

starters for Sunday

Starters for Sunday October 7th

Creation Time Resources Day Six

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals” ...God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning —the sixth day. ~ *The Book of Genesis*

The Earth and all its People

[Genesis 1: 24 – 31:](#)

[Psalm 148:](#)

[St. John 6: 1 – 15:](#)



Introduction to Theme



Climate justice is one of the great pressing issues of the twenty first century. Christian Aid has called for action on climate justice now as ‘the world's poorest people live on the frontline of climate change; they are affected first and worst, yet have done least to cause the problem.’

At the United Nations conference on climate change held at Durban in South Africa in December 2011 faith leaders came together to call upon governments around the world to promote climate justice:

‘Caring for the earth is a form of worship to God the creator. God put passion and energy into creating something beautiful for his children. How can we do anything but treat it with respect. Anything else would be an insult. How would a parent feel if their child trashed a gift they had spent time and effort making?’ Rev Willard Metzger, the General Secretary of the Mennonite Church of Canada



Multi-Faith Rally at King's Park in Durban South Africa

Congregations across Scotland have joined Eco-Congregation Scotland to show their commitment to care for creation and the movement now numbers over 280 congregations. At the Annual Gathering In April 2012 they heard Charles Agboklu of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana talk about the impact of climate change on Africa and how churches there are helping communities adapt to the changes. Charles made clear that we have created many problems for Africans through our indiscriminate use of fossil fuels. To promote climate justice we have to reduce our use of carbon fuels; and support churches and others in Africa who are helping communities to adapt to a changing climate. This can become one of the great Christian challenges of the age.



Introduction to Passages

That the world in general is increasingly conscious of the need to deal with the injustices around the climate of the earth, there can be no doubt. The weather, which up till recently has mainly been a topic (in Britain perhaps the main topic!) of casual conversation, now demands, and mainly gets, much more serious consideration. Google “Climate Justice”, as I have done to help me in my thinking for this day's theme, and you are in danger of being overwhelmed by the blizzard of websites and technical information about what is being done – or needs desperately to be done – to address this pressing issue.

While the Bible doesn't address this matter directly, here are some thoughts arising out of five passages which relate to our theme in a number of ways.

Genesis 1: 24 – 31

The peoples who kept alive this wonderful poetic narrative of the beginning of things, until it was recorded superbly in Genesis, were consistently and sharply clear about priorities. On the sixth “day” of creation, the animals, including humankind, are created. But only humankind is created “in our image, according to our likeness”; there is absolute equality here between male and female; and God gives them “responsibility” (Petersen's better paraphrasing of the Hebrew phrase “have dominion”) over the whole of creation. So we are left in no doubt at all – as far as this narrative is concerned, God's original plan was to devolve the care for the whole of creation upon humankind. The fact that we have consistently messed up, doesn't seem to me to alter that initial plan – we just need to be humble enough to constantly ask for help, and determined enough to keep on working at it – the ball is still at our feet.

On the specific issue of climate justice, it's perhaps appropriate to note here, in the context of the statement in verse 27 about God making us equally “male and female”, that it is women who are likely to have to bear the greater burden of climate injustice in the many situations of poverty across the world. As so often, injustice weighs more heavily on the female side of creation.

Leviticus 25: 8 – 28

This great jubilee project, aimed at legislating for a just and equitable society in ancient Israel, may or may not have worked consistently in practise. But the point here is that lays down a very clear marker, perhaps best expressed in verse 23 - “the land in mine; with me, you are but aliens and tenants.”



In recent years, people concerned about climate justice have latched onto this concept of Jubilee. The Jubilee Justice Campaign, for instance (www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk), seeks to draw attention to the injustice around the way in which the rich countries of the world (led by the UK) have bypassed the United Nations and gone to the World Bank to set up a climate fund, which forces poor countries to accept loans, rather than give them grants, in order to deal with the effects of climate change – a problem which they are not responsible for causing. (By contrast, the United Nations Adaptation Fund gives grants, not loans.)

This year, the Scottish Government has set aside £3m over three years as a Climate Justice Fund, to support water projects in Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, to help communities there to “increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change”; this initiative has the support of all the aid agencies, and Scottish Church leaders.

