

# CLIMATE VIGIL SONGS

## WORSHIP GUIDE



Climate Vigil Songs is a major new album from The Porter's Gate Worship Project, challenging us to respond to climate change as an act of worship.

Created in partnership with

**Climate Vigil**

## Grace and peace to you!

We are very excited to share this Worship Guide as a companion to the new [Climate Vigil Songs](#) album by The Porter's Gate Worship Project.

These resources are designed to help churches, groups, and individuals reflect on the music, and explore how Jesus' greatest commandment, to love God and neighbor, also calls us to respond to climate change. The Worship Guide includes the following:

- Album Overview - Get a bird's eye view of the album and the meaning behind the music.
- Song Profiles - Dive into each song with a short introduction from The Porter's Gate, lyrics, and sheet music (see page 41).
- Song Reflections/Devotionals - Discover in-depth song reflections from Christian writers, including Scripture references, prayer prompts, and questions for further discussion.
- Climate Change and Christianity - Learn critical information about climate change and why it matters to Christ followers.
- What You Can Do - "Be the light" by hosting a Climate Vigil event in your local community. Sign up at [climatevigil.org](https://climatevigil.org), and we'll help you do it!

You can access more free resources, including Bible studies, sermon starters, and more from our partners at [climatevigil.org/album](https://climatevigil.org/album).

Thank you for *listening* to Climate Vigil Songs. We hope you are inspired by this music as much as we are — and may each of us continue to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Faithfully,  
Your friends at Climate Vigil





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Find more free resources at  
[climatevigil.org/album](https://climatevigil.org/album)

# Introduction to Climate Vigil Songs

**Our climate crisis is the backdrop for a crisis of faith. Despite the overwhelming evidence and life-or-death consequences of climate change, many of us who follow Christ remain confused about how our beliefs relate to one of the greatest moral challenges of our time. Could worship music be part of the solution?**

Climate Vigil Songs offers an enthusiastic “Yes.” Renowned sacred music collective, The Porter’s Gate Worship Project, created this major worship album in partnership with several Christian nonprofits involved in the Climate Vigil movement. Together, we are calling on Christians, and all people of goodwill, to gather in local communities to bear witness to our climate crisis – and take action to end it.

Climate Vigil Songs is available at [climatevigil.org/album](https://climatevigil.org/album) and on streaming platforms. The music features top artists, including: Fernando Ortega, Molly Parden, Jonathan Ogden, Page CXVI, Terrian, Josh Garrels, Paul Zach, Audrey Assad, Jon Guerra, Taylor Leonhardt, Jessica Fox, Matt Maher, Jason Upton, Sara Groves, Liz Vice, and Nick Chambers. Songwriters include many of the artists above, plus Kate Bluett, Isaac Wardell, Latifah Alattas, Leslie Jordan, Wendell Kimbrough, Andy Squyres, Tenielle Neda, Lucas Morton, and Nan Macmillan.



These songs are meant to be sung during church worship services, and they can also be enjoyed by church groups or anyone who appreciates Christian music. Lyrics are derived from the Scriptures and a deep well of time-tested Christian teachings. Diverse artists and musical styles represented on the album span different traditions, so there is a song on the album for almost every church.

**Isaac Wardell, creative director of The Porter's Gate Worship Project, had this to say in response to the release of *Climate Vigil Songs***

“Theologically speaking, we wanted this album to do three different things. First, we wanted to sing songs that celebrate the beauty and wonder of God’s creation, with a particular emphasis on God as an actor in the world. But we couldn’t stop there. The second thing we had to do was pause and say, ‘Something bad has happened here, and we are all responsible.’ We need to feel sorrow for what has been lost, so we wrote songs that give the church words to lament the devastation of God’s good earth. These are deep spiritual and Biblical expressions, not just political positions. Thirdly, we wanted to help people do something with these convictions, so we wrote songs for action and mobilization – music for the movement – where we say ‘yes’ to the work we are called to do. God is restoring all things, and He gives us hands and feet to help build His kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven.”

# CLIMATE VIGIL SONGS

# LYRICS AND REFLECTIONS



# GOD OF GRACE AND MYSTERY

Featuring Audrey Assad

Written by Kate Bluett, Nick Chambers, Isaac Wardell, and Paul Zach

[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## ***Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project***

*This is a simple hymn well-suited to even a very traditional worship context. Like other traditional hymns, the lyrics theologically build on each other, beginning with God's creative work, moving to His invitation to us, and then concluding with our prayer to join in his work of creation renewal.*

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## ***Lyrics***

God of grace and mystery  
From your fullness overflows  
More than we can ever hold  
Fill us with a melody  
Rising up to greet the dawn  
Joining in creation's song:  
"Holy, Holy, Holy!"

God of hospitality  
Here within the world you make  
Every creature finds its place  
As we hear your symphony  
Call us now to join the dance  
Held and led within your hands:  
"Holy, Holy, Holy!"

God creating all we see  
All that lives beyond our gaze  
Fill the earth with breath and praise  
Call us into harmony  
Teach us how to join with you  
Ever making all things new:  
"Holy, Holy, Holy!"

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

# GOD OF GRACE AND MYSTERY

**“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him, all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16-17, NIV)**

Our powerful, loving God made everything that is on our earth, our solar system, and everywhere else we can fathom. He selected every detail and chose every color and texture. We are part of that creation, of course, and are still learning to understand many facets of how the whole of God’s creation works and works together. We are still discovering specifics about the deepest depths of the oceans and the other planets and celestial bodies in our solar system. Scientists are still figuring out all the details of how cells work as well as still discovering new plants and animals throughout the world. God’s creation is both vast and intricate. His goodness, generosity, and creativity are seen in the absolute abundance found on earth and all of existence.

God’s hospitality is demonstrated throughout creation, where in each ecosystem there is a perfect space for each organism. Every creature finds its place. This special home for each animal, plant, or human helps us see the balance that God created – and sometimes how we are disrupting that balance.

Join the rest of creation in singing praise to God for what we will learn in the future, for our unique place within his creation, and praise his craftsmanship. By considering yourself part of creation itself, wonder at the harmony he has made. Then ask God where you can help your community find a better balance between creation and humankind. He is ever making all things new, forgiving past transgressions, and allowing us to make corrections where they are needed. Thank him for his grace and his generosity while singing praises with the rest of creation.

**Dearest God of Mystery, Grace, and Hospitality, thank you for your wondrous creation and for sharing it with us. Teach us how to join with you in your plan for the earth and how to care for it. Help us join creation as it praises you.**

**Contributed by Maureen Wise**

*Reflection questions: Which detail of creation reflects God’s hospitality to you the most? What do you want to learn more that will also help you praise God’s craftsmanship and creativity?*

# WHERE WERE YOU?

Featuring Nick Chambers and Page CXVI  
Written by Nick Chambers and Jon Guerra  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*Job loses everything and cries out for answers. Yet God surprises him by putting the question back to him: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" These are hard words for us, but a Christian vision of justice also includes the recognition that God truly holds the world in His hands, and that we can cry out to him with our laments (like Job) knowing that the One who spins the earth on its axis can also sustain us in our work for justice. Thus, in the midst of our lament, there can still be rejoicing, and that is where the song concludes.*

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## **Lyrics**

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations  
the morning stars, they sang together,  
all the children of the heavens shouted for joy? Where were you?

Where were you when I gave the sea its limits  
when I made the clouds its garments  
when I wrapped it up in darkness, shut behind doors Where were you?

Tell me, where were you when the waters split in two  
when the world was new  
when I sent the morning dew, Show me, where were you?

Do you know the extent of all horizons  
the expanse of all the oceans  
have you walked these depths and edges, mountains and shores?

Do you know how I lead the constellations  
in the rhythm of the seasons  
and did you set free Orion to shine in the void? Do you know?

Tell me, do you know how the light knows where to go,  
where the winds will blow,  
where the darkness makes its home? Surely, you must know.

I don't know. But In the whirlwind of my weakness  
O my God I hear you speaking  
and when I think of all your secrets, I shake and rejoice.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## WHERE WERE YOU?

**“Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: ‘Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. ‘Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?’” (Job 38:1-4 NIV)**

We may be tempted to think of Job 38-41 primarily as a dressing down. Job, after all, has spent 37 chapters calling God to the mat over his apparent covenant negligence. When God finally answers him, he is described as speaking out of a whirlwind.

