



Complete Series – To Hope and Act with Creation

A Season of Creation Worship Guide for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA Congregations

Creation is groaning in the pains of childbirth... - Romans 8:22

In a time when the groans of creation are growing in intensity, Mennonites are invited to join Christians all over the world in marking the Season of Creation – six weeks of worship, prayer, and action dedicated to the healing of our common home. The Season of Creation is an annual celebration that begins on September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and culminates on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christians.

This resource grew out of a desire to provide Season of Creation Resources with an Anabaptist lens. Commissioned by a bi-national group that emerged after the transition of Mennonite Creation Care Network to becoming the Climate Justice Ministry of Mennonite Church USA, this resource was created to support the congregations of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA as we seek justice and peace for all creation.

We have chosen to build on the theme *To Hope and Act with Creation*, developed by the [Season of Creation](#) ecumenical coalition. Romans 8:14-25 provides a rich scriptural framework for the season, inviting us to join creation in lament and praise as we actively hope for “our re-connection as kin within the whole, a full release from our collective bondage to a culture of destruction, into a fully restored and embodied web of life.” (Romans 8:23b, Looz, p. 179)

For each of the six Sundays in the Season of Creation, we have identified verses from Romans 8, as well as a Psalm and a Gospel text. We found inspiration in Victoria Loorz's translation of Romans 8:15-23 from her book, [Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us Into the Sacred](#), and have provided her rendering of this text in weeks 1-5 (used by permission from Broadleaf Books).

We offer a focus statement for each week that points us toward the transformation for which we HOPE and ACT. We provide options of songs and worship resources related to each week's scripture and theme, drawing on *Voices Together* or other Mennonite/Anabaptist sources. These resources can be shaped into a flow that is familiar to your congregation.

We encourage congregations to share the Lord's Supper at the end of the series, recognizing the communion of all creation in the celebration. Many congregations celebrate World Communion on the first Sunday of October, so you may consider this timing in your planning.

We pray that this resource will facilitate vibrant worship and nurture active hope for the healing of creation!

Kinship

Week 1

Focus:

We hope and act in a spirit of kinship with all of God's creatures.

Scripture:

Psalm 148

Mark 3:31-35

Romans 8:14-15

All who are led by the Spirit of God are the children—the kin—of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear; but you received the Spirit of Kinship, with whom we cry, "Abba, Father! Mama, Mother!" (Loorz, p. 178)

Songs:

Voices Together 93 Nyanyikanlah nyanyian baru (Sing to God a New Song)

Voices Together 115 Praise Be to God

Voices Together 120 For the beauty of the earth

Voices Together 121 When at Creation's Dawn

Voices Together 125 Shout to the Lord

Voices Together 175 Planets Humming as They Wander

Voices Together 177 All Things Bright and Beautiful

Voices Together 522 O Blessed Spring

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/83/24279> Now May the Lord of Peace

Praising:

Voices Together 881

Praying:

Voices Together 1009

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/82/25633> Slow us down in the midst of Climate Crisis

Responsive Reading:

by Craig Janzen Neufeld

Leader: God is great and worthy to be praised.

**People: We give thanks for all that God has done;
for all that God created.**

Leader: You made the sun to light the day and the moon to watch over the night and stars to decorate the night sky.

**People: Give thanks to God, you sun, moon and stars,
thanks be to God.**

Leader: You established the earth on it's foundations,
and made mountains and flat land.

**People: Praise God, you mountains, valleys, deserts, and hills,
thanks be to God.**

Leader: You covered the earth with the watery deep.

**People: Praise God, you oceans and seas, lakes and rivers,
thanks be to God.**

Leader: You filled the waters with all kinds of swimming things,
fish, whales, and crustaceans.

**People: Give thanks to God, all you creatures of the deep,
thanks be to God.**

Leader: Overhead, the birds in the sky make their home,
chirping loudly in the trees.

People: Give thanks to God, all you birds that fly, thanks be to God.

Leader: On the land, animals, wild and tame, live and move
and have their being.

**People: Give thanks to God, all you creatures of the earth,
thanks be to God.**

Leader: And on earth, people, young and old, dwell.

People: Give thanks to God, everyone, thanks be to God.

Leader: God, you have done so many things!

You made them all so wisely!

The Earth is full of your creations!

All: We give thanks to you and sing praises to you as long as we live.

Interdependence

Week 2

Focus:

We hope and act recognizing our dependence on God, and our interdependence with all other beings in the web of life.

