



Worship resources for a Climate Sunday service

Introduction

The selection of material presented here will help resource Christian worship at any time of year. A variety of 'pick and mix' options are offered below for each part of a service, including a liturgy for a Communion service.

You are particularly encouraged to hold a Climate Sunday service in your congregation before 5 September 2021. National services are due to be broadcast on the afternoon of 5 September.

Please register your service here: www.climatesunday.org/register

This will help demonstrate the commitment and united voice of churches and faith communities in praying and calling for action on climate change.

This resource has been written and compiled by Rev David Coleman, URC Special Category Minister and Environmental Chaplain to Eco-Congregation Scotland, on behalf of the URC's Environmental Task Group. Find out more at: www.urc.org.uk/caring-for-creation

Worship, Commit and Speak Up

As part of your Climate Sunday service, you are invited to:

- ◆ **Commit:** Make a commitment to your next steps as a local church community to reduce your own greenhouse gas emissions. The recommended way to do this is as part of a programme such as Eco Church (England and Wales) or Eco-Congregation Scotland.
- ◆ **Speak Up:** Sign the Climate Coalition's 'The Time is Now' declaration as a church, calling on the UK government to act for a healthier, greener, fairer future. Visit thetimeisnow.uk for details.

If a commitment is to be made, or a document signed, then this could be brought into the online or in-person sanctuary with the Scriptures, and dedicated as part of the offering, or before the Communion part of the service.

Hymns and songs

Please choose hymns which emphasise our partnership with creation, rather than exploitation of the Earth. Care should be taken in selecting material from the relevant sections in *Rejoice & Sing* ('Praising the God of Creation') and *Church Hymnary 4* ('God in Creation'), given the context of the climate emergency we are now experiencing.

For some suggested hymns, see

- ◆ Climate Sunday resources: www.climatesunday.org/service-resources
- ◆ 'Friends and troublemakers' – original hymns to familiar tunes, available on the Eco-Congregation Scotland website: www.ecocongregationscotland.org/uncategorized/friends-and-troublemakers-recycled-hymns-for-immediate-use/

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Order of service

Call to worship

For a Climate Sunday service

In the beginning, and today,
God shapes beauty from chaos.

Today, we respond in praise!

In the beginning, and today, God speaks.

Today, we speak out.

From the beginning, and for all days,
God sustains with faithfulness.

Today, we make our commitment.

For a Climate Sunday service or any time

Through the warmth of the sun

and the blessing of rain

[Isaiah 45:8]

With all that has breath

We give glory to God!

[Psalm 150:6]

As the sun and the moon

shape the day and the night

[Genesis 1:16]

So we children of earth

tend and care where we live

[Genesis 1:26]

Through fire, through water

we pass on our way:

Bring us refreshment today!

[Psalm 66:11]

or

Seek advice from the beasts

And they will enlighten you

From the birds in the sky

And they will show you

Speak to the Earth

And Earth will teach you;

For which of these does not know?

All life is in God's hand!

Hymn or song

Prayers of confession

For a Climate Sunday service

Sustaining God

today, the stones are shouting

for the Lord's disciples have been silent.

Today the cycles of the seasons

which tell of your faithfulness

are gagged and stifled.

Today the very skies which tell of your glory

the glaciers which reflect and protect

and the seas which you put in their place

are all in wounded turmoil

longing simply to praise you.

Yet we have locked these voices out

and with them the human voices

of those who are hurt first and worst
by emergencies, not just of climate
but the injustice
on which our human societies
have come to rely.

For what the rich do to the poor
Our species does to the Earth as a whole.

We acknowledge our part,
and our knowing silence
in these and more
sinful choices of today.

Food waste
Biodiversity loss
Plastic pollution
Deforestation
Air pollution
Mismanaged agriculture and factory farming
Global warming from fossil fuels
Melting ice caps
Food and water insecurity.

Sustaining God,
as in Christ
you enter with mercy, energy and compassion
into the life of the Earth
speaking out wherever creatures are out of place or lost

Shout with the stones,
call us to account
show us the power we have
and how we continue to misuse it.

Set us free from imagined responsibilities
to keep things as they have been
And show us, with the energy of forgiveness
the path of healing
for heaven and earth.

