

**”Turn, then, and live”
Ezekiel 18:32**

Liturgical Material on Climate Change

**compiled by
The National Council of Churches in Denmark
Climate Change Working Group**

**for Creation Time 2009
1 September - 4 October**

**Including an additional section for
the WCC supported international bell-ringing action
13 December 2009 at 3pm, 15.00 local time**

Edited by Jacqueline Ryle, Martin Ishøy, Keld B. Hansen and Hanna Smidt

Indian liturgical texts from the Lutheran World Federation’s
Climate Change Encounter, Puri, Orissa, India, 16 – 20 April 2009

Biblical quotations from New Revised Standard Version, Anglicized Edition
www.bible.oremus.org

Introduction

Each year ECEN publishes an anthology of liturgical material for Creation Time.

This year's liturgical material is entitled: "Turn, then, and live", based on Ezekiel 18:32. It is compiled by the National Council of Churches in Denmark Climate Change Working Group.

A crucial time in history

In December (7-18 December) Denmark will host the 15th UN Climate Summit. The liturgical material we have compiled here in Copenhagen focuses on this major event when the nations of the world meet to negotiate a replacement of the Kyoto Protocol that runs out in 2012. This is a crucial time in history. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of creation and its inhabitants is at stake. The challenges of the climate crisis and the vast task we all face – as inhabitants of God's creation – to reduce our carbon footprint, to change our environmental behaviour, in short to *turn*, so that we and future generations may *live* - is immense and overwhelming.

As Christians we bring our prayers, our confessions, and our hopes to God, naming them in worship and finding inspiration to *act* and *change* for the good of the world. During Creation Time, we celebrate the presence of the triune God in the created world. We give thanks for God's grace and blessings, and we confess and repent our destruction of the environment, the injustice this causes in the world, and our arrogance towards the gifts of God. We know that we cannot change, heal or repair anything by our own means alone. Confessing Christ as our Savior, we worship God during Creation Time, we trust in God's love and power to lead us, and we are encouraged to turn and live anew.

Liturgical building blocks

The material presented here is not a full liturgy, but consists of 'liturgical building blocks' with suggestions for prayers, litanies, symbolic acts and Bible texts for use in preparing worship services, devotions or other liturgical events that focus on climate change and stewardship of creation. You are of course welcome to use this material in the way that suits your particular needs and context best.

Climate Relay

In preparation for the COP15 Climate Summit in December the National Council of Churches in Denmark Climate Change Working Group has launched a so-called "Climate Relay", consisting of three symbols that testify to the effects of global warming: glacial stones from Greenland, a bleached coral from the Pacific Ocean, and dried maize from Malawi. Over a two-year period this relay travels from church to church in Denmark for use in Christian education and worship. The Creation Time 2009 material includes inspiration for use with the climate relay as well as ideas on how to use similar symbols during Creation Time.

International bell-ringing

During the Climate Summit in December, the National Council of Churches in Denmark Climate Change Working Group, in collaboration with the World Council of Churches, is planning a high-profile ecumenical celebration in the Lutheran Cathedral, the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen on 13 December at 2pm, 14.00 hours. At the end of the service at 3 pm, 15.00 hours, the church bells of the cathedral will ring 350 times as a call to alarm, prayer and action for the climate. Churches all over Denmark will participate in this bell-ringing, along with churches all over the world. At 3pm, 15.00 hours local time in all time zones, starting in Fiji in the South Pacific, where the day begins, continuing in Copenhagen at the end of the ecumenical celebration, churches will ring their bells, sound conch shells, beat drums or sound gongs in joint action for the climate. We

invite all churches to participate in this joint bell-ringing action for the climate. The Creation Time material for 2009 includes inspiration for worship services that you might wish to arrange in connection with your bell-ringing.

Liturgical texts from South India

This material contains amongst other things liturgical texts from South India, first used in the Lutheran World Federation's *Climate Change Encounter* in Orissa, India, 16-20 April 2009. The texts were compiled by Theophilus Gnana, Belinda Praisyy og Wesley Vinod, recent graduates of Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, and Anupama, minister in the Lutheran Church in Orissa, South India.

We hope these liturgical building blocks will inspire your liturgical creations for Creation Time 2009, this important and precious time for reflection and the opportunity for our world to 'turn', so that we and future generations might live.

