



You save humans and animals alike, O Lord

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We would like to publish as many dates and events for the Ecumenical Day of Creation as possible at www.schoepfungstag.info. We kindly request you to send information on dates and services.

Many thanks!
Your Ecumenical Centre

Humans and animals in God's creation – living together in responsibility

“You save humans and animals alike, O Lord” - this year’s motto for the Ecumenical Day of Creation focuses on our fellow creatures, the animals. Animals are all around – sometimes in plain sight, sometimes hidden. Whether they are loud or quiet, they always belong to our world, even if we often take no notice of them. The ant on the ground in the forest, the birds above our heads, the fish in the sea or even the mostly unpopular insects in our cellars at home. Humans and animals have an age-old relationship that has not always been marked by respect and care, but in most cases by hunting, killing and extermination. Humans have often brought guilt upon themselves in dealing with their fellow creatures. We are responsible for the extinction of species, for the abolition of biodiversity and for the disappearance of complete types of creature from the face of the earth. Every year, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) publishes a Red List of Threatened Species, which is an important tool for analysing biodiversity. In the current list of October 2024, the IUCN assessed almost 4,000 species as threatened with extinction. The loss of biodiversity is perhaps one of the least heeded natural catastrophes worldwide. Countless species disappear noiselessly from the earth every year. The latest findings assume that humans play a significant role in the rapid extinction of species. The main reasons are habitat loss, overfishing and poaching. Environmental pollution, the climate crisis and the displacement of native species also play a decisive role. Nevertheless, all living creatures have their function and place in the complex structure of the terrestrial system. The disruption of this ecosystem by the extinction of species has direct consequences for us humans and ultimately threatens the basis of all life.

The psalm verse “You save humans and animals alike, O Lord” reminds us of our responsibility towards our fellow creatures. It puts us on an equal footing with them, making us realise that with their existence they are praising God, the Creator of all life. St Francis also reminds us of this in his “Canticle of Creation” (Il Cantico delle Creature):

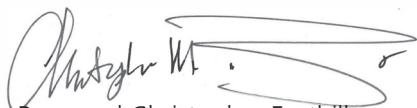
“Be praised, my Lord,
through all your creatures.”

Whether farm animals, wild animals or pets (wanted or unwanted), animals have been part of God’s creation plan from the beginning of the world. It is our task as humans to use our minds to preserve and care for the animal world and not to feel superior to it, thus only doing. This applies in particular to farm animals; we are paying special attention to them since we have chosen Haus Düsse as the venue for the central celebration of the Ecumenical Day of Creation. It is necessary to strike a balance between the human need for food, the

interests of agriculture and ultimately the requirements of the end consumer, who wants both the use of modern technologies and appropriate and adequate conditions for the life and death of the animals. We experience this tension in concentrated form in everyday life and at the meat counters in the supermarket. But one thing remains indisputable: thoughtless excessive consumption of meat must be reduced.

With its motto "You save humans and animals alike, O Lord", the Ecumenical Day of Creation aims to open up a space for discourse on precisely such areas of tension, in which different opinions on animal welfare and animal ethics can be expressed, where people listen to one another and search jointly for an ethically responsible treatment of animals, based on Christian principles.

I hope that the choice of this year's motto will make us more attentive to animals, whether in the narrow or the broader context, and that we will learn to be grateful for the different animal species on earth, recognising in them a signal of God the Creator in all his diversity and abundance. I hope that the motto will inspire us to treat animals as equals and with respect, to protect and preserve them and thus fulfil the will of God the Creator. I would like to thank all those who contribute to the preparation of the Ecumenical Day of Creation, who prepare and organise a celebration in different places in Germany, and those who are inspired by the motto to treat animals differently. I would be delighted if this service booklet were to inspire a follow-up celebration and pass on ecumenical impulses for a successful and newly reflected relationship between humans and animals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Easthill', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Reverend Christopher Easthill
Chairman of the ACK in Germany

God saves humans and animals

On the central celebration of the Day of Creation 2025 in Haus Düsse – Bad Sassendorf (NRW)