All such initiatives – and there are many more like them – seem to me to give strong support to the basic message expressed in Leviticus, which says that if we are all simply tenants on God's earth, then the responsibility, for ensuring that the effects of climate change do not land unfairly on those least able to cope with them, lies with those of us who have not only contributed to the changes in the first place, but are most able to alleviate the effects. There isn't much evidence that we in the rich countries are really prepared to bear the pain that this will inevitably entail.

Psalm 148

What a great shout of praise from the whole of creation! In my mind, I link this with St. Paul's vision in Romans 8: 18 – 21, where he speaks of “creation waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God”, and of “the whole creation groaning in labour pains until now”. We need poetic visions like this to lift our eyes, from time to time, above the hard struggle we're engaged in, so that we can see what God has ultimately in mind for creation at the end of time. The version of this psalm in Church Hymnary 4, as Hymn 105, give it a real boost; as does George MacLeod's great prayer in his little book of prayers “The Whole Earth Shall Cry Glory” (Wild Goose Publications, 1985), with its marvellous verse:



“Holy Spirit, Enlivener,
breathe on us, fill us with life anew.
In Your new creation, already upon us, breaking through,
groaning and travailing,
but already breaking through,
breathe on us.
Till that day when night and autumn vanish:
and lambs grown sheep are no more slaughtered:
and the whole earth shall cry Glory at the marriage feast of
the Lamb.
In this new creation, already upon us,
fill us with life anew.”

St. John 6: 1 – 15

Jesus feeds the five thousand – one of the great Signs in this Gospel, designed to awaken in us to both the power of Christ and also His compassion, as well as pointing towards both the basic Christian eucharistic meal and also the promise of the “marriage feast of the Lamb” at the last day.

In relation to our concern on this day for Climate Justice, this passage can also remind us that we really are “all in this together”. Look at who is all involved in this Sign: not only Jesus, but Philip, Andrew, all the disciples, and of course the boy with his picnic – as well as the crowd.

In 1992, at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, the nations of the world did come together at the so-called Earth Summit, and set up the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which led to the Kyoto Protocol signed by 194 parties, a legally binding obligation on developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We're still a long way from achieving the aim of that vision – but it is there out in front of us, and it does remind us that we are all tied together in this struggle – as we saw right at the start.



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. If you would be interested in looking at our free materials on how you might preach, please click [here](#) to see our [Preachers Perspectives](#) web page where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

Prayers

Almighty God,

You have built your Church

On the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Jesus Christ himself

Being the chief cornerstone.

Join us together in unity of the spirit

By their teaching,

That we may become a holy temple,

Acceptable to you;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

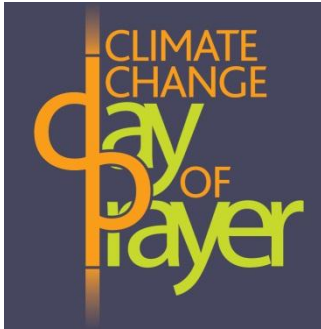
Who lives and reigns

With you and the Holy Spirit,

One God, now and forever.



The Climate Change Day Prayer



Creator God, this earth is miraculous and beautiful.

Forgive our confusion and inaction as we confront the challenges of climate change.

In the light of your truth, seen so clearly in the life and teaching of Jesus, help us to re-examine ourselves and our lifestyle choices and see clearly the implications of how we live on all that sustains life on this earth.

May we follow your leading in caring for every aspect of this precious world, which you made, and love.

We pray for world leaders to agree a new, just and radical treaty that will protect our fragile world for future generations.

Throughout history you have moved people to do amazing things for the sake of their neighbours.

Inspire us now to work together, as your people, to change priorities in the way we live, so that we build a fair and safe world for all your creation; a world where your will is done as it is in heaven.

Amen



From Climate Change Day of Prayer, CTBI, 2009

Christ

Who helped a boy share his packed lunch

and fed a giant crowd,

Who calmed a troubled steward

by turning water into wine,

Who gave followers a meal to remember

as he broke bread in an upper room

And fed weary disciples

cooking fish by a lakeside....

...thank you for our daily bread.

Help us to follow you

by sharing our plenty,

bringing joy round the table

with food that nourishes,

restores and fulfils.

Amen



Children's Time

Purpose: to allow us to think about what we do to the earth by throwing rubbish away and what we can do about it.

