

LENT LIVING

Resources for worship and beyond

Compiled in partnership with Living Lent, a campaign being led by the ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). [Full details of Living Lent can be found on its own website.](#)

We offer hymns and prayers grouped under five themes identified by the Living Lent team.

1. **Hungering and thirsting for righteousness**
2. **Exploring the Lenten wilderness**
3. **Being transformed by and in our relationships**
4. **Our Christian call to love our neighbours**
5. **The earth is the Lord's**

1. Living Lent is not just about one decision to change. It's about: **hungering and thirsting for righteousness**, in our relationship with God and with the world.

Hymn suggestions

[As if you were not there](#) (StF 724)

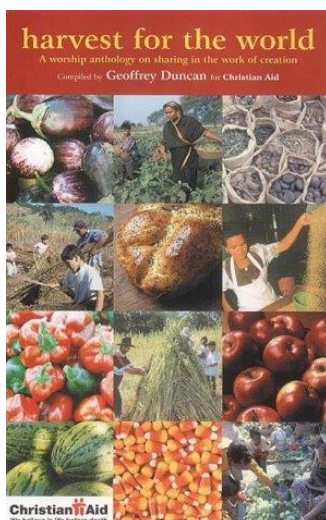
[As the deer pants for the water](#) (StF 544)

[Being of beings, God of love](#) (StF 490)

[Great God, your love has called us here](#) (StF 499) – Brian Wren's fine hymn, reinterpreting the chains of Charles Wesley's [And can it be](#) (StF 345) as "social forces" and "powers and systems"

[Speak in the stillness, God we pray](#) (StF 511), which concludes with the prayer: "Strengthened by you that we may prove / a gift of grace to earth from heaven."

Prayer of praise and confession



We praise you, Creator of All Living Things,
for the power of the wind,
the energy of the sun,
the steady flow of a waterfall,
and the spirit of living things as they return to clay.
Your works are many and wonderful, O Loving Creator.

We confess that we have forgotten our interconnectedness
with your universe.

We confess that we have been indifferent to the
environmental crises

to which we have contributed,
in which we are enmeshed.

We confess we have abused your creation
through ignorance, exploitation and greed.
We confess doing permanent damage to your handiwork.
We confess to alienating ourselves from you, the Source of All Life.
We confess that we have forgotten who we are.

Forgiving Creator,
awaken us to the roaring of creation
and the cries for justice,
that we may open our minds and hearts to respond

(Diann Neu, adapted, included in Geoffrey Duncan, comp., [Harvest for the World: a worship anthology on sharing in the work of creation](#), © 2002 Christian Aid)

2. Living Lent is not just about one decision to change. It's about **exploring the Lenten wilderness**. Lent is a time of self-discipline in order to grow in our discipleship. Our environmental damage is making more of our earth barren wilderness; we should travel there to have our eyes opened for our need for renewal.

Hymn suggestions

[Deep in the darkness a starlight is gleaming](#) (StF 625) – the call from “the safety of home” that challenges us to confront crying voices, terror and fear, so much of it bound up with the plight of our planet

[Forty days and forty nights](#) (StF 236)

[God, beyond our dreams, you have stirred in us a memory](#) (StF 496) – with its refrain:

All around us we have known you,
all creation lives to hold you.
In our living and our dying
we are bringing you to birth.

[Into a world of dark, waste and disordered space](#) (StF 387) – Ann Phillips’s vision of the continuing power of God’s spirit “to give a pattern of new life”, allowing our world to live (v.6)

[Lord, save us from the desert](#) (StF+ website only)

[O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth](#) (StF 112) – John Bell’s reminder of God’s love for the world and our role as its curators and carers. . .

picked up also in John Arlott’s [God, whose farm is all creation](#) (StF 122):

Take our ploughing, seeding, reaping,
hopes and fears of sun and rain,
all our thinking, planning, waiting,
ripened in this fruit and grain.

Prayers

(Earth Prayer)

I am your mother: do not neglect me!
Children, protect me – I need your trust:
 my breath is your breath,
 my death is your death,
ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

I am your nurture: do not destroy me!
Love and enjoy me, savour my fruit;
 my good is your good,
 my food is your food,
water and flower, branches and root.

I am your lodging: do not abuse me!
Tenderly use me, soothing my scars;
 my health is your health,
 my wealth is your wealth,
shining with promise, set among stars.

God is our maker: do not deny God,
challenge, defy God, threaten this place:
 life is to cherish –
 care, or we perish!
I am your mother, tears on my face. . . .

(Shirley Erena Murray [*Every Day in Your Spirit: new hymns written between 1992 and 1996*](#)

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At the heart of everything is the land.
The land is my mother.
Like a human being,
the land gives us protection, enjoyment
and provides for our needs.

We belong to the land
in the sense that
it is part of us.