Yet, when read straight through, these chapters have the overwhelming feel of a love letter. A love letter written to God’s creation. They positively drip with affection. God shows the dawn its place (Job 38:12) and takes both darkness and light to their dwelling places (38:20). God raises his voice to the clouds and sends lightning bolts on their way (38:34-35). God hunts the prey of the lioness and provides food for the raven (38:39-41).

More than mere transactional provision, though, chapter 39 tells us that God knows when the mountain goat gives birth, and that he counts the months until the doe bears her fawn (39:1-2). God notices the laughter of the wild donkey (39:7), the joy of the ostrich (39:13), and the pride of the horse (39:20). God dedicates half of chapter 40 to his pride in the strength of Behemoth (possibly the hippopotamus), and all of chapter 41 to the grace and wildness of Leviathan—a mythical water creature that God seems to have created simply for the sheer joy of watching it sport in the waves. This is not the language of a distant, uninterested God. This is the language of a God who is intimately involved and passionately in love with God’s created things.

The profound intimacy with which God interacts with God’s creation is a gift to behold. It’s as if God’s response to Job’s complaints is to say, “If it feels to you like I’ve nodded off on the job, check my references. I’ve been feeding lions, midwifing fawns, and directing the rain and snow across the world.” Indigenous theologian and wisdom keeper, Randy Woodley, is fond of reminding us that every moment of every day, God is in relationship with parts of creation that are completely outside of human perception. Such is the scope of God’s great love for creation, and the limits of humanity’s experience of it. Let us pray with Job as he responds to God:

**I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2).**

**Contributed by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap**

*Adapted from the forthcoming book Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap (InterVarsityPress, 2023).*

*Reflection question: What aspects of God’s creation you would like to learn more about, if only to rejoice in God’s loving attention to detail?*

# LORD HAVE MERCY

Featuring Jonathan Ogden and Page CXVI  
Written by *Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, Latifah Alattas*  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## ***Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project***

*Many churches have a practice of singing our confession, "Lord, Have Mercy." However, we are more likely to confess personal sins than corporate, or collective, sins. This song gives us language to confess our corporate sins and ask for God's forgiveness. It is particularly suited to the confession section of a worship service.*

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## ***Lyrics***

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Holy Spirit rest upon us

Lead us in the way of your justice

Holy Spirit rest upon us

Teach us how to serve in our weakness

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Holy Spirit rest upon us

Teach us how to tend to creation

Holy Spirit rest upon us

Guide us from our path of destruction

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## LORD HAVE MERCY

**“Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4 NRSV)**

The 2021 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscored the grave and existential threat posed by climate change and emphasized that the actions we take in this decade will be key to the future viability of life on earth. We must rapidly transition away from fossil fuels to preserve a livable planet for current and future generations; each day that we fail to change course puts the possibility of a thriving future further out of reach.

*Forty days for Nineveh, ten years for planet earth.*

I don't believe that God wills the climate crisis as punishment for human wrongdoing, but neither does it seem that God intervenes to spare us the consequences of our choices. To do so would be to negate our free will. In the case of the climate crisis, the choices of a few—namely, fossil fuel companies who for decades have knowingly covered up the grave threat posed by emissions and, to a lesser extent, those of us whose consumer lifestyles have maintained demand for fossil fuels—have outsized consequences for the many. The poorest of the poor have been impacted first, but none of us will be altogether spared.

Our God, however, is a God of second chances. We are not beyond redemption; all hope is not lost. In the Book of Jonah, we encounter a God of mercy. As the book begins, God directs Jonah to carry a message to the Ninevites: “Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; for their wickedness has come before me” (Jonah 1:2). Rather than making haste to Nineveh, however, Jonah flees, seeking to shirk the weight of his responsibility, a decision which results in a divinely-willed time-out in the belly of a whale. Hearing Jonah's contrition, God frees him from the belly of the whale and once again commands him to carry his admonition to the Ninevites: forty more days and Nineveh shall be destroyed. This time, Jonah complies, and, upon hearing of their impending destruction, all Ninevites, down to the beasts of labor, donned sackcloth and ashes, renouncing evil and violence. Just as God had spared Jonah, God spared the Ninevites.

Today we are replete with warnings, and our forty days are not yet up. In Psalm 51, we confess our faith in a God of mercy when we pray, “My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.” The word “humbled” derives from “humus,” the organic matter in soil. To be humbled is to be of the earth. Today, may we remember that we are of the earth, and that to live otherwise is to hasten our own destruction. Where we are called to repent of our pillaging of the earth, may we make like the Ninevites and “turn from [our] evil way and from the violence [we have] in hand.” Where we are called to join our voices to the Jonahs of today, may our prophetic cries reverberate within the halls of power.

**To the God of second chances, we pray: have mercy on us.**

**Contributed by Anna Robertson**

*Reflection question: Where can you join your voice to the Jonahs of today, to challenge the injustice that intensifies the climate crisis?*

# DECLARING GLORY (THE EARTH SINGS ITS REFRAIN)

Featuring Jon Guerra and Audrey Assad

Written by Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, Jon Guerra, Nick Chambers, and Molly Parden

[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*It is only with the invention of the modern clock that the concept of “seconds” or “minutes” came into existence, while God’s world exists in seasons, years, millenia, and eons. In humility, we look around at creation and remember that “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” (Psalm 24). What would it sound like if our ears could hear the planet praise the Lord? This song is a meditation on that question.*

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## **Lyrics**

When I was young,  
you woke me with the sound of song.  
The wind and rhythm drew me along;  
I echoed in the hymn of the dawn.  
I turned and turned,  
this dance that all the planets learn  
in circles 'round the stars as they burn.  
I praise you as I orbit and turn.  
Declaring glory!

The mountains rise;  
the forests grow before my eyes.  
The moments and the seasons unwind,  
then turn again, embracing the tide.  
The waters fall  
and carve their way across my soil,  
their canyons cutting deep in my soul.  
I praise you while the rivers still roll.

Declaring glory!

New life begins,  
your creatures dance across my skin.  
Like me they have your spirit within,  
But soon they fade away as I spin.  
They fall to dust,  
and dress me in decay and rust,  
their secrets buried deep in my crust.  
I praise you in the layers of dust.  
Declaring glory!

The rocks wear down  
beneath the passing of the clouds.  
The rivers run until they run out.  
I'll praise you 'til my fires run out.

I praise my Maker in every age.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## DECLARING GLORY

**“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.” (Psalms 19:1)**

All of creation declares the glory of God. But some parts of creation are harder to access and see than others, and perhaps their declarations would go unnoticed and unheard were it not for the help of modern science and technology. Telescopes help us see things that are millions of miles away from us, like stars and galaxies, while microscopes magnify things that are millions of times smaller than us, like bacteria and other microbes.

In a sense, the tools of science help make the works of God's hands more visible, and help us uncover the glory of God hidden at the macroscopic and microscopic levels of creation.

Imagine the generations that came before us, who still found things in nature to marvel at, even when they couldn't see half as much as we can today. This is a testament that we can indeed find reasons to praise our maker in every age, regardless of technological limitations on what we can or cannot see.

Scientists recently took a picture of a black hole in space. We've discovered fascinating microorganisms like the tardigrade, affectionately known as water bears for their chubby gummy bear appearance. These creatures are oddly cute and very much intriguing to scientists for their ability to survive harsh conditions, like outer space and extreme temperatures; they can even go without food and water for years.

Planets spin, black holes “sing,” water molecules dance and some species of bacteria zoom like comets inside their hosts as part of their lifecycle. What a wild and wondrous universe! Even while broken and subject to disease, decay and rust, we can find reason to praise the maker till our fires run out.

As science continues to advance and develop even better ways of seeing things. I wonder what other secrets we will uncover that are just waiting to be revealed.

