation is a splendid opportunity for Christians around the world to embody the communion for which we human earthlings are created, and to do so in the quest for lifeways that build justice among people and allow Earth’s web of life to flourish.” - Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, Ph.D., Professor of Theological and Social Ethics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University. Director, PLTS Center for Climate Justice and Faith***

***“There has never before been a time, in the history of human existence, when we have so gravely threatened not only our own existence, but that of the rest of the living world. But it’s not too late to act, if we do it now, if we do it together.” - Bishop Olivia Graham, Diocese of Reading, Church of England***



*"The Season of Creation is a vital and necessary reminder that God's saving, healing, justice-seeking love extends to every part of creation. As the Church, the household of God, we are called to live out this life-giving love for the benefit of all." - Rev Faith Whitby, Bishop of the Central District, Methodist Church of Southern Africa*

*"We live in very turbulent and troubling times as we continue to struggle for world peace and the reconciliation and unity of all creation. We are surrounded by war, violence, climate challenges and unjust systems that continue to dehumanise and oppress people around the globe. Christians are urged to join with God in the ever-flowing river for justice and peace in the world." - Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary, World Council of Churches*

*"The Season of Creation is a reminder to young people that God is Creator, and we humans, along with others (animals and plants), are creatures. It is a reminder that we need to take care of one another as our Creator takes care of us SoC is important for youth as it recognises us (youth) as leaders of today rather than the victims of tomorrow." - Priyanka Gloria Gupta, Intern at the World Communion of Reformed Churches*

*"The Season of Creation is a special time of the year to pray with others as part of and with God's creation. I am reminded that our joint response in loving creation comes from first being in a loving relationship with our Creator God." - Jasmine Kwong Creation Care Catalyst, Lausanne Movement*

*"This Season of Creation will be an opportunity to pray, reflect and act together as the People of God for our common home. Like tributaries joining forces to become a mighty river, the ecumenical family will come together on a synodal path of care for our common home through justice and peace." - Sister Alessandra Smerilli, Secretary of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*

*"The Season of Creation is celebrated by ACT members around the world every year from September 1 to October 4. Celebrate with us this year." - Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, General Secretary, ACT Alliance.*

*"The Season of Creation has been a gift to the churches of the Middle East. It has awakened the already present creation dimension in the diverse worship traditions, it has provided language that responds to the concerns of the youth, and it has provided a bridge between the varied ministries and between the faith communities and the civil society.." - Rev'd Dr. Rima Nasrallah, Middle East Council of Churches.*



Through prayer, practical advocacy, and sustainable actions, this 2023 Season of Creation can prophetically renew our ecumenical unity and care for our common home. We invite you to join this special season and be part of this mighty movement for justice and peace.

May we journey together in communion as the People of God to let justice and peace flow!

**Members of the Season of Creation Advisory Committee:**

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*Sister Alessandra Smerilli, Secretary, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*

*Dr. Paulo Ueti, Theological Advisor & Latin American Regional Director, Anglican Alliance*

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*Dr. Ruth Valerio, Director Global Advocacy and Influencing, Tearfund*



## 2023 SEASON OF CREATION THEME AND SYMBOL

Each year, the Season of Creation Ecumenical Steering Committee proposes a theme for the Season of Creation.

**The theme for 2023 is “Let Justice and Peace Flow” and the symbol is “A Mighty River”.**

### Join the river of justice and peace

Prophet Amos cries out “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” ([Amos 5: 24](#)) and so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

Our prayers, sermons and liturgies must call for justice not only for humans but for all creation. Justice, allied with peace, calls us to repent of our ecological sins and to change our attitudes and actions. Righteousness demands that we live in peace, not conflict with our human neighbors, and building right relationships with all of creation. ‘Peace’ (shalom) involves not only the absence of conflict but positive, live-giving relationships with God, ourselves, our human neighbors, and all creation.

Those Indigenous communities that recognize the sacredness of natural elements and so live as an embodiment of an interconnected way of life, expressing a partnership between people and the life of the Earth, have much to teach the rest of the world.

We are invited to join the river of justice and peace on behalf of all Creation and to converge our individual identities, of name, family or faith community, in this greater movement for justice, just like tributaries come together to form a mighty river. As the people of God, we must work together on behalf of all Creation, as part of that mighty river of peace and justice.