Jacqueline Ryle, Martin Ishøy, Keld B. Hansen and Hanna Smidt

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I

1. Call to worship

a. Planet Earth: our sick patient

Our earth is sick

Its temperature is soaring

The earth is fever-struck.

We've wrapped the earth in blankets
It can't cool down.
Each increase in greenhouse gasses
piles on more blankets,
heats up our suffering earth even more.

The climate of the earth is changing
Ice is melting, sea levels rising

Storms gain in strength
Bush fires rage ever stronger
Water supplies disappear
animal species die out
coral reefs are destroyed
The earth is a sick patient!

When we are struck down by illness
When our temperature soars to danger level
When our glucose levels rise
When our cholesterol levels rise
When our blood pressure rises
We do something.
We call in sick
We stay in bed
We call the doctor
We take medicine
We take it easy
We focus on our health
And we hope with all our strength
Till we recover and get going again
But what are we doing to help the earth?
This precious place
that was and is the gem of the universe?
How are we helping this sick patient who's
getting sicker by the day,
by the month,
by the year?
How do we stop where we're going
and start helping the earth
start giving it the peace and calm
the tender loving care
it needs
to get well?

Keld B. Hansen 2009

b. We must ask God to help us

When God created heaven and earth
God gave the water boundaries and limits
And God saw that it was good.
But today temperatures are rising, the ice is melting
And seas and rivers are covering the land

They also say that when God created the world
God let water pour forth to water and nourish the dry earth.
But today deserts spread
And people seek refuge from droughts

We must combine all our strength and energy today to combat climate change, to work together to
save God's creation that we are a part of.
We must pray to God for help.

Keld B. Hansen 2009

c. Responsive call to worship litany

Sisters and brothers, rejoice.
We are sustained and nourished by God's presence and love.
Thanks be to God.

As we mourn the distress and wounds of God's creation,
God weeps with us.

As we face rising waters, hunger, and displacement,
God suffers with us.

As we struggle for justice,
God struggles with us.

As we expose and challenge climate injustice,
God empowers us.

As we strive to build alternative communities,
God works with us.

As we offer our gifts to all,
God blesses us.

Sisters and brothers, rejoice.
Sustained by God's presence and love we worship God.

Lutheran World Federation, 2009

d. Blessing - as used in worship in South India

May God, the mother of the village well and the village women, help you draw water for life and laughter. May God, the father of the outcast poor and deserted Dalits, meet you waiting in their streets and teach you hope. May Jesus, a son to malnourished mothers and a brother to unwanted daughters, teach you to be a midwife who brings new life from the risen one. May the Spirit who seeks justice for earth, oppressed by the ways of the past, lead you to open new eyes to see the path beyond evil to freedom.

May Jesus Christ, the poor one, the malnourished one, the suffering one, the earth one, the Dalit, the adivasi, the climate refugee, look upon you from the dusty ground and make his face shine on you,
Amen

Lutheran World Federation, 2009

2. Creed

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.

And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God.

And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

Amen

Keld B. Hansen 2009

3. Bible passages

The following Bible passages and commentaries were compiled and written by Pastors Keld B. Hansen and Martin Ishøy.

a. Conversion

Choose life rather than death. It's still a challenge for us to extend justice, consideration and love to all Creation, to all that God created.

Deuteronomy, Chapter 30

¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days

This is not the first time the world has seen ecological degradation and environmental destruction on account of people's violation of God's commandments and the covenant God made after the flood -in joyful trust that life would never die. Let us rediscover respect and faith towards God's commandments:

Isaiah, Chapter 24

⁴The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers;
the heavens languish together with the earth.

⁵The earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled,
and few people are left.

God calls people to convert from all misuse of creation, and so conversion leads us to return to life.

Ezekiel, Chapter 18

30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ^{*} ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

It may take us a long time before we realise that our environmental behaviour, for example, has led us in the wrong direction. In the parable of the prodigal son Jesus tells us of the great opportunities (and the peace and joy) that conversion offers us.

The Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15

11 Then Jesus* said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with* the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’ ” ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”* ²²But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate.

25 ‘Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.” ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” ³¹Then the father* said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

b. Praise

The only true response to the knowledge that Planet Earth is God’s creation, is gratitude and praise. Let us praise the glory of God!

Psalm 104

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul.

O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honour and majesty,

²⁴O LORD, how manifold are your works!

In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.

²⁶There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

²⁷These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
²⁸when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
²⁹When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
³⁰When you send forth your spirit,* they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.
³¹May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.

