

**PRAY.  
GIVE.  
ADVOCATE.**

# **CREATION COVENANT**

# PRAYERS & WORSHIP RESOURCES

## Suggested Scripture Readings

**Genesis 9:8-17** - God's covenant with Noah

**Isaiah 42:5-8** - I have given you as a covenant to the people

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** - A new covenant, written on hearts instead of stone

**2 Corinthians 3** - Ministers of a new covenant, acting with boldness

**Psalm 8** - Ruler of all the earth, you give us to rule

**Matthew 13:1-9** - Parable of the farmer

## Call to Worship

In the days of Noah,  
God placed a rainbow in the sky  
as the sign of a covenant of God's love for all the earth.

In the colors of the rainbow,  
we see the sign of God's grace for all creation.

In the days of Moses,  
the words of God were written on tablets of stone,  
as the sign of a covenant  
between God and all of God's people.

In the tablets of stone,  
we see the sign of God's hope  
for each to live in peace with God and neighbor.

In the days of the prophet,  
God promised to place a new covenant in our hearts.

As members of the living Body of Christ,  
we see the sign of God's promise among us. <sup>1</sup>

## Opening Prayer

God of storms and rainbows,  
God of rain and sunshine,  
God of all creation we worship and adore you.

We gaze in wonder at the beauty of your creation  
and marvel at stormy skies transformed

with the vibrant colours of a rainbow.  
Like Noah and his family,  
we praise you for this everlasting sign  
of your love and care for the whole creation  
in your desire to preserve and not destroy life.

For all these assurances of your love for us  
and for the whole creation,  
we praise and worship you, O God,  
in the power of the Holy Spirit  
and in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our Saviour and Lord. Amen. <sup>2</sup>

## The Wonderful Name of the Lord (Responsive Reading of Psalm 8)

Our Lord and Ruler, your name is wonderful everywhere  
on earth!

You let your glory be seen in the heavens above.  
With praises from children and from tiny infants,  
you have built a fortress. It makes your enemies silent,  
and all who turn against you are left speechless.

**R: Our Lord and Ruler, your name is wonderful  
everywhere on earth!**

I often think of the heavens your hands have made,  
and of the moon and stars you put in place.  
Then I ask, "Why do you care about us humans?  
Why are you concerned for us weaklings?"

**R: Our Lord and Ruler, your name is wonderful  
everywhere on earth!**

You made us a little lower than you yourself,  
and you have crowned us with glory and honor.  
You let us rule everything your hands have made.  
And you put all of it under our power—  
the sheep and the cattle, and every wild animal,  
the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and all ocean  
creatures.

**R: Our Lord and Ruler, your name is wonderful  
everywhere on earth!**

## Scripture Litany: Isaiah 42:5-8

I have given you as a light to the nations,  
and I have called you in righteousness.

Thus says God, who created the heavens,  
who fashioned the earth and all that dwells in it;  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

I have given you as a light to the nations,  
and I have called you in righteousness.

I am the Lord  
and I have called you in righteousness,  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the captives from the dungeon,  
from the prison, those who sit in darkness.

I have given you as a light to the nations,  
and I have called you in righteousness.

I am the Lord—that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other.

Glory to the Creator and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be forever. Amen.

## Prayer of Confession

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,  
for neighbours near and far,  
our children and ourselves. <sup>3</sup>

## Children's Feature: The World as an Apple

Objective: To help children understand the importance  
and value of farm land (soil) and to illustrate the gift of  
creation along with our responsibility to care for it.  
Materials: apple, knife, cutting board OR have the  
apple pre-cut according to the instructions in the  
demonstration.  
Recommended time: 5 minutes

### Leader's Guide

“This apple represents the planet earth. [Cut the apple  
into quarters. Put three quarters aside and keep the  
remaining quarter.]

What do you think these three quarters represent?”  
[Allow time for responses.]

“The world’s oceans, lakes, rivers and ponds. These are  
called “bodies of water”. What do you think this last  
quarter represents?”  
[Allow time for responses.] “The world’s dry land.”

[Cut the remaining quarter into 8 equal portions (half  
the quarter, half each piece again and then half each  
piece again). Put aside 7 of the 8 pieces and keep one  
remaining piece.]

“What do you think the seven small pieces represent?”  
[Allow time for responses.]

“The mountains, deserts, swamps, frozen ground etc., the  
climates and soils where we cannot grow any food.”  
[Hold up the final small section.]

“What do you think this tiny piece of apple represents?”  
[Allow time for responses. Peel the skin off the apple. Lift  
it up and show it to the children.] “This is the amount of  
the earth we use to grow food. This is very special land.”

