

SEASON OF CREATION 2023

PRAYERS AND WORSHIP MATERIAL

Week 1



****There's a good variety of prayers to start the Season : including from **United Reformed Church general Assembly Moderator (for the UK) Rev Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson.** [THR] She writes"

The following prayers are based on Jeremiah 15:15-21

They are written based on ideas around the IPCC Headline Statements particularly focusing around immediate and long-term responses to climate change as this particularly resonates with the part of Jeremiah I am looking at where God is offering hope to the people if they turn around their actions.

There's also an alternative set below, including 'all-age activity' from Rev Andy Braunston, Minister for Digital Ministry, United Reformed Church. Happy Scrolling!

Week 1 Opening

ECS Staff

The people are thirsty
Strike boldly the rock

They've nowhere to go
So Split open the sea

The people are grumbling
Break open the treasure

And feed on the sweetness
Of joy in God's Call

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THR Call to worship #1

Our Redeemer says
Repent, and I will restore you!
And when you utter worthy words
speak up!
Repent, for I will restore you!

May we use the Grace
that we are freely given
to follow our words with worthwhile actions.
And save our world.
Our Redeemer says,
Repent! I will rescue and save you ~ **Amen.**

THR Gathering #1

O Living and Liberating God
We speak up in prayer
And we repent,
recognising our responsibility
in being part of your Creation story.

May we refrain from
participating in our own destruction
and recognise that in choosing actions
that see your Earth flourish
we are choosing to protect
our relationship with you.

We thank you that
you choose to restore and rescue us
And we give you all the praise.
For it is by your grace and mercy
that we are saved ~ Amen

Prayers of Approach

THR Prayers of Approach

O Loving God,
may we use our hearts and minds
to see the greatness and generosity of love
in the work of Your Creation.
And may we be wise enough to accept
that although you are hidden from our sight
You are ever present with us
in ways we do not always understand.

Holy God,
may we have faith enough to trust
that You can use every situation we face
to bring about good.
For, it is in our glimpses of you
that we find strength
to unearth the love we need
to be able to do our part
in securing a liveable and sustainable future for all

Life-Giving God,
we do not always appear to understand
that we are just as,

and not more important to you, than,
other parts of your Creation - great and small.
Forgive us when we forget, and fail to act
with a love that flows from our every fibre.
May we recognise that our human well-being
and planetary health are intertwined
and are a joy and a delight to You.

Listening God,
May we commit to you
our words, innermost thoughts, and actions,
and admit that we can do better.
And may we work as people
who want to co-exist beautifully
in Your Creation story, alongside every living
and breathing thing that you have made
We continue to bless your Holy Name,
through Christ Jesus who brings us renewed life,
and who taught us to say The Lord's Prayer...

Insert the Lord's Prayer here

~ Amen.

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ECS Staff

Sustaining God, through joy and love and hope
In fellow creatures you look us full in the face.
You delight and challenge, nourish and threaten;

And we, your people, are called to be alert, awake,
and ready to respond.
Fulfilling our place and purpose
our service as creatures
in the tending of all that has breath:
flesh of all flesh which in Christ you chose to be.

As trees breathe out what we breathe in
so in the cycles of life which are cycles of praise
you are given glory.

Dear God and Friend, and Source of wisdom
In this season: blow your Wild Wind
where there's a need

to stir us up
Help us to let be
As also to step in

Whatever serves your will for Sky and Soil, Heaven and Earth
For you, not we. are God;

Confession, Pardon

Lamb of God, you take away
what truly harms the Earth

And, knowing, we have chosen hurt
Well-informed, we have trampled on
Advised by your Gospel of warning and hope
We have refused to get real:
to choose justice rather than weak expediency
the cost of change rather than Satan's prudence
and the trusted authority of a different time and place.

But now we need to change,
or things get worse.

Jesus, as we hear your rebuke
walk with us in these next steps
Showing that forgiveness sets us free
And freedom puts behind us
all that petrifies and paralyses.

For with these words you gift us:
'Do not worry about tomorrow!
Now go and sin no more!'

Get on with it: AMEN!

THR: Gratitude

Listen to this:

God is full to overflowing with Grace, Mercy and Patience; and has shared the gift of life in abundance. Receive from such abundance, the grace and mercy of a loving, forgiving God. Who sees beyond our

shortcomings and says to us “Your sins are forgiven ... go and sin no more.” Thanks be to God ~ Amen.

ECS Staff:

Thanksgiving for no monopoly on grace

Sustaining God,
thank-you for the rocks which when struck
have gushed forth living water.

