

# Order of Service for OWW 2018

This is an adaptation of the service originally written for OWW 2007, by Jo Rathbone, of Eco-Congregation, with modifications, additional materials and suggestions from OWW to make it appropriate for the 2018 theme

## THE WORLD IS CHANGING - HOW ABOUT US?

### Notes for the service leader

As humans we are one race, living on one planet. The science says we are beginning to exceed the capacity of the planet's systems to meet our demands for resources and to absorb our pollution and waste. Climate change is one consequence which is challenging the livelihoods of people in many parts of the world, threatening to make useless the lands people have dwelt in and farmed for centuries. We are destroying forests and other habitats, the homes of endangered species. But, as part of one creation, we must all learn to live within the constraints of our changing world.

Can we change the way we live our lives to ensure a future for all the world's people and the whole of creation, not humanity in conflict with the rest of creation; nor one group of people at the expense of other people?

We are now aware that we are the first generation to know that we're undermining the ability of the Earth's systems to support human development. This is a profound new insight which challenges us to recognise our togetherness with the rest of creation and work together for its healing.

### Planning the service

*This outline can be developed and adapted to your own preferences and needs: there are references in this text to additional materials: prayers, dramas, readings, quotations, thoughts; and suggestions of sources of appropriate hymns.*



# THE WORLD IS CHANGING - HOW ABOUT US?

## Order of Service for OWW 2018

### Welcome

*Let us acknowledge together in praise Your glorious creation*

#### **Praise the LORD, O my soul.**

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,  
**whose hope is in the LORD his God,**  
the Maker of heaven and earth,  
**the sea, and everything in them -  
the LORD, who remains faithful forever.**

He upholds the cause of the oppressed  
**and gives food to the hungry.**  
**The LORD sets prisoners free,**  
The LORD watches over the alien  
**and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.**

The LORD reigns forever,  
**your God, O Zion, for all generations.**  
**Praise the LORD.**

*From Psalm 146*

### Hymn or song

#### **God's love letters to us**

"The whole creation cries to us penetratingly, with a great cry, about the existence and the beauty and the love of God. The music roars it into our ears and the landscape calls it into our eyes... In all of nature we find God's initials and all of God's creatures are God's love letters to us."

*From the Nicaraguan poet, Ernesto Cardenal, "To Live is to Love" New York, 1971*

#### **Groaning together with creation**

We know that all creation is still groaning and is in pain, like a woman about to give birth. The Spirit makes us sure about what we will be in the future. But now we groan silently, while we wait for God to show that we are His children. This means that our bodies will also be set free. And this hope is what saves us. But if we already have what we hope for, there is no need to keep on hoping.

*Romans 8.22-24*



**Drama** (5-7 minutes)

**Planet Doctor** (this is an especially effective and entertaining way of presenting the earth's problems. - see *Appendix for script*).

## **Let us acknowledge together what we now know about humanity's stewardship of the Earth**

*We are the first generation to know that we're undermining the ability of the Earth, our home, to support human development.*

*We accept the enormous privilege of being the first generation to know that we now need to change how we treat the earth.*

*We know that we need to change our lifestyles to build a future where all peoples and species may enjoy a satisfying life without damaging the environment.*

### **Quotes from people already experiencing climate change:**

( or use the video, 'Salote', see page 10 of *Additional resources*)

'We've lost about 40% of our production. Rains now fall heavily for a short period and our dry season is much longer. The coffee plants are badly affected, and flowering is stopping. People struggle for everything. Food is getting more expensive and key food crops like bananas are being threatened as well. Without work opportunities young people are being forced to move to the cities'

*Source: Willington Wamayeye, Gumutindo Coffee Co-op, Uganda  
Fairtrade Foundation.*

'I used to grow traditional rice, but the seeds don't grow anymore because the water is salty. I am now cultivating saline seeds which are adapted to grow in this environment...I will always stay here and adapt to changes. This is my own land; I don't want to move from my home.'

*Source: Selina Begum  
who is helped by a project supported by a  
Christian Aid partner in Bangladesh.*

## **Let us confess our shortcomings in the stewardship of Your creation**

*(alternatives can be found on page 8 of "Additional ideas for Worship")*

**We offer you Lord these moments of silence to remember our need of your forgiveness, for ourselves, our churches and our society.**

### ***Silence for reflection***

#### **The Operation Noah Prayer**

Creator God, how deep are your designs!  
You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,  
and charged us with their care.