**Lord, please show us how to join in the song of all creation, declaring Your glory!**

**Contributed by Ciara Reyes-Ton**

*Reflection question: What parts of nature do you personally hear God's glory declared loudest? Perhaps when you see a particular species of animal, walk a certain hiking trail, recognize a constellation in the night sky or look under a microscope.*

# HOSANNA! (WILL YOU RISE?)

Featuring Matt Maher and Terrian  
Isaac Wardell, Leslie Jordan, Nick Chambers, Terrian Bass  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*Simply put, we wanted this album to have at least one song that is well-suited to big modern worship spaces that sing big modern worship songs. The simplicity of these lyrics and melody are matched with Jesus' simple prayer for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). We sing "Hosanna" (meaning "Save Us") and ask God to help us care for His earth like He does.*

---

## **Lyrics**

When the waters rise all around  
When the rocks and trees, they cry out

Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven

Hosanna! Hosanna!  
Will You rise? Will You rise?

Fill us with Your breath to renew  
To care for what you've made as You do

Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven

Hosanna! Hosanna!  
Will You rise? Will You rise?

Young kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## HOSANNA! (WILL YOU RISE)

**“But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”**  
**(Job 12: 7-10)**

All of creation speaks of God’s glory. When we hear fewer birds singing and no bees buzzing, creation is speaking to us. God’s creation is a testimony of diversity, balance, and harmony. Man-made pollutants and deforestation disrupt that harmonious song of creation.

Climate change and its consequences are creation continuing to speak to us. The violent storms, scorching heat, and unproductive soil all cry out for mankind to take heed and work to restore the harmonious and fruitful creation that God entrusted humans to care for.

When areas are reforested, we see more birds soaring in the sky. When waterways are restored by removing and stopping pollutants from being dumped into them, the fish return to multiply and thrive. When land is sustainably farmed through improved agricultural techniques and agroforestry practices, soil remains productive and brings forth nourishing food for humankind.

Nature is resilient and responds with growth and thriving when people work to clean and restore the environment. If we continue to pollute and destroy our habitat here on earth, extinction is the language nature speaks to foretell the death of mankind.

***God, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to respond to the cry of nature for humankind to restore diversity, harmony, and balance here on earth.***

Contributed by Annah Amani

*Reflection question: In what practical ways can you reduce, reuse, recycle, and restore God’s creation here on earth?*

# THE KINGDOM IS COMING

Featuring Terrian and Josh Garrels  
Written by Isaac Wardell, Wendell Kimbrough, Liz  
Vice, Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, and Jessica Fox  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*While writing these lyrics about the coming of God's kingdom, we debated between singing "We are praying for it" or "We are waiting for it" or "We are working for it." In the end, we all agreed that trusting God's promises means all three of these things. We pray for His renewal, we wait in trust, and we work in faithfulness. This song is written in the style of a spiritual — a "work song" meant for singing on the march.*

---

## **Lyrics**

The kingdom is coming!  
We are praying for it.  
The kingdom is coming!  
We are waiting for it.  
The kingdom is coming!  
We are working for it.  
All creation groans!

The fire in the sky, we see it burn  
The waters that keep rising up, the floods that come  
Put your hope in the Lord!  
Put your hope in the Lord!  
He will lead us on the way

All you nations, all you judges, all you kings  
Come and join the work. He's restoring all things  
Put your hope in the Lord!  
Put your hope in the Lord!  
He will lead us on the way.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## KINGDOM IS COMING

**"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."  
(2 Corinthians 5:17-18, NRSV)**

I was humming this song in my heart 26 years ago when my wife and I, with a band of other iconoclastic Christian educators, co-founded the Creation Care Study Program (CCSP) in Belize in 1996. Four years later we expanded the program to New Zealand, and while creation care is now accepted as mainstream theological orthodoxy, 26 years ago that was not the case. We were on the periphery of mainstream biblical legitimacy, and only a few students, mainly from biology, were thinking about creation care. That needed to change—the Church needed to understand the centrality of creation care for faithful discipleship. And as God's gift of creation was being senselessly destroyed, we needed a new generation to rise up and take loving, innovative, collective, and decisive action to stop our ecologically destructive ways and forge new economic, social, and cultural paths that would lead to a better future—the Shalom of God.

Of course I didn't know this exact melody, hear this instrumentation in my head, or know these poetic lyrics. But the deep calling to deep in The Kingdom Is Coming is what motivated us all to bring into being our new bit of goodness. It is a new sign and a needed taste of God's coming Kingdom on Earth known as CCSP. CCSP isn't God's Kingdom, but it is a start towards a creation care education all Christ's disciples will have one day when God's Kingdom finally arrives. When that day comes we will all be able to live uncompromised ecological lives of beauty, meaning, abundance, and joy in a world put right.

Until that day arrives, God's people will be singing this song. Let it drench our souls with its truth--Put your hope in the Lord! Put your hope in the Lord! He will lead us on the way. Let us heed its call and march to its beat to have faith, to pray, and do good works—which is the evidence of our love of God as James tells us. CCSP still runs today, even after an earthquake that knocked our campus down, a deep economic recession that rocked our world, and other struggles and difficulties. God's earth isn't healthier than it was 26 years ago either, but there are many bright spots and signs of the coming restoration. As for CCSP, it still has a profound, transformative impact on many students' lives who then go on and make a difference in the places where they live and work. We're not perfect, but "The Kingdom is coming! . . . We are praying for it. We are waiting for it. We are working for it."

*Lord, we are sustained by your love in this broken world. Yet we see signs of our reconciliation and redemption all around us too. We have deep hope and assurance that not only will you set this world fully right in the future, but your Shalom--where all relationships will be healed and restored between God, humanity, and other creaturely beings--has already broken out on the Earth through your death and resurrection. In the meantime, help us to participate in, and be agents of, your reconciliation in this broken world. Amen.*

**Contributed by Chris Elisara**

*Reflection questions: As you read my story, or listened to The Kingdom Is Coming, what was stirring in your heart that you can do, working with God, that brings a bit more of God's Kingdom to earth? What's a small thing you can do right away? What's a bit more of a reach that's going to take more time, resources, energy, and collaboration with others? How can you start on that?*

# BRING IN THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (PSALM 37)

Featuring Taylor Leonhardt and Jessica Fox  
Written by Jessica Fox, Wendell Kimbrough, Taylor Leonhardt,  
Paul Zach, Isaac Wardell, Nick Chambers, Leslie Jordan, Kate Bluett  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*Christians familiar with the Biblical concept of Jubilee may think first of the year of Jubilee as debts forgiven and land restored to previous owners. However, another important part of God's rest is letting the fields lie "fallow." That is, God not only gives financial rest to his people, but He gives rest to His creation as well. How does the concept of God's Jubilee inform the way we talk about giving the land its rest today? The words to this song primarily come from Psalm 37. And because it's about the fields getting rest, we wrote it in the style of a folk song.*

---

## **Lyrics**

The meek will inherit the earth  
The meek will inherit the earth  
The first will be last and the last will be  
first  
The meek will inherit the earth

The wicked will lose what they stole  
The wicked will lose what they stole  
And all that they thought they could  
own and control  
The wicked will lose what they stole

Jubilee!  
Now is the year of His favor  
Jubilee!  
Rest for the weary creation

Now bring in the year of Jubilee!

Turn now from evil to good  
Turn now from evil to good  
Then we will dwell in the land as we  
should  
Turn now from evil to good

The earth, it will sigh with relief  
The earth's gonna sigh with relief  
There's more than enough for the  
hungry to feed  
The earth will sigh with relief.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## BRING IN THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

**In what may well be his first sermon, Jesus chose as his text the following passage: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”  
(Luke 4:18 &19 ESV)**

With this choice Jesus made it clear that his message and the objective of his healing, feeding, and reconciling ministries was practical and economic. His focus was not on getting anyone’s individual, disembodied soul to heaven, but upon the embodied realities and the social and political structures that prevent people from flourishing. The textual setting was the Jewish ideas of Sabbath, the regular weekly time when all people of a household—including the animal livestock and the land itself—were to observe a time of rest, and the Year of Jubilee, the 50-year interval when land was returned to families that had lost it owing to personal misfortune or economic injustice.

Jesus tells us not to forget the land or the people that work it to provide our daily sustenance. Even if we are not farmers ourselves, Christians are called to advocate on their behalf by making sure that they can grow food and raise animals in ways that honor God, nurture life, and cherish this world’s innumerable sacred gifts. Unfortunately, climate change makes this more difficult as farmers struggle with severe heat waves, droughts, and floods. This is in addition to the crushing debt loads and merciless financial institutions that already make their labors difficult.