Don't trust great men, for they cannot save. But praise the Lord and put your hope and trust in the Lord, who created heaven and earth.

Psalm 146

¹Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
²I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.
³Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
⁴When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.
⁵Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
⁶who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith for ever;
⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
⁹The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
¹⁰The LORD will reign for ever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Respect the earth and all its people. And ensure that the earth and all animals and people may find rest.

Exodus, Chapter 23

10 For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; ¹¹but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

12 For six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your home-born slave and the resident alien may be refreshed.

¹³Be attentive to all that I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips.

c. Love

Love is the greatest thing. We should love one another and every thing that God creates. For God IS love.

The chief tax-collector Zacchaeus is deeply changed by his meeting Jesus. His style of life is completely transformed and he experiences the desire to give what he has away, to share what he owns with others.

The Gospel of Luke, Chapter 19

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' ⁹Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

In the first Christian communities people did not live for themselves. They lived for God and for each other, and they shared whatever they had between them, to meet the needs of all.

Acts, Chapter 2

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and

generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The world is nourished by God's love - in its creation and in its redemption. God's love carries us and inspires us so that as we follow God's commandments, it reaches others through us. No person should be made a refugee on account of our lifestyle, and no animal or ecosystem should suffer on account of our irresponsibility and lack of care. Those who are in God's love, love all of creation.

1 John, Chapter 5

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

4. The Church Climate Relay: Linking place and people in prayer for a sustainable future for God's earth

The Church Climate Relay is a campaign to assist churches in focusing on climate change and its consequences for the poorest peoples of the world. Glacier stones from Greenland, uncovered by the receding inland ice; shrivelled up maize from Malawi; and bleached, dead corals from the Pacific Ocean are available in a Climate Relay Kit for churches throughout Denmark to use in services that focus on climate change.

Assisting churches in focusing on climate change

Stones that since time immemorial lay buried under the inland ice in Greenland are now being uncovered as the ice melts. Brightly coloured corals of the Pacific Ocean are bleached to white skeletons by unusually warm ocean currents. The maize in Africa is shrivelling up due to lack of rain, and people are dying of hunger. Climate change is impacting our planet to a hitherto unknown degree and in unprecedented ways. God's earth is suffering. And God's children are suffering.

Like many other churches and organisations, particularly in the western world, churches in Denmark have the responsibility to help reduce climate change in the world. The Church Climate Relay gives churches tangible symbols and tools to work with in making climate change a focal point of worship services. Bringing the problems of climate change into our church services increases awareness of how we all need to work together to care for God's earth, show love for our neighbour and improve the world's climate – for the benefit of all.

*Three short poetic reflections on the objects of the Climate Relay Kit,
Martin Ishøy, 2009*

Glacial stones

For millions of years God reflected on the stones. Their geological beauty pleased God, their volcanic blends and mineral combinations, sedimentations and power visible in their layerings. And God saw that it was good. With breathless joy the stones hibernated for millions of years. God rejoiced in the warmth and the freezing cold. And God rejoiced in the water that crystallized in its own ways and forms, in its own time and rhythm. Warm winds lifted it up and let it disperse on the ground in feather-like crystals. For thousands of years the snow fell, adding layer upon layer to the sedimentation of the stones, forming a natural pattern of glaciers and inland ice. And time passed, long periods of time passed, with chaotic, winding patterns of change – until all of a sudden an unseen boundary had been crossed. Nature's rhythm had been broken.

Coral Reef

A bubbling city. An organic community, more elegant than the most beautiful city on earth. An ideal of beauty and efficiency. With its genius systems of formation and recycling it nourishes and fertilises life up to forty times its value. As perfect and fragile as a child - this is the coral reef. A city built of living stones, encompassing everything that wants to be, a city of no restrictions. A multitude of forms and colours, far surpassing those of humans. Yet the city is being attacked. The arrogance of ignorant beings is destroying life and battering the jewel of the oceans. Will yet another ideal, here to enlighten the world, be crushed under the marching feet of idiocy? When the lights go out, that will be the end of the world. When we turn up the heating, the world is struck down with fever.

Advocate in our world who with a sigh tells us what we always need to hear: whisper the sighs of creation into our ears so we may learn from the frugality of the coral reef; learn to use our resources like the coral reef, with all its beauty and efficiency as our model. With respect for the diversity of creation's many forms of life.