We confess that the way we live today  
is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of life



dispossessing the poor and future generations.  
Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,  
and, as you promised Noah never to repeat the Flood,  
so make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:  
choosing life for all that is at risk -  
for creation, neighbours near and far,  
our children and ourselves.

**Amen**

See Operation Noah [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah)

## Responsive Confession

Eternal and Sovereign God,  
We recognise that we have been branded by the consumerist culture around us.  
**We have unwittingly allowed its temporary values to override what is permanent and truly important.**

We continue to damage your creation through our over-consumption and wastefulness.  
**Forgive us, Lord, and help us to refuse to conform any longer to the false aspirations of greed and pretence of our world.**

Transform our inmost sense of truth and justice and change the direction and tempo of our lives.  
**For your name's sake, Amen.**

*(From the A Rocha Environment Sunday pack 2005, ([www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk)),  
inspired by an excerpt from Living on Purpose by T & C Sine (2001)  
quoted in L is for lifestyle by R Valerio (2004))*

## Hymn or song

***Let us be aware of changes we need to make***

### Bible reading:

**Colossians 1: 15 – 20**

**John 3:16,17** Suggestion: use the word 'cosmos' in place of the word 'world' in this reading, as that is the Greek word used here, and implies for us the whole of the created order.

(Alternatives available in the Additional Ideas for Worship)

## From the scientists

*"The need to reduce demand for livestock products is now a scientifically mainstream view. Only a significant decrease in meat and milk consumption will allow us to deliver a food system fit for the future – for the benefit of humans and the planet as a whole."*

Pete Smith, Former Convening Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, March, 2018.



## ***Let us reflect on our place on the Earth***

Every part of this earth is sacred.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.

This we know: the earth does not belong to us:

**we belong to the earth.**

This we know: all things are connected:

**like the blood which unites one family.**

This we know: we did not weave the web of life:

**we are merely a thread in it.**

This we know: whatever we do to the web

**we do it to ourselves.**

*from the prayers of the 2nd European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz 1997,  
adapted from a text of the Indian Chief Seattle*

## **Hymn or song**

### ***Let us pray for hope in change***

*(alternatives available in the "Additional ideas for Worship")*

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*From Church of England's 'Creationtide'*

God of love, show us our place in this world  
as channels of your love  
for all the creatures of this earth,  
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.  
Enlighten those who possess power and money  
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,  
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,  
and care for this world in which we live.  
The poor and the earth are crying out.  
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,  
help us to protect all life,  
to prepare for a better future,  
for the coming of your Kingdom  
of justice, peace, love and beauty.  
Praise be to you!  
Amen.

*'A Christian prayer for union with creation' was published in Pope Francis' encyclical,  
Laudato Si'.*

God of light and life,  
we see you in the rising sun,  
the golden fields of new daffodils,  
and the feel of a spring shower.  
Help us to see your light reflected throughout creation.

God of compassion,  
you are there with those people  
who are facing the effects of a changing climate,  
and are affected by floods, droughts and famine.  
Show us how to be there with them too.

God of truth and justice,  
you hear those people around the world,  
who struggle to make their voices heard.  
Open our ears and the ears of those in power  
to hear the cries of those living in poverty.

God of hope,  
we see you in people who refuse to give up,  
who will not lose faith and keep on fighting,  
for your earth and for your people.  
Lift us, so that we may never lose hope.  
Amen

*Michaela McGuigan/CAFOD The live simply challenge*

### Hymn or song

### Address

*or you could use the following activity instead or as well*

## ***Let us respond to the Cry of Creation by acting for Change***

### Responding to the Cry of Creation

The cry of creation prompts us all to ask 'What then should we do?'. What is needed is 'not merely a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the hardships of many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit ourselves to the common good: that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we really are responsible for all.'

*Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 1988, Section*

*(choose a selection from the following reflections, questions and responses)*

*Someone brings forward a plastic bag and says:*

Each person in the UK uses on average around 20 times as many resources as each person in the global south. If everyone consumed the way we do in the UK we would need three planet earths.

