



# SEASON OF CREATION

## 2018 CELEBRATION GUIDE



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# Faith leaders' invitation to join the Season of Creation

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June 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?” (Job 12:7-9, NRSV)

Once every year, from September 1 to October 4, we as members of the Christian family set aside time to deepen our relationship with the Creator, each other, and all of creation. This is the Season of Creation, which began in 1989 with the first recognition of the day of prayer for creation by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, and which is now embraced by the wider ecumenical family.

During the Season of Creation, we join together to rejoice in the good gift of creation and reflect on how we care for it. This season offers a precious opportunity to pause in the midst of our day-to-day lives and contemplate the fabric of life into which we are woven.

As the environmental crisis deepens, we Christians are urgently called to witness to our faith by taking bold action to preserve the gift we share. As the psalmist sings, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1-2). During the Season of Creation, we ask ourselves: Do our actions honor the Lord as Creator? Are there ways to deepen our faith by protecting “the least of these,” who are most vulnerable to the consequences of environmental degradation?

We invite you to join us on a journey of faith that challenges and rewards us with fresh perspective and deeper bonds of love. United in our sincere wish to protect creation and all those who share it, we join hands across denominations as sisters and brothers in Christ. During this season, we walk together towards greater stewardship of our place in creation.



“O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent” (Psalm 104:1-2).

In God’s grace,

**Archbishop Job of Telmessos**

Permanent Representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the WCC, on behalf of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

**Most Rev. & Rt. Hon Justin Welby**

Archbishop of Canterbury

**Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson**

Prefect, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

**Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit**

General Secretary, World Council of Churches

**Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson**

General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches

**Bishop Efraim Tenderso**

Secretary-General, World Evangelical Alliance

**Rev. Dr. Martin Junge**

General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation

**Mr. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria**

General Secretary, ACT Alliance

**Fr. Heikki Huttunen,**

General Secretary, Conference of European Churches



# Introduction

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Thank you for bringing your community together for the Season of Creation. The Season of Creation is an annual, worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home from September 1 to October 4.

As followers of Christ from around the world, we share a common role as stewards of God's creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with its wellbeing. We have a moral and spiritual opportunity to care for our common home, and for the sisters and brothers who suffer when it is harmed.

This year, the theme for the season is "walking together". We invite you to consider the season as a shared journey to better care of creation.

This guide will help you learn about the season and plan how to celebrate it. More resources, including webinars and prayer services, a Facebook group, and photos, are available online. Please visit [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org) to access all of the materials.



# Event Checklist

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This checklist covers the steps to hold a successful event. In summary: plan well, gather wide support, make sure others are aware of the event, and follow up after it's held.

Here is a detailed step-by-step list to guide your celebration:

- First, gather a group of one to four people to lead with you. This event committee will share the work, develop ideas, and convey to your pastor and congregation that the Season of Creation has broad support in your church.
- Develop a general plan for your event. Refer to the event suggestions, and either choose the one that is right for you or develop another.
- Schedule a time to speak with your pastor/priest. To prepare him/her for the meeting, send the letter from faith leaders, information about the season, and a link to the website. All are available at [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org).
- In the meeting, start by thanking your pastor for the good work he/she already does to protect creation. Say that you and your committee would like to volunteer for the church by leading a Season of Creation event. Get your pastor's feedback, and write notes to record his/her comments.
- Update your plan in response to the pastor's comments. Clear the event date, time, and location with your church administrator.
- Register your event at [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org). When you register, your celebration will become visible on the global Season of Creation map. We will also follow up with you by email to provide additional resources.
- Speak to additional leaders in the church as needed to get feedback and buy-in. The grounds committee, director of religious education, music and worship leader, and parish council might be involved, depending on your event.
- If your event is ecumenical or interfaith, contact pastors with whom you hope to collaborate. Request a meeting and present your plan in a way that is similar to the method you used with your own pastor.
- After the plan is finalized, make sure that members of your congregation and any collaborating places of worship are aware of it. The ideal time to start is one month before the event. This step is essential to ensuring robust attendance and an engaging event. Use the template bulletin announcement, flyer, and social media post available at [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org).
- A few days before the event, gather all supplies. Contact any co-hosts to make sure they have everything they need. Do a final push for awareness in the church by asking your pastor to make a pulpit announcement for setting up a table in your narthex to pass out flyers after services.
- Host your event. Have fun!
- After the event, send a thank-you note to all leaders and volunteers. Let your congregation know about any outcomes or next steps from the event.



