



ECO CHURCH
RESOURCES

WORSHIP
& TEACHING

Prayer

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think



Our exploration of creation begins with one step, into the realm of prayer. But does that mean forcing our prayers into an 'environmentally-friendly' mould?

In the Jewish tradition, prayer is like that already. The ladder Jacob saw in his dream – with angels of God 'going up and coming down on it' – is a symbol of prayer, connecting earth and heaven. The Hebrew word for prayer is not 'levakesh – to request', but 'tefilla – to connect'. So in the Jewish mindset, the essence of prayer is about linking creator and creation.

The early church of Britain and Ireland would be puzzled with our modern-day quest to become 'eco-friendly' in our prayers. In their minds, considering creation was not a separate issue. To talk of 'the environment' as an isolated concept would have been strange. Everything was connected in Christ. Creation itself had a 'blessedness' about it.

Rather than try to change prayer by adding bolt-on references about the environment, let us revisit the roots of prayer – where creator and creation become connected – mysteriously, in our midst. Create space. Take time.

do



Gently introduce your congregation or small group to creation care with this multi-sensory prayer, which uses a simple but powerful visual aid.

As worshippers arrive, play *Let There Be Light* by Mike Oldfield from his CD *The Songs Of Distant Earth*, which includes audio from the Apollo 8 space mission.

weblink



NEW KILPATRICK PARISH CHURCH
Visit the church website to discover more
worship resources
www.nkchurch.org.uk

(Gently pour water into a bowl)

God has chosen the rolling tide
the flowing river
the rushing stream
the flooding burn
to hold all of heaven
and her promise

(Pour water more fully into the bowl and let it overflow quite a bit)

in the pouring
and stirring
and spilling
and running
comes the act of heaven
and her promise

(Scoop up water from the bowl and let it dribble through your fingers)

so come and be soaked in the spirit
as the story of salvation teems around us
parables whispered in the drenching
and baptism becomes the soothing rush of
heaven
and her promise
of Jesus

© Roddy Hamilton

do



William Butler Yeats was born into a Church of Ireland family. Though he may have drifted from those moorings, still his poetry remained intensely spiritual.

One of his best-known poems, *The Isle Of Innisfree*, is rich in references to nature. Use this in a service to create the atmosphere of a special place, bathed in the light of creation.

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Having established a special sense of place in your worship service – ‘the deep heart's core’ – read out this prayer by Ray Simpson (from *Prayers of Creation* published by Kevin Mayhew), or reflect on it in your own personal devotions.

As background music, play *Living In Eternity* by Tangerine Dream from their CD *The Angel of the West Window*.

Creator, make us co-workers with you,
that the earth and all who live upon it
may reap a full harvest.

Show us how to reflect your rhythms
in our life and work
and to conserve the world's rich resources.

Help us to give all creatures their due respect,
to tend cattle and crops with care.

Guide science along wise and considerate ways,
that we may fashion agriculture that truly enhances,
and that we may sustain a vibrant environment.

do



While people are in a thoughtful attitude and a prayerful place, play the Bob Dylan track *Father Of Night* from his album *New Morning*.

Loosely based on the ancient Jewish liturgy, the Amidah or 'Standing Prayer', you can buy the song from iTunes, if you don't have the recording on CD. Interestingly, Dylan's Jewish roots are revealed in this prayer, which connects Creator with creation.

do more



Bring themes like biodiversity and endangered species into your church's prayers

Introduce those topics into times of reflection and communion, too. The websites listed below have resources you can use in your church services. You can also learn from them to produce your own.

Explore prayers for creation, work and blessings from the Celtic tradition

They feature in this resource, compiled from various sources by the Diocese of London.

weblink



You can obtain the lyrics of this deeply meaningful composition at the following weblink.

www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/father-night

AT YOUR SERVICE

atyourservice.arocha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/WWW-Prayers-Biodiversity.pdf

CELTIC PRAYERS AT LONDON
ANGLICAN

www.london.anglican.org/default/assets/downloads/resourcelibrary/celtic-prayers.pdf

BROKEN LINK REPORTED

do



Try writing your own prayers in the Celtic tradition

Review some of the prayers from other online sources. Celtic Christianity expert Ray Simpson offers some guidance.

Use prayers that focus on climate justice

Prayers based on Psalm 46 and The Great Commandment, prayers of intercession and a 'rainbow litany' have all been brought together in this selection from Christian Aid.

Consider prayers of confession and intercession

These are offered in A Rocha UK's 2013 Environment Resource Pack.

Apply ancient influences and insights to contemporary worship

Irish saint Columbanus wrote in the sixth century, 'If you wish to understand the Creator, then first understand his creation'. Celtic missionaries went with the flow of nature, refused to fell trees unnecessarily and revered sacred wells. Consider using *The Celtic Resource Book* by Martin Wallace (Church House Publishing).

Read about ancient Jewish ideas on the holistic nature of prayer

Use this helpful article.

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RAY SIMPSON'S GUIDE TO WRITING CELTIC PRAYERS

www.raysimpson.org/userfiles/file/WRITING_CELTIC_PRAYERS.doc

CLIMATE JUSTICES PRAYERS

www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Climate-campaign-prayers-June-2014.pdf

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND INTERCESSION

www.arocha.org/int-en/13894-DSY/version/default/part/AttachmentData/data/Home%20-%20Prayers.pdf

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THE CELTIC RESOURCE BOOK

www.chpublishing.co.uk/books/9780715141861/the-celtic-resource-book

CHABAD

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/682090/jewish/The-Meaning-of-Prayer.htm