Will you think twice before making your purchases? Pray as you shop and make choices which are better for you and better for the planet.

**By acting for change we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us strength together to resist the powers  
which manufacture desire.**

*Someone brings forward a lettuce and a jug of water and says:*

We use 70% more water in the UK today than we did 40 years ago.  
It takes 50 litres of water to grow a single bag of supermarket lettuce.

Will you reduce your water demand? Pray as you turn the tap on and make choices which are better for the whole planet.

**By acting for change, we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us carefulness in our living for the sake of the whole earth and its people.**

*Someone brings forward a bowl of fruit and vegetables and says:*

95% of fruit and 50% of vegetables eaten in the UK are imported.  
Choosing seasonal products and buying them locally at Farmers' Markets could reduce food miles to 1/60th of food bought in a supermarket.

Will you find out about buying food produced locally? Pray as you draw up your shopping list and make choices that reduce energy use.

**By acting for change, we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us creativity to work out how to organise our food buying in a way that while protects the soil and the climate.**

*Someone brings forward a basket with Fairtrade tea, coffee and tropical fruits*

Millions of poor farmers in developing countries cannot earn enough to cover their farming costs and care for their families.

But those who produce for the Fairtrade market are guaranteed a fair price which enables them to meet their costs and provide for their families.

They can plan for the future as they are in a better position to care for their land. They are already experiencing climate change which is affecting their crop yields. Fairtrade helps them to invest in new methods and try out new crops.

Will you choose Fairtrade products? Pray as you chose products which enable those who grew or made them to grow too.

**By acting for change, we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us creativity to work out how to organise our food buying in a way that shares the precious resources of the planet justly between its people in a way that enables producers to adapt to climate change**

*Someone brings forward a loaf of bread or a (vegetarian) pizza or corn on the cob*

The livestock industry alone is responsible for a significant share of global greenhouse gas emissions, and it is responsible for destroying forests the size of Spain each year.

The resources used to produce meat from animals in intensive barn units could feed many more people than the meat does. Keeping animals in restricted pens indoors all their lives is a failure in our stewardship for God's creatures.

Would you give up meat on one or two days a week? If everyone in the UK ate



less meat and chose free range products, we'd be healthier, greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced and animal welfare would be respected. Pray as you select what you eat and make healthy choices for all of creation.

**By acting for change, we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us the determination to choose food produced in a way that protects the soil, forests, and the climate and respects all of your creation.**

*Someone brings forward some pictures of children and says:.*

People in the UK are responsible for emitting as much as 50 times more CO<sub>2</sub> than people in the poorest countries. The damage already done to the climate by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions is already affecting farmers and those living near coastal areas prone to flooding. The impacts of climate change will affect us for the next 1,000 years.

Will you change your light bulbs to low energy ones? Will you switch to renewable energy suppliers? Pray as you use equipment needing energy that you would always remember the impact of our energy use on people around the world both now, and long into the future.

**By acting for change, we can make a difference now:  
Creator God, give us compassion to live positively into a new low energy age.**

*Adapted and added to from an idea by Simon Taylor in "What on Earth are we doing?"  
Lent Resource pack from churches in Devon*

## Commissioning

God said: 'I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, their loud cry of complaint against their slave drivers I have heard. I know well their suffering.' (Exodus 3:7). In the power of the Spirit go forth, seeing the affliction of the earth as God sees it, hearing creation's cry of complaint as God hears it, knowing its suffering as God knows it.

**We commit ourselves anew to seeing the affliction of the earth, hearing its cry and knowing its suffering.**

**We commit ourselves to learning more about the changes that are needed. We commit ourselves to embarking on that long and difficult road toward life in harmony with all God's creatures.**

**In covenant with God and with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit  
we are called to action in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

*© David Hallman, Canada (permission applied for)  
Taken from What a World, a worship anthology compiled by Geoffrey Duncan and published by The United Reformed Church, 2002*

## Blessing

May we bless the earth and all its inhabitants  
as we receive the blessing of God:

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of this fragile planet.  
**Amen**





**DRAMA**

**Planet Doctor – a humorous story/dramatic sketch**

PD = Planet Doctor (sits behind a desk, wearing white coat)

Nurse (non-speaking) = appears with Earth's medical records, then shows Earth into the Doctor's surgery

E = Earth (padded out to be as rotund as possible!)