- Share photos of your event at [SeasonOfCreation.org](https://SeasonOfCreation.org). They may be shared publicly, and will inspire and educate people around the world.
- Complete the event report form at [SeasonOfCreation.org](https://SeasonOfCreation.org).

# 2018 theme: Walking Together

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This year's Season of Creation has the theme of "walking together". Although this theme does not need to be incorporated into your celebration, using it is an easy way to unite with celebrations around the world.

In walking together, we follow the role of Jesus, who walked with friends on the roads around Jerusalem.

As he traveled the byways of his community, Jesus invited us to encounter God through God's presence in creation. Whether by considering "the lilies of the field" or the "grain of wheat that falls to the earth," the spiritual journey of following Jesus is closely tied to the everyday wonders of nature that He experienced in His earthly journey.

This Season of Creation, we strive to more deeply understand the lessons Jesus taught us through creation, to more authentically honor our Creator, and to share fellowship with brothers and sisters along the way. As pilgrims together, we welcome the opportunity to awaken anew to the wonder of the Earth, our common home, and to protect the web of life it shelters.

*"Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth" (Laudato Si', 9).*

## Pilgrimage Blessing

Dear pilgrim,  
As you go into the wilderness of the land and of your heart—  
May you experience the ever-flowing grace of God's presence!  
May you be immersed so fully in God's love that you learn to let go and swim!  
May you engage deeply and radically with the natural world,  
as steward, co-creator, and friend!  
May you drink anew from the divine source, the stream of living water!  
And may you be transformed, may the stagnant waters of your spirit begin to flow,  
and may all which is dead in you rise again!  
God is here. The river awaits. Let the adventure begin. Amen.

Written by Lisa Hershey Kutolowski  
From *The River of Life Prayer Book* for the Connecticut River Pilgrimage 2017,  
available courtesy of [Kairos Earth](#)



**SEASON OF  
CREATION**



# Ideas to Celebrate the Season of Creation

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There are many different ways to celebrate the season. The ecumenical Season of Creation network has suggested a few ideas, which are available below.

As you are planning your event, be sure to register it on the website at [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org). When you register, your celebration will become visible on the global Season of Creation map to inspire others and increase attendance. We will also follow up with you by email to provide additional resources.

## Share your experiences

### 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. Please upload your photos at [SeasonOfCreation.org](http://SeasonOfCreation.org).

### 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](http://SeasonOfCreation.org).
- Join our English-language [Facebook community](#) and share your experiences.
- Write a blog post about your community's Season of Creation celebration. More information on how to write a blog post is available [here](#).



# Pray and worship

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*Prayer is at the center of our lives as Christians. Praying together deepens our relationship with our faith and brings forth new gifts of the Spirit. As Jesus taught us, “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them” (Matthew 18:20).*

*The following suggestions will help you shape a prayer or worship service for creation.*

## 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 also offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with Christians outside of your denomination.

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.

Start with the event checklist. Ask all participating communities to advertise the service. This will ensure good attendance and lead to a diverse, dynamic celebration. Sample flyers, bulletin inserts, and pulpit announcements are [online](#). Appoint either one clergy person or a group of clergy people from participating churches to lead the prayer service.

The following is an example of a prayer service that you can use and adapt to your context:



## ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE FOR SEASON OF CREATION

Opening prayer (Begin your service by lighting a candle, and setting the space with other natural items from your local ecology, and open by praying:)

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, 13<sup>th</sup> Century)*

### Opening sentences

*One* We gather in the image of the Creator

**Many who is a community of love.**

*One* We gather in the name of the Redeemer

**Many who reconciles all of creation.**

*One* We gather in the presence of the Life Giver

**Many who inspires new life and renews it.**

### Song

Sing a hymn that praises God as Creator. If possible, find a hymn that is shared by all participating traditions. [Click here](#) for a list of creation-themed hymns, thanks to Interfaith Power and Light.

### Psalm 36:5-9

*One* Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Many For with you is the fountain of life**

*One* Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,  
your judgments are like the great deep;  
you save humans and animals alike, O LORD.