Scripture:

Psalm 8

Matthew 6:25-34

Romans 8:16-17

Spirit bears witness with our own wild souls, reminding us that we are co-inhabitants, living in utter interdependence with All. And as kin, we inherit our place in the land, participants in Christ, if indeed we feel the pain together, so that we, with all beings, may be celebrated together. (Loorz, p. 178)

Songs:

Voices Together 39 As We Rise, O God, to Meet You

Voices Together 128 Wakantanka (Many and Great)

Voices Together 176 O God, Great Womb

Voices Together 289 See the Birds That Fly

Voices Together 423 God the Sculptor of the Mountains

Voices Together 456 Oceans

Voices Together 618 Sometimes a Light Surprises

Voices Together 788 The Garden Needs Our Tending Now

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/83/27444> Bring Your Reign of Peace

Gathering:

Voices Together 861

Giving:

Voices Together 1018

Praying:

Sing the Story 198

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/82/20804> Prayer for Peace
Sunday – Environment

Confessing:

Voices Together 901 with an option to sing *Voices Together* 682 Lord, Listen to Your Children,
between the stanzas.

Revealing

Week 3

Focus:

We hope and act for the revealing of God's sacred presence in human and more-than-human creation.

Scripture:

Psalm 19:1-6

John 2:1-11

Romans 8:18-19

Consider that the sufferings of our present times are not as weighty as the lingering presence of the Sacred that will be fully revealed in us all. The whole creation longs with eager expectation for this unveiling of the human, beloved ones. (Loorz, p. 178)

Songs:

Voices Together 44 We Long to Know Her

Voices Together 63 Like a Rock

Voices Together 178 God of Wonders

Voices Together 181 Creation Is a Song

Voices Together 182 I Sing the Mighty Power of God

Voices Together 436 O Lord My God/How Great Thou Art

Voices Together 539 God Speaks to Us in Bird and Song

Voices Together 582 My Love Colors Outside the Lines (John 2 reference)

<http://www.philcampbellenns.com/songbook.html> Nature's Voice Declares

Gathering:

Voices Together 855

Praising:

Voices Together 887

Praying:

Praying like the Sky, by Alissa Bender

God above, around, and within us,

You hear our praying, these words we speak.

You see our praying, the lives we live in you.

You feel our praying, the ones we carry within and cannot speak or have not yet even named ourselves.

We pray together, in our own visible cloud of witnesses, to carry each other through these times of naming.

God we pray wide open prayers of blue sky and warm sun.

Gratitude, praise, awe, possibility.

We pray close and quiet prayers of dark night and gentle stars.

Comfort, healing, rest, peace.

We pray stormy prayers of clouds and rain and thunder.

Why, God? Where are you? Who are you?

We pray sunset prayers of colors and light and transformation.

There you are. Here we are. All things will be made new.

We pray prayers for ourselves, prayers for our world, prayers for the earth, prayers for the waters, and we pray that on each new horizon, we would seek you, find you, love you, and know and share your love.

It's in this love that we pray today, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sending:

Voices Together 1061

Freedom

Week 4

Focus:

We hope and act trusting in the Spirit of Christ that frees us from captivity to fear and death.

Scripture:

Psalm 95

Luke 4:16-21

Romans 8:20-21

For Earth was subjected to emptiness not of her own choice, but out of a pattern of life and death, in hope that the creation, herself, will be set free from her own spirit of slavery to decay and brought into glorious freedom, alongside the freedom of their human kin. (Loorz, p. 178-9)

Songs:

Voices Together 2 Uyai Mose (Come All You People)

Voices Together 41 For You, O God, My Soul

Voices Together 101 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns

Voices Together 180 This is God's Wondrous World

Voices Together 227 Here I am to Worship (Ich will dich anbeten)

Voices Together 376 O Holy Spirit, Root of Life

Voices Together 413 Na nzela na lola (As Long as We Follow)

Voices Together 428 Praise with Joy the World's Creator

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/82/24319> I am not Wrong

Gathering:

Voices Together 877

Praying:

Voices Together 895

Voices Together 1043

Birth

Week 5

Focus:

We hope and act with eager expectation for the birth of new relationships with Creator God and our creaturely kindred.

Scripture:

Psalm 104:1a, 10-30

Luke 6:17-26

Romans 8:22-23

We know that the whole creation has been groaning together, in the pains of childbirth, until this present time. Not only 'them,' as if they were separate, but we ourselves, who have been awakened by Mystery, we, too, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our re-connection as kin within the whole, a full release from our collective bondage to a culture of destruction into a fully restored and embodied web of life. (Loorz, p. 179)

Songs:

Voices Together 145 Touch the Earth Lightly

Voices Together 168 Peace to You

Voices Together 290 Blessed Are You

Voices Together 420 God of the Bible

Voices Together 591 When I Can't Find My Way

Voices Together 694 Tears of Suffering

Voices Together 701 You Are All We Have

Voices Together 712 Beauty for Brokenness

Together in Worship <https://togetherinworship.net/ResourceView/83/26861> Psalm 104 (Renew the Earth)

Praying:

Voices Together 908

Voices Together 1009

Responsive Reading:

by Craig Janzen Neufeld

Leader: In the beginning, God, you created,
and you called it good; 'tov.'

Left: And it was beautiful

Right: A masterpiece.

Leader: And you were delighted.

All: And it was good.

Leader: You placed humankind in creation,

Left: to care for it,

Right: to tend to it,

Leader: to live in harmony with it.

