

# Eco-Congregation Scotland

## Creation Time Resources 2016: Followers of Jesus, Caring for Creation



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### INTRODUCTION

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Worship material for Creation Time 2016 comes from an ecumenical writing group, with contributors from the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church.

It follows the theme, *Followers of Jesus, Caring for Creation*, emphasising the readings from the Gospel of Luke which appear in the Revised Common Lectionary in September.

Material from 2013, emphasising Year C RCL readings from Jeremiah is available at <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/materials/creation-time/>

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### THE MATERIAL

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- Week One 04/09/16 Careful Planning Priorities (Luke 14: 25-33)
- Week Two 11/09/16 Keeping to the Right Path (Luke 15:1-10)
- Week Three 18/09/16 Caring Locally, Caring Globally (Luke 16:1-13)
- Week Four 25/09/16 Caring for all Creation (Luke 16:19-31)

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### THE WRITING GROUP

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Members of the Creation Time 2015 Writing Group:

Jenny Adams is Church of Scotland minister of Duffus, Spynie & Hopeman Parish, in Moray, in the north-east of Scotland. As part of an Eco-congregation, and through many other connections, she is trying, failing, and keeping trying to live out creation care and concern for social justice in all of life.

Janet Foggie is minister of St Andrew's Parish Church in the Church of Scotland. She is a mediator with Place for Hope, Place an organisation accompanying and equipping people and faith communities so that all might reach their potential to be peacemakers who navigate conflict well, and finds much satisfaction in sharing hope for peace in our church and world.

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Trevor Jamison, a United Reformed Church Minister, is the Environmental Chaplain for Eco Congregation Scotland <http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/chaplain/>

Richard Murray is a Lay Reader in the Scottish Episcopal Church and a member of its Church in Society Committee, where he has a focus on environmental issues. He is a board member of Eco-Congregation Scotland.

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#### ABOUT CREATION TIME

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Creation Time started in the Orthodox Church in 1989 and has been supported by a growing number of churches across Europe since then. The European Christian Environmental Network has urged churches to adopt a Time for Creation, stretching from 1 September to the feast of St Francis on 4 October. This was endorsed at the European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania in 2007, when it was agreed that Creation Time "be dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change".

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#### ALSO AVAILABLE

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#### ***Resources for World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation - September 1<sup>st</sup> 2016***

*In 2015 Pope Francis established September 1<sup>st</sup> as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, encouraging the Catholic community around the world to pray for our common home. Now, for its second year, the aid agency, CAFOD, provides a prayer in union with creation at*

<http://cafod.org.uk/content/download/25371/182321/version/5/file/A%20Christian%20prayer%20in%20union%20with%20creation-%20Laudato%20Si'.pdf>

*And resources for organising a prayer vigil at*

<http://cafod.org.uk/content/download/29948/340910/version/7/file/Prayer%20vigil%20for%20the%20care%20of%20creation.pdf>

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CREATION TIME 2015 - WEEK 4 – SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>

### *CARING FOR ALL CREATION*

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#### THOUGHTS ON THE READINGS

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##### AMOS 6: 1<sup>A</sup>, 4-7

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Amos, the first prophet to have his words recorded at length, was likely to have been speaking to the people of Israel sometime in the eighth century BC. His words are recorded, probably by a scribe or disciple, so may have been written down some time after they were delivered.

In this passage he derides those who live in luxury. To kill lambs and calves (for veal) was to demonstrate wealth and excessive consumption; a desire to eat the best simply because they could afford it with no thought to the wider welfare of the people.

Although written so long ago, these words chime with many modern writers on the environment and our current food industry, and social issues relating to diet, excessive consumption and social responsibility. What would it mean for our banquets and feasts to come to an end in the twenty first century?

##### PSALM 146

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Very probably written after the exile (see verses 7 and 8) this psalm follows the pattern of a public call to praise God. The psalm was probably written to be used in worship. The psalmist leads by example, calling the people to praise God, and adding that the author also praises God as an individual act of devotion.

Praise is connected to God's justice, both in the positive sense of helping the oppressed, prisoners, the blind, strangers, and in the negative sense, stating that

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those who do not trust God will come to no good, and die with no hope in an eternal future. Focus on the eternal nature of god constitutes the clause before closing refrain, 'Praise the Lord!' which envelopes the psalm in a circular call to praise.

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#### 1 TIMOTHY 6: 6-19

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Paul and Timothy seem to have one of those natural friendships of the Bible. The letters Paul writes to Timothy are tender, full of love and support. His advice in this passage, is intimate and yet also broad.