**Many For with you is the fountain of life**

*One* How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

**Many For with you is the fountain of life**

*One* They feast on the abundance of your house,  
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

**Many For with you is the fountain of life**

*One* For with you is the fountain of life;

**Many In your light we see light.**

Confession

*One* We know that “creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now” (Romans 8:19-22). And so we confess. God of mercy and justice,

**Many** **We confess our overuse of transportation,**  
*One* the need for speed overriding the healing of the earth’s fever.

**Many** **We confess our hyper-consumption of food and energy,**  
*One* producing meat and electronics on demand, but too often exhausting and poisoning the backyards of the poorest.

**Many** **We confess our soaps, our cosmetics, our synthetic clothes,**  
*One* ignoring that their unseen, plastic microbeads run into our streams and oceans, now residing in fish, and probably in some of us.

**Many** **We confess our junk, the piles of what we throw away,**  
*One* the sewage smelling of our lack of concern.

**Many** **We confess our mindset,**  
*One* too often concentrating on our ability to buy rather than asking what we really need, what our world needs.

**Many** **We confess our unfaithfulness, not loving you with our whole heart and strength and mind,**

*One* not loving our human and non-human neighbors as ourselves,

**Many** **not caring for the creation you have given us as a gift.**

*One* Turn us from our cursed practices

**Many** **to life that is really living, giving ourselves away, following Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

*One* The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26–27).

**Many** **Amen**

*(adapted from the Lutheran World Federation)*

Reading of Scripture followed by preaching or participatory reflections

See the thematic readings offered below in this resource, or locally designate a text that reflects the particular context of your prayer service. Suggested scriptures are on the [Season of Creation website](#).

Profession of faith

One We belong to the Creator in whose image we are all made.  
**Many In God we are breathing, in God we are living, in God we share the life of all creation.**

One We belong to Jesus Christ, the true icon of God and of humanity.  
**Many In him God is breathing, in him God is living, through him we are reconciled.**

One We belong to the Holy Spirit, who gives us new life and strengthens our faith.  
**Many In the Spirit love is breathing, in the Spirit truth is living, the breath of God always moves us.**

One We belong to the Holy Trinity, who is one in all and Three-in-One.  
**Many In God we are all made, in Christ we are all saved, in the Spirit we are all united.**

*(Per Harling)*

Offering and offertory prayer

*You may want to have an offering, perhaps to collect money for a particular project or ministry, or you may want to gather local plants, animals, or other materials from your area as a way to raise awareness and offer thanks for the fruit of the earth where you live.*

Prayers

One We pray in thanksgiving for Mother earth in whom all life is rooted, Brother Sun whose energy radiates life, Sister Water who nurtures and revives us, and co-creatures with whom we live, and for whom we are called to till and keep this garden. "All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Creative Spirit,  
**Many enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.**

One O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Creative Spirit,  
**Many enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.**

One Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. Creative Spirit,  
**Many enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.**

One We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace." Creative Spirit,  
**Many enlighten our hearts and remain with your world. Amen.**

*(adapted from A prayer for the Earth, Pope Francis, Laudato Si)*

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

May God who established the dance of creation,  
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,  
Who transforms chaos to order,  
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church  
To reflect God's glory in creation.

*(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)*

Closing Song

Sing a hymn that praises God as Creator. If possible, find a hymn that is shared by all participating traditions. [Click here](#) for a list of creation-themed hymns, thanks to Interfaith Power and Light.

## Integrate creation into Sunday liturgies

Encourage your pastor to preach a sermon on creation or integrate creation themes into prayers during the Season of Creation.

The following ideas will help your pastor or prayer leader shape a sermon or prayers. Each week in the Season of Creation has a suggested theme. Scriptures from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospels are listed along with a synopsis of how they connect with the theme. Any or all of these may used during the season.

