

# World Environment Day 2007

"You give new life to the earth"

*(Psalm 104,30)*



Melting ice  
– a hot topic

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## Message from church leaders

The UN Panel on Climate Change gives us a new, telling report about the state of our earth.

We now know more about the seriousness of the situation of which we have long been aware.

We know that the creation, the beautiful earth to which we all belong, is wounded and out of balance.

We know that the responsibility rests on us.

We know that all will be worse for us and for our descendants

if we do nothing about our present levels of gas emissions and other pollution.

We know that those who are already at risk will be the first to be affected.

We know that action taken now can be effective, both at the individual and at the public level.

Norwegian and international political leaders must dare to take right and perhaps unpopular steps on behalf of us all.

The time has now come to work and to pray.

We challenge all people of faith to pray for our wounded earth.

- Let us thank God for his great gift of the creation, the foundation of our life and existence.
- Let us pray that the earth can continue to sustain us and our descendants.
- Let us pray that we, each and every one, may have the will and ability to do what is possible to reverse the negative development.
- Let us pray for our politicians and our industry, that they may have clarity and courage to do that which must be done.

*Bishop Olav Skjevesland  
Presiding Bishop, Church of Norway Bishops' Conference  
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*February 2007*

## Introduction

There has lately been a great increase in the attention that is paid to climate change and matters of environment. Reports from UN Panel on Climate Change endorse the fact that many people are experiencing climate change locally. We are experiencing drought, floods, extreme weather conditions, warmer seasons, melting ice, the rise of sea levels. The climate is changing. Temperatures in the Arctic region are rising twice as fast as in other places on earth. The poor are those who are hit first and who are hit hardest. Climate changes are already taking the lives of people. Moreover, many animal and plant species are in danger of being wiped out. UN's researchers claim that today's climatic changes are caused by us who inhabit the earth, and that we in the rich parts of the world bear the greatest responsibility for these changes.

**World Environment Day**, commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The World Environment Day slogan selected for 2007 is **Melting Ice – a Hot Topic?** Norway and the city of Tromsø is honoured to host the international World Environment Day 2007 celebrations in recognition of the hot topic of melting ice. More than a hundred nations are celebrating this day, and the theme is highly relevant.

Church of Norway and Christian Council of Norway are together with World Council of Churches encouraging churches to celebrate World Environment Day 2007. This can take place either the Sunday before or after 5 June, i.e. on 3 June or 10 June. It can also take place at some other time. A service on World Environment Day should take into account:

- **wonder and thankfulness** when standing face to face with the infinite variety of creation.
- **sorrow and recognition** of responsibility in the face of environmental challenges
- **solidarity and love** when face to face with the world that God loves.
- **hope and action** when faced with the responsibility God has given us towards the creation and towards one another.

This publication gives ideas and materials that can be used in preparing local celebrations of World Environment Day. The following is an outline for a worship service. It includes prayers, confessions, blessings, stories and suggestions for Bible texts. This is just a selection of the material available. More resource material is available in Norwegian, several hymns, guidance for including worship workshop etc – at [www.kirken.no/miljo](http://www.kirken.no/miljo)

Below are links to a few websites that give more information about World Environment Day 2007 and how churches are addressing climate change.

WED 2007 celebrations in Tromsø, Norway: [www.wed.npolar.no](http://www.wed.npolar.no)

World Environment Day 2007 international website: [www.unep.org/wed/2007/English](http://www.unep.org/wed/2007/English)

World Environment Day 2007 booklet: [www.unep.org/wed/2007/downloads/documents/WED\\_Booklet\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.unep.org/wed/2007/downloads/documents/WED_Booklet_Eng.pdf)

"Tore and the Town on Thin Ice", A children's environmental storybook: [www.unep.org/PDF/TORE.pdf](http://www.unep.org/PDF/TORE.pdf)

World Council of Churches programme on climate change: [www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/justice-and-diakonia/climate-change-and-water.html](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/justice-and-diakonia/climate-change-and-water.html)

European Christian Environmental Network: [www.ecen.org](http://www.ecen.org)

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# A World Environment Day Worship Service

## INTRODUCTION/PROCEDURE

### Together on World Environment Day

The issue of climate change is of direct concern to all of us. It is a question of the future of the whole of creation. So it is important that we celebrate World Environment Day together. Let us consider some options:

- Is an ecumenical worship celebration a possibility?
- Can other local partners be invited than "the usual"?  
What about involving local places of work and business, industry, tourism, research, and education?
- Which local organisations would it be natural to work together with on this project?