All: And it was good.

Leader: And then, Sin, entered, and everything changed.

**People: Greed, Commerce, Industry, and Profits
were the new altars of worship.**

All: And creation groaned, and we didn't listen.

Leader: And now, creation wasn't just to be lived in;
it became a commodity.

**Left: The earth was cut open,
for all kinds of precious things:**

Right: Gemstones, minerals, metals, and fuels.

All: Creation groaned, and we didn't listen.

Leader: Creation was divided up,

Left: Land and trees,

Right: Rivers and deltas,

Left: Mountains and valleys,

Right: Deserts and wastelands

All: Creation groaned, and we didn't listen.

Leader: We built our homes and our livelihoods,
while others lost theirs,

**Left: The caribou lost their forest and tundra homes,
seeking food and safe places to raise their young.**

Right: The bear was pushed out of their traditional territory,

and into our landfills, in their quest for food.

Left: The raccoon & squirrel moved to the urban jungle,

Right: The Atlantic cod was nearly fished to extinction.

All because of our insatiable hunger.

Leader: Some creatures disappeared altogether.

All: Creation groaned, and we didn't listen.

Leader: The groaning of creation has become louder.

Left: Fires burn indiscriminately, home and forest alike.

**Right: Waters break their banks, rush through barriers,
flooding communities, and neighborhoods,**

**Left: while in other places, water disappears altogether,
leaving many parched.**

**Right: Storms lash out, with wind, wave, rain, hail, and ice,
dismantling the security we construct around us.**

All: Creation groaned, and we didn't listen.

Leader: Creation has been groaning. We haven't listened,

People: Sometimes we feel helpless, scared or sad. We lament.

All: We lament because creation groans. Will we listen?

Hope

Week 6

Focus:

We hope and act, trusting God to work in unseen, marvelous ways.

Scripture:

Psalm 126

Mark 4:26-32

Romans 8:24-25

Songs:

Voices Together 123 Come, Ye Thankful People

Voices Together 205 Light Dawns on a Weary World

Voices Together 298 What Is the World Like

Voices Together 498 Qing zao qi lai kan (Golden Breaks the Dawn)

Voices Together 789 Be a Sower

Voices Together 800 Honja sorironeun (With My Voice Alone)

Voices Together 806 Called by Earth and Sky

Voices Together 828 There's a Wild Hope in the Wind

Communion Preparation:

Voices Together 937

Voices Together 947

Communion Songs:

Voices Together 462 We Place upon Your Table

Voices Together 466 The Bread We Break is Telling

Voices Together 467 Taste and See

<http://www.philcampbellenns.com/songbook.html> All Things

Prayer:

Voices Together 1048

Confession:

by Alissa Bender

Holy God,

Sometimes you feel so far above us that when your acorns fall at our feet, we just step over them on our way. Forgive us when we don't notice your goodness or your sneaky seeds of grace that so need cultivating in our lives. Forgive us when we try to keep your kingdom small...

Burst into view despite us and among us. Grow in unexpected places. Stop us in our tracks with wonder, shelter us in your peace, and let those seeking a place to belong build nests and find home in you. Assure us that this is the way your kingdom comes. Amen.

Sending:

Voices Together 821

Additional Resource Suggestions:

Season of Creation Theological Introduction –

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YIM_2FAhqpLcnbX86Xn31_xKQTs5GoHwT160jERHK_eA/edit

Burning Bush Forest Church in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada –

<https://www.burningbushforestchurch.ca/reflections--prayers>

Together in Worship/CommonWord

Creation Care – <https://togetherinworship.net/Browse/8352>

Climate Change/Action – <https://togetherinworship.net/Browse/3180>

Creation & Creativity – <https://togetherinworship.net/Browse/359>

More creation songs:

Voices Together 11 Mountain of God

Voices Together 103 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Voices Together 209 We Dream of a Turning

Voices Together 287 Jesus Christ is Waiting

Voices Together 427 Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

Voices Together 495 Morning has broken

Voices Together 514 I saw a Tree by the Riverside

Voices Together 594 Over My Head

Voices Together 605 My Life Flows On

Voices Together 629 Here by the Water

Voices Together 653 Nothing is lost on the Breath of God

Voices Together 670 In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Voices Together 706 O Healing River

Voices Together 720 O God in Heaven

Voices Together 763 Waterfall

Voices Together 838 La paz de la tierra (The Peace of the Earth Be with You)

More creation resources:

Voices Together 189

Voices Together 867

Voices Together 996

Voices Together 997

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This resource was shaped and compiled by Alissa Bender (Mennonite Church Canada) and Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler (Climate Justice Coordinator, Mennonite Church USA), with support from Sandy Plett (Climate Action Coordinator, Mennonite Church Canada).

Resources Cited:

Loorz, Victoria. *The Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred*. Broadleaf Books, 2021.

Sing the Story. Faith & Life Resources, 2007.

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