Additional denomination-specific ideas can be found at [SeasonofCreation.org](http://SeasonofCreation.org).

| <b>IDEAS TO SHAPE YOUR PRAYERS OR SERMON</b>   |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <i><b>Biodiversity</b></i>   | <i><b>Land</b></i>                                     | <i><b>Water</b></i>  | <i><b>Climate Change</b></i>   | <i><b>Simplicity and Sustainability</b></i>                                  | <i><b>Stewardship</b></i>   |
| <b>OLD TESTAMENT</b>   |  |  |  |  |   |
| Job 28: 1 - 11   | Genesis 12: 1 – 10                                     | Exodus 17:1-7  | Gen 6;11-14; 9:8-15  | Exodus 16: 13 – 21   | Genesis 1: 24 – 31  |
| The wonders of creation and the blessing of God that so many of our needs are met through them | God calls Abraham to journey to a land promised to him | The people in the wilderness are thirsty. Moses strikes the rock and water pours forth | The story of Noah and the Ark. God makes a covenant with all creation not just to humans | God provided enough manna for their needs. If they took too much, it rotted. | God created humans on the same day as other animals to form the web of creation |
| <b>PSALMS</b>  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Psalm 148  | Psalm 126  | Psalm 65   | Psalm 24: 1-6  | Psalm 104: 26 – 35   | Psalm 8   |
| The song of all created things offering praise to God  | The harvest of joy when land is used properly          | Water is at the heart of thanksgiving for Gods provision                               | The Earth is the Lord's  | God has provided food for all creatures.                                     | God has made us wonderfully and with responsibilities in the care for creation  |

| <b>Biodiversity</b>   | <b>Land</b>   | <b>Water</b>   | <b>Climate Change</b>   | <b>Simplicity and Sustainability</b>   | <b>Stewardship</b>  |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b>  |   |  |   |  |   |
| 1 Tim 4: 1 – 5  | Acts 4: 32 – 37   | Revelation 22: 1 – 5                                   | Romans 8: 18 – 27   | 2 Corinthians 9: 6–15  | 1 Peter 4 : 7 – 11  |
| Everything created by God is good                           | The generosity of Barnabas in the sale of the land                        | The heavenly vision of water bringing life and growth  | Creation is groaning in agony but waiting eagerly for the children of God to be revealed. | We need to share out of the abundance that we have been given.                 | Christians are called to be stewards of the grace of God.                                   |
| <b>GOSPELS</b>  |   |  |   |  |   |
| Matthew 6:25 – 33   | Matthew 4: 26-34  | John 4: 4 – 15   | Mark 16;1-8   | Luke 12: 13 – 21   | Luke 12: 42 – 46  |
| All Creation is good and to be valued.                      | Jesus constantly used images from nature in his parables                  | Jesus offers living water to the woman at the well.    | The resurrection is a message of hope for all Creation                                    | We are accountable to God for what he has provided. God says “you fool”        | We will be called to account for the way in which we have used what is given into our care. |
| <b>CREATIVE IDEAS</b>                                       |   |  |   |  |   |
| Church decorations with indigenous plants or harvest motifs | Church display of photographs showing the change in the local environment | Bowl of water on the altar. Renewal of baptismal vows. | Decoration of dry branches on the altar   | Surround the altar with plastic rubbish, or at the door as people enter church | Put fruit and vegetables around the altar   |



## Host a creation-centered retreat

In this time of ecological crisis, a creation-centered retreat can be a powerful way to facilitate a deep spiritual experience that can support the ecological conversion of individuals and communities to respond to the “cries of the earth and the cries of the poor” (Laudato Si, 49). Consider hosting a morning or daylong retreat that includes praying outside, reflecting on the cry of creation, and discerning ways to engage in transformative action to care for our common home. Ideas for developing a retreat based on Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* are available at [CatholicClimateMovement.Global/retreats](https://www.catholicclimatemovement.org/global/retreats).

# Hold an education or sustainability event

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*Companionship enriches our experience of the natural world. By joining others in our community, we share both the joy of experiencing creation and the challenge of caring for it. Finding strength in unity is a principal celebrated by our scriptures, which say that “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).*

*The following suggestions will help you design an education or sustainability event for your community.*

## Clean local waterways

Over 30 years ago, a volunteer in Washington, D.C. organized a group of friends to pick up litter along the water. Today, tens of thousands of people around the world come together annually to continue her good work.

What began as a program for coastal areas is now a program for waterfronts everywhere. Whether you live on the ocean or near a lake, river, or pond, your community is invited to join.

Participating honors Christianity's symbolic engagement with water, from the cloud that guided the Israelites to the river that baptized Jesus. Your group may wish to conceive of its travel to the clean-up site as a pilgrimage that connects you with the foundations of our faith.