### Choice of Biblical passages

In the order of service below, suitable passages are proposed, from the Old Testament, and from the gospels and the letters of the New Testament.

### The worship space

How do we prepare the place for a World Environment Day worship service?

How can the Creation communicate through the senses in the worship service? The communion elements can be placed on a table at the entrance and then be carried forward with the offering, together with other things that help to visualise the theme of the worship service. Can this be a day when one uses an alternative communion bread instead of the wafer?

### Indoors or outdoors?

There are many places where the great outdoors would be the best place to celebrate this Sunday's worship service. Places can be chosen that would connect well to the theme. i.e. in the woods, down by the water, in an industrial area. Think creatively about local possibilities, and how the outer framework can emphasise the content of the worship service.

### Use of symbols

The melting of ice – how can we visualise this theme for World Environment Day. A decorative illustration could be to freeze water in milk/juice cartons and build "beacons of ice" – two by two in layers, crossing each other. These ice blocks could also function as ice lanterns which melt during the service.

If *indoors*, lighting candles can be a good way of involving people, such as:

- A strong symbolic act that can involve many
- An opportunity for different groups to take part and visualise the message
- Other means of participation without words

If *outdoors*, one can use other symbols than the lighting of candles, such as:

- Carry forward plants and flowers accompanied by suitable words
- Make use of stones or other items available along the water's edge
- Establish prayer stations using ice, water, or items of a polluting nature
- Select symbols related to the location where the worship service is to take place

### Intercessory procession

An intercessory procession can provide a positive challenge at different levels to those taking part in the worship service. Such a procession allows for more involvement and identification with the theme by those taking part. The participants can be invited to move between the different stations, where they will find tasks, biblical passages or things to experience. It is important to include both information and action, for the sake of deepened understanding, faith and feelings. Here are some suggestions:

- Information about the variety of species in the oceans, on land and in the air.
- A place where prayers can be written which will be used later – either at the conclusion of the intercessory prayers, or in different ways in the course of the week that follows.
- Have coloured paper available so that those who wish for their prayers to be read aloud can use a colour that will indicate this.
- A place for silence, perhaps with an icon to help towards meditation
- A home list of ecological do's and don'ts
- Can something be built? Can ice be used? How long does a certain volume of ice take to melt?
- Make a project that shows what will disappear when the sea level rises by say 6 metres
- The lighting of candles where and if suitable.

# Outline of a Worship Service

The service shall be adapted to the worship traditions and liturgies of the churches celebrating. We recommend that a special team be requested to prepare the service related to the World Environment Day.

## I. THE GATHERING

### PREPARATION

*Opportunities for individual preparation in silence, by lighting candles etc.*

*Words of welcome, followed by silence. A church bell may strike three times.*

### HYMN

### INTROIT

**L:** In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;  
for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.

(Psalm 24,1-2)

### LET US PRAY:

Almighty God, your wisdom is beyond our understanding.

We praise you for your greatness, imprinted in the earth and the sea and the sky.

Through the web of creation you have given us a share in the gift of life.

You have breathed the breath of life into us earthly beings,

Show us how to carry your image while in this threatened creation.

May your love and care for the creation be ours.

Give us the will and the strength to turn and to fight on the side of life.

With faith in you, and together with the whole creation, we gather together before you – in thankfulness for the gift of life,

and in prayer for the wounded earth.

**All:** We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen

### KYRIE

*Senzenina* (South-Africa) or another kyrie litany, e.g. prepared locally.

### GLORIA

### HYMN



## II. THE WORD

### 1. READING:

Job 38,1; 4-11;22 ;24-30 or Gen 9;8-17

### HYMN

### 2. READING:

Rom 8,18-26 or Rom 11,33-36 or Col 1,15-20

### HYMN

*The Gospel reading Matt 22,34-40 or Matt 6,25-33*

### SERMON

*based on one or more of the readings.*

### THE CREED

*The Nicene Creed or another creed.*

### HYMN

*Prayers of intercession/lighting the candles*

### Leader;

We light a candle  
in the name of God, who created life,  
in the name of our Saviour, who embraces life by love,  
in the name of the Holy Spirit, who is the flame of life.