This is why it is so important for Christians to recover a Jubilee mission that cancels farmer indebtedness and creates just food economies in which farmers are properly compensated and protected, and all eaters are properly nourished. Now is the time for churches to become leaders in Congregation Supported Agriculture, a new kind of CSA in which area farmers know they can count on the support of faithful people who yearn to participate in God’s love for all creatures.

***Gracious God. You first revealed your love for us by kissing the soil that created plant, animal, and human life. Inspire us with your life-creating and life-sustaining breath, so that we can be the agents of your feeding, healing, and hospitable ways with the world. Animate us with the power of your love, so that freedom, flourishing, and justice follow us wherever we go.***

Contributed by Norman Wirzba

*Reflection questions: Where in your community and neighborhood do you see forms of bondage and oppression that are preventing people and fellow creatures from flourishing? What would it look like, and what would it practically take, for the love of God to become active there?*

# GOOD LORD, DELIVER US

Featuring Paul Zach and Terrian  
Written by Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, and Isaac Wardell  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*The Bible is full of the language of rescue and deliverance. Whatever legal actions we pray for and whatever changes in policy we hope to achieve, we also know that we ourselves come to this conversation with unclean hands and hearts. This song is a spiritual plea for our collective deliverance.*

---

## **Lyrics**

Good Lord, deliver us

From the merchants in the temple  
And the worship of our greed  
From the whisper of the tempter:  
"We should take more than we need"  
From the chains of wealth and plunder  
From our avarice and pride  
From the ever growing hunger  
From our vanity and strife

Good Lord, deliver us

From our constant quest for power  
Over all that we survey  
From the lies that we devour  
From the fears we cannot face  
Come and save us from our demons  
Come and strip away our hate  
Come O Lord, restore our reason  
Come O Christ, the time is late!

Good Lord, deliver us

## REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

# GOOD LORD, DELIVER US

**"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions! Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me... a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."  
(Psalm 51, ESV)**

The Psalms span the entire emotional range of the human experience, conveying love, awe, fear, grief, and even anger to God. Psalm 51 shows the sorrow and repentance of the human heart crying out to God for mercy and seeking the restoration of a right relationship with Him. The psalmist laments his broken nature and asks God to deliver him from his sins and the pain they have caused.

This lament and sorrow cannot be the only Christian response to the climate crisis. We must also seek the joy that comes from a life in Christ, reject despair, and celebrate the precious victories that have been won in the struggle against our ecological catastrophe.

However, any prayerful consideration of this crisis must include sorrowful repentance, or it will not be a complete reckoning with the scope of the problem and our responsibility for it. Human greed and arrogance, particularly in the West, have contributed to the destruction of human lives around the globe, endangered the flourishing of future generations, and crowded out our Biblical mandate to steward the Earth. We have much to repent of.

In light of such destruction in the world around us, we must turn inward to seek "a clean heart." Like the psalmist, we too must lament our broken natures and cry out to God to help renew ourselves and, through us, the world. Only the Creator of the human heart can transform it, and we must turn to Him for guidance and strength as we seek renewal.

The Psalms portray the story of the human experience with God. The climate crisis demands such emotional range as well, and to that end we must sit in our sorrow, lament for our sins, and pray, *Good Lord, Deliver Us*.

***Lord, with a clear vision of our failings to love the rest of your world as we love ourselves, we rely on your mercy and ask for the new life you offer to all who seek.***

**Contributed by Matthew Groves**

*Reflection question: In what ways have my selfishness, laziness, and greed furthered the climate crisis? In what tangible ways does Christ call me to a different way of life?*

# WATER TO WINE

Featuring Page CXVI

Written by Latifah Alattas, Andy Squyres,  
Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, Nick Chambers

[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*This is more of a poem than a song. These words invite people to pause and reflect on the miracle of "ordinary" creation. It also asks us to ponder how God's creation has not been set in motion and left like a wound-up clock, but rather God is miraculously at work through the ordinariness of creation all around us, just as he worked the miracle of turning water to wine at Cana. When we see the earth's life-giving processes as ordained by God, and therefore sacred, we recognize that interrupting or destroying these processes is a form of blasphemy.*

---

## **Lyrics**

Consider now the hawks that fly  
Above the hills, beneath the sky  
Whose wisdom rings from overhead  
"The earth below is daily bread"  
Consider now the miracle  
Of rain that falls into the soil  
And swells the grape upon the vine  
It's always been water to wine

Imagine every buried seed  
Enshrouded in the furrows deep  
That breaks itself apart to rise  
And lift the ground up to the skies.

Imagine heaven reaching down  
a gift poured out from heavy clouds,  
Restoring all our withered vines:  
It's always been water to wine.

Remember Christ the living bread,  
The seed grown high and harvested  
Who gathers us into the feast,  
gleaning every fallen seed.  
Remember earth will bloom again,  
And Christ will be our living spring,  
The fountain welling up inside:  
It's always been water to wine.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## WATER TO WINE

**“Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.” (Song of Songs 2:15)**

The Lord abundantly provides for all of creation by elaborately orchestrating an ensemble of connections between His creatures and their surrounding environment – a natural order of relationships known as ecology. These connections are like delicate vines, bearing fruit and sustaining life.

When we observe the birds that fly above us, they may come from thousands of miles away, faithfully migrating across oceans to reunite with their life partners and build nests in the spring. During their travels, birds as small as warblers or as large as falcons rely on wind patterns and rising pockets of warm air to carry them for a few hours or months at a time as they pass over seas. As they migrate, they forage for plants, invertebrates, small mammals, or carrion to give them strength along the way, helping control pests in farmlands and other spaces as they pass. As they continue their journey, they transport new nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus to other land and water systems, enriching remote or nutrient-poor areas like small islands or the Arctic. In oceans, these nutrients can fertilize the smallest of organisms, like phytoplankton which in turn feed fish, or corals which in turn provide shelter for many species. On land, these nutrients pour into soils and streams and are pushed by the rain that swells the grape upon the vine.

Indeed, our Lord is the master at turning water to wine.

However, such masterful connections are under threat by the very creation He has assigned to care for them. We are the little foxes that spoil the vines. Like migrating birds, all of creation relies on the perfect timing of the seasons, the supply of nutrients, and space to thrive. Climate change threatens the stability of the wind patterns that form migration routes; earlier or later seasons can cause a mismatch between when flowers bloom and when insects can pollinate or lay eggs on them, and whether there is enough for predators to eat; massive insect population decline from warming impact important crops that feed the world; and converting lands for human use reduces carbon storage, removes important habitats, blocks species' movements, and can cause harmful encounters between humans and wildlife.

We humans are cutting the connections that God's tender grapes of creation rely on. Let us work on restoring all our withered vines.

***Lord, rain down on us the conviction and power to restore the vines that connect, give life to, and sustain Your creation, so we may humbly reclaim our role as tenders of the garden.***

**Contributed by Veronica Frans**

*Reflection question: What masterful connections can you find when you observe God's creation? Consider the acidic soils that make wild blueberries and raspberries along a trail taste so wonderful. Or a caterpillar eating the leaves of a plant that it*

# BROTHER SUN (GIVING GLORY!)

Featuring Liz Vice

Written by Tenielle Neda, Isaac Wardell, Paul Zach, and Liz Vice

[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*Our second meditation on [Canticle of the Sun](#), this song is a modern reimagining of St. Francis' hymn, but this time in a gospel style. Like Francis, we begin contemplating how everything in creation gives glory to God, and like Francis we conclude with the simple call for human beings to join in that work of giving glory to God.*

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## **Lyrics**

Brother sun, sister moon  
Your light shines from the heavens  
Giving glory, all the glory to The Maker

Gentle wind, welcome home  
You've been traveling with your song  
Singing glory, all the glory to The Maker

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!  
Singing glory to The Maker,  
Hallelujah!

Sweetest rain, serenade  
Pouring down from the heavens  
bring your blessing, every blessing from The Maker

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!  
Singing glory to The Maker,  
Hallelujah!

All you people, join in the song  
There is work to be done  
Bringing glory, all the glory to The Maker

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## BROTHER SUN (GIVING GLORY!)

