



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY

SEASON OF CREATION

A worship resource for the
Season of Creation

1 September – 4 October 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the Season of Creation!

As we enter the Season of Creation, I am deeply reminded of the interconnectedness of our faith, our communities, and the Earth that sustains us all. Growing up as a daughter of the Pacific, I've witnessed firsthand the delicate balance of creation—how the ocean's rhythms sustain life and how, in turn, our actions impact those same waters.

I recall stories from my Tongan heritage where the ocean is not just a resource but a living, breathing part of our community, a sacred gift from God that demands our respect and care.

This Season of Creation, with its theme *Hope and Act with Creation*, invites us all to embrace our shared responsibility to protect and nurture the Earth. The theme resonates deeply with our mission as the Uniting Church, where ecological justice and the stewardship of creation are central to our call as disciples of Christ. Romans 8:19-25 reminds us that creation itself groans in anticipation of liberation—a liberation that we are called to participate in through our prayers, actions, and advocacy.

As President, I have emphasised the theme, *Threads of Love, Weaving Christ's love across cultures and boundaries*. This theme is powerfully connected to the Season of Creation, as our care for the Earth transcends all human divisions. Just as we are called to weave threads of love in our communities, we are equally called to weave these threads into our relationship with creation, recognising that every act of care for the environment is an act of love for our global neighbours and future generations.

I encourage you to explore this worship resource and other resources provided for this season and to actively engage. Whether through worship, advocacy or community action, let us come together to protect and renew the Earth, reflecting the boundless love of Christ in all we do.

As we weave Christ's love into the fabric of our daily lives, may we also weave it into the very soil, waters and skies that sustain us, honouring God's gift of creation with every step we take.

In doing so, let us also acknowledge the deep wisdom and spiritual connection of First Nations peoples to this land. Their care for country over countless generations reminds us that creation is not just a resource to be used, but a sacred trust to be nurtured and respected. May our actions reflect this understanding, as we seek to live in harmony with the land, honouring both God and the First Peoples who have cared for this place since time immemorial.

Rev Charissa Suli

President of the Uniting Church in Australia

Tips for holding this service inside

Note there is a complementary resource available from the Assembly if you are planning to hold this service outdoors

Tips for holding this service inside

It may not be possible in every context or community to worship outdoors. In some parts of our country it may be difficult to find a body of water to gather around. In others, the weather may not permit. Don't worry, you can take your celebration of creation inside with the same sense of inclusion and attentiveness to our world!

Be creative in decorating the space and include symbols for water or creation, such as using blue fabric or displaying particular images. Even better if these are images of your local community or region. You might like to set up the church differently than usual to help people engage their senses and be reflective.

Make moments of prayer and reflection interactive or shared and allow silence to linger. As always in worship, consider how the different prayers can be distributed among the community: all of us adding our voices to the choir of creation in prayer and song.

If you wanted to include the symbolism of gathering by water in your community, you could collect water during the week and use it to fill the bowl. You could also collect river stones or other symbols such as fallen gum leaves.

When speaking about creation during worship, be specific and name things and places in your region.

Service of Worship

Call to Worship

Friends, it is the Season of Creation!

We gather to worship the God of rivers and oceans and waterfalls,
of rainforest and desert place.

We gather to hear the cry of the prophets and the groaning of creation,
and to join that mighty river of justice and peace.

We come to be quenched by living water, giver of life.

We come to plant our feet on the earth, parched for justice.

May the Creator, fountain of life,
Jesus the Christ, pulse of life,
and Holy Spirit, breath of life,
be always with you.

And also with you.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of First Peoples is a way of paying respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whenever we gather together and an important expression of our covenant commitment to walk with First Peoples. Include in your Acknowledgement the name of the traditional lands on which you gather. You might like to acknowledge the ongoing connection to Country and care for creation by First Peoples in your place.

For example words to use go to:

<https://uniting.church/acknowledgement-of-country-in-the-uca/>

Blessing for a sacred place (Aunty Rev Dr Denise Champion)

Leader: Arrawatanha Ngapala Nguthana

Response: Most High, Our Maker

All: The land you have given us, your children.
Look on this place ...
this special place where you live;
this special place where your glory rests.
Look upon this sacred place where your name is
honoured.
Help us keep it as our Ancestors did.

Leader: Althaninda

Response: Happy are you.

Invitation to be present to God's world

Take a minute to fully 'arrive' in this space. Settle into a comfortable position, stilling yourself. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your breath. Gradually expand your attention to the sounds and sights of the world around you.

Allow silence.

After a time, people could be invited to call out the sounds, smells, sights they have noticed. After each one, all respond with: "Thank you, God of creation!"

Conclude with a short, spoken prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Hearing the Word

You may like to include both or just one of these readings, or choose your own. You may like to use a few different voices, perhaps from different generations.

Amos 5:21-24 (MSG)

I can't stand your religious meetings.
I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions.
I want nothing to do with your religion projects,
your pretentious slogans and goals.
I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes,
your public relations and image making.
I've had all I can take of your noisy ego-music.
When was the last time you sang to me?
Do you know what I want?
I want justice—oceans of it.
I want fairness—rivers of it.
That's what I want. That's all I want.