This year's international coastal cleanup will be held 15 September, and an event on any date is welcome. By participating, you will stop plastics and other harmful materials from entering the water and its food chain. This activity is especially well suited to families.

As you plan your event, be sure to refer to the event checklist.

In reaching others in your church, you might want to incorporate a lesson on plastics into the Sunday school curriculum. The Anglican Communion Environmental Network/Green Anglicans has developed [Oceans of Plastics](#), a Sunday School lesson designed to help children understand the wonders of God's oceans and the harm plastic causes and the actions we all need to take to protect the oceans and the creatures that live in them.

A Rocha has put together a microplastics toolbox to equip you to act against microplastics in your community. It has helpful tips and information on how microplastics affect creation. You can find the toolkit [here](#).



For more information about The International Coastal Cleanup, please visit the [Ocean Conservancy](#).

## Plant a tree

Planting a tree or other perennial creates a living reminder of your community's shared commitment to creation. A tree-planting ceremony is a wonderful occasion for prayer, song, and children's activities.

- Start with the event checklist.
- Once you have approval, work with your director of religious education, liturgical coordinator, and social justice committee to ensure the event is fully integrated into the life of your community.
  - The director of religious education may want to invite children to participate in the activity. Children can create drawings commemorating the tree planting (to be shared at the event or hung in the church) or write a group prayer to be read at the event.
  - The liturgical coordinator may want to suggest readings that highlight humanity's role as stewards of creation. Suggested readings from scripture and readings from denominational authorities are on the [Season of Creation website](#).
  - The social justice committee may want to include ministries that are working on issues affected by climate change and environmental degradation. These include hunger ministries, peace ministries, and women's ministries.
- Guidance for how to select a tree and choose a site for it is [here](#). If possible, choose a native species. This will best support insects and other animals, contributing to the health of the entire ecosystem on your grounds.
- Work with the facilities manager, grounds committee, and your own team to care for the tree after it is planted.

## Organize a meditative walk

Taking a meditative walk around your church grounds makes concrete the theme of this year's Season of Creation, "walking together". A meditative walk roots us, body and spirit, in the gifts of the season.

- Start with the event checklist.
- Ask your pastor whether he or she would like to incorporate the walk as part of the worship service or invite congregants to participate after the service.
- Plan a route. Walk the grounds yourself, and give special attention to the physical needs of your congregation, making sure if possible to plan a route that is accessible to the disabled, seniors, and children.

- Create an event plan:
  - Start with a reading. Suggested readings from scripture are here and readings from denominational authorities are here.
  - Before walking, invite participants to close their eyes, breathe deeply, and become aware of the feeling of the air and sun on their skin.
  - As the walk begins, ask participants to progress silently and slowly, maintaining awareness of the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the world around them.
  - At one or two predetermined points along the route, ask participants to take special notice of a tree, flower, rock or other natural object. Ask them to contemplate its Creator, its role in creation, and our role as its caretaker. You may choose to bring paper and pencil for participants to write or draw in response.
  - At the conclusion of the walk, ask participants to share their reflections.
  - Finally, pray together. You may wish to use this prayer. If so, be sure to print copies for the group to share.

*Creator God,  
 We thank you for the abundance of creation,  
 For the air we breathe,  
 The water we drink,  
 And the food we eat.  
 We pray that we, your children,  
 Will steward this gift  
 So that all of your children may share in its abundance  
 Here and around the world,  
 Now and in generations to come.  
 In Jesus' name we pray.  
 Amen.*



# Participate in a campaign

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*As Christians, we have a strong tradition of prophetic witness. From Nathan's words to King David to Jesus' words to the Pharisees, speaking truth to power is a way to live out the call of our faith in a world that sorely needs redemption. By speaking together, we grow in love and strength.*

*The following suggestions will help you witness to the threats faced by our common home and encourage better care of it.*

## Rise for Climate Action

As the heads of national governments delay action on climate change, witness to our moral duty to protect creation is more important than ever.

This September, non-state leaders from around the world are coming together in San Francisco to show that they are serious about addressing the climate crisis. Governors, mayors, heads of large corporations, and high-level clergy will attend.

