

# Order of service: Song of the Prophets

## Notes for leaders

Thank you for downloading this Christian Aid order of service. It takes its inspiration from the Song of the Prophets; that is the voices of global theologians, young people, Christian Aid partners and the prophets of the Bible.

Their collective chorus calls for humanity to be in communion with nature, rather than exploitative consumers of it. They call for justice for those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis but are suffering most. And, crucially, they call us to imagine how the world could be, and beckon every one of us to do all we can for the restoration of creation and the flourishing of all, to the glory of God.

The service is divided into four parts and we encourage you to include a variety of voices, as indicated in the text. Sermon notes based on the Micah reading have also been prepared to accompany this order of service and are available at [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)

The service was written before the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions, but we have tried to provide adaptations throughout to accommodate both in person and online church gatherings. As always, feel free to adapt what we offer for your context and use selectively as you see fit. Song suggestions are included throughout and a further list, including references, is provided at the end.

You may wish to go over these songs with the congregation before the service begins (if meeting online or if coronavirus restrictions allow singing in person) so everyone is familiar with them. Leaders' instructions are included in *italics* throughout the service.

## Preparation

- Have videos downloaded or ready to stream, including sound.
- Have devotionals and giving envelopes on the seats/pews if meeting in person.
- Have links to online giving page ready to share if meeting online and to the campaign action if you're in Northern Ireland.
- Select readers and provide them with the relevant text and a highlighted order of service, indicating their parts. A minimum of three readers are required.

## Visual ways into worship

Arrange an installation that echoes or encapsulates the climate crisis for your context and congregation. It could be a banner from a recent awareness-raising or campaign event, or a poster displayed at the front of the church or to show online, saying: 'Communion not consumption' or 'Climate justice now'.

You might wish to bring something of the outside indoors, such as several potted plants. Or if meeting online you could ask attendees to bring something to draw attention to the four elements of earth, water, fire and air.

If you are using this Order of Service during Christian Aid Week, you might include some rocks and soil to refer to when describing the earth dams being built to help communities in Kenya fight the climate crisis.

## Passages included in this service

Psalms 96:11-13

Micah 6:1-9

John 15:9-17\*

\*Christian Aid Sunday lectionary passage.

Passage suggestions for other seasons:

Lent: Jesus with the wild beasts,  
Mark 1:12-13

Easter: The journey from doubt to hope,  
Luke 24:13-49

Harvest: Do not worry but be ready to act,  
Luke 12

Advent: Apocalyptic advent,  
Mark 13:24-37

Christmas: A child shall lead them,  
Isaiah 11:1-9

## Call to worship

*Split the gathering into two groups, group A and group B. Alternate the lines of passage spoken by alternate groups.*

Group A: O sing to the Lord a new song  
Group B: sing to the Lord, all the Earth.  
Group A: Sing to the Lord, bless his name;  
Group B: tell of his salvation from day to day.

Group A: Declare his glory among the nations

Group B: his marvellous works among all the peoples.

**All together: For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.**

## Song

*Sing for God's Glory*

*Let all Creation Sing*

## Prayer of Approach

Reader 1: Come and celebrate our common home

**All: we gather with the family of humanity.**

Reader 2: With the mountains, islands and deserts

**All: we honour the glory of God in creation.**

Reader 1: With the lakes, rivers and seas

**All: we come to the source of living water.**

Reader 2: With the land, its soil, seeds and sustenance

**All: we give thanks for God's generous provision.**

Reader 1: With the forests of great trees, the lungs of the planet

**All: we will sing with joy and clap our hands.**



Florence prays more people like her in Kenya can have access to a dam full of fresh water.

Reader 2: We join with the whole of creation,  
inspired by those who have gone  
before and the prophetic voices  
of today

**All: We dare to praise and pray  
for another possible world.**

Reader 1: To the glory of God,

**All: Amen.**

Adapted from 'We are the Amazon', an  
ecumenical act of solidarity and justice for  
the Amazon and its people.