Talsmand som på jorderige med at suk kan alt udsige, hvad vi evigt trænger til: ånd skabningens suk i vort øre, så vi lærer koralrevets nøjsomhed, lærer at bruge vores ressourcer i koralrevets tegn og med dets skønhed og effektivitet som forbillede. Med respekt for livsformernes mangfoldighed.

Maize

Maize, gently protected by leaves - as if swaddled in a manger, just like a little boy once lay, protected by a poor woman. Maize is the woman's fragile hope for the future. Fragile like the boy in the manger. In good times, when the rain came on time and brought enough moisture and replenishment, the maize was fat and nourishing, full of sun and energy. Life and nurture for a child. But now the sun burns the earth and there's no rain to cool it down. A child burns its feet on the earth's dusty baking stones. And the maize won't grow, drying out before it matures. As the maize shrivels up, so the child's arms shrivel into thin, dry sticks. At a circumference of 12,5 cm a child should be admitted to hospital. If there were a hospital. Or money to pay for treatment. When the circumference of a maize is 12,5 cm a woman's tears fall on the child, and people fold their hands in prayer for life. "Lord, forgive them. They do not know what they do". Or do we?

5. Symbolic actions

Below are suggestions for symbolic gestures to use in a worship service or devotion to illustrate various aspects of nature and spiritual life.

a. Water in a vessel or dish

Everybody is invited to bring water from their house and pour it into a common vessel at the church, remembering that this water, which comes from many places, unites us. We are called to combat the factors that cause climate change. Alternatively, people can be asked to take water from a common vessel as a symbol of a common calling and fountain of inspiration to act against those things that cause climate change.

b. Laying stones and taking flowers

At the beginning of the worship service or devotion, all participants are given a stone to hold in their hands. During the welcoming, people can be encouraged to meditate on the stone, feel it in their hands and consider things that are weighing heavily on their hearts. During a song or confession, participants are invited to come forward to lay their stones on a table as a sign of laying down their burdens. On the table is a vase with roses or lilies, from which each person can take a flower with them, as a symbol of life and hope. There is a suggestion for praying with the stones and flowers elsewhere in this material.

c. Throw stones into the water

At an outdoor worship service or devotion on the beach or on the edge of a body of water, everyone (as in the suggestion above) receives a stone. Instead of laying it on a table, however, they are invited to throw the stone into the water as a symbol of actively distancing ourselves from the burdens we carry.

d. Plant seeds or potatoes, tend them and watch them grow

As part of a worship service, for example together with children at the beginning of Creation Time, you can plant a seed or a potato as a symbol that life is a process that begins in darkness and mystery. Over time the plant grows forth. From Sunday to Sunday the pastor or Sunday school teacher can talk about the wonder of life, the necessity to care for it and nurture it. You can leave the plant(s) at church or allow the children to plant a seed or potato to take home with them. After some time (for example at the end of Creation Time), the children can bring their plants to church to show how the many little seeds have been transformed into large plants.

e. Melting ice

At the beginning of the service, place an ice cube in a place where the whole congregation can see how – during the service - the ice melts. This is a strong symbol that glaciers are melting many places in the world as a result of climate change.

6. Drama

The four elements:

There are three actors in this small drama:

Pastor/priest;

Life

Death

Pastor: God, you gave us the four elements:

Earth, air, fire and water.

You gave them to us in the name of life.

But we have misused them,
So that with time they have become bearers
of suffering and death.
See our need, hear our cry and save your world.

A bowl with water is carried up.

Life: *(the bowl is lifted up)*

I am life.
I offer you the earth to share justly between you all,
to nourish all that grows,
to give bread to all.

Death: *(the bowl is lifted up)*

I am death.
I take the earth from the many and give it to the few.
Life is short.
The earth should be exploited so that everything is made use of.

Pastor: God, we confess that we haven't shared the riches of the earth justly-
We have broken our bonds to the earth and to each other.
We have chosen death, forgive us.

A fan is carried up.

Life: *(using the fan)*

I offer the air, my breath,
the everlasting energy of the wind.
The space we all live in.
The air has no boundaries. We share the air.

Death: *(stopping the fan)*

I fill the air with destructive emissions.
I create destructive allergies and
I destroy the fragile life energy of the atmosphere.

Pastor: God, you breathed life into the world,
We confess that we have poisoned the air,
That we have not cared for the fragility of creation.
We have chosen death, forgive us.