**“Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens! Praise him from the skies! Praise him, all his angels! Praise him, all the armies of heaven! Praise him, sun and moon! Praise him, all you twinkling stars! Praise him, skies above! Praise him, vapors high above the clouds! Let every created thing give praise to the LORD, for he issued his command, and they came into being. He set them in place forever and ever. His decree will never be revoked.” (Psalm 148:1-6, NLT)**

Soli Deo Gloria! I stand in the crisp night air, sucking life in through my nostrils. The sharpness clears my sinus, the chill catches in my chest for a pause before seeping back into the night, a vapor through pursed lips. Each breath a prayer before retiring; an examen, or prayerful reflection, on the day.

My face inevitably shifts to the stars, the moon, sentinels of time immemorial. Consciousness reaches back through genetic heritage. Knowing ancestors stood marveling at the lit array season after season. So faithful and steadfast are the heavenly bodies that they were trusted to guide our great canoes across the vast ocean from the eastern Pacific to where we dwell to honor them today in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The stars, navigation beacons, the moon, determiner of the tides, the sun, a compass to the seasons, the winds, a propellant, the rains, a blessing from the mysterious Uncreated One, the supreme being: Io Matua Kore.

As Māori Marsden, honored spiritual leader, said, “Our forefathers saw the foot of the mountain, but when the missionaries gave us the Scriptures, the cloud lifted and we now see the mountain full.” The mysterious, less of a mystery. That all creation reveals the glory of the Great Creator is understood. That creation is held together by Tama a te Atua, a Ihu Karaiti: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the firstborn over all creation, is understood. In creation we see the Son. In creation we have a sibling. The life of God pulsing through the life of the world.

I turn my head from the constellations, confident in the fidelity of its inhabitants and expectant of a new dawn. The day is behind. What is done is done. Tomorrow will have enough concerns of its own. I am content to walk the path of my forefathers, seeking only the reign of the Great Creator, to live in the rightness of the ways of the Holy Three—Creator and ruler of everything that is seen and unseen, giver of every good thing.

***Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Let everything created give glory to God alone!***

**Contributed by Dr. Jay Matenga**

*Reflection questions: In what ways do you perceive God's created things giving praise to our Creator? Right here and now, will you add your voice to theirs?*

# KEEP WATCH AND PRAY

Featuring Jason Upton and Sara Groves  
Written by Isaac Wardell, Jonathan Ogden, and Molly Parden  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*In the garden, human beings “walked” with God in harmony. Do we still have a vision for what it will mean for us to walk with God again when he restores His world? In this song, we juxtapose this question with Jesus’ words to his disciples to “keep watch and pray” and not be found sleeping.*

---

## **Lyrics**

Before the dark  
Before the pain  
Before the beauty of the world had been unmade

Your voice, it rang  
Your words, they stood  
You breathed Your life into the world and called it good

And you will come again  
We will weep no more  
I wanna be ready  
And will we walk with you  
Like we did before?  
I wanna be ready.

These fields are dry  
Your garden burns  
And all the rocks and trees and fields cry out in turn  
Your promise rings  
Your words are true  
All creation once again will be made new

Keep watch and pray  
Keep watch and pray  
I don't want to be sleeping.

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## KEEP WATCH AND PRAY

**“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15)**

Climate change has become the biggest pandemic of the century. Its impacts include poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, water scarcity, lack of access to education (especially for women), increased school dropout, and child labour. As these impacts continue to worsen, the world is lurching toward mass migration, war, and civil unrest in the fight for limited resources and safer places to live.

These impacts are also gender-sensitive, as men and women are affected differently by climate change. Already women in marginalized communities carry the burden of feeding and caring for families, even when there is crop failure. Women are working harder to get food, and they are walking longer distances to look for water and firewood.

The song, Keep Watch and Pray, is a reflection of how beautiful the world was in the beginning, and how human activities have impacted negatively on this beauty. But the hope of restoration through Christ is inevitable, and we all must be ready to be part of the restoration process. We are called to take action and not be found sleeping when it is time to rise up to the occasion.

That time is now. Christ is raising environmental advocates to amplify the need to restore God's beautiful earth, for the sake of all God's children who depend on the earth's bounty. Christian communities are called to take part in the movement. Capacity building, education, and raising awareness about climate-smart agriculture and green energy are now key to shaping a world we can all live in.

*Dear Lord, Creator of heaven and earth. We come before you with meekness of the heart, to ask for guidance to practical solutions to climate change. Touch the hearts of decision makers in climate change so that they learn to fear you and do what is right. Amen.*

**Contributed by Shamiso Winnet Mupara**

# SATISFIED

Featuring Page CXVI and Paul Zach  
Written by Latifah Alattas, Lucas Morton, and Paul Zach  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*Legislative action? Yes. Church advocacy? Yes. Global cooperation? Yes.  
We need all these things, but we also need our individual hearts to turn from  
consumption to a posture of being satisfied in God's provision. Our public witness  
must be grounded in a spiritual reality of repentance from our own greed and  
self-centeredness as we ask God to re-tune our desires to be in harmony with His  
creation and one another.*

---

## **Lyrics**

God we have taken more than we've given  
We are entangled in consumption and greed  
Christ in your mercy break our obsession  
With hollow possessions  
O Lord, set us free!

May our hearts be satisfied  
May our hearts be satisfied  
Fill us with joy and peace

Lord we've neglected your simple provision  
Instead we've invested in building up our wealth  
So tear down our storehouse  
Our walls and our towers  
And build us a table  
Where all can come feast

May our hearts be satisfied  
May our hearts be satisfied  
Fill us with joy and peace

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

# SATISFIED

**“This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.’”  
(Exodus 16:32)**

In the opening verses of Exodus chapter 15 the people of God declare in worship, “The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.” However by Exodus chapter 16 verse 2, “the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, ‘If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.

The hearts of God’s people were not satisfied; nor were they filled with joy and peace. They were entangled in their desire for consumption and greed. They neglected God’s provision and were instead invested in temporary things.

God’s surprising response to their scarcity was the over abundance of manna. Each day, for every day they were led by God in the wilderness, their need was met and they were satisfied as a sign. God commands the people to keep some of the manna for the generations to come as a reminder.

The human condition is to take more than we give. To be consumed by our needs and ensuring we have enough. Consider Christ’s example on the contrary as the Apostle Paul shares with the church in Philippians 2:6-8:

*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

Jesus, being in very nature God, took on the flesh, blood, the very elements of creation itself to fill us with joy and peace by becoming obedient to death. The heavenly bread God sent to the Exodus generation to satisfy their grumbling pointed to the heavenly bread that was Jesus’ body that would be broken on the cross.

Jesus himself teaches as much in John 6:32-33 when he reflects on the manna story; “Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

So let us come to the table and the marriage feast of the lamb of God. May our hearts be satisfied; filled with joy and the peace that Jesus provides.

***Father God, you give daily bread and heavenly bread! You provide out of your generosity and abundance when we respond with our greed and scarcity. In your mercy you redeem us and set us free. May our hearts be satisfied, filled with joy and peace for all you provide in your good good creation.***

**Contributed by Marqus A. Cole**

*Where in your life have you found yourself grumbling about what you have? What has God given you already that you can keep for the generations to come, so that they can see how God has provided for you?*

# THE PROMISE

Featuring Molly Parden and Jonathan Ogden

Written by Nan Macmillan

[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## ***Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project***

*The world we live in did not appear on its own, nor was it provided only out of physical necessity, but rather it is a gift from God, created with great love. God tasked us to tend and keep it. Can we keep this promise?*

---

## **Lyrics**

This gift you gave from the beginning  
Warm light, dry land, blue water brimming  
And more, from the earth there came a growing  
From seed to bloom, all the while you were sowing

It was love, love given in the water  
And peace, God's peace written in the letters  
Of the earth, God's earth, given with a promise  
Can we keep it?

And stars in the night to gaze on them kindly  
Great light, cool moon, all aligned in the sky, see  
From water came life and so from the land  
To feed, not to fight, to stand hand in hand

Out from the silence I hear a voice, I follow it onwards  
You whisper to me, I am reminded of every gift you gave  
So, spirit lead me unto the waters, unto the earth you made  
Teach me the secret to ever care for, to look after it

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

# THE PROMISE

**“For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37, NRSV)**

Like the air we breathe, it has always been there, wherever we lived, as long as we and our ancestors can remember. “This gift you gave from the beginning...”