What you need:

one or more adult volunteers (could be the minister) who don't mind getting stuff put on them a lot of different rubbish

- plastic bags*
- cans and bottles*
- some heavier items like an old radio or tv or bike wheel*
- old trainers and clothes (or not so old)*
- anything else that you think could work*
- and space you can lie down*

- 1. Get the adult volunteers to lie down.*
- 2. Explain to children that we're going to be throwing away some stuff we don't use anymore and we've found a great site - right here [where the adults lying down are].*
- 3. One by one get the children to put things on top of the adults (obviously being careful that adults are not hurt), gradually add things on.*
- 4. After everything is on take a look and ask how they think the adults are feeling.*
- 5. Imagine the adults are parts of the earth that are covered with our rubbish... now how do you think the earth feels?*
- 6. So what can we do to help the earth? (go backwards from what you put on and take things off as you work out what to do with them)*
plastic bags - if we have them use them again or recycle them, or better yet use sturdy reusable bags. cans and bottles - recycle so that they can be made into new cans and bottles
old clothes - give them to charity shops or to places that use the fabric parts again etc.
- 7. Now look and see what's left on the adults.*
- 8. Think about God having made creation and then gave it a break.*
- 9. Is it time that we gave creation a break too?*



Collect

Almighty God,
You have built your Church
On the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ himself
Being the chief cornerstone,
Join us together in unity of spirit
By their teaching,
That we may become a holy temple,
Acceptable to you;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns
With you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.

"A Prayer in the form of poem from Ethiopia, the so called island of Christianity"

Mom is crying!
Our mother earth is dying!
She is really burning!

The tradition of planting trees is gone
her children abandoned her, and
did harm to her.

Give wisdom to her children to save her.
Direct and lead us all to protect her.

She is really burning.
The globe is crying loud.
Africa is crying loud.
Ethiopia is crying loud.
Our mom earth is drying!



Oh! wisdom!
Oh! fear of God!
Oh! care for creation!

Let us confess our sins
which were invisible and not considered as such.

Lord have mercy on us and lead us and help us
to save our beautiful mom, our earth, our globe.

Let it be our daily duty to save our mom.
As we love ourselves, let it be so for our mom, earth.

Then the daughter will dance, the sons will join
the whole community will rejoice
in the wellbeing of our mom, earth

In the valley of Omo down, on the mount of Rise Dashe,
Ethiopians want to flourish
in the wellbeing of our mom Ethiopia, earth!

Our God, the source of everything
the creator and savior of mom
please give all human beings thoughtful spirit,
hard- working habits, towards the betterment of life,
all together to save our mom.

Our mom, earth is bleeding
it is so cruel to let her bleed!

Please, our Father and Mother and creator of mom give us kind spirit
to save her from such danger up on!

Have mercy on us! give us directions to save her!

By Belaynesh Bekele, Ethiopia, From World Council of Churches , Time for Creation 2010

I am the fanua

I am the fanua
The placenta buried in my ancestral land after childbirth
I am the pute
The umbilical cord buried and my link to my fanua



I am the fanua
The land which holds my history, my life, my death
I am the fanua
The land of my people, my ancestors, my descendents

I am the fanua
That which bonds me to the air, the earth, the sea
I am the fanua
That which binds me to the plants, the animals, the fish
I am the fanua
My mother's pain and joy in giving life
I am the fanua
Mother earth's pain and joy in giving life

I am the fanua
God's beautiful and unparalleled creation
I am the fanua
God's undying and steadfast love
I am the fanua
Wailing in despair at my self-destruction
I am the fanua
Dying of a slow suicide

I am the fanua
Expecting God's revelation
I am the fanua
Believing in God's promise

I am the fanua
You are the fanua
We are the fanua.

Faautu Talapusi, Samoa/Switzerland

NB: In most Polynesian languages fanua (fenua or whenua) signifies not only land but also the placenta.



That story by Ruth Burgess

(John 6 v 5-14 Matt 14 v 15-21)

It's that story,
you remember,
the wee boy
five loaves
two fishes
twelve disciples
Jesus,
women, men and children,
five thousand fish suppers,
people well fed.

That story, Jesus,
is it about miracles
crowd control
hunger,
healthy diets
significant numbers
sharing laughter
sharing food?



And is it a story,
a sign
a parable
a wonder?
Can we get at what really happened?
Does it matter?
Who knows?

Enough for everyone
that's what we remember...
a little food
a lot of questions
and Jesus giving thanks.

That story, Jesus,
tell it in us
tell it through us,
in our hopes, our dreams
our struggles.