### Leader's Explanation:

God gave us the whole earth. The mountains and deserts,  
the swamps and glaciers, rainforests, oceans, valleys and  
farm land. God gave us the bodies and brains to be able  
to learn how to grow food so we can be healthy.

God gave us the whole earth to take care of, and a very  
special bit to grow our food. It is important that we take  
special care of the land so that we can continue using it to  
grow food.

How many of you live on a farm? Have a garden? Have  
been to a farm/garden?

Land for growing food is precious. Let’s remember the  
good things we eat which come from the land where it is  
grown. Even if you or I don’t have a farm or a garden, we  
can buy food that other people grew on a farm or garden.  
Let’s remember people all over the world who work hard  
to grow food from their special land, and those who need  
special land to grow food but do not have any.

Option: share the apple slices with the children.

## Prayer Suggestion:

Creator God, thank you for all the earth and all the wonderful things you've made on it. Thank you for the highest mountains and the deepest oceans. Thank you for the deserts and the forests. Thank you especially for the land where food is grown. Bless the land and bless all the people who grow food on it so we can all eat. Comfort and help those who do not have special land and do not have enough food to eat. Remind us all to share generously so everyone can have enough. Amen.

This resource available in Sunday school format at <http://foodgrainsbank.ca/product/the-world-as-an-apple-2/>

## Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God above us,  
Creator of all things,  
Sustainer of all life.

We believe in Christ beside us,  
Companion and friend,  
Redeemer of all the broken pieces  
of our universe.

We believe in Spirit deep within us,  
Advocate and Guide,  
who lives with us eternally.

We believe in God's resurrection created world,  
where all things are fixed,  
and all creation fits together in vibrant harmonies.

We believe in God above, beside, within,  
God yesterday, today and forever,  
the Three-in-One, the One-in-Three.

We believe in God. <sup>4</sup>

## Prayer of Intercession

Holy Lord,  
make our eyes and our hearts more open to the needs of  
others,  
especially the hungry, the hurting, and the poor.

Help us to see that in caring for the Earth,  
we are also caring for one another.

And help us, O Lord, to live in ways that promote respect,

compassion, justice, and peace for all people,  
and for all of your broken and yet beautiful creation.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer. <sup>5</sup>

## Opportunity for Responses

Giving—see the Give section in this resource for ideas.

Advocating—see the “Advocate” section for information on the Harvest of Letters activity. Below is a sample announcement:

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is inviting people to contact their Member of Parliament. The message is to increase Canada's support for small-scale farmers around the world who struggle to feed their families. Many of these farming families and communities have experienced the challenges of increasing drought, erratic rainfall, or other environmental challenges. You can visit [www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca) for more information about how to get involved.

Following [the Sunday worship service, meeting, etc], all are invited to gather for [coffee, tea, goodies] to collect a Harvest of Letters, which can serve as our collective voice toward ending global hunger. What is our role in the challenge of hunger and the earth? What is Canada's role? We will hear about how [our church, Foodgrains Bank member agency, etc] is working to end hunger and support small-scale farmers around the world, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet. We will then take some time to write letters to our Members of Parliament on how Canada's aid budget could better meet its' intended goals of ending global hunger.

## Prayer at the Table

Great Big Creator God  
Baker of loaves of bread  
Maker of cups of wine  
Setter of tables for feasts  
Choose to come to our little table  
and set a meal here for us

Here with grain that comes from the ground  
and grape that is grown on the vine  
here among us of all ages who gather  
and in the middle of your vast and wild creation  
may you come to a meal with us  
And open our eyes  
to the great story  
of your love for creation

and your friendship through Jesus  
of the birds of the air  
and the feast for the world  
of the lily of the valley  
and the bread for all people  
of the rainbow of hope  
and the wine of new promise  
of the wilderness of wandering  
and the journey to the table  
of the water that cleanses  
and the community of faith  
of the trees that hide sinners  
and the banquet in their honour  
of the stones that cry out  
and the voices that proclaim grace  
of the grain that is buried  
and the bread that is broken  
of the seed that is sown  
and the wine that is shared  
of the cedars that sing  
and the faith that is lived  
of the rock that is rolled  
and the truth that is set free

Here with grain that comes from the ground  
and grape that is grown on the vine  
here among us of all ages who gather  
and in the middle of your vast and wild creation  
may you choose to come to a meal with us

So be it  
Amen <sup>6</sup>

## Closing Prayer

Gracious God,  
your amazing love extends through all time and space,  
to all parts of your creation,  
which you created and called good.

You made a covenant with Noah and his family,  
putting a rainbow in the sky  
to symbolize your promise of love and blessing  
to every living creature,  
and to all successive generations.

You made a covenant with Abraham and Sarah,  
blessing them and their descendants  
throughout the generations.

You made a covenant with Moses and the Israelite people  
to all generations,  
giving them the ten commandments

and challenging them to choose life.

