



## PRAYER AND WORSHIP IDEAS

*Our hope is that by engaging with Climate Sunday your corps or centre will be better equipped to address this critical issue. There is no specific date for Climate Sunday so these resources can be used on a Sunday of your choosing.*

*Here is a selection of prayer and worship ideas for use in online or socially distanced worship services or group sessions.*

### Prayer

#### Sing a New Song

Psalms 96 is one of the psalms that call the Earth to sing a new song to the Lord – to praise his name and proclaim his salvation. Share on screen some images that display ways that the Earth praises his name as you read out this passage. In what ways do these examples of creation proclaim his salvation and declare his glory?

Spend some time praising his name through prayer. You could do this by asking people to share words of praise for God, or his different names/attributes (eg Creator, King, Restorer, Saviour).

#### New Creation

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul celebrates that we are new creations in Christ. We also live in eager expectation of a 'new heaven and a new earth'. Creation is also waiting in eager expectation (Romans 8), but at the moment it's groaning. In the same way that God reconciles us to him, he also reconciles the whole world to himself – both the human and non-human world.

As God's ambassadors of this reconciliation we need not only to consider how we make this good news known to others, but also be good news to the wider creation.

Spend some time in prayerful celebration of the way that we have been renewed and restored by God, and ask for his guidance in how we should respond:

- Thank him that he has not given up on us and he continues to shape and mould us into his new creations.
- Invite him in to continue this restoration work in you.
- Pray that we will be able to shake off the behaviours that cause destruction and wastefulness, and set out on a new path towards restoration.
- Pray that God will reveal ways for us to do this as individuals, as households and as a corps or centre.





# Climate Sunday



## Breath of God

Use the following prayer together – read it out slowly and encourage people to breathe along with the prayer:

*Lord, we thank you for the beauty and wonder that can be seen in all of creation. As you breathed life into this world and into our beings, we ask you to breathe life into us once again.*

*We pray for you to give us the strength to respond to creation in a way which reflects your loving care and concern for all things.*

*As we breathe in your love, help us to breathe out your love.*

*As we breathe in your grace, help us to breathe out your grace.*

*As we breathe in your beauty, help us to breathe out your beauty.*

*May we reflect your nature in all that we do.*

*Amen.*

## In God's Image

Give out small mirror mosaic tiles (available to purchase online or from craft shops) to each member of your congregation/group. Or, if using online, encourage people to find a mirror or use the camera on their device. Reflect on the fact that we are each made in God's image. Take some time to recognise the divine presence of God in who he has made us to be, and consider how we can each reflect his nature in the way we treat his human and non-human creation.





# Climate Sunday



## Redemption of Creation through the Bible – A Prayer Journey

The story of the Bible is ultimately the story of the reconciliation, redemption and restoration of all of creation. As we journey through this story, let us discover more about our Creator and his heart for all that he has created. And, as people made in his image, may we understand more of how we can join in with his redemptive plan.

### **The garden (Genesis 1-2)**

Genesis tells us that we are made in God's image, reflecting his nature (1:26 *The Message*) so that we can be responsible for the very good world he has created. Pray for guidance on how you can best serve and preserve creation.

### **Sabbath (Leviticus 25:1-7)**

Amongst the many laws of the Old Testament is the importance of sabbath – for the land as well as for God's people. The principle highlighted the importance of not overworking the land, but also to let it lie fallow. Pray for wisdom to ensure that you are not causing the land to be over-exploited through your actions and lifestyle.

### **In praise of the Creator (Psalm 148)**

The Psalms are full of praise for the Creator and his creation. Praise God for his creation through what you can see around you today. Ask God to reveal more of himself to you through his world.

### **Incarnation (John 1)**

In John 1 we read of Christ – who has been present since the beginning of creation – becoming flesh and blood and putting down roots in the world he created. Consider how you can follow this example of incarnation and show commitment to the place you find yourself in at this season of your life.

### **Salvation for all creation (John 3:16)**

John 3:16 is arguably the most famous verse of the Bible. But we often miss that this verse shows God's love for the world, not just mankind. Thank God for his sacrifice on the cross and that he came to reconcile all things to himself (Colossians 1:20).

### **Creation groaning (Romans 8:18-25)**

Paul tells us in Romans 8 that creation is groaning. Pray that you will become more attuned to the ways that creation is groaning. Pray for God to give you guidance about how you can respond to this groaning so that his glory will be revealed in and through you.

### **A renewed Earth (Revelation 21)**

The story we have been exploring is not yet over. We are still living it. In Revelation we see that God's redemption story ends with a new Heaven and a new (or renewed) Earth. Thank God for his plan to make everything new (v5). Pray that as Christians we will help bring about this renewal through our words and actions.

*Originally featured in [Prayer Matters](#).*





# Climate Sunday



## Oaks of Righteousness – Meditation

Read [Isaiah 61:1-3 from \*The Message\*](#).