The leaders' summit takes place 12-14 September. To encourage them and demand action, people around the world will march in their communities on 8 September.

Whether your march goes to city hall, through your neighborhood, or around your church, mobilizing shows the community that there is strong support for finding a solution to climate change.

What's more, walking together provides precious time for undivided attention and freedom from distraction. As you walk together, share conversation, reflecting on humanity's shared journey to climate change and praying for change. By walking in unity, you are part of the long Christian tradition of shared journeys, and you are keeping the theme for this year's Season of Creation, "walking together".

Your church is invited to participate. Sign up [here](#) to get information about the march. Be sure to register your march on the [Season of Creation website](#) so that others can find it.

## The Big Shift

Protecting "the least of these" is integral to our faith, and energy access is an important way to serve our sisters and brothers in poverty. Access to energy helps us maintain businesses, store our food, and care for our health.



However, energy that comes from fossil fuels does not serve anyone in the long-term. Dirty energy contributes to more extreme weather, more hunger, and worse health outcomes.

Improving lives for our brothers and sisters in complex, and the World Bank is a leader in the field. Unfortunately, some of the World Bank's projects fund dirty energy.

The World Bank acknowledges that climate change harms the people it serves. Encourage the bank to take all funding out of fossil fuels and improve access to clean, renewable energy for all. This will improve lives now and in years to come.

Learn more and support the Big Shift campaign to take the World Bank to 100% renewable energy by [clicking here](#). The Big Shift campaign is coordinated by Christian Aid.

## Reduce plastics

Plastic items are deeply woven into our everyday life. Although plastics have made life-saving advances in medicine and clean energy possible, their overuse is a symptom of our culture of disposability. As Christians, plastics confront us with the question of our commitment to creation in our day-to-day lives.

Humans now produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic every year, according to the Worldwatch Institute, with much of it used only once. Many of these plastics will take decades or centuries to disappear. In the meantime, they break up into ever smaller pieces, which end up in the digestive tracts of marine animals, and they leach petrochemicals into the soil and water.

A campaign to reduce the use of plastics allows your church to make protection of creation a daily practice and an opportunity to consider lifestyle choices that honor the Creator.

- Starting with the event checklist, establish a meeting in your community to discuss the use of plastics.
- Encourage church members to commit to stopping their use of plastic shopping bags.
- Contact local retail outlets, tell them about your church's commitment, and encourage them to provide reusable shopping bags or a discount for customers who bring their own bags. Make the request of local retailers, rather than chain stores, which may need to seek multiple levels of approval.
- Give the retailers a deadline by which you would like to see this change made. Three months in advance will give retailers time to consider and implement their decision.
- Let them know that you will be following up with others in the community, and that you look forward to publicly celebrating their success.
- Support your encouragement of retailers through a petition, letters to the editor in your local newspaper, and follow-up visits to speak with outlets' managers.
  - A template letter to the editor is on the [Season of Creation website](#).

- For the petition, includes simple text at the top such as “ As part of my commitment to protect creation, I encourage Retailer A, Retailer B, and Retailer C to provide reusable bags or give customers credit for bringing their own banks by Date X.” Under the statement, write columns for first name and last name. Keeping your safety foremost in mind, collect petition signatures after church services and in the parking lots of the retailers, if possible.
- At the end of the three-month period, evaluate which retailers have made your suggested change. Celebrate their success through letters to the editor and a culminating event in your church.

Be sure to begin each step of your campaign with a prayer or reading. Suggested readings from scripture and denominational authorities are [online](#). Minimizing the use of plastics through an advocacy campaign such as this bonds your congregation in its commitment to sustainable lifestyles at home and in the community.

## **Pledge to live more sustainably**

The Season of Creation is a wonderful time to reflect on how our lifestyles impact the environment and to make a commitment to live in ways that better care for our earth. The good news is that making more sustainable lifestyle choices in just a few areas adds up to a big difference overall. This can be done individually or in a communal setting.

Step 1. The first step is to commit. Consider taking a pledge like the [Laudato Si' Pledge](#) from the Global Catholic Climate Movement. Prayerfully consider your commitment as an individual, and talk with your family and community about making shared commitments. You can also see more information about other pledges at the [Living the Change initiative](#).