In Jesus,  
you invite us to enter into a new covenant,  
in communion with all who seek to be faithful to you.

As people of faith,  
we are called into covenant.  
Your covenant of faithfulness and love  
extends to the whole creation.

We pray for the healing of the earth,  
that present and future generations  
may enjoy the fruits of creation,  
and continue to glorify and praise you. Amen. <sup>7</sup>

## Closing Litany: Jeremiah 31:31-34

*“The day is coming,” says the LORD,  
“when I will make a new covenant  
with the people of Israel and Judah.  
It will not be like the covenant I made  
with their ancestors  
when I took them by the hand  
and brought them out of the land of Egypt—  
the covenant which they broke,  
even though I loved them....” (Jer. 31:31-32)*

Come, Holy Spirit.  
Do a new work among us!

“But this is the new covenant  
that I will make with my people on that day,”  
says the LORD.  
“I will put my instructions deep within them—  
I will write them on their hearts.  
And I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.” (Jer. 31:33)

Come, Holy Spirit.  
Write your truth within us.  
Claim us as your own.  
Show us what it means to follow you—  
to be your people in the world.

“No longer will they need to teach their neighbors,  
or their relatives, saying,  
‘You should know the LORD.’  
For everyone,  
from the least to the greatest,  
will know me already....” (Jer. 31:34)

Come, Holy Spirit.

Renew our hearts and minds.  
Fill us with your love and compassion,  
so that our lives may make you known  
throughout our hurting, hungry world. Amen.

## Benediction

As we prepare to leave  
and embrace the challenges  
of our lives and our world,  
let us ask for God's blessing.

May God bless us with wisdom to care for our earth.  
Amen!

May God bless us with love to bring forth new life.  
Amen!

In the name of God,  
the Maker of the whole world,  
of Jesus,  
our new covenant,  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
who opens eyes and hearts.  
Amen!

Go in peace and be witnesses to hope.  
Amen! <sup>8</sup>

# SONG SUGGESTIONS:

## The God Who Set the Stars in Space

(Tune: [KINGSFOLD](#) or any other 8.6.8.6.D. meter)

The God who set the stars in space  
and gave the planets birth  
created for our dwelling place  
a green and fruitful earth;  
a world with wealth and beauty crowned  
of sky and sea and land,  
where life should flourish and abound  
beneath its Maker's hand.

A world of order and delight  
God gave for us to tend,  
to hold as precious in his sight,  
to nurture and defend;  
but yet on ocean, earth and air  
the marks of sin are seen,

with all that God created fair  
polluted and unclean.

O God, by whose redeeming grace  
the lost may be restored,  
who stooped to save our fallen race  
in Christ, creation's Lord,  
through him whose cross is life and peace  
to cleanse a heart defiled  
may human greed and conflict cease  
and all be reconciled.

Renew the wastes of earth again,  
redeem, restore, repair;  
with us, your children, still maintain  
your covenant of care.  
May we, who move from dust to dust  
and on your grace depend,  
no longer, Lord, betray our trust  
but prove creation's friend.

Our God, who set the stars in space  
and gave the planets birth,  
look down from heaven, your dwelling place,  
and heal the wounds of earth;  
till pain, decay and bondage done,  
when death itself has died,  
creation's songs shall rise as one  
and God be glorified!

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be sure to report it on your CCLI license.

## What the Lord Creates

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Praise him, praise him, praise the Lord  
For the wonders of the world.  
For the people big and small  
For the animals short and tall  
We will care for all these things  
That our Lord Creator brings.

Praise him, praise him, praise the Lord  
For the wonders of the world.  
For the sea and for the sky  
For the animals and birds that fly  
We will care for all these things  
That our Lord Creator brings.

Praise him, praise him, praise the Lord  
For the wonders of the world.  
For the seasons of the year

For the plants that re-appear  
We will care for all these things  
That our Lord Creator brings.

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## Other Contemporary Song Suggestions

All Creatures of Our God and King, Brent Milligan, David Crowder  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=564108>

At Your Name, Tim Hughes  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=564404>

Glory, Pete Kipley, Phil Wickham

<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=2001668>

God of Wonders, Marc Byrd, Steve Hindalong  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=574211>

Indescribable, Jesse Reeves, Laura Story  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=563304>

Majesty of Heaven, Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1824691>

The Earth is Yours, Michael Gungor  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1790711>

How Majestic, Jadon Lavik  
<http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=563543>

(Consider this in place of Psalm 8 reading, or use the chorus sung in place of the responsorial)

# SOURCES

**Signs of the Covenant was written and compiled by Christine Longhurst for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Our thanks to the following individuals or organizations who contributed prayers or readings:**