## The river of life brings hope instead of despair

Prophet Isaiah proclaims “Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” ([Isaiah 43: 19](#))

Biodiversity is being lost at a rate not seen since the last mass extinction. The hope of keeping average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius is fading. The world humans have known, enjoyed and celebrated is changing rapidly beyond repair. The futures of young people are threatened by the cascading impacts of the loss of biodiversity and a changing climate. Industrialization, colonisation and the extraction and consumption of resources have created great wealth, unequally distributed. Powerful Global North nations have grown wealthy at the expense of Global South nations and Indigenous and subsistence communities.

Today’s climate and ecological emergency hurts the most vulnerable, many living in the least wealthy nations, who have contributed the fewest emissions. Indigenous peoples make up five percent of the world’s population and protect nearly 80 percent of the world’s remaining biodiversity.

We are presently more aware than ever of the link between fossil fuels, and violence and war. We can, however, dream and work for a world where each country produces the energy they need from God-given gifts of the sun and wind, rather than going to war for fossil fuels.

The urgency grows and we must make visible peace with Earth and on Earth, at the same time that justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. As we join the river of justice and peace with others then hope is created instead of despair. Streams can rise in the desert. An economy of peace can be built instead of an economy based on conflict.





## A mighty torrent can move mountains

Our individual actions during the Season of Creation are important. Celebrating creation, taking part in clean-ups, planting trees, and reducing our carbon footprint are some of the immediate actions we can take.

We must also recognise that as we need a mighty movement of justice, individual actions are no longer enough. Justice also includes paying historic debts. At a global level, nations with power and wealth have a duty to deal justly and honestly with communities that suffer most from the climate and ecological crises. They have not dealt righteously with their less wealthy neighbours in global forums. They have not fulfilled their promises of financing the losses and damages that vulnerable communities are suffering from, or funding necessary biodiversity initiatives in less wealthy nations, nor have they made the necessary sacrifices to stay below 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming.

Nevertheless, Global South nations, working together for more than 30 years, managed to win a victory at COP27 in making wealthier nations realise their moral duty to provide financing for loss and damage.

The recent decisions at COP15 to preserve biodiversity are also hopeful and require similar perseverance. The new UN Treaty on Oceans marks a historic moment for protecting marine biodiversity in international waters, adding to the hope of more persistent global responses to the climate crisis. These victories have been achieved by those with less power working together. Together we can be a mighty river of justice and peace, that brings new life to earth and future generations, a river that can move the mountains of injustice.



## How the river of justice and peace inspires our advocacy actions

Those living in the Global North must ask their elected representatives to fulfil their promises. These promises include funds promised at global meetings for the most vulnerable communities affected by climate change and for the preservation of remaining biodiversity.

Other actions in recognition of our interconnectedness and interdependence with all of Creation include learning about and signing the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers, part of a movement to recognize the inherent rights of Mother Earth. As an ecumenical family, we can engage in these actions and contribute to ensure that the web of life is preserved and cared for.

This is why practical advocacy and sustainable actions are more fully described in the Celebration Guide and the Season of Creation website. At the same time that we trust in God's work, we recognize that we can also participate in God's will for justice and peace. This Season of Creation, may we journey together in communion as the people of God to let justice and peace flow!



## 2023 SEASON OF CREATION PRAYER

Creator of All,

From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being.

On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.



## IDEAS TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment. It is an annual ecumenical season where we pray and act together as a Christian family for our common home.

We are called to engage in the Season of Creation starting early in the year, so that we can build a year-long process of preparation for the celebration that takes part later in the year.

As you prepare for the Season of Creation, remember that rather than events we are building encounters, to cultivate listening in the spirit of ecumenism, engaging in prophetic action for our common home and strengthened by eco-spirituality to commit and follow-up on our responsibilities as stewards of creation.

There are many different ways to celebrate the season. The ecumenical Season of Creation network has suggested a few ideas, which are available below. Be sure to visit [SeasonofCreation.org](http://SeasonofCreation.org) for more ideas and campaigns, and to register your event on the website.



## Host an ecumenical prayer service

Hosting a prayer service is a simple and beautiful way to celebrate the season. While a prayer service that stays within your church community is welcomed, this season offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with Christians outside of your denomination or network. A ecumenical prayer service developed for the Season of Creation 2023 can be found [at the end of the celebration guide](#) and on the Season of Creation website.

If interested, contact local Christian communities of denominations different from your own, and ask the clergy or justice coordinator whether he/she would like to collaborate in co-hosting a prayer service for the Season of Creation. If you send an email, be sure to share a link to the Season of Creation [website](#) and to include information about the season.