**All sing:** Lord, in your mercy, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

### PRAYER LEADER:

1. God of Creation, we light a candle,
  - rejoicing in the life you have created, so precious and so sacred
  - in thanks for our beautiful earth and its place in the universe
  - in awe of your wisdom, which fills the earth, the sea and the sky.

2. We light a candle for the gift of life:

- for the diversity of life and the interdependence in the web of Creation
- for the richness and the abundance of the Creation
- for the sanctity of the Creation.

3. We light a candle for the suffering Creation

- praying for all fellow creatures threatened with extinction
- praying for land and sea that is impoverished by our greed
- praying for the web of life as it is threatened by global warming.

**All sing:** Lord, in your mercy, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

4. We light a candle for humanity,

- in thanks for the beauty of the earth that we carry within us
- in sorrow over our violation of your great dreams for your creation
- in prayer that our hearts again may be turned towards the earth from which we have come.

5. We light a candle for all who are now affected by climate change,

- for the Inuits in the Arctic, whose traditional way of life is threatened
- for communities in the Pacific Islands whose land is being taken by the sea
- for peoples in Africa who are driven from their homes because of drought.

6. We light a candle for the insight that can make changes possible,

- knowing that a serious crisis will soon be upon us
- knowing that the life of coming generations and the entire future of the earth lies in our hands
- knowing that the time for action has come.

**All sing:** Lord, in your mercy, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

7. We light a candle as we pray for willingness to act,
- give to each of us the will to do that which we know we must do
  - give our political leaders the will and the courage to make the decisions that are needed today
  - give us the will to establish a new and sustainable order.
8. We light a candle for the vision of a common future,
- for common efforts towards a world which is better and just
  - for a dream of a unified humanity, in solidarity with future generations
  - for solidarity and concord with the rest of the creation.
9. We light a candle for cheerfulness, joy and hope for the future.
- Let us not be hindered by worries.
  - Let your creative power and grace change our hearts and minds.
  - Let your light shine upon us so that we can sing songs of joy and hope together with all the creation.

**All sing:** Lord, in your mercy, Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

### III. THE MEAL

Liturgy of Holy Communion

### IV. CLOSING

#### CLOSING HYMN

#### THE BENEDICTION

**L:** Let us praise the Lord

**All:** The Lord God be praised

**L:** The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you, the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

#### STROKES OF THE BELL

*The bell is struck once after each reading of the following 9 sentences*

We go in the name of God – we go forward on our way with joy in our hearts

We go in the name of God – rejoicing in wonder over the richness of the creation.

We go in the name of God – in sorrow over the pain we inflict upon the earth

We go in the name of God – believing in the covenant of the rainbow as our foundation.

We go in the name of God – with our hearts full of prayer for all that is threatened

We go in the name of God – full of longing: that our prayers will be turned into action

We go in the name of God – with light that shall lighten the depths of darkness

We go in the name of God – singing a song that is a hymn of creation

We go in the name of God – with hope for deliverance and the future of the earth.

#### RECESSIONAL HYMN

#### CONTINUATION

*The worship service may continue while all the participants in the service process together outside the locality.*

*A procession, preferably while singing, goes out into the open, where one can have a simple gathering.*

*A prayer of thanks or of praise can be offered, followed by a symbolic act, a blessing – and a challenge to action.*

The gathering prayer: Tore Johnsen, 2007

Intercessions by Tore Johnsen and Herborg Finnset Heiene, 2007

"Break up, action and hope" by Svein Ellingsen, 2007

## Liturgical building blocks

### We did not weave the web of life

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;  
for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.  
(Psalm 24,1-2)

**L:** Every part of this earth is sacred.  
Whatever befalls the earth  
befalls the children of the earth.

**All:** This we know, the earth does not belong to us:  
we belong to the earth.

**L:** This we know, all things are connected:  
**All:** like the blood which unites one family.

**L:** This we know, whatever we do to the web:  
**All:** we do to ourselves.

Adapted from Chief Seattle, 19th Century

### We belong to the Creator

**L:** We belong to the Creator  
in whose image we are all made.  
**All:** In God we are breathing,  
in God we are living,  
in God we share the life of all creation

**L:** We belong to Jesus Christ,  
the true icon of God and of humanity.  
**All:** In him God is breathing,  
in him God is living,  
through him we are reconciled.