Thank-you for the sanctuary and fellowship of our local churches
For the joyful encouragement to find meaning and help
in the treasures of our faith, the resources of good news
to face headlines drenched in bad
whilst birds still sing to greet each morning.

Thank-you that we rely on grace:
that your will to save and heal the world
asks only that we take our part
-take up the cross that's ours-
as other crosses, heavy-hefted
work for common good:
we thank you that we have no monopoly on kindness and justice
that our species is not alone in joy and delight
not

Intercession

(please add or subtract sections according to local need)

Keeping-us-going God,
Whilst giving thanks that we *can* pray and help
in many ways,
as this Season of Creation begins,
we are mindful of the fellow creatures
human and other neighbours
whose habitats, livelihoods, customs and migrations
are most urgently impacted by the unjust choices
and pig-headed continuities
of economies and cultures
lacking faith in a just transition.

We bring you what we've heard this week
about wildfires, floods, droughts,

things far away
and closer at hand than we ever expected

May the changes we are prepared to embrace
be the prayer that we offer

May our eyes be open to the signs of our times
And our ears to the voices and personalities of Creation.

We pray for the joy and hope amongst all the churches
that is part of commitment to living out our human calling
in active partnership with the life of the Earth on whom we depend.

We pray for courage amongst our leaders,
to shape the conditions
in which change may be rapid and just

And for peace amongst the nations
and an end to the hatred of God
expressed in war
where Creation is always the first casualty

God, keep us going, that the worry over tomorrow
does not overcome our joy, hope and commitment
to the goodness of this Day you have made.

Week 1 Closing

ECS Staff

The water has flowed
And the people, refreshed

We have heard how Christ Jesus
Stood up to his friends:

Though cut off from conquest
We're open to life!

Giving thanks
for God's love for the Earth

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Blessing THR

Friends, may the peace of God which is beyond all understanding, protect and guide our hearts and our minds in Jesus Christ. And may the blessing of the Triune God - Creator, Christ and Comforter - be with you, now and always.

Blessing

Isaiah 7:4

May your heart
and the heart of your people be moved
as the trees of the forest
are moved by the wind.

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The Grace THR

May the Grace of our Redeemer Christ, the Love of God and the Community of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and forevermore ~ Amen.

From Rev Andy Braunston, Minister for Digital Ministry, United Reformed Church. These items are part of the 'Daily Devotions' project of the URC

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Call to Worship

Today we hear again the ancient story of Moses' encounter with God through a bush aflame yet not consumed. We hear in a world which is burning, where the flames do consume. We look at the story and realise aspects have been hiding in plain sight – just as we hide from our eyes the harm we do to Creation. So with our fears and our praises, our penitence and our sorrow, our hopes and our despair we come to God in worship.

Prayers of Approach, Confession and Desperation

O Most High,
we give thanks for our world and the beauty that surrounds us,
for bird and fish, animal and flower, tree and bush,
for the insects that delight in their smells,
for the harvest that sustains us,
for gentle rain and refreshing breeze,
for majestic mountain and peaceful loch,
for bustling city and quiet village, we thank and praise You.

O Risen Lord Jesus,
in the midst of this beauty we see the ugliness of greed and exploitation.
As we raid our future and pillage our planet,
the Earth groans, eager with longing for a new age,
and fights back as we burn her.
We reap what we sow, Lord, and there is little health in us.
We fail to see what's in front of us,
distracted by possessions and fake news.
Give us time to change our lives, that Your people and planet will not
perish.

O Most Holy Spirit
You hide in plain sight, longing for us to see and follow You.
Give us compassion for Your people on the move,
fleeing war, persecution, poverty, and climate change.
Give us compassion for the earth, our mother,
the grace to learn how to live in harmony with her,
and time to make a difference before it's too late.
Help us to seek true forgiveness and change, not cheap grace which lures us
to Hell. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy flame of God's love,
burn within us as we hear the Word read and proclaimed,
that we may understand, follow, and change,
that our world may not burn but thrive. Amen.

All-Age Activity

When you are in school and there's a new teacher how easy is it for them to teach when they don't know your names? Is it easier for you to misbehave if the teacher doesn't know who you are? In the Bible there are many names for God: sometimes there are just titles like The Lord or The Most High or Father. In the Old Testament the Hebrew term Elohim is used a lot – it simply means “God” or “gods”. In the Hebrew the rabbis wrote down God's name as YHWH leaving out the vowels so it couldn't be pronounced – God's name was too holy to be said aloud. Putting vowels in makes people guess what God's name was – that's why many hymns name God as Jehovah – where vowels have been put in. Jewish people won't say God's name as it is seen to be too holy for humans to use.