Paul points to the contrast between the powers of this world, represented by Pontius Pilate, and Christ's kingship and lordship, which is the basis of Timothy's faith. Riches can then also be divided into the riches of this world, such as money, clothes and possessions and the riches of heaven, such as righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

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#### LUKE 16: 19-31

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The story of the 'Rich Man (Dives) and Lazarus' as told in Luke's gospel is one of the harshest stories in the gospels. Jesus has no pity for those who should have known better. The rich man has no way of pretending that he did not know the plight of Lazarus in this life, as the poor man was brought to his door, presumably by friends, or fellow beggars.

The tale of the afterlife tableau is one of merciless pain suffered by the rich man, which cannot be alleviated. Even when he asks for his family to be warned and spared, he is told that all they need to know is already available, and even if Jesus was raised from the dead, they would not mend their ways. There is a futility to the resurrection with regard to those whose hearts and minds are closed by their love of money.

This story is a challenge to our understanding of a forgiving God, and perhaps also a challenge to those who try to campaign to change the minds of rich people intent only on more profit. In the end, we are all facing God's judgement.



#### SERMON THOUGHTS

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It is easy to be tempted to soften the message of this week's scriptures. The very stark, harsh picture drawn by Jesus of the fate of the rich man who does not repent until after death and cannot be redeemed might seem unfair and difficult for contemporary congregations who tend to a focus more on God's love than God's judgement. However, it is clear from the text that the evidence, moral guidance, and ethical clarity which we require to live good lives and care for the Lazarus-type people in our world are already before us.

If we look at the readings in Amos, the verses of psalm 146 and the advice of Paul to his beloved Timothy we see already enough to guide us to care for God's world and the poor people within it. Christians cannot look at the current state of the world, including related issues of the climate challenge, loss of biodiversity, population growth and uneven distribution of wealth, and claim ignorance. It is in refusing to accept responsibility for our own sins that we will find the harshest and most uncompromising judgement of God.

Some contemporary Christian may be inclined to focus on personal and sexual morality, rather than the social morality which concerns Jesus in this parable. If so, a challenge must be made in the sermon to ensure that we do not find ourselves avoiding these important social issues and focussing solely on more personal issues.

Where the community is more inclined to self-congratulation or a division between worship behaviour and lifestyle, a challenge may be made to bring the Christian faith into every day of the week through eco-congregation activity, social justice campaigning or service to a local community, or support for Fairtrade.

There are real and hard challenges here for all Christian churches and it is unlikely to be an entirely 'feel good' Sunday. Perhaps finishing with a focus on Paul's advice to Timothy, and on the thought that we can change even a little to help the poor and rebalance the planet, would lift morale and encourage the congregation to engage in the world as Christ's light.

#### **All-age Address**

For an all age address you will need

1. A mobile phone or
2. A tablet device
3. An old telephone or device (clearly outdated)

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#### 4. A plastic bin

Show the congregation the old telephone or device. Complain that your friend has a newer one and that this one buffers too much, doesn't work quickly enough, or doesn't suit your needs. Thankfully I am rich so I can do something about it!

Produce the newer device or phone and then ask one of the children to put your old one in the bin. Talk about how this new one isn't going to last that long and discuss that perhaps you'll need to keep up with an ever better model soon. Thankfully I am rich so I can do something about it!

Then ask the congregation what will happen to the phone you have put in the bin? Where does it go once the bins are collected? How much tech waste like this do they think is around today?

Share some facts with them: (These are just some suggestions; there is a lot on the web to read about this)

- <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/electronic-waste-worth-34bn-piling-up-in-toxic-mine-warns-un-report-10187364.html>
- The study warns that **less than 16 per cent of global** e-waste is being diverted from landfill into recycling and reuse – representing the loss of an “urban mine” of potentially recyclable materials worth more than £34bn.
- <http://phys.org/news/2016-02-thirst-gadgets-vast-empire-electronic.html>

There is more than 6kgs of e-waste for every person on the planet!  
So what do we do about it?  
What are the challenges?  
What can we do?



### MUSICAL SUGGESTIONS

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#### Hymns on Discipleship and Following Jesus

For ourselves no longer living	R&S				
Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go	AMNSCH4	MP	R&S	StF	
I want Jesus to walk with me	CH4				
I want to walk with Jesus Christ	MP				
Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult	AMNSCH4	MP	R&S	StF	
Lead us heavenly Father, lead us	AMNSR&S	MP	StF		
Lord of creation, to you be all praise	CH4	R&S	StF		
One more step along the world I go	CH4	R&S	StF		
We are marching in the light of God	AMNSCH4	MP	R&S	StF	
Will you come and follow me	AMNSCH4	R&S	StF		

#### Hymns for this Week

The Lord is King, lift up your voice	AMNS	CH4	MP	R&S	
God gave me eyes so I could see	CH4				
How God it is when God's will is done	CH4				
Lord, from the depths to thee I cried	CH4				
Through the love of God my Saviour	AMNS	CH4	R&S		
Eternal ruler of the ceaseless round	AMNS	CH4	R&S		

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#### God, You Spoke Your Word Through Amos

BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D

God, you spoke your word through Amos long ago and far away.

