

# Congregations Alive!

A sampling of resources for worship and preaching,  
for the healing of God's Creation



## **Creation Justice Ministries**

<https://www.creationjustice.org>

“Creation Justice Ministries educates, equips, and mobilizes Christian individuals, congregations, denominations, and communions to protect, restore, and rightly share God's creation.” (*statement from the website*).

Here is a link to their Resource Hub, where you can find – you guessed it! – resources for education, worship, events, and action, just to name a few. There are also sections on Seasons of the Church Year, and Issues (where you can find information on areas such as Food and Agriculture, Biodiversity, Public Lands, and Racial Justice, for example):

<https://www.creationjustice.org/resources.html>

## **Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development**

<https://interfaithsustain.com/>

Interfaith organization “mobilizing faith communities for a sustainable future.” Here are some sample resources by Rev. Dr. Leah Schade:

- A Theology of Water – Responding to our Baptism
  - The Sunday celebrating the Baptism of Jesus is an ideal time to articulate a theology of water and call for protecting the waters of Creation.
  - <https://interfaithsustain.com/ecopreacher-resources/a-theology-of-water-responding-to-our-baptismal-vocation/>
- How to Preach a Sermon on Climate Change and Your Congregation
  - <https://interfaithsustain.com/ecopreacher-resources/how-to-preach-a-sermon-about-climate-change-and-your-congregation/>  
(See *3 Layers of Environmental Preaching*, below, for a different perspective.)

## **The BTS Center**

<https://thebtscenter.org/>

The BTS Center is a private foundation in Portland, Maine, building on the legacy of the former Bangor Theological Seminary. They offer several programs of significance, including:

- Lament with Earth – five seasonal events honoring the pain of loss through the liturgical year. Two are still upcoming in April and June of 2023; videos of the previous events are available.
- EcoPreacher Cohort – a monthly series, November 2022 – November 2023, in cooperation with Creation Justice Ministries, to help preachers understand climate change and other environmental justice issues more deeply as spiritual crises that requires creative, faith-rooted action. Registration for this year is closed, but resources for the series are available at <https://interfaithsustain.com/ecopreacher-123/>. (*See above for more from interfaithsustain.com*)

### **Not Ordinary Church**

<https://allyson.revsawtell.org/>

A website of resources for worship and personal reflection, by Rev. Allyson Sawtell. Here are a couple of links to sample liturgies on the website:

- Blessing of the Animals – a Celebration in Two Parts  
<https://allyson.revsawtell.org/blessing-of-the-animals-a-celebration-in-two-parts/>
- A Tenebrae for Creation (a Holy Week service)  
<https://allyson.revsawtell.org/tenebrae-for-creation/>

### **United Church of Christ website**

<https://www.ucc.org/>

The pages on Click “How We Serve”, then “Justice and Local Church Ministries”, then “Faithful Action Ministires” where you will find “Environmental Justice”. Just good information about what the national Church is up to. Also, The Pollinator is a good blog to subscribe to.

Also buried in the website is “Sing for the Earth” (<https://www.ucc.org/sing-for-the-earth-song-recommendations-for-worship/>) is a list of lists of contemporary songs that you might find helpful in worship (no links provided to individual hymns). It was compiled by Ruth Striegel, the Music Director at First UCC, Albuquerque NM. There is a section at the very end under “Further Resources” that lists other songwriters and their websites (with links!).

### **Season of Creation** – two similar organizations, note the .com and .org addresses!

The Season of Creation is a new season of the church year which is celebrated during the four Sundays of September that precede St Francis of Assisi Day (4 October).

- The organizing of this season began in Australia, and is continued as a global program at <https://SeasonofCreation.com>. The worship resources here follow a three-year cycle of readings and themes.
- A more recent initiative, with Catholic and Orthodox ties, is found at <https://seasonofcreation.org>. The organizing for this expression has included both worship planning and social change commitments.

### **Interfaith Power & Light**

<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org>

IP&L has an extensive list of climate prayers and sample sermons, not surprisingly from a range of faith traditions, at <https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/congregational-resources/>.