In light of this year's theme, see how you might intentionally include the needs and participation of groups and individuals in your community that work with social justice, peace-building, or the rights of rivers. You might also consider taking up a donation collection to support a particular issue.

Ask all participating communities to advertise and promote the service. Broadcasting information via social media, print and web media will ensure good attendance and lead to a diverse, dynamic celebration. Sample flyers, bulletin inserts, and pulpit announcements are on the [official website](#). Appoint either one clergy person or a group of clergy people from participating churches to lead the prayer service.



## Hold your worship service outside

To celebrate God's creation fully, it is good, where practical, to take our worship outside a building and to worship in the context of God's creation—which is already worshipping God eloquently as every creature, and even mountains, rivers and trees worship the Lord simply by doing what God created them to do.

You might like to consider a site of environmental significance. If it is a place of great natural beauty, the focus would be on giving thanks to God and committing ourselves to protecting the site and others. If it is a place of environmental degradation, the focus is on confessing our environmental sins and lamenting the voices of co-creatures who have been lost, and committing to actions of healing and restoration.

Depending on your style of worship and the weather, consider an informal service or brief Eucharist that incorporates the [ecumenical prayer service](#) offered in this Celebration Guide, or other creation-centered liturgies.

For your offering, ask children and adults to gather symbols from nature and take them to the holy table. These symbols can represent the "fruit of the earth and work of human hands" alongside the bread and wine, and serve as a reminder of the voices of all creation that joins in the feast.

Include a moment of silence to listen to, and wordlessly join in with the song of creation's worship. Or play sounds of water or a river in the place of singing as you come to the table.

In place of the sermon, divide into groups for a short Bible study.



## Organise a creation walk or pilgrimage

Organise a contemplative walk outside by a local river to meditate on the gift of God's creation and our response to be in deeper communion with all life. Organise a pilgrimage to a significant ecological site or a site that witnesses ecological or social injustice. Invite a group to study ecologically themed Scriptures, or pray with ecologically themed prayers such those that can be found in the [Laudato Si' Movement prayer book](#), while walking. Your pilgrimage could also culminate in a prayer service.

## Incorporate the symbol of a mighty river in your events

We have prepared some helpful ideas for activities and crafts with the symbol of a mighty river for your Season of Creation preparation journey which you are welcome to use and adapt as you see fit - you can find them in details [at the end of this celebration guide](#). These ideas on how to incorporate the mighty river symbol are also invitations to engage your faith community and reflect on how the symbol this year inspires unity and action for justice and peace.

You are also encouraged to [download the logo](#) of the Season of Creation and this year's symbol on the Season of Creation website for use in your materials and activities.



## Share your experience

### Photos and videos

- Be sure to take photos of your community in action. Your photos will be shared with people around the world, and could inspire prayers and action to protect creation. (kindly ask consent to share people's images, and refrain from closeups of children without parent/guardian permission). Your photos will show up at [SeasonOfCreation.org](https://SeasonOfCreation.org) if you use the hashtag #SeasonOfCreation

### Social media and blogs

- Post images and stories while you plan, and during your celebration. Be sure to tag your post or tweet with #SeasonofCreation, and it will appear on the Season of Creation website.
- Follow the official channels of Season of Creation on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and share your experiences. Don't forget to also subscribe to the Season of Creation [YouTube channel](#).
- Write a blog post about your community's Season of Creation celebration and include #SeasonofCreation so it can be easily found.

## ADVOCACY ACTION

The Season of Creation is an important time to unite our voices for our common home and our vulnerable sisters and brothers. This year more than ever before we have the opportunity to prophetically join forces as an ecumenical family and call for bold actions for climate justice and the preservation of biodiversity to build peace with Earth and on Earth.

Here are some concrete steps you can take to get involved with your faith community and act together for justice on climate and biodiversity issues:





- Learn who is active on these issues in your faith community. How are members/leaders of your church/faith community engaged at the local, national and international levels?
- Learn more about effective advocacy. Many faith organisations have helpful resources (be sure to check the resources page on [SeasonofCreation.org](https://SeasonofCreation.org) for details).
- Determine with your faith community who you should influence. Meetings with and petitions and letters to decision-makers are forms of influence. These can include letters to the editor of your local media outlets.
- Join and support campaigns for fair and just climate financing and biodiversity funding.

We encourage you to call on your government to keep the following promises:

## Climate Justice

- Allocate fair funding for the global Loss and Damage facility.
- Submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions in order to implement the Paris Agreement.
- [Keep 1.5 degrees Celsius alive](#) and stop dangerous fossil fuel emissions. Call on your government to reach binding global agreements that eliminate the use of fossil fuels and achieve a fair and equitable energy transition.

