

Worship resources

MCC's National Peace & Justice Ministries assembled these worship resources to help your congregation reflect on climate change and our role in taking climate action to build a more peaceful world. You will find reflections, prayers, readings, scripture verses and song selections to help you plan a service that will inspire you to think about God's creation and how we can work for a better climate future for all.



MCC photo/Meghan Mast

Reflections

The things that make for peace

Rarely is climate change discussed in the context of violence. But people are indeed suffering and dying due to human actions.

Climate change has led to more frequent and extreme weather events that take lives directly. It also contributes to slower-developing humanitarian crises as a driver of food shortages, conflict and migration. The most vulnerable often suffer the most harm.

In Luke 19:41–42, Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem and wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!” Although Anabaptists have a long history of nonviolence, many are coming to the difficult realization that we are part of the violence being done to God’s creation. We have, once again, failed to recognize “the things that make for peace.”

What does it mean to live in peace with the Earth? Living a simple, sustainable lifestyle is a good start. But we must also urge our government officials to enact policies that both care for the Earth and assist those who have been harmed by the violence of climate change.*

Above photo: Elita Moyo is a part of the Women’s Coalition of Climate Change in Mwenzei District, Zimbabwe. As a leader in her Apostolic Church and community, Elita influences others to protect trees after learning about their importance to the climate through the coalition.

* Read more about the slow violence of climate change at mennonitecreationcare.org/every-creature-singing.



Teofilo Colque has been able to diversify his crops through irrigation and soil conservation techniques promoted by MCC partner PRODIG. In remote, mountainous communities in Bolivia, farmers feel the effects of climate change most keenly in how unpredictable and extreme the weather has become.

Right Relationships

Mennonite Central Committee envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation. As we advocate for government policies to address climate change, it is important to remember that we are entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Too often we seek simple, top-down solutions for deep, complex problems. At the root of the greenhouse gas emissions that led to climate change were human decisions and human failings.

In the U.S., Canada and globally, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels has exploited natural resources and human workers, disproportionately polluted historically marginalized communities, and stolen and desecrated sacred Indigenous lands.

In order to untangle the web of climate change, resource extraction, inequality, racism, colonialism and corruption, we must seek to be in right relationship with one another. It is imperative that affected communities be involved in making policy decisions to ensure that rash actions do not cause unintended harm.

We can be climate peacemakers if we approach changemaking with an attitude of love, humility and listening, restoring right relationships as we restore God's Earth.

Chhin Ya is a farmer supported by MCC partner Organization to Develop Our Villages (ODOV) in Mesang district, Cambodia. Before starting work with ODOV, the family was not able to support themselves. Their crops were regularly damaged or destroyed by droughts, especially in more recent years as the impacts of Climate Change intensified in the region.



MCC photo/Isaac Alderfer

“Our World is more
intricate and magical
than we ever dreamed.”

Prayers

Call to worship

God’s goal is not to pluck human souls out of a world damned to destruction.

The Word became flesh and camped out with us here in the mud of earthly existence.

God became a human creature so that, in Jesus, God could show us how to better imagine and fully become creatures ourselves.

God embraces the material world.

We feel the crushing burden of responsibility.

God is already at work ahead of our humble efforts,
birthing new life out of despair and inviting us to join in.

God promises to stick with us no matter what.

We might prefer a God that would blow in like a storm cloud and fix climate change with mighty acts of power.

But, to walk in the steps of the suffering Savior will surely involve coming face to face with places of environmental destruction.

God is at work through vulnerability and suffering.

As we are touched by the Earth’s pain we also discover

that our World is more intricate and magical than we ever dreamed.

God wears the wounds of places that are hurting.

God does not give up on us.

Amen.

—Adapted from Session 1 of *Every Creature Singing*, Mennonite Creation Care Network, mennocreationcare.org/every-creature-singing/

Martina Jacinta Aldaña stands in her garden plot in Ashotial, El Salvador. The plot is run collectively by five women and supported by MCC partner ANADES.

The project helps women in the region to sustainably produce their own food while minimalizing environmental damage and improving soil composition.



MCC photo/Meghan Mast

Scripture readings

Job 28:20–27

God speaks of wisdom being imbedded in nature, even in the elements of the weather.

Psalm 24:1, Psalm 148

The Earth is God’s wondrous creation; it brings glory to God.

Jeremiah 9:10

A lamentation for nature.

Matthew 25:31–46

Caring for the vulnerable includes being aware of how climate change makes more people sick, hungry and vulnerable.

A prayer for Oak Flat

by Jennifer Schrock

God of the desert—
God whom Hagar named “the God who sees me,”
look again.
See the place where water flows,
nourishing ancient oak trees
and the San Carlos Apache
come to gather acorns.
“Oak Flat” we say in English,
But the Apache have a name
more like music,
much older and wilder.

It is easy to see our voracious need for copper:
In pipes, wires, wind generators, solar panels, hospitals.
The Apache tell us of beauty, history, peoplehood,
the presence of God.

We may not know Oak Flat,
but we know Bethlehem.
We know Mount Sinai and the Swiss caves where Anabaptists
worshipped;
where people still sing hymns.
Help us feel the pain of our brothers and sisters.

We have no solutions, only fervent prayer
For the San Carlos Apache
For the corporation, Resolution Copper
For You to act in ways that bring justice and peace.
For a way forward beyond all imagining.

—mennocreationcare.org/a-prayer-for-oak-flat

Solar panels on the roof of a home in Zimbabwe that is part of a project by MCC’s partner SCORE. The project empowers women by providing environmentally friendly technologies that reduce emissions and give women time and resources to contribute to their families’ incomes.



MCC photo/Christy Kauffman

Songs suggestions

Hymnal A Worship Book

HWB 89 For the beauty
of the earth
HWB 156 All things bright and
beautiful
HWB 414 God, who stretched

Sing The Story hymnal

STS 115 Beauty for brokenness

Voices Together hymnal

VT 712 Beauty for Brokenness
VT 806 Called by Earth and Sky
VT 205 Light Dawns on
a Weary World
VT 788 The Garden Needs
Our Tending Now

Coffee plants on San Jorge farm, MCC partner ANADES' demonstration farm in El Salvador. The project helps women in the region to sustainably produce their own food while minimalizing environmental damage and improving soil composition.

ClimateActionForPeace.com



Prayer for our Earth from the Pope Francis encyclical Laudato Si

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.

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.

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.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

—*Interfaith Power and Light: “Faith Climate Action Week” resources. More at faithclimateactionweek.org/prayers-and-climate-blessings.*

Prayer of confession

Gracious and merciful God, in your presence we confess our sins.

We have neglected the poor and the hungry and ignored the cries of the oppressed. We pursue profits and pleasures that harm the land and pollute the waters, leaving this world depleted and damaged for future generations. Have mercy on us, O Lord. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we and all your creatures may know the joy of life abundant, given through Christ Jesus, the risen Lord.

Amen.

—*Creation Justice Ministries. More at creationjustice.org/earth-day-library.html/.*



MCC photo/Meghan Mast