## Part one: The Earth

### Reading

Let the heavens be glad,  
and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it.  
Then shall all the trees of the forest  
sing for joy before the Lord;  
for he is coming,  
for he is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with his truth.  
Psalm 96:11-13

### Song

*Where are the Voices for the Earth?  
If the Fields are Parched*

### Prayer of Lament

O God, the heavens are not glad,  
the Earth does not rejoice  
warming gases fill the atmosphere  
pollution turns clean air foul  
climate breakdown wrecks havoc.

The sea roars with the grief  
of all the plastic that fills it  
of the destruction of coral reef.  
The fields exclaim despair  
for delayed rains and prolonged drought  
for species extinction on a daily basis.



Glory with her  
sister Lanie in  
the Philippines.

No song of joy rings out  
from the trees of the forest  
decimated by forest fires.

How long O God, how long  
until your justice comes  
for all your creatures  
and the Earth?  
In you we put our trust. Amen.

## Part two: Young people

### All-age talk

An all-age talk is available at  
[caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)

### Reading

These are the words of a young person living  
at the sharp edge of climate change in the  
Philippines (Glory, pictured above).

**'I am 19-year-old Glory, from the Philippines. I live on a small island of Tabugon, Carles with my family. It's beautiful and peaceful, with fresh air, coral reefs, and fresh seafood. But it is changing. Living on an island is very challenging. I really feel the impact of climate change. My message for the world is that, we must act on the crisis of climate change. We need to be responsible. We should be concerned on protecting our surroundings because this has been created for us. We have the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong.'**

Full reading at

[christianaidcollective.org/we-must-act](http://christianaidcollective.org/we-must-act)

## Video

This short video highlights Severn Cullis-Suzuki's speech at the 1992 Earth Summit, with words that are echoed in the speeches of Greta Thunberg today. Will there be another Greta to echo the words of Severn in 20 years' time, or will we listen this time, since we don't have 20 more years to make the necessary changes?

[youtu.be/oJjGulZVfLM](https://youtu.be/oJjGulZVfLM)

## Song

*For the Beauty of the Earth  
Nature Sings with Beauty*

## Prayer of Confession

Reader 1 For the beauty of the Earth  
desecrated by pollution  
extinguished by forest fires  
choked by plastic waste  
Christ, our God, to you we plead  
forgive us for systemic greed.

Reader 2 For the urgency of this hour  
ignored by apathy or  
procrastination  
wasted by ineffective decisions  
denied by economic interests  
Christ, our God and Saviour,  
forgive us for selfish  
short-term behaviour.

Reader 3 For the joy of human love  
fractured by forced migration  
crushed by bereavement  
lost to typhoons, floods, starvation  
Christ, our God, bringer of justice  
forgive us for this climate crisis.

## Absolution

Reader 1 God you know me.  
You know that I can be loving  
and kind;  
and you know that  
sometimes I get things  
wrong.

I'm sorry for the times I hurt  
other people,  
forget to listen to you  
and don't bother to take care  
of your world.

**All** **God forgive you,  
Jesus bless you.  
God's Spirit help you to  
grow in love.**

Reader 1 Amen.

**All** **God you know us.  
You know that we can be  
loving and kind;  
and you know that sometimes  
we get things wrong.  
We're sorry for the times we  
hurt other people,  
forget to listen to you  
and don't bother to take care  
of your world.**

Reader 2 God forgive us.  
Jesus bless us.  
God's Spirit help us to grow in  
love.

**All** **Amen.**

[Silence]

## Saying yes

Reader 1 Because we are God's people,  
**All** **we will care for each other.**

Reader 2 Because we are part of God's  
creation,  
**All** **we will care for the Earth.**

Reader 1+2 Because we are loved by God,  
**All** **we will share God's love with  
everyone.**

Absolution and Saying Yes (*Iona  
Community Worship Book*, 2017).

## Part three: Prophetic voices from the Bible

### Old Testament reading: Micah 6:1-9

Alternative reading – this script has been provided for Micah 6:1-9 to hear this familiar passage in a new light.

#### Micah 6:1-9 A script for three readers

Reader 1 Listen my people.  
I need to talk with you.  
I have questions.  
I need answers.  
I have cared for you.  
I rescued you from slavery.  
I gave you wise leaders,  
both women and men.