## Biodiversity

- Ensure your country is taking steps to protect biodiversity. Start by reading about and follow up on the early implementation of the Global Biodiversity Fund. If you live in the Global North, ensure that your country makes and upholds ambitious financial commitments.

Please go to the resources page on the [Season of Creation website](#) to see the range of advocacy campaigns to support for Season of Creation 2023.

We have also prepared special reflections on advocacy in light of this year's theme to help ground and fuel your events and activities for Season of Creation this year - you can find them [at the end of this celebration guide](#).



## GLOBAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

While each Christian community around the world celebrates the Season of Creation in its own way, a few events present opportunities to bring all communities together. You can access them through the global calendar of events on the [Season of Creation website](#).

You are particularly invited to join two online prayer services that will mark the opening and closing of the Season of Creation, as described below.

We also invite the whole ecumenical family to be part of [“Together - Gathering of the People of God”](#), a vigil prayer on September 30 being organised by the Taizé community in collaboration with numerous other Christian churches and ecclesial and ecumenical associations.

### September 1: Online Prayer Service for the Day of Prayer for Creation

Creation Day, also called the Day of Prayer for Creation or World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, opens the season each year. Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis, the World Council of Churches, and many other leaders have called the faithful to celebrate. Globally, Christians are invited to join an online prayer service to come together in a joyful celebration of our common cause. More information can be found at [SeasonofCreation.org](#).

### October 4: St. Francis Day

Many traditions view St. Francis as an inspiration and guide for those who protect creation. October 4 is his feast day and the last day in the Season of Creation. The faithful around the world will come together in an online event prepared by the Season of Creation Ecumenical Youth Committee to celebrate our month-long journey together. You can find information about the event on the [Season of Creation website](#) and social media.



## ABOUT THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation runs annually from September 1 through October 4. The world's 2.2 billion Christians are invited to pray and care for creation during this time. The Season of Creation unites the global Christian family around one shared purpose. It also provides flexibility in celebrating prayer services and engaging in a variety of actions to care for creation.

### History

September 1 was proclaimed as a Day of Prayer for Creation for the Eastern Orthodox Church by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in [1989](#). It was embraced by other major Christian European churches in [2001](#), and by Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church in [2015](#).

In recent years, many Christian churches have begun celebrating the "Season of Creation" (also known as Creation Time) between September 1 and October 4, the Feast of St. Francis that is observed by some Western traditions. St. Francis is the author of the Canticle of the Creatures, and the Catholic saint of those who promote ecology.

Several statements from the past few years have called the faithful to observe this month-long season, such as those of the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines in 2003, the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu in 2007 and the World Council of Churches in 2008.



## The Ecumenical Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides the resources to celebrate the season and it is comprised of the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Laudato Si' Movement, Anglican Communion Environmental Network, the Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the European Christian Environmental Network, ACT Alliance, A Rocha International, World Methodist Council, and Christian Aid.

As an ecumenical network, we are inspired by the urgent call from Pope Francis' Laudato Si', "for a new dialogue on how we are shaping the future of our planet" and "we require a new and universal solidarity" where the most vulnerable are supported and to enable them to live in dignity. We invite you to join us in these efforts.

We are also extremely grateful for the work of the Season of Creation Ecumenical Youth Committee.



### Members of the Season of Creation Steering Committee:

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## ADDENDUM 1: ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE

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 "mighty river" by decorating your worship space with images of rivers, or water. You can find more concrete ideas [here](#). As you prepare for the service, be sure to prepare a bowl of water for the sprinkling of the congregation.*

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

### Welcome

*"Listen carefully, I am about to do a new thing, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even put a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."  
(Isaiah 43: 19)*

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

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)

### Opening Prayer

Blessed are you, Creator of all  
to you be praise and glory forever  
as your dawn renews the face of the Earth  
bringing light and life to all creation  
bring hope to your people.



May we rejoice in this day you have made  
open our eyes to behold your presence  
and strengthen our hands to work for justice for all of  
creation,  
that the world may rejoice together and give you praise.