A candle is lit.

Life: *(lifting up the candle)*

I offer fire for light and warmth,
To cleanse and energise.
We gather around the fire in community, happy to share.

Death: (*blowing out the candle*)

I use fire for violence and terror

I give strength to the weapons of war that bring death.

I burn down the forests of the earth.

I give energy in abundance to the rich and limit the access of the poor to fuel.

Pastor: God, you are the Spirit of fire and cleansing,

We confess that we lack inner fire and determination

To fight for justice and peace on earth.

We have chosen death, forgive us.

A bowl of water is carried up.

Life: (*lifting up the bowl*)

I offer water to cleanse and replenish thirst

To give nourishment to the dry land.

And with this I give peace of soul to people.

Death: (*pouring colour in the water*)

I poison the water.

I contaminate the water so that it brings sickness

I create deserts from the fertile land.

Pastor: God, you are the source of living water,

We confess our inadequate ways of dealing with the world's water.

We have chosen death, forgive us.

God, creator of earth, air, fire and water.

We give ourselves to you and cry with all creation:

Free us from our misuse of the precious riches of the earth.

Have mercy on us, Lord, and forgive us.

Sweden's Christian Council

7. Prayers

a. Open my eyes, Lord

Open my eyes, Lord,
that I may truly see the
beauty of your creation.

Open my ears, Lord,
that I may truly hear
your word.

Open my heart, Lord,
that I may hear your
warnings

and
your calling
to change my ways.

Open my mind, Father,
that I may truly comprehend
the ways your wondrous world
is being destroyed
by greed and selfish exploitation
of its precious resources.

Open my heart, Lord Jesus Christ
that I may truly feel the struggles, suffering and anguish
of my neighbour

As the earth hardens
rivers dry up
crops fail
children starve
the rain does not come.

As floods, earthquakes and cyclones ravage your earth and peoples
ever stronger;
as glaciers melt
sea levels rise
and island homes, ancestral lands
of my brothers and sisters
sink below the oceans.

Open my soul, Holy Spirit, to
the enormity of my responsibility.
Breathe strength into me, Lord,
Giver of life and light,
that I may truly hope and trust in you.

Empower me, Lord, to
Follow your will
Speak out
Act now.

Jacqueline Ryle, June 2009

b. Prayer for healing of God's Creation

Heavenly Father, you created the sky and sea,
the comfort of the moon and stars at night,
the warmth and brightness of the sun.
You gave us light and life
the beauty of the earth

You gave us your love.
*Father, we thank you for your never-ending love
We thank you for the wonders of your creation.*

Lord, you gave us the gift of insight to understand
The meaning of your creation and our responsibility
to care for it.
You gave us eyes to see the beauty
of the world
the gift of empathy
to understand others and their needs
*Lord, forgive us for not caring for your creation
Forgive us that we seek to become masters of your work
Forgive us our inner blindness and deafness to
the needs of our neighbour.*

Loving Father, you knew us from before we were born
We have turned from the knowledge and wisdom
you gave us
Hear our repentance!
Grant us the courage and tenacity to change our ways!
*Lord, show us your way
And make us willing to follow it.*

Father of all, you gave us yourself in your son, Jesus Christ
Grant us through your grace renewed insight
to live according to your word
to respect and care for your creation
*Stay with us, Lord, that we may
learn from you.*

Holy Spirit, we pray
Come to us, breathe new life and insight into us
*Holy Spirit, help us to see
where our treasure is
for where our treasure is
there will also our hearts be.*

Jacqueline Ryle 2009

c. Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord, you created heaven and earth and
the stars that glow in the dark,
you gave us the beauty of the earth in all its diversity
you gave us your unending love
you gave us warmth and love of our neighbour
to share the joy of your creation with others.

We thank you for all that you entrusted us with.
Forgive us that we have not
cared for your gift as we ought.
We ask you
lead us to walk new paths that
respect your creation,
respect the fragility of life and the earth
respect and love our neighbour.

Loving Father, without your grace and love,
without your help
we can do nothing.
Help us rebuild and heal all that we have destroyed,
Help us rediscover your wisdom of love.

Jacqueline Ryle 2009

d. Prayer for conversion

Almighty, triune God, we are weighed down by worries, by despair
We see an overwhelming army of misdeeds and misuse,
of lack of faith, confusion, selfishness.