Teach us always,
to share our fish suppers,
our wonder,
our stories
and our bread.

Ruth Burgess



Creation Time Prayer

This model is based on 'Appreciative Inquiry' and offers time for silent reflection on the theme of each of the seven days. It allows the worship leader to support the congregation through a more reflective and quiet time of prayer, best placed after the sermon. This structure below gives the main stages to go through, in as unhurried a fashion as possible.

The hope of this form of prayer is that we connect with what sustains and draws us towards that which is good, rather than dwelling upon and being paralysed by the things that weigh on us or feel beyond our capacity to change.

[1] Decide the theme of your prayer, for example

- being aware of the sources of our energy
- being concerned about our use of water
- the times when we thought about food and how we use it

[2] Settling and beginning the Prayer

Do this in a way that is familiar to your congregation, spend time addressing God and naming the theme of the prayer. The language below may seem unusual, but acts as a prompt for people to pray, rather than a script for leading the prayer. It can of course be adapted to suit.

In prayer recalling when

- I consciously thought of how I was using energy
- how that energy was created
- how those thoughts moved me to action

Silent reflection

[3] In prayer remembering how I felt when I made an effort to conserve energy

Silent reflection

[4] In prayer imagining how I would feel if I made another effort to conserve energy

Silent reflection

[5] In prayer making the commitment, promising God, that I will act

Silent reflection and ending the prayer, entrusting our lives into God care and love.



Music Suggestions

These suggestions could work for any of the seven days of these Creation Time resources. Suggestions specific to each day are also found below.

Songs

Called by earth and sky (printed here with permission)



Called by Earth and Sky page 1 PDF.pdf



Called by Earth and Sky page 2 PDF.pdf

We Walk His Way

Know that God is good

The peace of the earth

God's love is for everybody

Mayenziwe - Your will be done on earth, O Lord

Lord your hands have formed this world

Here I am Lord

Enemy of Apathy

God's will for creation

Heaven shall not wait

Let all creation dance (alt. tune 60)

Wild Goose Resources Group

CH4 788

CH4 798

CH4 765

CH4 805

CH4 140

CH4 251

CH4 593

CH4 136

CH4 362

CH4 149



Children's Song

Children's song: Music Maker (Fischy Music, album: 'Down to Earth')

Very beautiful and very easy to learn. Has some subtle sign language and noises to join in

iTunes: <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/music-maker/id340725482?i=340725570>

Songs

All you works of God PSALM	CH4 151
Glory to God above PSALM	CH4 105
Sing to God with gladness, all creation PSALM	CH4 150
Mothering God	CH4 117
Womb of life (alt. tune-any 87 87D)	CH4 118
Here to the house of God we come	
“we are all tenants of your love”	CH4 195
Great God your love has called us here	CH4 484
Breathe on me, breathe of God	CH4 596
Holy Spirit, gift bestower	CH4 590
Sent by the Lord am I	CH4 250
Moved by the Gospel let us move	CH4 247
Beauty for brokenness	CH4 259
Father Eternal, Ruler of Creation	CH4 261
God of freedom, God of justice	CH4 263
Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation	CH4 172
God the Father of Creation	CH4 113
God weeps	CH4 168
As man and woman we were made	CH4 700
Iona Abbey Worship Book/ Woman and Men as God intended We Walk His Way: This is God's world	

These are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music magazine Different Voices. To subscribe click [here](#). To see more information and see our free taster copy click [here](#).



Additional Resources

A video on 'Why should we care about climate change?'

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjwmg__ZVw

Nurture in his Name is a short series from the Church of Scotland and RCC.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zli73tMV-Do>

Many prayers, sermons and other ideas for Creation Time are available at:

- Eco-congregation Scotland (ECS) module 2:
<http://uploads.ecocongregationscotland.org/uploads/m2.pdf>
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CJB/295>
- European Christian Environment Network (ECEN) <http://www.ecen.org/uploads/creationtimeliturgyo8.pdf>

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For further information regarding Climate Change issues and resources please contact the Church and Society Council through Adrian Shaw, Climate Change Officer, ashaw@cofscotland.org.uk

Visit the climate change pages of the Church of Scotland website:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/care_for_the_earth

Become an eco-congregation. Find out more at :<http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org>

For further information about Starters for Sunday, please contact the Faith Expression Team through Anna Reid, Senior Administrator, areid@cofscotland.org.uk



Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