(Adapted from Lancelot Andrewes, 1626)

## Greeting - A Four Direction Prayer

Let us turn our hearts to the West  
From there the Thunders bring us cleansing rain  
**Creator God, heal us and our relatives**

Let us turn our hearts to the North  
Winter comes to us from there and calls us to rest  
**Creator God, restore our strength**

Let us turn our hearts to the East  
The morning Sun begins each day there  
**Creator God awaken us and help us to walk with a renewed life**

Let us turn our hearts to the South  
Where the warm winds come from to give us comfort and joy  
**Creator God soothe our aching souls**

Let us turn our hearts to the Sky  
From there our Creator sees all around us  
**Creator God help us to trust you to lead us**

Let us turn our hearts to the Earth  
From there quiet wisdom comes to teach us  
**Creator God hear us as we pray**

(Adapted from Diocese of Western North Carolina - Anglican Indigenous Ministries)



## Psalmody- Psalm 85

We are presently more aware than ever of the link between fossil fuels, and violence and war. Let us pray and proclaim with the Psalmist:

Lord, you poured out blessings on your land!

You restored the fortunes of Israel.

You forgave the guilt of your people—  
yes, you covered all their sins.

**May love and truth meet together**

**Let justice and mercy kiss**

You held back your fury.

You kept back your blazing anger.

Now restore us again, O God of our salvation.

Put aside your anger against us once more.

Will you be angry with us always?

Will you prolong your wrath to all generations?

Won't you revive us again,

so your people can rejoice in you?

**May love and truth meet together**

**Let justice and mercy kiss**

Show us your unfailing love, O Lord,

and grant us your salvation.

I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying,

for he speaks peace to his faithful people.

But let them not return to their foolish ways.

Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,

so our land will be filled with his glory.

Unfailing love and truth have met together.

Justice and peace have kissed!

**May love and truth meet together**

**Let justice and peace kiss**

Truth springs up from the Earth,

and righteousness smiles down from heaven.

Yes, the Lord pours down his blessings.

Our land will yield its bountiful harvest.

Righteousness goes as a herald before him,

preparing the way for his steps.

**May love and truth meet together**

**Let justice and peace kiss**

(Adapted from the New Living Translation)





## Litany of repentance

God of light, life and love,  
God of land, and sea, and sky,  
Who called creation into existence and wove it into a rich  
tapestry, a fine mat, a web of life

Your Spirit hovered over the face of the primordial waters,  
And was breathed into humankind after You made us  
equally in Your image.

Your Word was made flesh and embodied Your divine  
love as it took root and bore fruit in us, restoring our  
relationship with You.

Yet we have not honoured this relationship with You and  
the rest of Your Creation.

We have disrespected the web of life

We have devalued the fine ecological mat that You wove  
with so much love

We have uprooted Your tree of life and sold it as logs.

We have forgotten that we sweat and cry saltwater and  
have polluted Your oceans and rivers... oceans that cry for  
Justice and rivers that call to righteousness.

Instead of everything that has breath praising You, all  
creation groans in pain as trees and phytoplankton choke  
on carbon belched from our desire for more, and our care  
for less.

All around we see the consequences of our ecological sin  
as we extract and exploit, as we defile and pillage our sister  
and brother creation:

Heatwaves and wildfires

Bitter winters

Droughts and floods

Rising sea levels and rising ocean temperatures

More extreme cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes

Yet we are blind

Creation roars in pain

Yet we are deaf

You call us in Christ, to speak truth to power and peace to  
this planet, our common home

Yet we are silent.



God of hope and healing  
May your Rivers of Righteousness  
Wash away our apathy, our greed and selfishness and  
reveal the deep relationships You created for us with all  
creation.  
Nourish us with the water of life that restores, turning  
deserts of despair into oases of hope.

May the waves of Your embrace  
Transform us back into guardians of Your creation.  
May the currents of Your justice  
Carry us to Your lagoon of peace  
Where all creation may enjoy  
Life in abundance

We pray in the name of the one who came so that the whole  
cosmos may have everlasting life,  
Jesus the Christ,  
Amen.

(Rev. James Shri Bhagwan, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches)

## Repentance

In God there is forgiveness.  
**Loving and all-seeing God,  
forgive us where we have failed to support one another  
and to be what we claim to be.  
Forgive us where we have failed to serve you;  
and where our thoughts and actions have been  
contrary to yours we ask your pardon.**

God forgives us; be at peace.  
[Silence]  
Rejoice and be glad,  
for Christ is resurrection,  
reconciliation for all the human race  
And for the whole of creation.  
**Amen.**

(Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book - Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia)



## Reading of Scripture followed by preaching or reflections

### First Reading - Amos 5: 21-24

Justice, allied with peace, calls us to repent of our ecological sins and to change our attitudes and actions. Righteousness demands that we live in peace, not conflict with our human neighbours, and building right relationships with all of creation. We are invited to join the river of justice and peace on behalf of all creation and to converge our individual identities, of name, family or faith community, in this greater movement for justice, just like tributaries come together to form a mighty river. Let us hear the words of prophet Amos:

"I can't stand your religious meetings.  
I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions.  
I want nothing to do with your religion projects,  
your pretentious slogans and goals.  
I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes,  
your public relations and image making.  
I've had all I can take of your noisy ego-music.  
When was the last time you sang to me?  
Do you know what I want?  
I want justice—oceans of it.  
I want fairness—rivers of it.  
That's what I want. That's all I want."