**L:** We belong to the Holy Spirit,  
who gives us new life  
and strengthens our faith.  
**All:** In the Spirit love is breathing,  
in the Spirit truth is living,  
the breath of God always moves us.

**L:** We belong to the Holy Trinity,  
who is one in all and Three-in-One.  
**All:** In God we are all made,  
in Christ we are all saved,  
in the Spirit we are all united.

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## Lord of the ocean

Lord of the Ocean,  
Grant us the courage and faith  
To face the tidal waves of our time.

Lord of the Reefs,  
Grant us the courage and faith  
To face the erosions of our time.

Lord of the Islands  
Grant us the courage and faith  
To face the cyclones of our time.

© World Council of Churches, 2005

## Kyrie – litany

Almighty God, Creator and Lifegiver,  
we are part of your beautiful  
but fragile creation.  
We have the responsibility to protect,  
to nurture and to respect it.  
We have failed in our responsibility.  
Therefore we cry:  
Kyrie eleison...

The earth is our mother,  
our origin, our nourishment.  
Every seed in the depth of the earth  
vibrates with your creating will.  
When the earth is spoiled and poisoned  
by greed and short-range interests,  
we deny our origin,  
we suppress your will.  
Therefore we cry:  
Kyrie eleison...

The earth is a water planet.  
The seas are our amniotic fluid.  
All life carries your creative water;  
people, vegetation and animals.  
When the water is polluted  
it reacts against us and our future.  
Therefore we cry:  
Kyrie eleison...

The air is the breath of life,  
the breathing-space of the earth.  
Every breath is a reminder  
of your creative power.  
When the air is polluted  
the lungs of the earth are damaged  
and your strength is suppressed.  
Therefore we cry:  
Kyrie eleison...

Jesus Christ, who joins the Creator with creation,  
has heard you groaning  
and cleanses you from all guilt.  
Arise and walk in faith and struggle  
For the integrity of creation!  
In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy  
Spirit. Amen.

© Per Harling



## Our God, source of all life

- L:** We have faith  
**All:** in one God, one Source of all life,  
one Ground of the whole earth, with all her  
creatures.
- L:** And thus we have faith  
**All:** in the goodness of earth's life,  
in the innate worth of all her dependents,  
in human partnership in the life of nature.
- L:** And we have faith  
**All:** that in Christ we have been shown the special  
role of the human race to bear God's likeness in  
working and caring for the earth,  
in seeking to understand her mysteries and  
powers,  
in working with these powers  
for the wellbeing of all children of the earth.
- L:** And we have faith  
**All:** that God's Spirit will lead us  
to sensitive closeness with earth's life,  
to that meek, unselfish and compassionate life-style  
by which the earth is inherited in peace,  
by which her life is transformed for all creatures  
to share justly in her bounty. So be it.  
Amen.

From India. Source: Sinfonia Oecumenica  
©Gütersloher Verlagshaus, GmbH, Gütersloh 1998

## Forgive us, Lord

- Forgive us, Lord,  
for our indifference in face of the destruction of nature,  
for our desire for excessive profits, with no respect for life.  
Forgive us, Lord,  
for our violence against the earth,  
for our silence in face of the devastation of forests and  
the pollution of rivers.
- Forgive us, Lord,  
for our complicity in making species extinct,  
for our readiness to destroy what is different from  
ourselves.
- Forgive us, Lord,  
for our burning desire to consume, inconsiderate of  
future generations,  
for our concentration on the present without taking  
account of tomorrow.
- Forgive us, Lord,  
for our arrogance in thinking that we are the centre of  
the universe,  
for our lack of zeal to preserve your creation.
- Teach us, by your grace,  
to love all your creatures, our sisters,  
and to care for life in all its forms.

© Jose Carlos de Souza, Brazil



## Blessing from Africa

God bless you  
and bestow on you ever anew  
the blessings of the wilderness:  
stillness,  
fresh water,  
wide horizons,  
an open sky,  
and stars,  
to lighten your way  
when it is dark.

May the earth beneath  
make your feet dance,  
and your arms strong;  
and fill your ears with music,  
and your nose with sweet smells.

May the heavens above  
fill your world with tenderness,  
and your eyes with light;  
put joy in your heart  
and a song in your mouth.