May our praise join the chorus
of all that has breath
with a loud shout of challenge
for we are your people.

Your people forgiven,
your people committed
for the healing of the Earth
by God's grace alone

Amen.

For use at any time

Call to Reconciliation

Despite our greed and arrogance;
Despite our apathy and despair
Despite chosen bitterness
and hatred of the Body

God still commends compassion,
Offers healing, peace, new life

God forgives, in Christ,
incarnate in the Earth,
we re-connect, in joy.

Let us confess our sins to God:
and put behind us,
what we need carry no longer,
that God's hope and grace might heal
what have broken in God's world.

Unison Prayer of Confession

**God of all flesh,
whose mind evolves in wonder;**

**In your great love,
You place in our way
such warning signs
as should without delay
divert our lethal course
and direct us to responsible life and faith.**

**Alone and yet, *by grace*, together
we acknowledge that,
alone, and yet, *far worse*, together,**

**we have chosen
ignorance and denial,
injustice through silence,
hesitation in place of wisdom
unfaithfulness through exclusion;**

**We have determined
human poverty through greed and wealth
the abuse of Earth and fellow creatures
through what we allow to pass
as wisdom, or as choices not ours to make.**

**We have disregarded
the needs of life's common home;
and set sail for disaster.**

**Have mercy on us, O God,
Set us free to choose life, and live justice
that we be not mired in fear of tomorrow
but – forgiven and forgiving –
boldly find our part in joy today
sustained by hope and wonder
with our friend,
Lord Jesus Christ.**

or

Prayer of Approach and Confession

God, Christ and Spirit,

Partnership of creation:

Bringer of beauty from chaos

Welcoming all who are lost

Alone and together

we bring life to transform.

Earth cries out against us; so
pardon our species:

Forgive!

Forgive each, forgive all!

And where damage is done
by *my* choice or neglect
to what *you* have made and you love:

so open a window of healing
that, mindful of the magnitude of change,
we be not bound by despair
but empowered by hope
encouraged by mercy
enlivened by grace beyond earning.

Silence may be observed

Assurance of Pardon

God challenges us, God encourages us.
God confronts us, and God accepts us.
God works wonders in our midst
and gives us eyes, hearts, souls,
to cherish life.

God forgives us:

for Christ is the Way

– when all we see is wilderness –

there, to dwell, at home with life abundant.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Or

Declaration of Forgiveness

God of good Earth, who offers forgiveness
in advance of completed action.

Show us our place and purpose
as creatures of dust and love
through the friendship of Christ
sharing flesh with all life.

Amen, Amen, as you call.

Old Testament Reading

See www.climatesunday.org/service-resources for suggestions

Hymn or song

Gospel Reading

See www.climatesunday.org/service-resources for suggestions

Sermon or other main reflection

See www.climatesunday.org/service-resources for suggestions and materials

Hymn or song

Prayers of intercession

For Climate Sunday

Introductory Prayer

Sustaining God

in this year of turmoil and challenge
when we have learned already

that more change is possible
than we wanted to cope with
we ask for the liberation of your joy
in all times and all circumstances
and we give thanks
for your solidarity
even before we grasp the tasks ahead.

Strengthen us to speak boldly
and with our fear that we might actually be heard:
Laugh with us
as we reassess what we held to be wisdom;
to enjoy the humility
the urgency
the pride in your friendship;
for all we knew has changed
except your faithfulness
and your love
spoken in flesh
for the Earth.

A prayer for COP (the United Nations Conference of the Parties)
Sustaining God

as in November, at great cost and with great urgency
the leaders of our species
and those with concern for their common home
will gather in Glasgow,
we ask for your welcoming, affirming presence

in the many layers of gathering
which are part of that event.

Give to those who make decisions
a freedom from the burdens of a past
which have pushed us to this cliff-edge.

Give a dawning vision of your offer of healing
greater than the blocked horizon of what it might cost.

Argue and wrestle with the powers and principalities
of expediency and despair.

Open every human ear to the voices of the Earth,
and of sisters, brothers, siblings who already suffer sharply.

Save us from the despair of complacency
and the toxic temptation
when the visitors have departed
to embrace 'business as usual'
for that 'normal' has gone.

And our only future
will be in wakefulness
trust,
hope,
yes, joy
as we live out your love for the Earth we are part of
through your Word made flesh
Jesus, our friend.

