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USG/UISG SECRETARIAT

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

**June 5<sup>th</sup>** is an important day for all persons in our global village but especially for those of us committed to living the Good News of peace and justice. *World Environment Day* was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and has been commemorated in a different city each year with an international exposition through the week of June 5. This year Mexico hosts the events.

*World Environment Day* is a vehicle through which the United Nations

- stimulates world wide awareness of the environment
- enhances political attention and action.

See the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org).

You are invited and asked to share with your members the enclosed prayer for this day. It was developed by members of the USG/UISG Commission for Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation in Rome. The dream of the members is that all consecrated religious throughout the world will not only be aware of this day but join in prayer with our brothers and sisters, friends and collaborators everywhere on this day. And so we encourage the adaptation and use of this prayer in any ministry setting where you are.

This day invites us to action alongside prayer. We encourage participation in UNEP's *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign* where individuals, families, communities, organizations, business and industry, civil society and governments, and churches are being encouraged to plant trees and enter their tree planting pledges on the web site: (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>). The campaign strongly encourages planting indigenous trees, or other trees appropriate to your local environment.

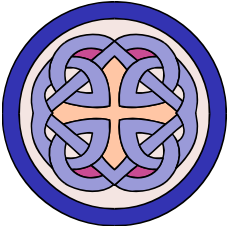
Another way of taking action is to inform yourself and your community about the upcoming Copenhagen Conference of Parties, December 7-18, 2009 (<http://en.cop15.dk>). This gathering of 189 major governments is the 15<sup>th</sup> such climate change conference aimed at combating greenhouse gas emissions. It will work towards a new global climate agreement (post Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012) that incorporates all the countries of the world. Approaches to forestry and carbon trading are some of the key issues this year.

- How is your local church engaging in these issues?
- Will you raise the issue? Where is the voice of our church?
- Find out how your government is acting on these issues.

Lobby your government to make your voice heard on the issue of climate change.

Finally, we propose you consider reading and reflecting on an ecological resource, developed by a working group of the JPIC Commission, entitled '**Earth Community: In Christ through the Integrity of Creation towards Justice and Peace for All**'. It can be accessed at:

[http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN\\_creation](http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN_creation)



## ***WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY***

### **Prayer**

**June 5, 2009**



This prayer unfolds in **three movements**: *celebration, lamentation, response*. Adapt. Be creative in your use of music, drama and space. Choose from among the scripture offerings. Or you might choose to pray one movement each day.

**Setting:** might you choose a location for this prayer where our hearts and minds, sight, touch and hearing will be moved to conversion? Where in your local place is the environment suffering?

## Opening Song

## Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we gather today with people everywhere to observe World Environment Day.

You call us to be in solidarity – through our prayer and actions – with people adversely affected by climate change.

We recognize that Earth will only be our home as long as we learn to respect and care for the whole community of life and learn humility about our place in it, that we take action to protect and restore the integrity of life systems, and that we work for sustainable development for all people.

Change our hearts. Fill our hearts with a burning desire for your ‘kingdom’ where you live and reign for ever and ever, Amen.

## Movement I: Celebration

Earth ( plant and animal life )

Gen.1:9-12, 24-25; Job 12:7-10; Num 35:33-34

R. *God saw that it was good.* ( could be sung )

Fire (sun and moon and light)

Gen.1:3,14-19; Acts 2:1-4; Heb. 12:29; Ex. 3:1-6; 13:18,21-22

R. *God saw that it was good*

Wind ( life and spirit and breath )

Ezek. 37:5; Ps. 104:3-4; Acts 2:1-4

R. *God saw that it was good*

Water ( seas and rivers and oceans and all water creatures )

Gen. 1:9, 20-23; Isa. 44:3a; 55:1; 2Kg. 5:14; Rev. 22:1-3

R. *God saw that it was good*

Human Life ( woman and man )

Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 18, 21-22;

R. *God saw that it was good*

PAUSE for silence / sharing / response – perhaps Pss. 19:1-7 or 104 or 148

## Movement II: Lamentation<sup>1</sup>

Scripture: Num. 35:33-34; Isa. 24:4-6; Ezek. 34:1-22 (or 17-18); Rom. 8:22

Sung response after each: *Lord have mercy*

- We have increased our dependence on and use of non-renewable energy. Many of us prefer cars to public transportation. We increase rather than decrease our carbon footprint.

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<sup>1</sup> For information and data about climate change see “Earth Community” JPIC Commission of USG/UISG, 2009. [http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN\\_creation](http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/EN_creation)

- We continue to use water as a commodity while 2/3 of the world population lives with water scarcity or stress.
- We destroy many of our forests and mismanage others.
- Our tropical forests and coral reefs are under threat from human activity, and yet both could be sources for life, food and health care.
- We contribute to global warming such that our glaciers retreat and shrink, putting all life forms at risk. Flooding and droughts put the food security of hundreds of millions at risk.
- We contribute to global warming such that increased sea and air temperatures result in rising sea levels, putting whole islands and their inhabitants at risk.
- We do not alter our ways and sufficiently care for or welcome those migrants and refugees displaced by drought, flood, or lack of food.
- add your own ...

***PAUSE for silence and prayer:***

Enduring God, hear our prayers

as we bring these our hurts and hopes, our fears and our faults before you.

Bind our hurts, encourage our hopes, comfort our fears, forgive us our faults.

Through the presence of your Holy Spirit dwelling in us,

empower us to remain steadfast in the hope and light and promise of the gospel revealed to us in your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.<sup>2</sup>

**Movement III: Response**

**Earth Charter<sup>3</sup>**

I / We, [Name], stand at a critical moment in Earth's history,  
a time when humanity must choose its future.

As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile,  
the future at once holds great peril and great promise.

To move forward we must recognize that

in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family  
and one Earth community with a common destiny.

We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society

founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of  
peace.

Toward this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one  
another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

We invite you to pray this in a variety of ways, pausing between each reading.

- in the first person plural: I, \_\_\_\_\_, stand at a critical moment ...
- in the second person plural: We, (Christians / the name of your congregation / name of school or parish or other group), stand at a critical time ...

*Silent prayer /Sharing of Reflections*

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<sup>2</sup> Shrowder, Jeff. *Our World, Scattered Seeds: Worship Resources for Today's Church*, The Joint Board of Christian Education, Melbourne, 1994, pg. 93.

<sup>3</sup> For the full text and other ideas go to [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)

**Scripture** (to help reflect on themes in the Earth Charter preamble above):

*about wonder & awe, reverencing life in all its forms:* Lk. 1:46-55; Rev. 4:11

*about choosing:* Dt. 30:19; Rev. 3:14-15; Jn. 10:10b

*about interconnectedness:* 1 Cor. 12

*about vision, promise:* Rev. 21:1a, 5a; Isa. 65:17a

*about responsibility and action for the common good:* Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

MDG 7      Ensure environmental sustainability.

MDG 8      Develop a global partnership for development.

UNEP's      *Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign:*  
<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/>



- Closing Prayer: “To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature” (from Earth Charter). All praise to you God for your goodness to us. Give us hearts of flesh to rejoice in your gifts, to beg pardon when we err, and to live justly. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus, who lives and breathes among us. Amen.