PD: The earth. Give me her file nurse.  
Thank you. Yes, right. (looking at a file)  
Four thousand six hundred million years old. Quite young for a planet.  
Ah! What's this?  
A hundred thousand years ago. Signs of human life.  
That's worrying.

Air, water. Yes, good. Plants. Yes good.  
Extinction of dinosaurs. Mmmm.  
Oh! Flu like symptoms:  
Warm and sweaty for long periods, then freezing cold.  
Show the patient in, nurse. *(nurse ushers Earth in)*

PD: Good morning. Take a seat.

E: Oh! I can't sit down doctor, far too painful.

PD: We'd better stand up then.  
You've been losing weight, I gather.

E: Oh, Yes doctor, it's awful.  
Me coal and gas and oil are getting really low.

PD: That's obviously due to too much liposuction.  
Too much being drawn out,  
You can't take millions of years to build these things up  
And then remove them all in a couple of centuries.  
We'll have to do something to slow that down.  
But then you've had all this radical surgery!

E: Oh yes doctor. It's been so painful,  
That's why I can't sit down. All these painful scars.  
It's been 250 years, and they've only just got round to sending me to you.  
And I'm feeling so hot all the time.

PD: Yes, you will be.  
That's because of all the extra carbon dioxide you're breathing, from the burning

of all that coal, oil and gas.

E: Ooh! And I get these storms doctor, raging storms and floods,  
And then these terrible droughts,  
And me sea levels rising something shocking!

PD: Yes, the prognosis is pretty grim actually,  
And you're seriously addicted to oil burning aren't you? If we don't wean you off  
that the fever could be fatal.

E: Ooh! I hope you can doctor I already have such terrible trouble breathing.

PD: Trouble breathing you said?

E: Ooh, yes doctor. I wheeze like a black hole at times.

PD: That's because you're losing your forests.  
I'll have to prescribe trees. High doses of tree planting.  
I mean, looking at these notes, this problem's been increasing for 5000 years,  
But in this last six hundred or so, it's got rapidly worse.  
You'll soon have no fresh air at all.

E: I get this terrible itching too, doctor.

PD: Humans. That's humans, swarming all over  
you. Most of your problems start with  
humans.

E: You mean like all these wars I've got? Ooh! They're really painful!  
And then there's me water retention, and me circulation problems.

PD: Yes, I can see your seas rising,  
And your dry areas getting more and more arid,  
But then there's your temperate zones.

E: Me temperate zones, doctor? What's wrong with me temperate zones?

PD: More and more rain, increasing vulnerability to  
flooding. Things are not good, Mrs. Earth, not good  
at all.

E: And just recently, doctor, I've noticed all this plastic accumulating in me  
oceans, killing me lovely sea birds and fish – makes me feel sick and  
depressed.

PD: I'm afraid that's down to your humans, too,  
making stuff you can't process and overloading your digestive system.

PD: You've got an acute halitosis problem as well.

E: I've been worried about that for two hundred years doctor.

PD: It's your air pollution.  
Humans again. Oh! Yes.  
Industrial revolution  
Damaged living organisms,  
Including your humans,  
With asthma and lung disease,  
Not to mention damage to buildings.

E: Oh! Dear. It sounds awful.  
And Ooh doctor just look at me ozone layer!

PD: Yes, it's very thin. It could possibly right itself.  
But we can't make that assumption.  
And your humans are going to get more fatal skin cancers  
And problems with cataracts.

E: What's your verdict Doctor?  
Is there any hope for me at all?

PD: Well, Mrs. Earth I don't want to give you any false hopes.  
I have to say that you are suffering  
From an unsustainable growth in your human species.  
If your current human activity doesn't  
change, I'm afraid your ailments could  
prove terminal For the balance of  
planetary life.

E: Ooh! Doctor! What are we going to do?

*Alan Gaunt, hymn writer and member of Parkgate and Neston United Reformed Church, adapted material from Eco-congregation Module 2 into a sketch which was used as part of their Harvest Festival. With a 2018 addition (on plastic) from OWW.*