Hallelujah anyway!

Amen

[For use at any time](#)

Lord, we pray in the midst of your world
where we are not foreign, though it may seem so;

We seek your loving vision of the creation we encounter;
Inspired to wonder at the wider universe;
receiving the human task of care for the Earth;
of which we, and all life, are made.

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

As justice and righteousness are the pillars of creation,
we acknowledge how poverty, prejudice and inequality
diminish human lives and lay waste the fruitful land;

[\[Psalm 89:14\]](#)

We no longer resist the connection
ubiquitous in Scripture
of injustice and the desecration of the Earth.

We recognise how Earth, abused, can care no more
in the way we have relied on

[\[Romans 8:22\]](#)

We share with you in sorrow
bad news we heard today
...[Silence or details]...

And share too in gratitude,
all that has given hope to us, or even to our neighbour.
...[Silence or details]...

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for our great family, the Church, [\[Romans 8:29\]](#)
your gift of hope for the Earth. [\[Matthew 5:14\]](#)
We ask for a perspective beyond division;
for freedom from the aspiration
to rule, as empires rule; [\[Matthew 20:25, 1 Peter 5:3, Revelation 20:6\]](#)

May each local gathering in your name [\[Matthew 18:20\]](#)
be a place of welcome and safety,
celebrating the saintliness of the ground
on which we meet, [\[Exodus 3:5, Joshua 5:15, Acts 7:33\]](#)
and the value of faith, beyond calculation,
in solidarity with Christ.

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the gifts of vision and prophecy
wheresoever it may please you to send them.

Speaking truth to power,
supporting those who do.

Bless our learning, and the treasure of experience
which guide the Church.

Stir up your people and help us test the spirits,
to interpret with wisdom the many voices of our day,
Alert to the prophetic voice of the Earth
the stones that shout aloud.

[1 John 4:1]

[Luke 19:40]

Give us impatience, yet perseverance
for a new sky and a new soil
as we live in the meantime,
blown forward by your Spirit.

[Revelation 21:1]

[John 3:8]

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray and open to you
the daily struggles
of this community you have called to your praise and service;
the conflicts, as we experience them,
those insights which do fit wonderfully into place
the questions which shake and reinforce our faith.

Our frailty, and vulnerability,
which are key to our strength in you.

The mixed bag of gifts,
and the knowledge of our limits
as we weep and rejoice
with those who do likewise.

We give thanks for the disciplines of prayer
and the freedom of spirituality,
to put down roots, and bear fruit,

and yet to weather storms that lie ahead
as God's people
for all creatures

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

And as human words can do only so much,
we keep silence...

By such beauty, God hears prayer.

Thanks be to God.

In the name of him who came, comes
and goes on coming, Christ the Lord.

Amen

Or

Framework for prayers of intercession

Let us pray with Christ:

God, who makes us with the earth,

God, who gives us to the world,

God; God-with-us in our struggles:

Hear us, stand with us as we bring our fears and needs

And walk, hold hands, advise, encourage.

For the world

What have we heard in the news this week?

Who is in need and who should give thanks?

How far have we got, and where have we stumbled?

And what seems completely beyond us?

Listen for Earth's voice: what is it saying?

We remember our neighbours, of whatever species.

We pray for our enemies, and those we fear.

And pray for peace throughout creation.

Hear us, stand with us as we bring our fears and needs

And walk, hold hands, advise, encourage.

For the church

Give thanks for the faithfulness, undergirding prayer.

Be open about continuing divisions, including local ones.

Look to a greater integration of environmental concern in our life and work.

And seek openness to the joy of deeper fellowship with all creation

Hear us, stand with us as we bring our fears and needs

And walk, hold hands, advise, encourage.

For ourselves

In silence: bring to God what no-one else need hear, not for God to 'hear' but to remind ourselves that God knows and understands.

Pray for those we pray with, acknowledging and respecting what they cannot share with us.

Look for support and perseverance,
and some sustaining sign when we get things right.

Pray for 'impatience' – not to simply accept 'the way things are'

And pray for peace in our heart, and the fuller joys of Christ.