(The Message Translation)



## **Second Reading - John 7:37-39**

On this Earth, our common home, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation. Let us hear the Word of the Lord:

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this Jesus meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

## **The Affirmation of Faith**

You, O God, are supreme and holy.  
You create our world and give us life.  
Your purpose overarches everything we do.  
You have always been with us.  
You are God.  
You, O God, are infinitely generous,  
good beyond all measure.  
You came to us before we came to you.  
You have revealed and proved  
your love for us in Jesus Christ,  
God made flesh,  
who lived and died and rose again.  
You are with us now.  
You are God.  
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.  
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.  
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.  
You are our God. We worship you.

(Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book)



### 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 water or river sounds as a way to raise awareness by listening to the mighty rivers from your local ecology praising God and calling us to care.

### Intercessory Prayers

Creator and Redeemer, as we approach you in prayer, make us walk in beauty and balance. Make us open our hearts and minds. Make us speak the truth. We pray for your community, the Church, the Body of Christ. We pray for all our relatives in the circle of life throughout all Creation, for those chosen to be our leaders and teachers.

#### **In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.**

We call upon the Earth, our planet home, with its beautiful depths, soaring heights and deep waters, its vitality and abundance of life, and together we ask:

#### **That it may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon the mountains and deserts, the high green valleys and meadows filled with wild flowers, the snows, the summits of intense silence, and we ask:

#### **That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon the land which grows our food, the nurturing soil, the fertile fields, the abundant gardens and orchards, and we ask:

#### **That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon the forests, the great trees reaching strongly



to the sky with earth in their roots and the heavens in their branches, the fir and the pine and the cedar and we ask:

**That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon the creatures of the fields and forests and the seas, our brothers and sisters the wolves and deer, the eagle and dove, the great whales and the dolphin. We ask:

**That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon all those who have lived on this earth, our ancestors and our friends, who dreamed the best for future generations, and upon whose lives our lives are built, and with thanksgiving, we call upon them too ...

**That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We call upon the nations of the world to hear the cry of those who have suffered loss of homes, lives and hope because of climate change. May they hear the cry of those whose schools, churches, hospitals, roads and infrastructure have been damaged. We pray for justice and for peace:

**That they may teach us and show us the way.**

We pray for all victims of war and violence. We pray for countries where the greed for oil and gas are leading to war. We hold in our hearts those areas where fossil fuel projects have destabilised communities and human rights abuses have occurred. We pray for areas where climate change has led to drought and conflict over water and resources is taking place. May we respond to the cry of the Earth and those living in poverty, as peacemakers who challenge the violence that threatens us all. We ask:

**That they may teach us and show us the way.**

Creator, you made the world and declared it to be good: the beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass speaks to us; the summit of the mountains, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the lakes speak to us; the faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speak to us. But above all, our heart soars, for you speak to us in Jesus the Christ, in whose name we offer these prayers.

**Amen.**

(Adapted from Prayers of the People, the Church of the Four Winds, Portland Oregon.)



## The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with the Lord's Prayer that Jesus has taught us.

*[Pray the traditional version of the Lord's Prayer or the following version by Jim Cotter adapted in the New Zealand Prayer Book]:*

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 communion 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.**

## Sharing of peace

The peace of God be with you all.

**In God's justice is our peace.**

Brothers and sisters,

Christ calls us to live in unity with each other and with the whole of Creation

**We seek to live in the Spirit of Christ.**



## Blessing of water

Blessed are you, Creator God,  
who in Christ, the living water of salvation,  
blessed and transformed us.  
Grant that when we are sprinkled with this water  
we will be refreshed by the power  
of the Holy Spirit.  
May we draw water from the springs of salvation.  
and continue to walk together in the new life we received at  
Baptism.

## The sprinkling of the congregation

Christ is the living water  
cleansing, refreshing, making all things new.  
Christ is the living bread;  
food for the hungry,  
strength for the pilgrim and the labourer.