Let us pray:  
Holy Spirit of God's creation,  
Spilling into rivers and oceans,  
Cleanse the life giving waters.  
Holy Spirit of God's creation,  
rushing through mighty forests,  
spread the seeds of new life.  
Holy Spirit of God's creation,  
burning in the hearts of your people,  
give life, reborn and renewed.  
Holy Spirit of God, who came to the first disciples  
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,  
come to us today and fill us  
with your love and power. Amen

Go in faith to witness  
to the truth of God in our Continent.  
And may the goodness of God's creation  
Be found in the little and the least,  
Christ be present in the longings in  
the face of our neighbour,  
And the Holy Spirit show us the way  
towards true peace. Amen.

From "Em tua graça", World Council of Churches 2005



## Prayer

**L:** Almighty and merciful God,  
not bound or limited by human understanding,  
you have revealed your wisdom and creative power  
through the unfading daylight of summer, when  
the sun does not set,  
and through the northern lights of winter, dancing  
in the dark,  
through the thundering of the sea and the silence  
of the wilderness,  
through the tender beauty of the cloudberry  
and the towering strength of the polar bear,  
through the migration of the fish and the flight of  
the eagles,  
through the laughter of children and the song of  
the nightingale,  
we bow in wonder and in thankfulness.  
Everlasting God, in your great mercy, create in us a  
new heart.

**All:** (Sing) God in your mercy, God in your mercy, hear  
out prayer.

**L:** You have created the mighty universe, and set the  
sun and the moon on their paths,  
You keep our earth suspended in the mighty  
universe, to follow the orbits of the solar system.  
Our past lies in the shadows of the ancients,  
but we know that you are the One who created life  
in the waters,  
that you lit the lights in the heavens.  
It is you who gave the ocean currents their paths,  
and gave endless diversity to the creatures of the sea.  
The seas have been the waters of the womb, where  
we have been fostered.  
Everlasting God, giver of all life, we come unto you.  
Everlasting God, in your great mercy, create in us a  
new heart.

**All:** God in your mercy, God in your mercy, hear our  
prayer.

**L:** We acknowledge that we, who are created in your  
image,  
have been blinded by greed, and have disturbed  
the fine threads of interdependence,  
which keep in balance the currents of the oceans,  
the systems of the weather, the sunshine and the  
rain.  
We acknowledge and confess that we have abused  
the bounty of nature,  
and have lost our way on paths of sinfulness  
in the dark forests of our own egoism.  
In closing our ears we have been unable to hear  
the sighs and groans of the creation.  
We have not done that which is right,  
and we have lacked the will to do that which we  
know to be right.  
Forgive us these sins, which we must share with  
many,  
Everlasting God, in your great mercy, create in us a  
new heart.

**All:** God in your mercy, God in your mercy, hear our  
prayer.

**L:** Give us love, courage and strength, to stand firm in  
what we have acknowledged,  
and to carry out these changes which we know will  
save, not only the climate,  
but all that is contained in this precious work of  
creation.  
Help us to act so that we can care for our common  
future here on this earth,  
this pearl in the universe that is everlasting,  
for the sake of life itself.  
Everlasting God, in your great mercy, create in us a  
new heart

**All:** God in your mercy, God in your mercy, hear our  
prayer.

Herborg Finnset Heiene, 2007

## Voices tell us about climate change

"My name is Juaanna Platou and I am a pastor and the wife of a hunter in Qaanaaq Thule in Greenland. We have been aware of climate change here in the far north. In recent years climate change has forced us who live in hunter communities in Northern Greenland to change our way of life. Hunters have had to change to fishing as a means of livelihood. Earlier one could travel far on the thick sea ice while pursuing the big animals, but that is no longer possible because of the poor ice conditions. The old way of life – hunting on dogsleds – is in danger. This has consequences for both our food and our clothing, yes, for our way of life, and so our means of living is in danger."



Photo: Tasilaq, Grønland. Christian Lien Jensen and Tor Wigum

"My name is Teraungo Beneteri and I belong to the protestant church on the island Tarawa in Kiribati. Kiribati is a country that covers several islands in the Pacific. My island is a lowlying island - where the highest point is only three meters above sea level. The elders say that some of the land that earlier was cultivated land now is covered by water. We do not know about climate change, but we experience how the water is eroding away the soil under the roots of the trees until they in the end fall into the water. We have tried to build walls in some places to protect against the water. Should the sea level increase a lot we will not have much land left. We already notice seawater intruding into our freshwater reserves. Some say we have to be prepared to evacuate our island."