Hear us, stand with us as we bring our fears and needs

And walk, hold hands, advise, encourage.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Either your preferred local words, or this mediation on the Lord's prayer, which might also be used in a study/workshop setting but is not presented as a 'regular' substitute.

Parent of Soil and Sky

May our praise reveal your beauty

May your encircling love bear fruit

As sun, rain and snow empower creation

Provide for life, all that sustains,

Free us from stubborn arrogance, and all it brings:

that we enable change for fellow creatures

Save us in the midst of what our kind has brought about:

deliver life from evil

For the seasons, the cycles and the power of life are yours

Now, and through all endings.

Let it be so!

Offering

Prayer if signing or presenting commitments

Bless to us the sky that you placed above us

the breath that the trees have given us

the water of all life on the Earth

The minerals of which we are composed

Bless to us this commitment

[mention what is being offered]

our successes and failures

our setbacks and encouragements

For though we will not ourselves fix or save the world
with delight, we accept our place and purpose
in God's/Your own collaborative care,

That all that's offered
indistinguishable from prayer
may be seed planted
to bear much fruit.

Amen

Holy Communion / The Lord's Supper

Liturgy developed from the fourth Order of Holy Communion, URC Worship Book 2003

The Invitation

Hear the gracious words
of our Jesus Christ, our friend;

Come to me,
all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Or

I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Or

Anyone who comes to me
I will never drive away.

Or

Look at the birds

Learn from the trees

Do not worry about tomorrow

Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand

Or

Invitation to the Table

If you are blessed by the attempt, if not by completion
of the healing of the Earth,

as which Christ is incarnate, as are we.

gather round this table

to be a work of God in progress

finding friends in the friends of Jesus

and nourishment in bread and wine

through human hands, from earth itself,

on which we feed;

holy hitherto, for Jesus,

by God's choice, is made of such.

Jesus said: when you celebrate,

invite those who can't finish what you begin:

for completion is in God's hands alone.

celebrate now with whoever who will join you:

make time now, whilst you can, for the feast .

[The Peace \[here or following Communion\]](#)

The peace of Jesus Christ
be with you all.

Christ's peace, throughout the Earth.

[A narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper](#)

We receive these things as we are part of Christ's Body.
Our brokenness is the brokenness of the Earth
Which God in Christ, in love, chooses to share and reshape.

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
celebrated a feast of urgency and of liberation:
Jesus took a loaf of bread, and having given thanks,
broke it, and said,
'This is my body, for you.
Do this to re-member me.'
In the same way Jesus
took the cup also, after supper, saying,
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
to re-member me.'

[The Taking of the Bread and Wine](#)

Together with our faithful friend Jesus Christ,
we take this bread and this cup,
and give thanks to God.

[The Thanksgiving](#)

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God

Let us give thanks to our sustainer
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

With joy we give you thanks and praise,
Almighty God, well of love, breath of life,

Faithful and creative
in response to the freedom of creation
bringing beauty out of chaos,
and life beyond the death of hope.

Stepping in to share the cost
of all that harms the Earth,

we celebrate our vocation
as creatures of divine versatility,
to manage and to cherish
all that shares our being,

and we cry out

with those who teach us:
beasts and birds, and trees and oceans
“All life is in God’s hand.”

[\[Job 12:8ff\]](#)

[\[Luke 21:30\]](#)

We delight, you love the Earth so
that Christ *is* flesh;
and trust transforms oblivion
to an open-ended life.

[\[John 3:16ff\]](#)

And above all we give thanks
that he was:
Carried, born and suckled

learning and labouring
eating, drinking, singing sharing,
welcomed and rejected;
Embracing what we are,
He shared his life and gave his death
with us, for us, always,
through the undefeated Spirit:
Christ alive, the risen way
in God's good time.
And God's good company.
of all places, people, creatures
in their own way, join the chorus
with the angels:

[John 3:8]

[John 14:6]

**Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might
Heaven and Earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest**

Or

**Holy, holy, holy God
Making and sustaining,
Sky and soil tell out your glory.
Hosanna all-pervading**

[Ancient liturgies, Revelation 4, 7]

**Blessed is the one
who comes in God's name
Hosanna all-pervading**

Holy God,
by your grace,
here in the precious company of Christ
we enter into the brutal solidarity of the cross;
the wonder of life made new and different
we are inspired at his ascension into wider creation,
and take note of the angels' rebuke
urgently to repurpose our lives on Earth.