Oaks are said to take 300 years to grow, 300 years to live and 300 years to die. They are long-lasting and they stand firm. They stretch towards the heavens and deep into the ground. As the seasons change they have times of growth and times where they lie dormant, conserving and preserving before they sprout their leaves and grow again.

Spend some time reflecting on what it means to have been planted as an *Oak of Righteousness* ...

### PLANTED BY GOD

Start by thanking God that you have been chosen by him, for the assurance of his grace, and that you have been reclaimed and replanted by him to display his glory.

### DEEPEN YOUR ROOTS

What soil are you planted in? How deep are your roots? How well can you withstand the challenging winds when they come? Are you able to stand firm? Are you being blown around or is the air still?

Stretch down deeper into God who dwells in you, who has made your heart his home. Welcome him in and ask him to reveal more of his love to you. Ask God to help you reach down deeper into his love.

## SUNLIGHT AND RAIN

Trees stretch up and bend towards the sun so their leaves can absorb the light. How can you stretch out your hands towards God?

As trees soak up nutrition through sunlight and rain, think about what God is feeding you with. How can you absorb what he is trying to say to you? How can you ensure you are soaking up what is of God?

## RESPOND TO THE SEASON

Like other deciduous trees, oak trees shed their leaves to conserve resources. This also helps protect them from being blown over in the windier winter months.

Think about the season you're in. Are you in a season where there is lots in your surrounding environment to help you grow? Or are you having to shed leaves, to preserve what you have to protect yourself against the adverse weather?

Trust that just as the seasons change, so the seasons of our lives will change. Ask God for his guidance to respond effectively to the season you're in at the moment.

## GROWING TOGETHER

The solitary field oak is not as useful to a carpenter or builder as the woodland oak. As they grow with other trees, they don't spread out as they would in the open field. They grow straighter and higher to reach towards the light.





The oaks of righteousness are plural – they are growing together. Pray for those in your forest – that you can grow upwards together towards the light. Don't be a field oak, stretching out and taking over, but a woodland oak, helping each other to grow.

## BEARING FRUIT

Oak forests support more life forms than any other native forest, including hundreds of insect species. They are an important source of food for many birds. Squirrels, badgers and deer feed on acorns, and caterpillars feed on its flower and leaf buds.

Let your life be fruitful, helping others around you to be nourished. Pray for the impact that your actions have on such a wide variety of people around you, as well as the wider creation. Finally, consider how we can stand firm as oaks in the midst of the chaos and the swirling winds of life.

## References

- <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/oaks-of-righteousness-the-hidden-lesson-in-a-bible-prophecy/128352.htm>
- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/english-oak/>
- <https://www.sciencefocus.com/nature/why-do-trees-lose-their-leaves/>





## Creative Worship

### Sounds of Nature

Use one of the following ideas to help you use music and sound as part of your worship to the Creator:

- Sing a song of praise which specifically reflects the glory of his creation (see end of doc for ideas).
- Make some simple junk instruments (eg plastic bottle shakers using rice, tube/tub drums) and 'sing a new song' with your waste.
- Do an internet search for nature sounds such as birds, water, animals etc. You could also use a streaming service, or there are numerous free apps available. Use these as a background to your Scripture reading or prayer time to help you connect with the sounds of creation and thank God for the wonder of it all.

### Bin Stickers

Give out some labels (or alternatively use plain paper). Ask people to draw on or decorate these with a reminder to consider the impact of what you consume and the waste this creates. Encourage people to take these and stick them on or around their main waste bin to be reminded of the call to be involved in restoring creation.

### Recycled Poster

Use a large piece of a cardboard box (sourced from a recent delivery or the supermarket) and encourage a group to spend time creating a prayer poster collage using recycled materials. If you are running an online service, encourage people to do their own with their household recycling. Display these somewhere in the building as an ongoing reminder of your commitment to serving creation as part of your mission.

### Plastic Planters

Collect up old plastic bottles and use them to create planters or bird feeders. This is a great way to re-use something if you have plastic bottles that would otherwise be thrown away – so don't buy more just for this! A quick internet search will provide plenty of inspiration for how to do this. You may also want to decorate these with a verse, a prayer or your commitment to respond.

### Scratch Doodles

The issue of air pollution is one that affects our towns and cities as well as people around the world. Using scratch art doodle pads (available from craft and stationery suppliers) ask people to respond and create an image of beauty by 'removing the pollution'. While doing so, encourage people to pray that God will help them translate this symbolic action into practical action.





## Hold some or all of your service outside

If current government guidelines in your areas permit, consider holding some or all of your service outside and spend some time in prayer and 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'<sup>1</sup>. If not, consider how you could encourage your church community to spend time in prayer and worship during a walk or other time outside. If holding worship online, consider instead whether you could record some or all of your service from a suitable outdoor space.