You need to remember the stories  
of who I am  
and what I have done.

Listen my people.  
I am talking to those of you who  
live in the countryside.  
I am questioning those of you who  
live in cities and towns.

Reader 2 What have I done to you?  
How have I wearied you?  
Speak, the mountains are listening  
to you.  
The Earth is waiting to hear your  
voice.

What can I do?  
What can I bring to God?  
What does God want of me?  
What will keep God happy?  
What will keep God off my back?

Would God be impressed with  
barrels and barrels of olive oil?  
Would God be satisfied with  
thousands of animals from my  
flocks?

Reader 3

Perhaps my riches are not enough?  
Should I offer to God  
the life of my precious first-born child?

Listen mortal.

Listen to what God says.  
Look carefully at how God acts.  
Remember the stories of what  
God has done.  
God has shown you clearly  
what is bad  
and what is good.

You are to do justice to act fairly.  
Do justice in the home and in the  
street and in the marketplace.  
Do justice in your community.  
Work with others to do justice  
globally.

Do justice with strangers and  
friends and family alike.

You are to love kindness.  
You are to be generous.  
You are to share your resources  
and share them with a smile.  
You are to care for those in need.

You are to walk humbly with God.  
No pretence, no bluster.  
You are to walk wisely and  
purposefully.  
You are to pray and wonder.  
You are to respect the Earth.  
You are to experience and learn  
who God is  
and what God is about.

Listen up mortal.  
God has told you what is good.  
So do it.

Do justice.  
Love kindness.  
Walk humbly with your God.

## New Testament reading: John 15:9-17

### Song

*The Kingdom of God*

### Sermon

Notes on Micah 6:1-9 and John 15:9-17 are available in the climate justice sermon pack at [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)

## Part four: The prophetic voice of communities experiencing climate injustice

Before we respond to God with our offering, we listen to the prophetic voice of communities experiencing climate injustice.

### Reading

Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, a theologian writing from Australia and the Pacific Islands:

**'Only the willingly ignorant continue to deny the link between our consumerist lifestyles, climate change, and suffering in the developing world. Promoting economic growth as the answer to all our problems, and in particular global poverty, is irresponsible. We need to recognise that our current growth-oriented system is driven by powerful economic interests set on making profits, however short term.'**

**'And it is just plain wrong to ignore the suffering of the poorest and most vulnerable populations in the world especially when they are the least contributors to climate change.'**

### Video

Play the Christian Aid Week film available at [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)

## Response: giving/offering

Drought drives people to the brink. Storms tear families apart. Raging waters show no mercy. Our world is in crisis. We have the power to stop it. People living in poverty are on the frontline of the climate chaos. They are losing food, water, homes and family. Every day, they walk further, dig deeper and build stronger to survive. Unrelenting. Determined. They battle the worst of a climate crisis they did not create. This is unjust. But a better way is possible. A way that restores justice to our broken world today. A way that protects the future for all of us, our children and grandchildren.

In our giving, let us put our words into action, sharing our resources with those working tenaciously for justice.

And let us give with God's vision of a more just world in our mind's eye and hope in our hearts.

Do use the envelopes on your seat/pew or the online donation link to make your contribution. If you're in Northern Ireland, completing the Gift Aid slip, will help make your giving go further. By completing the Gift Aid slip, you help make your giving go further. Please consider making a regular contribution to the work of Christian Aid. More information is available about this on the envelope and online.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Reader 1

God of abundant life,  
we see your goodness all around us and  
we thank you for every part of it;  
from the plants and animals which play  
their part in complex ecosystems,  
to the dry deserts and stormy seas which  
test the limits of life.

We pray that in this time of climate  
crisis and ecological emergency,  
you may help us to rediscover your  
love of creation and to reflect that in  
our own lives.

All

God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**



In Kenya, Faith's fields are green and thriving, thanks to a nearby dam.

#### Reader 2

God who speaks through unexpected people,  
We thank you for contemporary prophets who are challenging us to act on climate change;  
for indigenous people and their invaluable knowledge of the land and sea where they live,  
for scientists dedicating their careers to warning us about changes to the planet,  
and for young people striking for their future.