[\[Acts 1:11\]](#)

We pray that through your Holy Spirit
this bread may embody Christ in us;
this wine, the blood of Christ.

And to you, one holy and eternal One
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
(God, Beloved, Breath of Life)
we do give praise and glory, now and till the End.
Amen.

Or

[Thanksgiving](#)

God be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to God

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise

Thank you, God, for our place and purpose
as creatures of soil and partners with Earth's creatures.
Through all the ages, as mountains dance and trees applaud
We hear the call to join your praise.

From our beginning,
Earth cried out at the spilling of blood
bearing the burden of human harm.

Your people sought a land of milk and honey
But injustice brought decay.

Your prophets: priests and farmers
called them to account
Yet then, as now,
your countless warning signs
and words and actions
fell often by the wayside.

Then Christ Jesus, friend of wildlife,
speaking to the seas
teaching through trees,
Showing God's generous wildness
in wind and eloquence in weather.

In Jesus you spoke of sharing;
of justice as acknowledgement of need,
You showed the cost of healing
and the price of the truth
unwelcomed by the powerful.

Now risen, Christ is with us
in the care of a damaged world.
And he feeds, invites, inspires us
Friends and siblings with Christ-self
Through food and faith.

At the Last Supper shared with friends
before his murder
Jesus gave them food and drink,
flesh and blood, bread and wine.

Celebrating past and present
Church, throughout the Earth,
Where God is,
here and now:

We say.

**Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and change
All you make is filled with glory,
Hosanna, all creation!**

**Blessed is the one who comes
in God's name
Hosanna, all creation!**

[Prayer to the Spirit](#)

Blow, breath of life
on flesh and blood, on bread and wine
Make us, in sharing these good things
more fully creatures of your Earth.

[The Breaking of the Bread](#)

Our friend Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took bread and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
'This is my body which is for you.
Do this to re-member me.'

In the same way he took the cup, saying
'This cup is the new relationship with God in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
to re-member me.'

**Jesus, Lamb of God
you take away
what truly harms the Earth:
have mercy on us, who do so.**

[The Sharing of the Bread and Wine](#)

Take, eat – the body of Christ
broken for you.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ,
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins: drink of it all of you.

[The Acclamation](#)

We may not grasp
how God is at work in the turmoil of the world,
but this we trust, that

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Or

Christ was buried
Christ is present
Christ will see us through.

Prayers after Communion

Most gracious God,
as we shape our lives in partnership
with Christ who feeds and sustains,
renew our hope and determination
to serve and to celebrate
with urgency and hope

The potency of grain that died *[John 12:24]*

has nourished us with life

The tree on which our friend was hung *[Acts 5:30, Deuteronomy 21:22-23]*

has given fruit for joy

Through sunshine and through rain, the vine *[John 15]*

has prospered every branch

Thus we belong,
with all your church, before, beyond and now

Your family - *[Ephesians 3:15]*

Every creature's gift. *[Mark 16:15]*

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

[The Peace \[here or earlier\]](#)

The peace of Jesus Christ
be with you all.

Christ's peace, throughout the Earth.

Hymn or song

Dismissal and blessing

Get up, go on your way!

[Luke 17:19]

Faith makes us fit to heal!

[Matthew 10:8]

The world now needs to know

How Christ is flesh for all

[John 1:14]

As creatures of God's love:

[1 John 1]

tread lightly, and with joy

Trust God, learn from the Earth

[Job 12:8]

We welcome life, where we find home!

Or

We shall plant trees

And they shall take care of us

We shall plough furrows

And not look back

We shall be gentle

And we shall be crafty

We'll do our part

That the world may change course

And so

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Be with us all, evermore.

[2 Corinthians 13:14]

Amen

Or

When this day is ended may you find rest and refreshment.

May you, when you sleep, dream, and take heed of angels

May you, when you awaken, find the wisdom of a different way

May you, in travelling, tread kindly on the living path

and entrust your destination to God,

that you may dedicate your living to Good News

for every creature

through the blessing of God, the Christ, the breath of life.

Amen

Leaving

If a commitment has been made, or a document signed, then this is taken out of the online or in-person sanctuary with the Scriptures, or a similar custom may be observed.