A stable climate — our long-term pattern of temperature and precipitation — has ordered the lives and seasons of countless generations. It has been a firm foundation for human life on earth. It has allowed us to feed our families, grow in numbers, and build civilization as we know it.

Our climate is a gift, but it is not only for us. A livable planet is an invaluable inheritance to be jealously guarded and passed down to our children and grandchildren. Sadly, like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), we have squandered our inheritance. Our foundation for life on earth is dissolving into shifting sand, and we are entering a time of great peril.

Over nearly half a century, we have watched in silent complicity as our planet has grown hotter than ever in human history. It is still getting hotter, at a record rate, and with no sign of stopping. Yet so many of us remain silent, even as we and our loved ones face the painful results: extreme heat waves, droughts, wildfires, floods, storms, and more.

Where is the promise in that? First, we have a good and compassionate Father. Like the father of the Prodigal Son, God knows our faults and still runs out to embrace us, even when we are far off. Second, Jesus says, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17). In the original Greek of the Gospel, the word used for repent is metanoete: “change your mind.” Jesus challenges us to change! The good news is that we are all just one decision, one promise, from a new life-giving way of life.

Third, “God did not give us a Spirit of cowardice but rather a Spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). We will not be silent observers anymore, because the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead empowers us to be an unstoppable force for good in God’s world. “Out from the silence, I hear a voice, I follow it onwards...”

***Father, Son, and Spirit, we repent of our silence in the face of climate calamity. You challenge us to change. With your power and love, help us join with others to act.***

**Contributed by Peter Fargo**

*Reflection questions: Are you ready to make, or keep, a promise about climate change? Who is your promise for?*

# ALL CREATURES LAMENT

Featuring Fernando Ortega and Molly Parden  
Written by Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, and Isaac Wardell  
[Listen here](#) or on any major streaming platform.

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## **Introduction from The Porter's Gate Worship Project**

*One of Christianity's oldest meditations on God's creation is from St. Francis' [Canticle of the Sun](#), which is popularized in many churches as the hymn, [All Creatures of our God and King](#). We reference [Canticle of the Sun](#) several times in the album, and we reimagine the lyrics to this beloved hymn as a lament for the ways in which creation is groaning because of human sin, including the pollution and destruction of our common home.*

---

## **Lyrics**

All creatures of our God and King,  
lift up your voices; let them ring.  
Fill the earth with lamentation!  
Cry out abuses of our pow'r;  
tell what we lose with every hour  
to our greed and depredation.  
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy!

All creatures winging in the air,  
cry out the failures of our care.  
Fill the sky with lamentation!  
Shout through the clouds of smoke  
and ash,  
choked with the fumes of poison gas,  
tell us of our degradation.  
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy!

All creatures hidden in the seas,  
lift up your anguished prayers and  
pleas.  
Fill the sea with lamentation!  
Teach us to see your wonders now.  
Help us to make a holy vow  
here to halt your devastation.  
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy!

All creatures dwelling on the land,  
join as we lift each heart and hand.  
Fill the world with lamentation!  
Mourn the destruction of our home;  
weep with the fear of worse to come.  
Hear the groans of all creation:  
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy!

# REFLECTION AND DEVOTIONAL

## ALL CREATURES LAMENT

**“He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry” (Psalm 146:6-7, NIV)**

I take the climate crisis seriously as a Christian quite simply because I read my Bible. We know God made this world. It's absolutely precious to Him, and therefore as Christians we are called to take care of His creation as well.

The lyrics of All Creatures Lament are incredibly powerful as well as incredibly hard to listen to. In the vein of the prophets of old, the words are uncompromising, and they remind us that our relationship with God is directly bound up with how we treat other people. Sin has environmental consequences.

This song reflects some of the horrors that we have seen in recent years, in which billions of marine and land creatures have been killed through heat waves and wildfires. Species as diverse as the komodo dragon and the puffin are at risk of extinction. I want to ignore the pain of this. I want to distract myself with the beauty of the natural world and jump straight into language about hope. But the Bible and this song show me that mourning and lament are integral parts of my walk with Jesus. So I am challenged to stop and to mourn – to let God break my heart for what He has created, people and other creatures, and stir me to action.

***Jesus, this moment in history can sometimes feel dark, and we must lament what has been lost. Even so, you say to us: ‘You are the light of the world.’ May we join together to shine your light.***

**Contributed by Ruth Valerio**

*Reflection question: In Psalm 146, and in the ministry of Jesus, God upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. How can you take action to end our climate crisis – to stand up for the oppressed and give food to the hungry?*

# WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

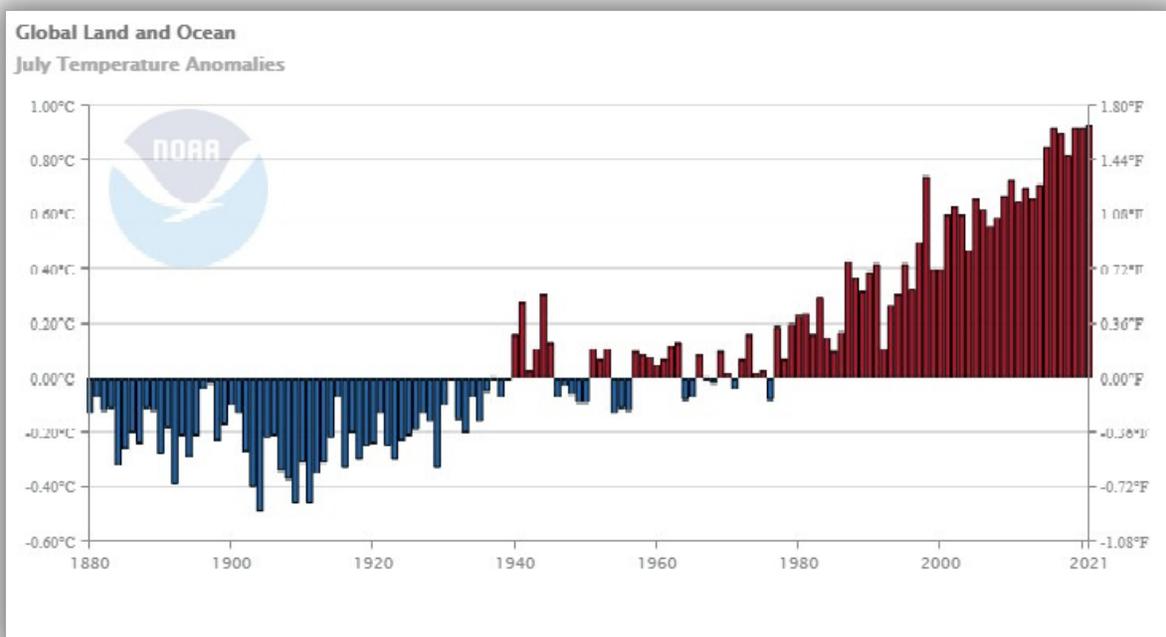
If you have ever experienced a fever, you have experienced a personal form of climate change.

A fever is when our average internal body temperature goes up by more than a degree and stays there for a while. Even a small rise in temperature (1 to 2°F) can make us feel sick with a range of symptoms: headache, body ache, sweating, chills, dehydration, fatigue, etc.



Climate change is a global fever. Like our bodies, the planet has an equilibrium temperature, and it can overheat. The average global temperature has been relatively stable for thousands of years, allowing people to spread across the planet, feed their families, and develop civilization as we know it. Unfortunately, because of heat-trapping greenhouse gas pollution, the average global temperature is now rising *more than ten times* faster than ever before in history.

The chart below illustrates our global fever.



The 20th-century average temperature is represented by the horizontal line at 0.00 degrees. In the late 1970s, our global temperature began an inexorable rise, and it has exceeded the 20th-century average ever since.

Why is this considered a crisis? Because of humanity's continued greenhouse gas pollution, our global temperature continues to rise — at a record-shattering rate. July 2021 was the hottest July since records began in 1880, and it was the 45th consecutive July (and the 439th consecutive month) with temperatures above the 20th-century average.