And we know we are caught in the same net.

We're like fish swimming with the current
while panic spreads and the net is tightened.

With your words you opened the world.

But with all our excuses we are closing it

- So Noah's Arc goes down with mice and men.

We fly to Thailand to get warm.

We drive the children to school to get there in time

We eat steaks because it's normal.

We constantly increase our consumption and growth
to exploit new opportunities.

Moderation is not big on our list of to dos.

We confess we have sinned and our sin is great

- so great that even being conscious of our sin paralyses us.

Where is our faith now, and where is our hope, and where is our sense of God's touch?

Lord, teach us to trust your name – teach us to rediscover roots and wings!

Let us discover

your presence in the phenomena of the forests,

part of photosynthesis and respiration,

part of biodegrading and recreation,

part of nature's diversity

and search for glimpses of the continuous, sustainable joy of creation.

And let us discover your presence in all the diversity of nature

that preaches your power to overcome all our sin and despair

far away from everything we know and understand.

Amen

Martin Ishøy 2008

e. Prayer with stones and flowers

With this stone,
we lay our burdens down.
Our fears,
our guilt,
our complicity.
We put them down.
Put them behind us and look forward with humility and hope.

With this flower,
we pray for humility,
respect for life,
and for hope.
We pray for the ability to see and feel symbols of grace all around us:
in the flowers,
the wind,
the sun,
the stones.
We pray for the willingness to see, hear and feel your creator hands in the world;
this world which you created and loved,
and still love
and which you love us through.
We are part of your magnificent creation,
dependent on its intricate systems and balances.
We pray for wisdom,
clear sight,
and willingness
to act for the good of all creation.
Amen.

Hanna Smidt 2009

f. Prayer thanksgiving, confession and hope

Almighty and loving God: you create and sustain all things

We thank you for the gift of creation and the miracle of life.
We praise you for the earth; our home in a cold universe.
We praise you for the air, for the earth, for warmth and for water
We praise you for all these gifts that grant us life.

Lord, we thank you!

We thank you for the rays of the sun, spread in blessing over land and sea.
We praise you for the atmosphere where we live, breathe, love and die.

We praise you when we see how matter and energy continuously renew life on earth.

Lord, we thank you!

Almighty and loving God: you have entrusted us with the stewardship of your creation

Help us gain insight into the wondrous processes of life and creation
Give us the wisdom to use the resources of the world with care
Strengthen us in overcoming greed and desire to become good stewards of your creation.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Help us understand that our ways of life will have to change.
Help us acknowledge our responsibility for the planet and its peoples.
Inspire us to act now in our local worlds
Inspire us especially to act for the good of the poor and needy of the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Almighty and loving God: you are our salvation

We admit that we thoughtlessly consume much more than we need.
We confess we have been slow to recognise the effects of our lifestyles.
We pray for forgiveness for misusing the life and resources of the planet.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Almighty and loving God: you call us, renew us and send us out into the world anew

Call us again to be your people, your humanity, in spite of our failings.
Renew our hearts to follow Christ in all aspects of our lives.
Send us into the world as peacemakers and good stewards of your gifts.

Lord, we praise your holy name! Amen.

Ole Birch (2008)

g.
Our God is the God of all,
The God of heaven and earth,
Of the sea and of the rivers;
The God of the sun and of the moon
and of the stars;
The God of the lofty mountains
and of the lowly valleys
He has His dwelling around heaven and earth,
and sea, and all that in them is.

St Patrick

The Wisdom of the Celts, compiled and introduced by David Adam 1996:10; Michigan, Lion Publishing

h.

He inspires all,
He gives life to all,
He dominates all,
He supports all.
He lights the light of the sun.
He furnishes the light of the night.
He has made springs in dry land.
He is the God of heaven and earth,
of sea and rivers,
of sun, moon and stars,
of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley,
the God above heaven,
and in heaven,
and under heaven.

St Patrick

The Wisdom of the Celts, compiled and introduced by David Adam 1996:11; Michigan: Lion Publishing

i.

The world cannot comprehend in song
bright and melodious,
even though the grass and trees should sing,
all your wonders, O true Lord!

Old Welsh prayer

The Wisdom of the Celts, compiled and introduced by David Adam 1996:12; Michigan: Lion Publishing - excerpt from Celtic Christian Spirituality, Oliver Davies & Fiona Bowie 1995, SPCK, by permission of the publishers

j.