Just as you need your home and place,
and protect it,



Save our Mother Earth

we need our land
and want to look after it.

(Australian Aboriginal, with Christian Aid and CAFOD)

Where are the voices for the earth?
Where are the eyes to see her pain
wasted by our consuming path,
weeping the tears of poisoned rain?

Sacred the soil that hugs the seed,
sacred the silent fall of snow,
sacred the world that God decreed,
water and sun and river flow.

Where shall we run, who break this code?
Where shall tomorrow's children be,
left with the ruined gifts of God,
death for the creatures, land and sea?

We are the voices for the earth,
we who will care enough to cry,
cherish her beauty, clear her breath,
live that our planet may not die.



(Shirley Erena Murray [Faith Makes the Song: new hymns written between 1997 and 2002](#))

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Note: Shirley Erena Murray described this text as “an increasingly persistent cry for respecting the health and protection of the earth”. Written as a contribution to the World Council of Churches programme for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

3. Living Lent is not just about one decision to change. It's about **being transformed by and in our relationships**. Doing this together matters, because a community encourage, challenge and grow.

Hymn suggestions

[Let love be real, in giving and receiving](#) (StF 615)

[Thanks for friends who keep on loving](#) (StF 619) – note lines such as:

In our faithful, honest learning
we discover things unknown.
Thanks to God for friends who teach us:
seeking talent yet ungrown.”

[Thou God of truth and love, we seek thy perfect way](#) (StF 620)

[We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet](#) (StF 718)

[When love is found and hope comes home](#) (StF 607) – a marriage hymn that may be applied more broadly; suggest adapting v.1, line 2 to read: “sing and be glad we are at one.”

Prayer suggestion

Consider reflecting on the *Methodist Covenant prayer* in light of climate change action. In this context what does it mean to pray: “I am no longer my own but yours. . . let me have all things, let me have nothing. . . “

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'



(Methodists hold an annual Covenant Service, at which we celebrate all that God has done for us, and affirm that we give our lives and choices to God. The traditional Covenant prayer makes it very clear that this affirmation is a serious one that embraces the whole of our life, in all its parts. In our culture we tend to prize our ability to make decisions and choose our own path in life. It can feel very hard to give that up.)

4. Living Lent is not just about one decision to change. It's about **our Christian call to love our neighbours**. Climate change impacts the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world already. Our Christian call to bear the burdens of our weakest members means that those of us in the affluent west need to recognise our own abuse of the earth's resources.

Hymn suggestions

[Brother, sister, let me serve you](#) (StF 611)

[When I needed a neighbour, were you there?](#) (StF 256)

["Who is my neighbour", asked the Scribe](#) (StF+ website only)

And two hymns by Andrew Pratt that address head on our response to refugees and asylum seekers:

[There are no strangers to God's love](#) (StF 716)

[If we claim to love our neighbour](#) (StF+ website only)

Reflection

If the land could speak, it would speak for us.
It would say, like us,
the years have forged the bond of life that ties us together.

It was our labour that made the land she is.
It was her yielding that gave us life.
We and the land are one!

Will they listen?

Those invisible ones, who, from unfeeling distance,
claim the land is theirs because pieces of paper say so?



Extract from words spoken by Macli-ing Dulag, a labourer from the Igorot indigenous tribe of the Philippines while championing the rights of the Kalinga and Bontoc indigenous peoples against the Chico dam. Quoted in "World Indigenous Peoples Remember A Fallen Philippine Hero" by Dr. Michael A. Bengwayan, eurasiareview.com

5. Living Lent is not just about one decision to change. It's about **understanding that the earth is the Lord's**, and everything in it. God created this planet and declared it very good. The creation – and everyone in it – is precious to God, and this should be reflected in the way we treat it.

Hymn suggestions

[For the beauty of the earth](#) (StF 102)

[God in his love for us lent us this planet](#) (StF 727)

[Heaven's heart is pulsing to Creation's hymn](#) (StF website only)

[Think of a world without any flowers](#) (StF 92)

[Touch the earth lightly](#) (StF 729)

And for a stimulating reflection on our deep interrelationship with the created world around us, words and music for Brian Wren's hymn [We are not own. Earth forms us](#) are currently available on StF+ by arrangement with Stainer & Bell Ltd.

Meditation

(The Gamble)

While soldiers threw a dice,
the crucified were dying
the world was turning black
and Jesus Christ was crying

O my God, O my God,
why have you forsaken me!

But who gave a toss
for the man on the cross?

And now we throw the dice,
the earth is slowly dying
the world is turning black
the planet's voice is crying

Human race, human race,
why have you forsaken me!

So what is it worth
to desecrate the earth?



(Shirley Erena Murray [Faith Makes the Song: new hymns written between 1997 and 2002](#))

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