As a result of this global fever, we are increasingly experiencing the dangerous symptoms of climate change:

- record temperatures in air, land, and water
- extreme weather of all kinds
- heat waves, droughts, floods, crop failures, and famine
- unmanageable wildfires and smoke
- ocean acidification, and ocean and freshwater dead zones
- spreading diseases from mosquitoes, ticks, and other vectors
- growing risk of animal and plant extinction

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Visit [climate.nasa.gov/evidence](https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence) to learn more about the causes and effects of climate change.

Learning about climate change leads us to respond as Christians, who are called to love God and neighbor as ourselves. Yet climate change is an affront to God's gift of creation and an existential threat to our neighbors, our families, and ourselves.

In partnership with the Spirit, and with you, we are building a movement to confront our climate crisis with prayer & action. You can join us at [climatevigil.org](https://climatevigil.org).

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By Peter Fargo

*Portions adapted from the book, A Million Prayers to Solve Our Climate Crisis, by Peter Fargo (2020)*

Sources: [climate.nasa.gov/news/175/the-ups-and-downs-of-global-warming/](https://climate.nasa.gov/news/175/the-ups-and-downs-of-global-warming/)  
[ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/202107](https://ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/monthly-report/global/202107)

# WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

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## GOD MAKES A GOOD WORLD

God calls creation “good” seven times in Genesis 1. In other words, in God’s eyes, creation is as good as it gets! How is creation good? One essential way is that creation has a “community design” to it, which is a reflection of the being-in-communion, Trinitarian Creator. In other words, God designed all life on earth—including us humans--to be dependent on the relationships between all the different parts of creation. This includes God’s relationship to what he made, which is a loving, enduring, and steadfast commitment to all creation.

## GOD GIVES HUMANS A SPECIAL VOCATION

When God created humans, God gave us a unique identity and a special role on earth. While humans are still creatures--embedded and dependent on the community of creation--humans are also spiritual. In our relationships to other creatures, our vocation is to mirror the love and character of the Creator to the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26-27). While the church has sometimes taken the command to “rule over” creation in Gen. 1:28 to be a blank check to do as we please with creation, our rulership is always derivative of the true King of creation: Christ. Christ rules not through domination and exploitation, but through humility, service, and sacrifice (Phil. 2:5-11). God intends for humans to have a moral relationship with creation that loves, serves, and protects the entire community of creation. When humans strive to have this kind relationship with creation, all goes well not only for people, but for all God’s other creatures, the land, the oceans and rivers, and the air we breathe. The vision given in the Bible for this is God’s shalom—God’s complete well-being for all of creation.

## GOD’S HEART BREAKS

When sin is introduced to creation, the effects are total, affecting even the earth itself (Gen. 3:17-19). When God makes a new covenant with Noah, he includes the earth and all living creatures on it (Gen. 9:1-17). The Psalms (i.e. 8, 19, 24, 65, 104, and more), the whirlwind soliloquy in Job 38-41, and the incarnation of Jesus himself make it clear that God is irrepressibly, recklessly in love with all of creation, and that he intends to rescue all of it.

## **GOD DOES WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BRING ALL OF CREATION BACK TO HIMSELF**

And so, God does the unthinkable to us: God loves what he created so much that he joins himself to creation forever in order to bring it back from the brink. God could have accomplished salvation however he wanted. Yet he did it by taking on the material stuff of creation for eternity (after all, Jesus remains incarnate) in order to rescue all of creation forever. Paul affirms God's cosmic plans for salvation when he writes that the Christ who made all things does not give up on his fallen creation, but instead reconciles, heals, and restores all things to himself (Col. 1:15-20). Even the gospel writer proclaims that God took on created things because he so deeply loves the created things (Jn. 3:16)! Matter has always mattered to God, and the incarnation is a profound affirmation of the goodness of creation and of God's intention to include all of it in his saving purposes.

## **GOD'S BIG PLANS FOR CREATION**

Revelation gives us a peek at the culmination of this big story, and it isn't disembodied souls going to be with God in heaven. It's the opposite. God comes to be with us on earth. John the Revelator sees a vision of a New Jerusalem coming down from a new heaven to a new earth (Rev. 21:1-5). The Greek word "new" here does not mean brand new—as if God is going to start all over—but renewed. God will not make all new things, he will make all things new.

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All of this means that climate change matters immensely to those of us who are formed by, and who have a role to play, in this big story. Because climate change threatens the integrity of God's good creation. Because climate change is a direct consequence of our failure to live up to our divinely-ordained vocation. Because climate change threatens our neighbor's ability to flourish and thrive. Because runaway climate change is the opposite of God's intention for his world. And we all know what God does about those forces that work against his purposes for his world.

The only question that remains is: what will we do? Will we as followers of Jesus join in with God's big story and work with other Christians to create foretastes of God's shalom in the midst of runaway climate change? Or will we ignore the destruction that climate change is wreaking on people and planet? We created Climate Vigil Songs for one reason: to help Christians worship God in the midst of runaway climate change, and to nurture their spirits and imaginations so we can participate in the big story as agents of God's shalom in the midst of the climate crisis.

These are intended to be songs that will sustain our faith and work over the long haul to stem climate change—through the deep troughs of struggle and worsening ecological degradation, and through the joyful heights of ecological restoration and conservation—until Christ returns to finish the work of restoring all creation for his eternal glory.

**By Rev. Kyle Meyaard-Schaap, and Dr. Chris Elisara.**

***Portions adapted from the forthcoming book Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap (InterVarsity Press, 2023)***

# HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



## Climate Vigil

Climate Vigil is calling on fellow Christians, and all people of goodwill, to gather in local communities to bear witness to our climate crisis — and take action to end it.

Are you ready to serve? Visit [ClimateVigil.org](https://ClimateVigil.org) to learn about hosting or joining a Climate Vigil in your community. We will provide training and support to help you organize a successful event. If there is already a Climate Vigil in your area, we would also be happy to connect you with other volunteers.

**Be the light in your  
community.**

# AUTHOR BIOS

## MAUREEN WISE

feels closest to God in the forest and is still learning to identify the trees in her home ecosystem. She is a freelance writer, part-time professor, and author. Wise holds a double major in Biology and English from the University of Mount Union. She lives near Cleveland, Ohio on the edge of her local park district with her husband, young son, and three cats. More about Maureen: [maureenwisebooks.com/about/](http://maureenwisebooks.com/about/)



## REV. KYLE MEYAARD-SCHAAP

serves as the Vice President for the Evangelical Environmental Network. Previously, he was the National Organizer and Spokesperson for Young Evangelicals for Climate Action. Kyle holds an undergraduate degree in religious studies from Calvin College (B.A. '12), a Master of Divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary (M.Div. '16), and is ordained in the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). Much of his professional experience has involved the integration of theology, science, and action toward a deeper awareness of the Christian responsibility to care for God's earth and to love one's neighbors, both at home and around the world.

More about Kyle: [creationcare.org/who-we-are/staff.html/title/the-rev-kyle-meyaard-schaap-vice-president](http://creationcare.org/who-we-are/staff.html/title/the-rev-kyle-meyaard-schaap-vice-president)

## ANNA ROBERTSON

holds a Master's of Theological Studies from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Xavier University in Ohio. She has worked as Campus Minister for Retreats at Seattle University, supported families of women experiencing incarceration, conducted research on collective memory in El Salvador, and accompanied students on international immersions at the intersection of faith and justice in Latin America. Anna now serves as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Mobilization at the Catholic Climate Covenant. She is passionate about supporting the emergence of the widespread ecological conversion of hearts called for by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. In her free time, she enjoys playing music, getting outside, and writing.

More about Anna:

[catholicclimatecovenant.org/people/anna-robertson](http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/people/anna-robertson)





## DR. CIARA REYES-TON

is a biologist, science writer and editor who is passionate about science communication to faith communities. She has a Ph.D. in Cell & Molecular Biology from the University of Michigan, and a B.S. in Biology from Valparaiso University. She has served as Managing Editor for the American Scientific Affiliation's God & Nature Magazine, and previously taught Biology at Belmont University and Nashville State Community College. She is currently the Digital Content Editor for BioLogos and an Adjunct Professor at Lipscomb University. Outside science, she enjoys singing as part of her band Mount Carmell and drinking coffee. She has a new science and faith song and devotional book coming out Summer 2022.