Step 2. Reflect on one change you can commit to as you begin to live your pledge. The three most impactful areas to improve your choices are energy, meals, and transportation. In energy, aim to use less energy and, if possible, renewable energy. In meals, aim to eat less meat—many people are surprised to learn that meat production is a leading cause of climate change and deforestation. In transportation, aim to take fewer solo trips by car.

Step 3. Share your commitment widely to inspire others and create a culture of accountability. You might post a vegetarian meal you cooked on social media, or send an email to friends inviting them to join you in the pledge. Make sure to include information about how individuals can enact shared faith values by transforming their choices in energy, meals, and transportation in your community's bulletin and pulpit announcements.

# Join us on social media

Join us in prayer and reflection and share exciting news about your celebration on social media. A supportive global community is forming on Facebook and Twitter. Be sure to like and follow our pages and to use the #SeasonOfCreation hashtag.

| <b>Join our online community</b>   | <b>Use the official Hashtag '#'</b>  |
|--|--|
| <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SeasonofCreation">Facebook.com/SeasonofCreation</a><br><a href="https://twitter.com/SeasonCreation">Twitter.com/SeasonCreation</a> | #SeasonOfCreation  |
| <i>If you have a Facebook or Twitter account, we invite you to like or follow the Season of Creation pages to get inspiring updates and join the conversation.</i>   | <i>Use the #SeasonOfCreation hashtag on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to join the global community. Hashtag posts may appear on the Season of Creation website.</i> |





# Global calendar of events

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While each Christian community around the world celebrates the Season of Creation in its own way, a few events present opportunities to tie all communities together.

## *September 1: Online Prayer Service for Creation Day/World Day of Prayer for Creation*

Creation Day, also called the World Day of Prayer for Creation, opens the season each year. Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, the World Council of Churches, and many other leaders have called the faithful to celebrate it. Christian leaders will be gathering in Assisi for an ecumenical prayer service. 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](http://SeasonofCreation.org).

## *September 8: Rise for Climate Action*

Ahead of the Global Climate Action Summit, people around the world are taking to the streets in their local communities to show support for action on climate change. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to march. Sign up [here](#) to get information about the march. Be sure to register your march on the [Season of Creation website](#) so that others can find it. Your information will be shared publicly, to inspire others and help them find your event.

## *September 12-14: Global Climate Action Summit*

Some national leaders are hesitant to make bold commitments to climate action, and some leaders are even moving backwards. Businesses, local governments, and grassroots leaders are standing up to say that they are committed to action on climate change at the Global Climate Action Summit. Faith leaders will help lead the conversation.

## *September 15: International Coastal Cleanup Day*

For over 30 years, communities have come together to remove trash from coastlines and waterways including ponds, lakes, and rivers. Together, these volunteers remove and catalogue mountains of litter every year. Your community is invited to join. To learn more, please visit the [Ocean Conservancy](#).

## *October 4: Online Prayer Service for 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. Faith leaders from around the world will come together to reflect on how St. Francis has informed their spiritual journey and to celebrate our month-long journey together.



*October 7: Harvest Day and Beginning of Living the Change Commitment Week*

Faith communities around the world will be coming together to publicly commit to making sustainable lifestyle changes on behalf of the planet. This will be a joyous occasion to come together as the world's faith communities and commemorate the changes that we are living in our own lives and which we commit to live for a flourishing world. To learn more, please visit [Living the Change](#).

# About the Season of Creation

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The Season of Creation is the time of year when the world's 2.2 billion Christians are invited to pray and care for creation. It runs annually from September 1 through October 4.

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 Cantic 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 STEERING COMMITTEE:*** As the urgent need to solve the environmental crisis continued to grow, Christian churches were called to strengthen their united response. The Season of Creation ecumenical steering committee came together to provide resources to empower Christians respond to of our faith, each in the way of his or her own denomination, during this shared season of reflection and action.

The steering committee is comprised of ACT Alliance, Anglican Communion Environmental Network, ARocha, Christian Aid, Global Catholic Climate Movement, Lausanne/World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network, Lutheran World Federation, and World Council of Churches.

***PARTNERS:*** Season of Creation is animated by a number of organizations and communities around the globe. For a whole list of partner organizations see [SeasonofCreation.org](http://SeasonofCreation.org).

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 in dignity. We invite you to join us in these efforts.



# Contributors

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