Photo: Tarawa, Kiribati. David Hallman, Kirkens Verdensråd

"Hi, my name is Maryan Hussein Salat. I am 15 years old and I live in Ashabito in Kenya together with my grandmother. I used to go to school, and that was fun. It took three hours to do my homework, and I learnt a lot. I can speak five languages. Now there is no longer anything to do here. Everything changed when the drought came. Our goats died because of the lack of water, and we no longer have anything. So I can no longer go to school. To go to school costs some goats, and they are now dead. We used to follow the animals, but now we live here. Now there is nothing to do. It has just rained a little, but too little to be of any use."



Photo: Ken Oprann, Kirkens Nødhjelp

## Scripture meditations

### Job 38,1; 4-11;22; 24-30

Have you stood by the edge of the sea when the storm is raging, have you walked along a beach and seen how hard the waves pound into foam?

Or have you stood under the night sky and seen the stars and the northern lights and thought about the distances out to the dancing veils in outer space? Then you know something about the universe and the creator. And you know something about yourself. These great dimensions inspire respect and awesome wonder. In God's reply to Job we see how people surrounded by sea, snow and ice, are a part of God's creation. God answers through the storm.

God answers Job and his friends in the violence of the storm, and he asks questions and riddles that make each and every self-righteous, self-satisfied human mouth be closed and keep silent.

God has created mankind in his image, and he has placed us in the creation. We are placed here to care for and to manage the earth, placed here to find the balance between that which we have borrowed from nature and our ongoing relationship with nature. We know that we have disturbed this finely poised balance. In the ecological storm that has begun to blow around us, God has not forsaken humankind although we have acted against God's will and intention, and in so doing have caused the storm. God has given us the knowledge that can lead to change. God can still recreate our hearts, if we allow God to do so. That is why we have hope.

*Herborg Finnset Heiene*

### Matt 22, 34-40

#### THE TWO GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

When Jesus is confronted with the question about which is the greatest of the commandments, he answers by emphasising love. But love has two directions, says Jesus. One of the directions of love is towards God - the other is towards my neighbour.

An old Sami tradition tells that long ago, all animals and trees, and all that is to be found upon the earth, could speak. Tradition tells that on the day of judgement this gift of speech will return. Then all the creatures of nature that have been under human dominance, will come forward and accuse those who have driven them hard, laid heavy burdens upon them, and who have treated them harshly. Therefore we should all remember not to be hard towards those who are under us, whether they be people or other creatures of nature. (Johan Turi, 1910) Western tradition has limited the words of Jesus about loving our neighbours to include only mankind. The rest of creation has often been defined according to its value to human beings. Indigenous peoples, represented here by the Sami tradition, show us, however, another way of thinking. The creatures of nature do not only have their own intrinsic value. They are living subjects with a voice in both their encounter with God and with mankind.

When placed before the present ecological crisis, the church is challenged to put forward an ecological faith which considers the whole of the creation in love. Christ is present in this threatened creation, and shows solidarity as the creation moans its need. (Rom 8,19-22) He will allow the voice of creation to be heard by all on the day of judgement.

*Sven Aasmundtveit – Tore Johnsen*



**Rom 11,33-36**  
**ALL THINGS**

In the opening words of this hymn of praise, it is as though Paul lets us stand on the edge of a cliff surveying the endless expanse of God's greatness. Look upon the greatness of God, his wisdom, his knowledge! It is grace, and grace alone.

Praise points us to the greatness of God, showing us the God who is the creator of all. Not just of humankind, or parts of the creation, but as the creator of all.

Great and small things join together in praising God.

This is our starting point when we speak about the worth and the greatness of creation. The worth of creation is given prior to the thoughts and actions of humankind. The inherent value of creation is given by Him who creates and breathes in the breath of life. God is present in the beauty of creation. But God is also present in the wounded, in the pain and the distorted, where the creation has been exposed to human tyranny of different kinds.

'For from him and by him and to him are all things.  
To him be the glory for everlasting! Amen.'

*Freddy Knutsen*

**OTHER PASSAGES:**

1. Mos. 9, 8-17 The covenant of the rainbow.

Matt 6, 25-33 Fear not!

Rom 8, 18-26 The cry of the creation

Kol 1, 15-20 Creation and reconciliation



## World Environment Day 2007

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