In today's story Moses asks for God's name but God refuses to give simply saying “I am who I am” (which could also mean “I am who I will be”) Why might God not have wanted others to know God's name? (Think about why teachers need to know the kids' names). Many people think that God didn't want people to know God's name as that meant that others would have power over God rather like a teacher has some power over the kids if she knows their names.

So in our tradition it's often the case that we describe God by saying what God is like rather than using a name for God. We say that God is like a father. Jesus said that he was like a Mother Hen who gathered her chicks under her wings. What ways might you use to describe what God is like?

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God created the world **and it is good.**

We believe that God created us **to live in harmony with nature.**

We believe that human selfishness and greed
are changing our climate, heating the earth,
and endangering all living things.

We believe as temperatures and sea levels rise
we have to change our attitudes, lifestyles, economies, and politics,
and adapt to all that is to come.

We believe we can live as the Creator intended,
through the sacrificial example of Jesus Christ,
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that our world may not end. Amen

Intercessions

O God, Eternal Majesty,
we thank you for our world,
but recognise all is not as it should be.
birds are dying of avian flu,
fish swim in polluted seas,
flowers cry out for bees and insects to pollinate them,
trees are torn down so big business can make more money.
The rains are not gentle but threatening,
the mountains shake with rage
as we turn our backs on the earth our mother.
Teach us, O God, to learn from the Earth and its earliest peoples,
that we may live in harmony with Creation and each other.

pause

Through our lives and by Your will, **Your Kingdom come.**

O God, Incarnate Word,
You walked our earth, know our pain, see our confusion,

and sense our confusion.

Help us to see those things You lay out in plain sight:-

the rising sea waters,

the increasing temperature,

the people on the move,

the ecological crisis reaching tipping point,

and give us the grace, strength and foolishness to act.

Forgive us when we are distracted by things that don't matter.

Help us to call to account those who lead us,

and those who hide in the shadows of business,

that we may use our voices, money, and votes

to change before it's too late.

pause

Through our lives and by Your will, **Your Kingdom come.**

O God, Eternal Flame of love,

bless those on the move this day,

fleeing war, hatred, poverty and climate change,

open our minds and our hearts to see the world as it really is;

bless those this day who seek to make peace and bring justice;

in particular we pray for the people of Ukraine

caught up in a war of aggression,

and the people of Russia, lied to and manipulated by evil men.

We pray for the people of Palestine

suffering the consequences of Empire,

and the people of Israel longing for security.

Help us to resist all that promises easy answers and cheap grace,

to see the road to Hell when it's before us,

and turn back to You.

pause

Through our lives and by Your will, **Your Kingdom come.**

Eternal Trinity of Love,

we raise to You the people and places we love and worry about

longer pause

Through our lives and by Your will, **Your Kingdom come.**

Offertory

Moses gave. He gave of his time to tend the sheep. He gave his future to free his people. He gave of his courage in order to obey God. We too are called to give – of our time, our future and our courage in order to live as committed disciples of the Lord Jesus. We also give of our resources to support charities at home and abroad and to support the work of God through the Church. We may give through envelopes or cash, bank transfers or standing orders. We give knowing that we have to return to God something of what has been given to us and, in so doing, we embody the change our earth cries out for. Let's pray:

Accept our gifts O God, as tokens of our praise and thanks to You.

Accept our gifts O God, as tokens of our desire to change.

Accept our gifts O God, as tokens of our love.

Accept us too O God,

that we may continue to praise, change and love. Amen.

MUSIC:



We recommend the use of the choices suggested via Trinity College, in which Eco-Congregation Scotland trustee Iain McLarty is fully involved.

<https://www.trinitycollegglasgow.co.uk/post/creation-time>

This week's New Words to a recycled tune:

May every family throughout God's Earth

(Genesis 12, 1 Kings 4, Matthew 6)

Glasgow: CM

1) May every family throughout God's Earth
Be blessed as we praise God:
the birds of heaven, the forests' kin
the beautiful, familiar and odd!

2) When meeting grant us wisdom, such
as Solomon gained as king:
how trees, fish, birds and bees and more
are honoured as we sing!

3) And beauty, more than kings command
Earth's families wild and frail;
By Christ both scolded and extolled
the wind, the waves, prevail.

4) By kinship, heritage, and bonds of care
are families defined.
Diverse, mysterious, interlaced
in praise to God combined.