If you want to understand the Creator,
seek to understand created things

Columbanus

The Wisdom of the Celts, compiled and introduced by David Adam 1996:13; Michigan: Lion Publishing

k.

My dearest Lord.
Be Thou a bright flame before me,

Be Thou a guiding star above me,
Be Thou a smooth path beneath me,
Be Thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today and evermore.

*St Columba The Wisdom of the Celts, compiled and introduced by David Adam 1996:18; Michigan:
Lion Publishing*

l. Canticle of the Creatures

All praise be yours, My Lord,
through all that you have made.
And first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day....
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright and precious and fair.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air....
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten up the night....
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us...and produces various fruits
With colored flowers and herbs....
Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
and serve him with great humility.

*St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies,
edited by Marion A. Habig, ©1973 by Franciscan Herald Press*

m. Green Prayer of Thanks

We thank you, Lord our God, from all our heart
for giving us life
which every morning when we wake
unfolds before us as an immense and beautiful gift.

And as we meet we are joyful
for you created heaven and earth
and all that is in the world:
the water we drink,
the air we breathe,
the fire that warms us.

Thank you, Lord, for in your wisdom
giving us other works of creation,
plants and animals,
to give us joy and enrich us

and which you taught us to use for our food.
Teach us to live up to the responsibility
you also gave us,
to not misuse and violate your other creative works.

Thank you, God, for the gift of other human beings
to be with.
Thank you for entrusting us to each other, as parents and children,
as brothers and sisters,
as relatives and friends
and as fellow human beings across the earth
Teach us to joyfully show responsibility for each other.

Lord, many people
don't have as much to be joyful about as we do.
Be with them,
And be with us
when joy is taken from us, or when we ourselves destroy it.
Let all people feel they always have your word to live by,
visible, audible and spoken to us at our baptism.
Amen

Martin Ishøy 2007

8. Prayers inspired by the Lord's Prayer

a. A prayer inspired by the Lord's Prayer

Our heavenly Father, you love the world with your divine love.
Let the whole of creation glorify your holy name
Bring healing to this planet and to all living things
Bring righteousness into being and make the joy of your creation grow
Help us to share our daily bread with all who are in need
Forgive us all our crimes against creation
Lead us not into the temptation of greediness,
but deliver us from evil
For yours is the cosmos in all its glory
for ever and ever.
Amen

Keld B. Hansen 2009

b. Another prayer inspired by the Lord's Prayer - as used in worship in India

Our God, the source of life, your name
be glorified as you reveal yourself through the beauty of your creation.
Let your will of protecting and preserving your earth community be continued.
Give the poor the strength to own their forests, lands, seas and rivers to sustain them daily.

Forgive us for breaking nature's cycle of life.
Lead us not into temptations of greed, want and seeking to make a commodity of your creation.
Deliver us from becoming evil agents destroying your creation.
For yours is this cosmos which proclaims your reign and glory
forever and ever.
Amen.

Lutheran World Federation, 2009

II

9. WCC-supported International Bell-ringing 13 December 2009, 15.00 local time

Since time immemorial in cultures across the world, the blowing of conch shells, the beating of drums, the sounding of gongs and the tolling of bells have warned people of imminent danger, have called people to religious worship, to mark important moments in worship and to seek to connect to God. These perspectives of alarm, prayer and hope are brought together in the following proposal:

We invite churches across the globe to join forces in a coordinated action on Sunday 13 December 2009 at 15.00 hours, 3pm local time by ringing their bells, sounding their drums or gongs 350 times for the climate.

13 December marks the height of the COP15 climate summit in Copenhagen. 15.00 hours Copenhagen local time on Sunday 13 December marks the end of a high profile ecumenical celebration at the Lutheran Cathedral in Copenhagen, hosted by the National Council of Churches in Denmark. At this service, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, will be preaching on the imminent threat of climate change and our responsibility as Christians and stewards of God's creation to act now. The aim and vision of this ecumenical celebration is for Christians to celebrate the beauty of God's creation, to raise awareness as Christians of the gravity of the situation the world faces in relation to climate change; to focus on justice, peace and solidarity in the world in relation to climate change; and to pray together for a successful and fair outcome of COP15.

As the congregation of some 2000 people leave the Cathedral, the bells will toll 350 times along with bells all over Denmark and the rest of the world – as a Christian warning to the world; as a sign of hope for God's Creation; and as a Christian call to the delegates of COP15 and the world for global action now – before it is too late.