Still your call for love and justice speaks to people in our day:

For we've trampled on the needy and brought heartbreak to the poor;

Lord, our way of life is greedy— we are always wanting more.

We confess the way we're living harms the planet in our care;

Many times our ways of spending hurt the poor and cause despair.

In a world where millions hunger, we consume without much thought.

So your land and people suffer; may we hear what Amos taught!

Even here within our churches, we have sometimes failed to be

Bearers of your love and justice to your world community.

All our songs and celebrations and the feasting that we do

Turn to mournful lamentations as we cry, "Lord, where are you?"

Lord, renew in us a vision of the world you're working toward.

Guide your church to make decisions that acknowledge you as Lord.

May we seek your ways of justice, care for earth, and gladly give;

May the words you spoke through Amos guide the way we daily live!

Biblical text: Amos 8:1-12

Tune: *The Sacred Harp*, 1844. Harm. James H. Wood, 1958.

Text: Copyright © Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2010.

Email: [bcgillette@comcast.net](mailto:bcgillette@comcast.net) New Hymns: [www.carolynshymns.com](http://www.carolynshymns.com)

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### PRAYERS

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### CALL TO WORSHIP

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#### **Praise the Lord!**

Praise him sun and moon; praise him shining stars.

#### **Praise the Lord!**

Praise him highest heavens and the waters above the sky.

#### **Praise the Lord!**

Let them all praise the name of the Lord!

#### **Praise the Lord!**

#### **Prayer of Approach**

A prayer about courage to tell the truth:

God who is in all,  
And through all,  
Who is everything;  
Creating all life,  
Moving through all breath,  
What is courage to you?  
You do not need to be brave.

We praise you.  
For always being strong,  
Whole, eternal, Almighty  
And as we bring our praises  
We realise just how small we are.

Sometimes we are scared,  
Sometimes anxious, even  
To the point that our anxiety  
Rests upon nothing at all  
But still cloaks us, chokes us.

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God of all power,  
Give us courage.  
Share your endless bravery  
With us, not so we take mindless risks  
But so we can be courageous for you  
Brave enough to do the right thing,  
To say the right thing  
To follow You.

We ask this  
In and through our Lord Jesus Christ  
Who was brave to follow your will  
To the end, even to death,  
And who rose again from the dead  
To share his courage with us.

**Amen**

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### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

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Richest God, whose wealth is eternal,  
Built of those treasures no time can destroy;  
Love, righteousness, humility, endurance, truth;  
We come to your throne to confess  
That often we have strayed from your kingdom.

We have been tempted by the luxury of our modern lives.  
We have eaten, drunk, played, purchased, driven,  
With no thought for our world and its fragile eco systems;  
With no thought for the poor who are longing for the scraps;  
From our heavily laden tables.

Forgive us, merciful God.  
Forgive us, for we are truly sorry.  
Forgive us, for we mean to try to change.

May we, unlike the rich man of Jesus' parable.  
Turn around our priorities in this life,  
Doing what we can for our neighbour,  
Sharing what we can of what we have.

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In and through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

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#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

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There are many people in our communities, in our church, and in our lives  
Who inspire us, with their commitment to your world, their love for others, and  
For the created beauty around us.

For all those who encourage, lead and challenge us.

**We thank you**

For all those who have gone before us,  
Who stood up against sexism, slavery or racism;  
For those who have fought to give us a fairer, better, world.

**We thank you**

As we bring our thanks we pray for all who need our caring attention.  
We pray that we would have the same courage and endurance as Timothy,  
To stand firm in the faith – even when faced with challenges.

We pray for those seeking to safeguard creation ... *specific examples may be given*

We pray for organisations working for a fairer world ...

We pray for charities helping those most in need ...

We pray for people we know in our community helping others ...

As we come with such weighty and difficult issues, before you our Father and our  
Friend, we pray today for our own hearts, for those we love who are sad, or facing  
bad news, grieving, or unwell.

In the silence now we think of the prayers for those closest to us.

[silence]

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Gracious God, we trust in you for our time here on this earth, and we also place our trust beyond the grave for our eternal lives in your Spirit. We ask that you will gather us in with all your loving people, to worship you forever,  
**Amen**

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