(1) Call to Worship from the Lent 2006 liturgy, posted on the Seekers Church website. <http://www.seekerschurch.org/>

(2) Opening Prayer excerpted from a longer prayer written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on Liturgies Online. <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>

(3) Prayer of Confession comes from the launch of Operation Noah, Coventry Cathedral, 2004. Posted on Operation Noah: A Christian Response to Climate Change. <http://operationnoah.org/>

(4) Affirmation of Faith from the Lenten series Journey into Wholeness written by Christine Sine. Posted on the Godspace website. <http://godspace-msa.com/>

(5) Prayer of Intercession written by Kim Winchell, in A 'Tenebrae' for Earth. Posted on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America website. <http://www.elca.org/>

(6) Prayer at the Table copyright © Roddy Hamilton 2007. Posted on "Additional Resources for Creation Time 2010" by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/295>

(7) Closing Prayer posted on the Web of Creation website. <http://www.webofcreation.org/>

(8) Benediction written for the 2nd European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz, 1997. Posted on the European Christian Environmental Network. <http://www.ecen.org/lithurgy/blessing-and-sending>



# GIVE

God's covenant with creation is "never again will I destroy the earth." The new covenant we read about is "written on our hearts" and frees us to live in the knowledge that we belong to God. The idea of covenant informs our relationships—including relationships with our environment—in a time when we face challenges related to the land, sky, sea, with all its creatures.

At Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we are faced primarily with the challenge of global hunger. The state of the earth, however—land, sea, and sky and its creatures—has a direct impact on people who experience hunger.

That's why the Climate Fund was established. The Fund invites Canadians to consider their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions in their everyday life, including air travel, driving, and heating their home, and then to make a contribution to help smallholder farmers in the developing world adapt to the changes they are already experiencing.

Each year, a new agriculture and livelihoods project is selected which meets the criteria of the Fund, including promotion of practices which help slow climate change while increasing food production for small-scale farmers. For more information on this year's project visit the Climate Fund website link below.

Here are two ways you or your church could contribute:

## Carbon Tithe

Encourage members of your congregation to give 1 to 10 cents for each kilometre driven to support efforts to end climate disruption and build a sustainable future. All of those participating will mark their start and end mileage in their vehicles for a period of time around Earth Day. Then they will meet to calculate their personal carbon tithe, make their contribution, and decide where the funds raised will be donated. We suggest 50% be donated to the Climate Fund and 50% to community and congregational initiatives addressing climate change.

## Footprint Contribution

During the week of Earth Day, have members of your congregation or faith community track their ecological footprint and make a contribution to the Climate Fund or community-based environmental initiative (\$5 or \$10 per global hectare) on Earth Day or the designated worship service. Dedicate the contribution with a prayer suggested in this resource.

Learn about calculating your footprint at <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>

Please visit [www.foodgrainsbank.ca/climatefund](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/climatefund) for a sample carbon calculator, and for more ideas and information.



# ADVOCATE

## Strengthening Support For Small-Scale Farmers

In Isaiah God says “I made the earth and everything that grows on it; I am the source of life”, while in the Psalm we reflect on how God “let us rule everything your hands have made”. Our attention on Earth Day naturally turns to agriculture as we consider how we tend the earth.

Agriculture is vital for our lives, our communities, and the world.

However, over 70 percent of the people in the world who regularly experience hunger are food producers.

In developing countries, most farmers work with two hectares of land or less, and many are women. Although they produce food, many experience hunger due to issues such as degraded soils, climate change, and inaccessible markets.

With support from aid donors and their own governments, small-scale farmers can improve their own food security, and livelihoods. The right kind of investments can empower small-scale farmers—especially women, and enable them to improve nutrition and adapt to a changing climate.

## Canada’s Support

Canada has a good track record for supporting agriculture in its aid programs and has been a leader in global food security. Since 2009, Canada has prioritized agriculture,

nutrition and food assistance.

However, despite Canada’s commitment to nutrition and food assistance, support for agriculture has fallen.

## What Can You Do?

Through the Good Soil campaign, Canadian Foodgrains Bank is reminding politicians and government officials of the importance of agricultural development, and urging the Canadian government to strengthen support to small-scale farmers.

But we cannot do it alone. You and your congregation can show your support for this campaign and for small-scale farmers by adding your voice.

Here are ways you can do this:

- Write a letter to your MP—resources such as a [sample letter](#) and other supporting information are available on our website;
- Organize a Harvest of Letters with your small group or congregation;
- Send an email, call your MP, or schedule a visit. Get your family, church, or community involved;
- Invite a speaker from Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help you with any of these activities—contact us at [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca) or call 1-800-665-0367

Please visit [www.foodgrainsbank.ca/letters](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/letters) for more information and resources on any of these activities.