



# SEASON OF CREATION

## Planning Toolkit

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### **Background:**

During the Season of Creation, from September 1 through October 4, Christians across denominations and around the world are invited to pray and care for creation. September 1 was first proclaimed as a World Day of Prayer for Creation by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Orthodox community in 1989, and embraced by other European churches in 2001. Pope Francis declared it a day of Prayer for Creation for the Catholic Church in 2015.

Since 2016, the World Council of Churches, Global Catholic Climate Movement, Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, Anglican Communion Environmental Network, Act Alliance, and several other Christian agencies have collaborated in an ecumenical celebration of Season of Creation. Last year, this network hosted over 300 local prayer services and events and two online prayer services which were led and attended by people across every continent.

### **Elements of the Season of Creation Prayer Service**

Here are the elements to consider incorporating into your Season of Creation prayer service.

#### **1) Make it ecumenical.**

The Season of Creation is a powerful time to bring together Christians in our common concern for creation. We are mindful that this year marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation that split Lutherans and Catholics. The Season of Creation serves as an important witness of how Christians, regardless of their denominational line, are united in prayer and action for the planet. Hence, consider reaching out to members of Christian communities in your area to develop your event.



To witness to this ecumenical spirit, we invite you to take a picture at your event with the sign “Christians together for creation” and share it with the hashtag #Christians4creation and #SeasonofCreation. We will be posting these pictures on social media and on our website.

## 2) Incorporate a symbolic action.

As part of this year’s ecumenical celebration, Christians are encouraged to host prayer services that incorporate a symbolic action and are held at a location where you can “hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”. [We have also detailed steps on how to organize a symbolic action here.](#)

Here are some possibilities of a symbolic action:

- Prayers at a location of environmental harm. Examples include a prayer service on the site of a mountaintop removal mine, in front of a waste incinerator, or a beach at risk due to sea level rise.
- Symbolic actions of environmental healing could include a tree planting or placing or blessing solar panels on a congregation building.
- Prayers at a location of environmental injustice, such as by a highway ramp forced through a lower income community, or a part of the city where nature is lacking.
- Incorporating creation and the poor in a prayer service, bringing symbols of nature inside or having the prayers led by members of an affected community.

We are aiming to have symbolic actions in key locations such as the Amazon rainforest, vulnerable island nations such as the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, the Tar Sands in Canada, the Great Barrier Reef and other locations.

These are only examples; we are sure you can come up with many more. Feel free to get creative and go somewhere that has meaning for you.

## 3) Incorporate prayers for creation.

[We have a great list of liturgical and prayer resources](#), or you can create your own prayers and liturgies.

## 4) Get people signed up.

Consider how you can capture names or keep people engaged. One suggestion is the [Laudato Si’ Pledge](#), asking people to commit to praying with and for creation, living more



simply, and advocating for our common home. Use this opportunity to find out who might be interested in doing more to stand up for creation.

## **5) Make sure you have a plan for follow up.**

Ideally, the Season of Creation event will be the start of something, not the end of planning. Think of how you'll engage people after the event is over. Make sure you have a signup sheet (see above) at the event, and if possible, a date to get this wonderful group of people together again. You can also use this event to look for new people you want to have a one-on-one meeting with to build a relationship.

**Optional:** Some of you may want to include an advocacy component where you combine prayer and action. Look at a local issue in your community, perhaps what you're highlighting with your symbolic action. Do some research on what can be done to make a change. You could also join with a local organization to put together the advocacy action.

When your event is scheduled, make sure you register it [on our map](#), and send us a report back when you're done. We've prepared a planning worksheet to help in your preparations, and please reach out to [Marisa Vertrees](#) with any questions. We look forward to seeing what you come up with!

## **Season of Creation Planning Worksheet**

Here is a worksheet to help you think through the different steps to plan your event.

**1. Put together a planning team.** Invite one or two colleagues from your Church or community. If you are planning an ecumenical service, reach out to members of other Christian denominations in the area.

*List the members of your planning team:*



**2. Invite your Pastor to speak with you and have a one on one conversation with him about your ideas.** Ask him to participate and let him know you'd like to include the parish community. We have a [sample letter to a Bishop](#) that can be adapted by your Pastor.

*Notes from the conversation with your Pastor:*

**3. Work with your team to identify the time and location of your event.** Consider places that are symbolic of where you can “hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” or natural areas that you want to preserve and protect.

Questions to consider:

*Time and Date:*

*Location:*

*Will this be inside or outside?*

*If inside--how you will incorporate the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (With pictures? Inviting prayer to be led by affected communities? Bringing symbols of nature inside?):*

*If outside-What possible permissions are needed to hold an event there:*



**4. (If including advocacy) Identify the advocacy component of your event, working with your planning team or other local environmental organizations.** Figure out your issue, and who you need to contact in order to change it.

*Advocacy issue:*

*Who you should target (mayor, president/prime minister, local council):*

*Tactic (petition, postcards, bring a group to the next council meeting):*

**5. [Register your event on the Season of Creation global map.](#)**

**6. Begin advertising your event through the bulletin, pulpit announcements, local media, the Diocesan paper, social media, and, most importantly, personal invitation.** We have [downloadable flyers](#), [social media graphics](#), and bulletin announcements for your use. Make a list of where you're advertising and when.

*Outreach:*

*Dates running:*



**7. Develop the program for your service.** Be sure to include who will be leading prayers, and any speakers you want to include. Reach out to affected communities wherever possible. Look at how you'll use the Laudato Si' Pledge, advocacy component, or other sign ups in the program. There are some great [liturgical resources here](#).

*Speakers:*

**8. Develop a practical list of materials you need for your event and who is responsible for bringing them.** These can include the postcards and pens for advocacy, sign in sheets, liturgical symbols, food and drinks, reusable cups and flatware, and anything else you might need. Don't forget to create a big sign that says " "Christians together for creation" for your picture.

*Materials:*

*Person responsible:*

**9. Send personal follow up invitations to your network.**

**10. Have a great event! And report back when you're done.**

### **Right before your event:**

1. Call your speakers and anyone assisting with the event to confirm when you'll be there. Confirm and rentals or reservations if needed.
2. Arrive early to set up—give you and your team plenty of time to set up tables and chairs, make sure a/v equipment works, decorate, etc.



3. Gather your team to have a special prayer for the event.

### **During your event:**

**Take a picture with the sign “Christians together for creation” so your prayerful witness is included in the Season of Creation global events.** If possible, have people hold hands and have any Christian symbols (such as a cross) in the background. Email it to [hello@catholicclimatemovement.global](mailto:hello@catholicclimatemovement.global) or post it on social media at [#Christians4climate](https://twitter.com/Christians4climate)

### **Immediately after your event:**

1. Thank everyone involved.
2. Send a report back and pictures of your event to [hello@catholicclimatemovement.global](mailto:hello@catholicclimatemovement.global).
3. Send a reminder of when the follow up meeting will be held.
4. Invite a few people to one on one meetings.