More about Ciara: [biologos.org/people/ciara-reyes](https://biologos.org/people/ciara-reyes)

## DR. ANNAH AMANI

is the Africa Programs Officer at Plant With Purpose providing leadership for programs in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burundi, and DR Congo. Annah is passionate about being part of a movement that transforms lives, communities, nations, and contributes to creation restoration. Through her M.P.H. studies at UCLA, Annah served as the team manager in the development of programs to prevent maternal mortality in rural Kenya. After her M.P.H, she went on to serve as the regional program coordinator for Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (now Unbound Uganda). After completion of her Ph.D., Annah taught global health and public health courses as an adjunct lecturer for the Department of Public Health Sciences at Clemson University.

More about Annah: [plantwithpurpose.org/team-member/annah-amani](https://plantwithpurpose.org/team-member/annah-amani)



## DR. CHRIS ELISARA

After growing up in New Zealand, Chris moved to the United States to undertake graduate studies at Eastern University (MBA) and Biola University (Ph.D.), where in 1995 he and his wife, Tricia, founded the first Christian undergraduate environmental study abroad program, entitled the Creation Care Study Program (CCSP), with campuses in Belize and New Zealand. In 2010, Chris founded the Center for Environmental Leadership before being invited in 2012 to start the WEA's Creation Care Task Force. He currently serves as the Co-Director of the WEA Sustainability Center in Germany and also the Lead for the Studio for Placemaking at the Ormond Center of Duke Divinity School in North Carolina.

More about Chris: [worldidea.org/leader/dr-chris-elisara](https://worldidea.org/leader/dr-chris-elisara) or [ormondcenter.com/chris-elisara](https://ormondcenter.com/chris-elisara)



## DR. NORMAN WIRZBA

is Gilbert T. Rowe Distinguished Professor of Christian Theology and Senior Fellow at the Kenan Institute of Ethics at Duke University. His research and teaching interests are at the intersections of theology, philosophy, ecology, and agrarian and environmental studies. Raised on a farm in Southern Alberta, Norman went on to study history at the University of Lethbridge, theology at Yale University Divinity School, and philosophy at Loyola University Chicago. Since then he has taught at Saint Thomas More College/University of Saskatchewan, Georgetown College (KY), and Duke University Divinity School. He's the father of four adult children and is married to Gretchen Ziegenhals. He likes to bake, cook and make things with wood. He also enjoys playing the guitar.

More about Norman: [normanwirzba.com/](http://normanwirzba.com/)



## MATTHEW GROVES

is a science and faith educator from rural Appalachia. He went to seminary, worked in youth ministry, spent time as a climate activist, and now teaches high school science. He hopes to draw on his credibility in both scientific and religious camps to bring harmony and understanding to areas often known for conflict. Matthew has taught nearly 100 science and faith classes to audiences of all ages and denominations, particularly focusing on climate change and building scientific literacy in the Church. More about Matthew: [matthewdgroves.com/about](http://matthewdgroves.com/about)



## VERONICA FRANS

is an ecologist and Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University, specializing in human-nature interactions, conservation, and theory. She loves engaging with communities on topics of science, faith, and creation care, serving as a professor at Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies and Vice President of Christian Women in Science (American Scientific Affiliation). She is a member of Every Nation Church.

More about Veronica: [canr.msu.edu/people/veronica-frans](http://canr.msu.edu/people/veronica-frans)



## DR. JAY MATENGA

serves as the Director of Global Witness and Executive Director of the Mission Commission for the World Evangelical Alliance. He is of mixed New Zealand Māori and European heritage, born to a solo mother in an impoverished situation. Jay came to know the Lord at 16 through the witness of a friend's parents. In 1990, his direction was shifted toward missions service by the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course, and he and his wife Pauline have dedicated their lives to strengthening participation in God's mission ever since. Jay's formal training has resulted in a BMin from Worldview Centre for Intercultural Studies (Aus), an MA from All Nations Christian College (UK) and a Doctorate of Intercultural Studies from Fuller School of Intercultural Studies (USA).

More about Jay: [worldea.org/leader/jay-matenga](http://worldea.org/leader/jay-matenga) and [jaymatenga.com/about](http://jaymatenga.com/about)



## SHAMISO WINNET MUPARA

is the Founder and Executive Director of Environmental Buddies Zimbabwe – a leader in reforestation, afforestation, waste management, and resource conservation. Shamiso holds a Master's in Environmental Science, Certificate in Occupational Health & Safety, and a Bachelor's in Environmental Studies and Sociology. Her passion to restore native forests stems from her upbringing in the rural areas of Zimbabwe, where she witnessed how the effects of massive harvesting of forests impacted women and girls. In addition to her work to address environmental challenges, Shamiso also assists with school fees for students in her former primary school and takes care of the aged in her community.

More about Shamiso: [ebztrust.org/shamiso-w-mupara](http://ebztrust.org/shamiso-w-mupara)



## MARQUS COLE, ESQ.

is on staff as a Community Pastor at Grace Snellville in the suburbs of Atlanta, and he is the Director of Church & Community Engagement at the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN). Marqus holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Georgia State University and a Juris Doctorate from DePaul College of Law. Marqus was trained as part of the initial cohort of the Racial Justice Training Institute; he has subsequently mentored others and remained an active part of the national community of advocates for a more just and equitable community.

More about Marqus and EEN: [creationcare.org/who-we-are](http://creationcare.org/who-we-are)



## PETER FARGO

is a Christ follower and a dad, which are the reasons he has made a lifelong decision: to join with others to stand in the way of runaway climate change. Peter co-founded Climate Vigil and authored the book, *A Million Prayers to Solve Our Climate Crisis*. Neither would have been possible without the love and support of his wife, Anna. Peter has worked on climate change and related challenges at the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Office of Senator John McCain. Peter earned a BA in Political Economy from Georgetown University and an MBA in Global Sustainability from George Washington University. Peter's greatest accomplishments in life are his two children, Rachel and Samuel.

More about Peter and Climate Vigil: [climatevigil.org](http://climatevigil.org)



## DR. RUTH VALERIO

is Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at Tearfund. An environmentalist, theologian and social activist, Ruth holds a doctorate from King's College London, and honorary doctorates from the Universities of Winchester and Chichester. She is Canon Theologian at Rochester Cathedral and her home church is part of the 24/7 Prayer Network. She enjoys living sustainably - practicing what she preaches and inspiring others as she does so - in the South of England with her family. She is the author of *L is for Lifestyle: Christian Living that doesn't cost the earth*, *Just Living: Faith and Community in an age of Consumerism*, and the children's book *Planet Protectors: 52 ways to look after God's world*. She also wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2020 Lent book, entitled *Saying Yes to Life*. Ruth is a regular contributor on Radio 4 and the BBC World Service.

More about Ruth: [ruthvalerio.net/about-me](http://ruthvalerio.net/about-me) and [tearfund.org/about-us/our-team](http://tearfund.org/about-us/our-team)

# SHEET MUSIC LINKS FOR CLIMATE VIGIL SONGS

*God of Grace and Mystery*

*Where Were You?*

*Lord, Have Mercy*

*Declaring Glory! (Earth Sings Its Refrain)*

*Hosanna! (Will You Rise?)*

*The Kingdom is Coming*

*Bring in the Year of Jubilee (Psalm 37)*

*Good Lord, Deliver Us*

*Water to Wine*

*Brother Sun (Giving Glory!)*

*Keep Watch and Pray*

*Satisfied*

*The Promise*

*All Creatures Lament*

AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD AT  
[CLIMATEVIGIL.ORG/ALBUM](https://climatevigil.org/album)



# THANK YOU FOR REFLECTING ON CLIMATE VIGIL SONGS WITH US!

Are you ready to get involved? Please visit [climatevigil.org](https://climatevigil.org) to learn more about the Climate Vigil movement, and consider signing up to host or join a vigil in your local community.

For additional free resources – including Bible studies, sermon starters, and more from our partners – we encourage you to check out [climatevigil.org/album](https://climatevigil.org/album).

May the Lord bless you with faith and courage to join with others and help end our climate crisis.

**“For nothing will be impossible with God”**

Luke 1:37