## Benediction

May we be blessed to open our hearts to receive “the living  
waters of God’s justice and peace” **within us:**

**Amen.**

May we be blessed to share “the living waters of God’s  
justice and peace” with our suffering brothers and sisters  
and all creatures around us:

**Amen.**

May we be blessed to walk together with all people of good  
will so that the many streams of “the living waters of God’s  
justice and peace” may become a mighty river all over the  
Earth:

**Amen.**

And may God bless us on this journey, + the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

(Fr Josphrom Kureethadam, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development)





## ADDENDUM 2: HOW TO INCORPORATE THE SYMBOL IN YOUR EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

### Activities

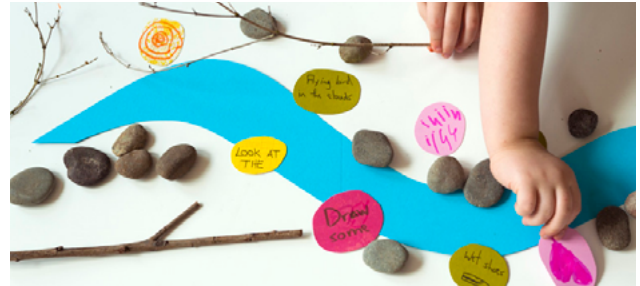
- Organise an encounter to introduce this year's Season of Creation theme and symbol. Briefly introduce and explain the theme and symbol, then dedicate a few minutes to open dialogue or small group discussions so people can share how they feel about the theme and symbol and what activities they would like to organise during September 1 - October 4. You may use the sounds of running water to invite participants to meditate on the symbol of a mighty river and reflect on how that makes them feel.
- Bring a bowl of water to the altar to keep the symbol present in all your Church or community celebrations. You may decorate the bowl with white and blue ribbons or paper to represent flowing water. Optionally, you can invite different members of your community to bring some water from their homes and each fill up the bowl with water, symbolising the power when different bodies of water come together.
- Invite your community or group to bring pieces of blue fabric to your event. Create a procession moment in which, while the passage of Amos 5 is read, each person brings their own piece of blue fabric and hangs it or places it on the floor along with the others, slowly creating the image of a river. See the following images for inspiration:





## Crafts

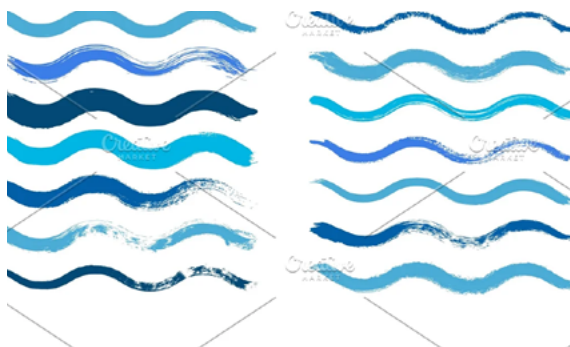
Create a river from blue construction or other blue paper (as below). Hang it on a wall or place it on the floor. Invite your community members to write their calls for Season of Creation justice and peace actions on small pieces of paper. Surround the river with these calls for justice and peace actions.



**For teens:** invite the teenagers of your community to research the main rivers in your region or country. Ask them to choose one river and find its main characteristics, then create a small mockup using cardboard, sustainable paint, rocks, and local leaves.



**For children:** invite the children of your community to draw or paint a mighty river to be used in your celebrations and activities. The drawing can be simple coloured models like [these ones](#), or you can invite all the kids to finger paint a river together, so that the strokes represent flowing water and tributary rivers - see images below as examples.





## ADDENDUM 3: REFLECTIONS ON ADVOCACY

We live in a world where there is a power imbalance between the Global North and the Global South. We see this in the relationship between wealthy nations and nations with fewer financial resources.

We also see that those with the fewest financial resources are the most affected by the climate crisis, a crisis created by emissions from wealthier nations.

Earth is experiencing a dangerous decline in nature as a result of human activity. One million plant and animal species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades.

Human existence is threatened by the cascading impacts of a changing climate caused by human activities such as the extraction of resources and the burning of fossil fuels.

### Global forums should be just

The power imbalance between Global North and Global South plays out in international forums hosted by the United Nations. Here countries gather to reach consensus on how to reduce climate change or preserve biodiversity. Both the climate forums and the biodiversity forums are known as COPs. Two significant ones were held in 2022, [COP27](#) on climate and [COP15](#) on biodiversity.