Why ring the bells 350 times? 350 refers to the 350ppm UN maximum limit of CO₂ emission (parts per million – the number of molecules per million) that is acceptable if we are to avoid climate disaster. At the present moment world levels of CO₂ emissions are at an alarming 389 ppm. If we are to have any hope of avoiding global climate disaster we need to bring our CO₂ emission levels down to 350ppm. It is therefore imperative that the COP15 summit reaches a radical, unequivocal and binding agreement as to how to attain this goal.

Read more about this event on www.gronkirke.dk and sign up now for your church to be part of this important and symbolic action!

Bell Ringing Prayer:

Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world:
There's a ringing in our ears and our hearts throb
as temperatures rise
an image emerging ever clearer
of communities gasping for breath
of ecosystems gasping for breath
of the earth experiencing increasing climatic change
species dying and ordinary people becoming
climate refugees.
Drought, floods, cyclones, sickness
destroy landscapes,
All the plagues of Egypt, only created by humans.

Almighty, love, Jesus Christ,
You who takes upon you our death - and gives us life
We are weighed down by guilt and idealism
Bring us under the protective wings of faith
You who are the truth, the way and the life!
Show us your way again. Give us the will to follow it.
Give our politicians and parliaments the will and courage
To choose and want to walk your path,
Where all people are equal and there is no arrogance,
Where everything you created flourishes in its own right in your honour
There's a ringing in our ears and our hearts throb
And not without reason.
But let bells ring across the land and through cities
Take away the power of the sandgrains trickling through
the hour-glass of fear.
Scatter the sand instead as exquisite chimes
350 chimes of beautiful sound for the health of the earth
in your honour.

Martin Ishøy 2009

Estonian liberation hymn by Heli Vith
Tune: Piret Pormeister-Rips
Translated to English by Kristin Markay

1. Can't you hear the distant bells are ringing?
People waken as they hear their song.
Everywhere the air is filled with music.
Now we see a new day has begun

2. So we know the darkness is behind us,
and the morning waits for us to sing.
Everywhere the light of God is shining.
Hear the joyful bells of heaven ring.

3. See the light that conquers over darkness
God has given us a brand-new day.
We're rejoicing of this new beginning.
Celebrate this Easter gift today

Hommikul

Heli Viht

Piret Rips

6

mf 1. Kau-gel väl-jal he-li - se-vad kel-lad, nen-de ku-min kos-tab ü-le

10

maa. _____ O - rus o - ja kal - dal ha-jub u - du,

13

ter - ve maa võib jäl - le är - ga - ta. Möö - das öö ja käes on jäl - le homm - mik,

17

kas - te - piis - ku sä - de - le - mas maas. _____ Tae - va - vee - rel koi - du kau - ge ku - ma,

21

val - gus võit - nud pi - me - du - se taas. See on Loo - ja kin - gi - tus me maa - le,

f

25

päev, mis mei - le kor - du - ma - tu, uus. Ol - gu sel - lel päe - val mei - e ü - le

29

kõik - jal ra - hu, rõõm ja _____ va - ba - dus.

3

Fine

Hommikul

2

34 G $\frac{Am}{G}$ D G $\frac{C}{E}$

mf 2. Aeg me e-lus as - tub o-ma sam - me, — hom - se poo - le eil - sest vii - vad

37 D $\frac{B}{D\#}$ Em $\frac{D}{F\#}$ $\frac{C}{G}$ C $\frac{G}{B}$

need. — Uu-te mõ-te-te ja loo - tus - te-ga tä - na al - gan jäl - le o-ma

41 Dsus4 D G $\frac{Am}{G}$ D G $\frac{C}{E}$

teed. Lõ-pu-tu ja pikk on va-hel ra-da, — i-ga-ve-ne päev meid oo-tab

45 D $\frac{B}{D\#}$ Em Dm $\frac{Dm}{G}$ C $\frac{Am}{B}$ $\frac{G}{B}$ $\frac{Am}{C}$ D $\frac{Gsus4}{D}$

ees. — Öö on möö-das, või-me rõõ-mus - ta-da, val-gu-sel on võit me sü-da-

49 G $\frac{\%}{C}$ D D7 G

mes. See on kõik - jal ra-hu, rõõm ja va - ba - dus.

rit.