- A separate page with worship resources for their Faith Climate Action Week (<https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/sign-up-to-access-worship-resources/>) requires you to sign up to gain access.
- IPL’s Youtube page has many brief video prayers for the Earth from many different faith traditions  
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzxikWFj5QcPXqCkDSSlwBq8CJjyJhTwD>)

### **Let All Creation Praise**

<http://www.letallcreationpraise.org>

“We seek to serve the whole church by providing resources for Christian worship that promotes love of and care for God’s creation.” They serve as the North American site for the Season of Creation (the “.com” version). Their website has tabs for worship resources, preaching, and occasional services.

### **The United Church of Canada**

<https://united-church.ca/worship-theme/environment>

Our kindred church to the north has a page with “worship ideas” of sample services, music and other related materials.

### **Climate Sunday**

<https://www.climatesunday.org/>

In the run-up to COP26 in Glasgow, over 2,200 churches and church groups throughout Britain and Ireland participated in the Climate Sunday Initiative, addressing climate change by holding Climate Sunday services, committing to practical action and speaking up for climate justice. The page on “Service Resources” has sections on Service Plans, Music and Hymns, Readings, Sermons, Prayers, Young People, and Audio Visual. Through these, you can explore links to many organizations and denominations in the United Kingdom.

### **Southern New England Conf, UCC**

<https://www.sneucc.org/worship-and-preaching>

This UCC conference’s website section on Environmental Ministries has sections on worship and preaching, and has links to sermons, prayers, liturgy and poetry.

### **Carolyn’s Hymns**

[http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect\\_earthcare.html](http://www.carolynshymns.com/lect_earthcare.html)

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, a Presbyterian pastor, is a prolific hymn-writer (over 400!), putting new words to familiar tunes. There’s a large section on her website designated under the subject of “Caring for Creation.” For many of the compositions, permission is given for the free use of the hymn in worship.

### **Doxecology**

<https://resoundworship.org/projects/doxecology>

Thirteen new, congregational worship songs (and music videos) that celebrate the wonder of creation, acknowledge our failures, and anticipate a glorious restoration in Christ. The accompanying thirteen-chapter study guide includes contributions from leading scholars and practitioners in the fields of environmentalism and worship, plus three service plans with new resources created by engageworship.

### **Jubilate: Creation Resources**

<https://jubilate.co.uk/collections/creation-resources>

To run alongside the Resound Worship Doxecology project here is a small collection of some of our most popular hymns and songs relating to creation and God's world. All have downloadable piano scores, mp3s and lyric videos. (Note especially the links to the new hymn collection “Until your earth is whole.”)

### **Reflections by Rev. Peter Sawtell**

<https://www.RevSawtell.org>

- ***Three Layers of Environmental Preaching***

<https://www.RevSawtell.org/3Layers.pdf> – In the late 1990s, Peter wrote a short article for a newsletter of the Colorado Council of Churches, encouraging pastors to use a mix of “issue preaching”, generalized themes, and background perspectives as they reflect theologically on environmental topics.

- ***Worship from an Eco-Justice Perspective***  
[https://www.RevSawtell.org/Worship\\_from\\_an\\_Eco-Justice\\_perspective.pdf](https://www.RevSawtell.org/Worship_from_an_Eco-Justice_perspective.pdf) – During Lent in 2013, Peter’s commentary, *Eco-Justice Notes* had a seven-week series on worship from an eco-justice perspective. Each week examined one quality of worship, and how an Earth-aware, justice-seeking perspective might inform our worship experience. The collection of seven articles could be used as a study/discussion source for a pastor, a clergy group, or a church worship committee.
- ***What About the Lectionary? an eco-justice critique***  
<https://www.RevSawtell.org/lectionary.pdf> – There are elements of the Revised Common Lectionary's structure and purpose which can make it difficult for lectionary preachers to consistently and intentionally address this time of great change and crisis in the context of worship. Peter points out four ways that the Lectionary hinders eco-justice preaching, and calls on pastors to, “at least on occasion, step away from the Lectionary to use other texts and other narratives.”

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This listing of worship resources is available on-line:

[https://www.RevSawtell.org/CA5\\_Worship\\_Resources.pdf](https://www.RevSawtell.org/CA5_Worship_Resources.pdf) –

just go to [www.RevSawtell.org](http://www.RevSawtell.org), and look in the list of resources for Congregations Alive!