

Creation-Tide

Good stewards or bad tenants – Responding to the climate crisis

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The language about what is happening to our climate and worldwide environment is becoming ever more serious. We have moved from ‘climate change’, to ‘climate crisis’, and sometimes ‘climate catastrophe’. Many have denied the science over the years, but now it is recognized as incontrovertible. Human beings have so damaged the environment that we are in danger of making our world uninhabitable. As Christians, we have resources to help us to respond to this crisis. We have an understanding of our relationship with creation and the Creator that can help us to change, that can be ‘good news’ for our world. But we are slow to hear and slow to respond. These resources are offered as an encouragement to action.

Opening Prayer

Creator God,
you breathe life into all life,
you hold the fragile balance of nature,
you call us to be good stewards of creation,
to honour you in the way we care for our world;
but we have abused your trust,
we have taken what we want, without heed of the consequences,
we have wasted and discarded, without thought for the future.
Open our hearts and minds to the signs of our times,
to the groaning of creation, so that we turn
from being bad tenants to being good stewards of your world,
in Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.

In this Psalm we remember that we are called to praise God with the whole of creation. We celebrate the fact that we are intimately connected with the universe, the earth and all that lives.

Psalm 148

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels;

praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens,

and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

fire and hail, snow and frost,

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle,

creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike,

old and young together!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Reading – *Romans 8.18–25 The Creation waits with eager longing*

Prayers of Recognition

We bring to God the times when we have failed to act,
the times we have doubted the reality of climate change,
the times when we have left it to somebody else.

(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,

Set us free to act.

We bring to God the times when we have been bad tenants,
wasting resources, throwing away so much,
failing to care for our world.

(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,

Set us free to act.

We bring to God the ways in which we have thought only of the short term,
in our politics, in our consuming, in our lifestyle,
failing to think of our children's children.

(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,

Set us free to act.

Now, as good stewards and co-creators with God,
we commit ourselves to change,
to take responsibility for the things in our lives that we can do.

(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,

Set us free to act.

We commit ourselves to listen, to the scientists and activists,
to the world around us, to the earth and all its creatures,
the prophetic voices of our time.

(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,
Set us free to act.

We commit ourselves to speak and to act,
to work together as a church and as a community to care for creation,
to provide for our children and grandchildren.
(Silence)

Creation waits with eager longing,
Set us free to act.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our churches,
that we may find courage and determination
to speak boldly and to act wisely
to protect the environment.
(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,
We are your children.

We pray for our political leaders,
that they might find courage and determination to resist vested interests,
to make long term decisions, to protect the environment.
(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,
We are your children.

We pray for climate change activists, both young and old,
who campaign for changing attitudes,
that they may find energy for their front-line work
and enable others to change destructive patterns.
(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,
We are your children.

We pray for the farming community, and all who produce food,
that they may find ways of working more sustainably,
to protect the soil and to reduce pollution.
(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,
We are your children.

We pray for scientists and engineers, all who research and discover,
that they might equip us with means to protect our planet,
to undo the damage we have done.

(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,

We are your children.

We pray for friends and neighbours and our local community,
that we might find ways of working together to reduce waste,
to protect habitat and to act locally.

(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,

We are your children.

We pray for all who are already suffering
from the effects of climate change,
for those experiencing extreme weather,
rising sea levels, and economic deprivation.

(Silence)

We wait with eager longing,

We are your children.

We wait with eager longing for the glory that is to come.
Where we have been bad tenants, help us to mend our ways.
May we use all our ability to become good stewards of creation.

Amen.

Action

*Create ten prayer points in church and set up a focus for prayer and action at each one.
These are based on ten actions we can take to respond to climate change.*

- 1 *Powering your home with 'green energy'*
- 2 *Eating less meat*
- 3 *Divesting your money from fossil fuels*
- 4 *Swapping clothes instead of buying new clothes*
- 5 *Switching to electric powered transport*
- 6 *Avoiding single use plastic bags and packaging*
- 7 *Writing to your local council and MP to call attention to climate change*
- 8 *Buying local seasonal food*
- 9 *Growing your own food*
- 10 *Other suggestions!*

You may like to set up a picture to illustrate the suggested action, with some explanation of why it would be good. Also, provide a pile of post-it notes and pens, for people to use to write their own commitment to change. These can then be added to a board in each location to show people's responses.

Act of Commitment

We stand to affirm our commitment to be good stewards together.

We acknowledge that God is our creator.

**The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it; *Psalm 24.1***

We acknowledge that we are stewards of creation, tenants of the land.

**The Lord God took the man
and put him in the garden of Eden
to till it and keep it. *Genesis 2.15***

We acknowledge the need to be good stewards of the land.

**When you enter the land I am going to give you,
the land itself must observe a Sabbath to the LORD. *Leviticus 25.2***

We commit ourselves to embrace the changes needed in our lives.

**Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile,
and pray to the Lord on its behalf,
for in its welfare you will find your welfare. *Jeremiah 29.7***

We commit ourselves to undo the harm we have caused.

**Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in. *Isaiah 58.12***

May the commitment we have made this day be matched by our faithful living.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Blessing

Creator God, create in us a new heart,
a new understanding, a new way of living.

Redeemer God, rescue us from the brink of disaster,
open our eyes to see the dangers that lie ahead.

Sustainer God, equip and energize us,
to hold fast to the changes that we need to make.

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer God,
bless us now to be good stewards of your creation.

Amen.