Isaiah 43:15-21 (MSG)

14-15 God, your Redeemer,
The Holy of Israel, says:
"Just for you, I will march on Babylon.
I'll turn the tables on the Babylonians.
Instead of whooping it up,
they'll be wailing.
I am God, your Holy One,
Creator of Israel, your King."
16-21 This is what God says,
the God who builds a road right through the ocean,
who carves a path through pounding waves,
The God who summons horses and chariots and armies—
they lie down and then can't get up;
they're snuffed out like so many candles:

“Forget about what’s happened;
don’t keep going over old history.
Be alert, be present. I’m about to do something brand-new.
It’s bursting out! Don’t you see it?
There it is! I’m making a road through the desert,
rivers in the badlands.
Wild animals will say ‘Thank you!’
—the coyotes and the buzzards—
Because I provided water in the desert,
rivers through the sunbaked earth,
Drinking water for the people I chose,
the people I made especially for myself,
a people custom-made to praise me.

Responding to the Word

Depending on the context, you could respond to the reading/s in a few ways. When worshipping outdoors, informal and interactive works best. Possible options include:

- *A brief reflection (see reflection prompts and themes for inspiration)*
- *A brief discussion, either among the whole group or in pairs*
- *A song*
- *Walking a labyrinth*
- *Silence, prayer and meditation*
- *Invite people to reflect on images of creation from your local community or region*

Prayer of confession (Rev Alex Sangster)

This prayer of confession and water ritual can be used inside or outside.

For outside worship

In some contexts, it may be possible for the leader to get into the water to lead this prayer. Please only do this in shallow water (like a riverbank) and only if you can be assured it is safe. Alternatively, you could use a large bowl or pour water on the ground.

For indoor worship

Use a large bowl or something similar. If you wanted to include the symbolism of water in your community, you could collect this during the week and use it to fill the bowl. You could also collect river stones or other symbols of the riverbank such as gum leaves.

During the sung Kyries, pour the water lavishly.

We gather here by the waters
the water shaping earth
the water in our bodies
the surging, the birthing, the baptism, the tears
we gather and we say
we are sorry

(SUNG) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison

For the pollution and the pain and the disrespect and drought
for all that we have inflicted upon the waters of the world
we are sorry

Here, you could invite people to name their own confessions.

(SUNG) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison

We sit by the waters,
we lay down and we weep
we say yes to the invitation to wash our apathy away

(SUNG) Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison

If you are worshipping inside or otherwise able to, for example if you have a speaker, play some music here (one suggestion is 'A River' by David Benjamin Blower. This is [available to stream](#))

Invite people to touch or pour the water as the song is playing.

Hear Christ's love to you all
Remember [young Stuart Moodie](#) who, in 2019
managed to rescue more than 100 native fish on the Mole River,
in far northern New South Wales,
by catching the fish by hand in muddy water
and moving them into larger waterholes.

Healing is possible.
Cleansing is possible.
We can form a mighty river of justice and peace.
Everything is possible with the love of God.

Prayers of the people

People are invited to offer their own prayers for creation out loud or could be invited to pray in small groups. You could pray as a community, with people each contributing a line.

As you gather people back or prepare for the sending, you could invite them to share what they will do this week to care for creation or to work for justice and peace.

Words of Mission (Rev Jon Humphries)

God,
As Christ you send us,
To be your apostolic Church
To go into the world
Flowing with grace
Eroding injustice
Flooding the world with peace and love.

Like rivers in the desert,
Bringing life giving water to all those who thirst,
May we be channels of your working,
Channelling justice and rightness,
Where there is a drought of hope because of their absence.
As we join with you as Spirit
In your mission of transformation, healing and redemption,
Be with us as you go before us.
Send us out once more to do your will.
Now and always.

Blessing

And may the blessing of God, pulse of all that is,
Spirit of creation, brooding over the waters,
and Jesus the Christ, who was clothed in
creation, Go with us now from this place.
Amen.

Additional resources

A blessing for the Season of Creation (by Jessica Morthorpe)

As we gather in this season, may our eyes be open for God's face shining through creation,
and our ears be open to the words of creation's songs of praise.
May we worship among the wattle in a cathedral of the sky.
May the scent of eucalypt and petrichor be our incense.
May the rhythms of our liturgy be breath and wind and wave.
May the bees give their sermons, and the birds their wisdom.
May ripples and dandelion seeds carry our prayers to the ears of God.
May the freedom from walls widen our hearts and fill them with compassion.
And may we find peace in celebrating the rituals of time, season and growth.
May this be for us a sacred time to remember God's first gift to us,
and our first responsibility – to love and care for creation.
Amen.

Reflection prompts and themes

- Amos 5 (Let justice roll down like a river)
- Isaiah 43 (A way in the wilderness, streams in the desert)
- Water as a giver of life
- Water as powerful
- Living water
- Water as a symbol of baptism
- Water as cleansing

Song suggestions

Organisers of this service can decide how and where music might be best used.

If you are holding this service outside, it may work best to choose a short chorus that can be repeated rather than a few longer songs, unless you have transportable music or songs are well known! If your community would like to, you could spend some time learning songs during the Season of Creation that could then be sung outdoors.

- Kyrie Eleison (TiS 736)
- 'Come Holy Spirit' (Iona) (TiS 710)
- Bless the Lord, my Soul (Taize, TiS 706)
- Lord Jesus Christ, Lover of All (John Bell)
- How long (Robin Mann)
- For you, deep stillness (Robin Mann and Julie Perrin)
- Morning has broken (TiS 156)
- Beautiful Things (Gungor)
- I, the Lord of sea and sky
- The Summons (Will You Come and Follow Me) (John Bell, David

Peacock and Graham Maule.) CCLI Song Number 4983527.

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBq1YtpQL8>

- Gather Us In (TiS 474)

Acknowledgements

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You may be interested in books by Aunty Rev Dr Denise Champion, [Anaditj](#) and [Yarta Wandatha](#).