The UN forums ensure that Global North countries, which are wealthier, and Global South countries, which generally have less access to financial resources, come together to discuss fair and just paths forward, paths that will preserve life on earth.



## **Broken promises**

Yet wealthy nations do not deal righteously, or honestly, with their neighbours in these forums.

Global North nations have not fulfilled their promises of significantly reducing, or mitigating, global warming emissions, or of providing financial compensation for loss and damage in the Global South caused by a changing climate.

They have not provided adequate financing to protect biodiversity, most of which is also found in the Global South and protected by Indigenous communities.

Indigenous peoples make up five percent of the world's population yet protect nearly 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity.

There is still time to protect what remains and slow down the pace of climate change, but it will require financial commitments from Global North countries, and a much stronger commitment to reducing emissions.

Climate change mitigation will inevitably require a drastic reduction in fossil fuel emissions. We urgently need to unite in calling on our governments to reach binding global agreements that eliminate the use of fossil fuels and achieve a fair and equitable energy transition.



## Signs of hope

### Climate: Addressing Loss and Damage

Working together, peoples and nations of the Global South, often marginalised in global forums, have shown that they can achieve justice.

Change at global forums is slow, partly because consensus must be achieved, but recent successes shows progress is possible.

The commitment to create a Loss and Damage facility at COP27 last year is a victory by vulnerable nations and their representatives. It required decades of negotiation and coordination on the part of countries in the Global South. While the Loss and Damage facility does not yet have the needed funds, the commitment to establishing it is a signal that justice can be achieved, particularly when nations work together.

The Loss and Damage facility, when financed, will provide funds to the most vulnerable communities and nations as they cope with the losses created by a changing climate: from loss of land, homes and livelihoods to the loss of tools, seeds and culture.

We need to ensure that the Loss and Damage facility is set up in a way that reaches those people who are most vulnerable to climate change and experiencing the worst impacts. It must serve the needs of communities who have the least, who also have done the least to cause climate change.

The facility should recognise both the economic and non-economic impacts of Loss and Damage.

We also need to make sure that the facility has adequate financing from wealthier countries. This must be in addition to already existing funding for development and aid. It should be allocated in the form of grants rather than loans and be based on the principle that the polluter pays.

### Biodiversity: an important commitment



Also promising is the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#) adopted in the closing hours of the 2022's United Nations Biodiversity Conference ([COP15](#)). The GBF will address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and protect Indigenous rights.

It includes concrete measures to halt and reverse nature loss, including putting 30 percent of the planet and 30 percent of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030.

It also contains proposals to increase finance for developing countries, a major sticking point during talks.

Those living in wealthy countries can help to ensure the

## Peace requires justice

debt their countries owe is paid, both to creation and to vulnerable communities.

The changing climate is mostly due to the emissions of wealthier nations during their industrialisation; biodiversity has partly been affected by extractive industries that have primarily benefited wealthier nations.

We can join the river of justice and peace by working for both restitution and restoration through advocacy and lobbying on behalf of affected communities and creation.

### Right relationships

We are called to a renewed vision of life by our faith, one in which we live in right relationship with all of creation. Psalm 63 expresses this, calling us to righteousness, or right relationship.

There are communities we can learn from that have traditionally cultivated right relationships with creation. The Gwich'in are an Indigenous people (First Nation in Canada) whose traditional area crosses the Yukon/ Alaska border. The caribou calving grounds located in Alaska's Arctic



Refuge near the Canadian border are considered sacred by the Gwich'in, and known to them as "the place where life began." The relationship between the caribou and the Gwich'in expresses a partnership between people and the life of earth.

Sadly, this area is now threatened by the sale of oil drilling rights in the Arctic Refuge.

All communities have the potential to rejoice in being part of the web of life. Joining the river of peace and justice can lead us to right relations.

### [Work for peace with earth](#)

COP negotiators from the most vulnerable countries worked for 30 years to have the needs of the most vulnerable recognised. In the same way, we can join with others such as our faith community to work on behalf of all Creation. We can be part of that mighty river of peace and justice.

Members of faith communities living in rich countries in the Global North can engage with their national representatives who influence global meetings such as the UN COPs. Let your representatives know how important the lives of those living in more vulnerable nations are.

Put pressure on your governments to make honest, just and righteous decisions in global forums and to fulfill financial commitments to loss and damage and to biodiversity. Encourage them to reach binding global agreements that eliminate the use of fossil fuels and achieve a fair and equitable energy transition.

To achieve peace on earth, we must also achieve peace with the earth, and with each other. This will require justice.