- If it is a place of great natural beauty, focus on giving thanks to God and commit to protecting the site and others.
- If it is a place of environmental degradation, focus on confessing our environmental failures and committing to actions of healing and restoration. You may also want to spend some of your time together cleaning up the area, or thinking about what practical steps you could take to help restore this place.
- If it is an urban space, look out for the examples of the natural world which can be seen and thank God for these, and pray that you will take notice more fully of God's creation each day.

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<sup>1</sup> [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#)

Look for ways to incorporate your surroundings into your time of worship by:

- Gathering symbols of nature from the space (without damaging it) and bringing them together / sharing them out as examples of the beautiful world God has created.
- Include a time of silence to listen to, and wordlessly join in, with the song of creation's worship and its groaning (Romans 8:22).
- Encourage people to explore the space themselves, maintaining social distancing measures.

Adapted from [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#)

## Creation walk

In line with current guidelines in your area, organise a creation walk to meditate on the gift of God's creation and our response to be in deeper communion with all of life. This could include spending time meditating on the seven days of creation at different points along your route, using relevant Bible passages or prayers featured elsewhere in this resource, or the Earth Examen (found on p25-26 of [this PDF](#)).

Adapted from [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#)





## Practical Worship

Consider what you can do as a practical act of worship that will help take care of creation. What this involves will vary depending on the area where you live and the local ecological issues being faced, but here are some ideas:

- **Clean local waterways** – these may contain pollution from fertilisers and pesticides, as well as other waste, including plastics. [Here are some tips on how to organise a clean-up.](#)
- **Organise a clean-up of a local area** – Like the waterways above, organising a clean-up of a local park, forest or other natural area can help to protect the plants and animal life that live there from pollution such as chemicals and micro plastics.
- **Plant a tree** – Trees help combat climate change, clean the air and provide habitat. The planting and nurturing of a tree can be a symbol of your shared commitment to creation. If possible choose a native species as this will best support insects and other animals. (<https://www.plantbritain.co.uk/>)

Adapted from [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#). Look at the Ideas for Action resource for more practical ways to serve creation.

## Harvest – Wildflower Seed Bombs

You will need:

- wildflower seeds
- soil
- flour or powdered clay
- water
- mixing bowl

Wildflowers are a great way to brighten up your garden or local area and reclaim a little bit of our local community for nature. Provide some wildflower seeds and encourage people to make their own seed bombs and release them somewhere as an act of worship to our Creator. Perhaps call out lines of Scripture on God's goodness as you throw or pray over the area.

### References

- <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-make-wildflower-seed-balls>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-seed-bomb>

### 'Stick' Pictures

Provide (or ask people to collect) a selection of sticks (you could also gather leaves etc) and use them to create a picture – these could either be stuck to some paper or card, or arranged on the ground and then photographed.





# Climate Sunday



## Whose Garden is This?

This can work as well whether worshipping together in person or online. Prime two or three of your congregation to send you pictures of their garden. Then ask the rest of your congregation to guess whose garden it is. Guesses can be shared by those in the room, or in the chat if online.

## Get OWT Colour Hunt/Collage

Get people to go in search of as many different colours in nature that they can find. You could even use what you find to make a colourful rainbow collage. Use the [Get OWT Week 2 activity sheet and colour hunt card](#) to help you.

*[Get OWT](#) (Outside With Toddlers) is a family-oriented programme that uses nature to nurture little ones. There are loads of resources online to help toddlers and their carers experience the benefits of nature through fun and creative activities.*





## Music and Video

### Suggested Songs

*There are plenty of songs you could sing to worship the creator God. Here are just a few suggestions.*

- 'All creatures of our God and King' (SASB 2)
- 'God of the open spaces' (SASB 20)
- 'Joyful, joyful' (SASB 39)
- 'How great thou art' (SASB 49)
- 'How great is our God' (SASB 64)
- 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!' (SASB 56)
- 'Say it loud' (SASB 920)
- 'So will I' (100 Billion X) – Hillsong Worship
- 'Beautiful Things' – Gungor
- Doxecology - <https://www.resoundworship.org/projects/doxecology> - An album's worth of new songs related to creation and ecology – with free lead and chord sheets (registration required).

### Videos

*Here are a few suggested videos you could use to help you explore this issue as part of your service or session.*

- Tearfund – The World Rebooted <https://youtu.be/Mcbxjz-LAuU>
- Tearfund – Theory of Poverty <https://vimeo.com/451780056/841556a0a7>
- Climate Coalition – The Time is Now for Climate Action - <https://youtu.be/IF2jujyknOM>
- He's Got the Whole World in his Hands - <https://youtu.be/QyGH-iWWHr4>
- <https://www.ted.com/series/countdown>