We pray that you will help those in power to hear their prophetic voices.  
Help them to see beyond short-term political priorities and business plans.  
and give them wisdom and courage when they face difficult decisions.

**All** God, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

#### Reader 3

God of second chances,  
we recognise the damage we have done to the Earth  
and the injustice we see in society every day,  
all of it fuelled by worship of profit and possessions.

We pray for the coming of a better world with justice, kindness and humility at its heart.  
We ask that you guide us to be co-creators of this new world.  
Give us confidence to follow the prophetic voices to stand against injustice to people and to planet.  
So that together,  
in your strength,  
we stop this climate crisis.

God, in your mercy  
**All** **hear our prayer.**

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together.  
Our Father... [in your preferred form]

Alternatively, you could use our Lord's Prayer film available [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)

## Response: Action

You can raise your prophetic voice by taking action right now. There are several opportunities to be involved in the campaign for climate justice in 2021.

Sign up to be part of the Christian Aid prayer chain at [caid.ie/prayerchain](https://caid.ie/prayerchain).

And, if you're in Northern Ireland, while we sing our closing song, you can add your voice to the call for climate justice by signing the campaign postcards available on your seats/pews or online (*share link in the chat*). Put them into the baskets/collection points on your way out.

## Song

*You shall go out with joy*

## Blessing

May God bless us with wonder at creation's glory.

May God bless us with fury at creation's spoiling.

May God bless us with courage at this critical hour.

And may the blessing of God, Father,

Son and Holy Spirit, rest upon us and

on all creation,

this day and for the future to come.

Amen.

ACT Alliance

## Song list

*All Things are Possible*, Darlene Zschech, Hillsong Worship.

*Behold, Behold I Make all Things New*, John Bell, Wild Goose Resource Group.

*Canticle of the Turning*, Rory Cooney (can also be sung to Kingsfold tune).

*Come Let's Sing*, Joel Payne, Resound Worship.

*For Everyone Born a Place at the Table*, Shirley Erena Murray.

*For the Beauty of the Earth*, Folliott S Pierpoint.

*From Life's Beginning*, Marcus Pagnam, Resound Worship.

*God the Maker of the Heavens*, Sam Hargreaves, Resound Worship.

*If the fields are parched*, Chris Juby, Doxecology album, Resound Worship.

*Let all creation sing*, Paul Zach and Andy Ziph, Doxecology album, Resound Worship.

*Let Justice Roll Down*, Garth Hewitt, from Justice Like a River.

*Let's Sing to the Lord, Yes, Sing God a New Song*, Cantad Al Señor, Brazilian folk song. Translated by Gerhard M Cartford.

*Nahasdzáán Nihimá/Mother Earth*, from Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native America.

*Nature sings with beauty*, Chris Juby, Resound Worship.

*O the Life of the World is a Joy and a Treasure*, Kathy Galloway.

*Pray Tim Hughes*, Worship Central.

*Simple Living*, Keith and Kristen Getty.

*Sing Hey for the Carpenter*, John Bell and Graham Maule, Wild Goose Resource Group.

*Sing for God's Glory that Colours the Dawn of Creation*, Kathy Galloway.

*Strength Will Rise as we Wait Upon the Lord*, Brenton Brown and Ken Riley.

*The Kingdom of God*, Taizé.

*The Peace of the Earth*, Guatemala, translated by Christine Carson.

*Touch the Earth Lightly*, Shirley Erena Murray.

*You Shall Go Out With Joy*, Stuart Dauermann.

*Where Are the Voices for the Earth*, Shirley Erena Murray.

With thanks to Ruth Burgess and Iain McLarty for their assistance in drawing together this order of service. Ruth writes and edits liturgies and stories for Wild Goose publications and writes for Spill the Beans. Iain does worship development work with the Church of Scotland's priority areas, is a choral and orchestral conductor, and has been involved in worship planning for World Council of Churches events in recent years. And thanks to the wider Christian Aid worship and theology collective for their initial ideas and insights for the service.

# Together we STOP this climate crisis