More and more people see their pets as their most important companions in life. They brighten up their days and banish loneliness. In the reflection on climate change and the future of food production, it is becoming increasingly important to address the appropriate way of treating livestock. Animal welfare is the keyword that is becoming increasingly important in animal husbandry. In Westphalia, animal breeding and meat production are an important factor in agriculture. And so it is fitting that the focus of this year's central celebration of the Day of Creation in the ACK North Rhine-Westphalia region is on animals as our fellow creatures. We are glad to be hosting the central celebration this year and to be guests at Haus Düsse, the research and training centre of the NRW Chamber of Agriculture in the Soest Börde. This centre is working on developing animal husbandry concepts that are more sustainable, future-oriented and socially acceptable. The focus is on approaches that improve animal welfare and reduce environmental damage.

The psalm verse that we have chosen as our motto names humans and animals equally as God's creatures who are under his protection. The creation story in the Bible speaks of human responsibility for creation when it says: "God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." (Gen 1:28)¹ It was a misconception that for a long time this was taken to infer the superiority of humans as creatures with the right to exploit animals and plants for their own purposes. A little later in the book of Genesis, God holds his hand in the same way over Noah, protecting him, his family and the animals: "Of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female." (Gen 6:19) In other places in the Bible, animals such as the donkey, for example, are given an important role in the story of salvation. Balaam beats his donkey three times, even though it was saving him from the sword of God. God then asks him: "Why have you struck your donkey these three times?" (Num 22:32) According to Jewish interpretation, this is a plea against cruelty to animals. On his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus rides on a donkey (Mt 21:7). On the one hand, this fulfils the Old Testament promise: "Look, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey." (Zech 9:9) And with his claim to power as the Messiah, Jesus sets himself apart from other rulers who ride on horseback as they assert their worldly claim to power.

¹ All Bible quotations mentioned in the text are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

Finally, in popular tradition the donkey and the ox even came to the manger as eyewitnesses to the birth of the infant God.

This year, we believe it is worth taking a theological and spiritual look at the relationship between humans and animals in creation and gaining inspiration for the way we live. We encourage you to consider the relationship between humans and animals with a watchful eye and to shape it responsibly. May this service booklet provide you with helpful suggestions.



Dr Barbara Schwahn

Chairwoman of the ACK in North Rhine-Westphalia

The theology of fellow-creatureliness: God's mercy for humans and animals

When the psalmist cries out: "God, you save humans and animals alike" (Psalm 36:7), he opens up a space for us in which creation is not split up, but rather comprehended in its entirety. Here, humankind does not stand alone before God, but in a community with all living beings - animals, plants and the earth itself.

This sentence presents us with a challenge because it detaches us from an anthropocentric view of the world and brings a theology of fellow-creatureliness into play. God is not just the saviour of human beings, but the one who also includes animals in his mercy. What does this mean for the way we treat them?

In the eyes of the Bible, animals are not mere resources, not inanimate objects at our disposal. They praise God with their very existence (Ps 150:6), they are under his protection (Jon 4:11) and they have a place in his kingdom (Is 11:6-9). God knows the birds of the air (Mt 6:26) and cares for them. If we take this seriously, we have to ask ourselves to what extent we can justify the instrumentalisation of animals or the indifferent acceptance of their suffering.

"You save humans and animals" - this verse is also a call to repentance. It invites us to see the world through God's eyes. Our culture often distinguishes between humans and animals, between dignity and worthlessness. But God acts differently: His love is universal and obliges us to take responsibility. The theology of fellow-creatureliness shows us that God's salvation is comprehensive. It is not enough to save the human being if the rest of creation suffers as a result. God's love is for all life – and so our actions should also be characterised by this: with respect, esteem and a deep awareness of the gifts that animals represent for our lives.



Marcus Bürger

Institute for Theological Zoology, Münster

Abbreviations

- EG Protestant Hymnal “Evangelisches Gesangbuch”, edition for the regional churches of Rhineland, Westphalia and Lippe, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1996
- EG Plus Supplement to the Protestant Hymnal (EG), introduced in September 2017 on the occasion of the anniversary of the Reformation by the Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau (EKHN) and the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck (EKKW), published by the Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau, Frankfurt am Main 2017
- F&L Hymnal “Feiern & Loben”, Hänssler Verlag, Neuhausen 2023
- freiTöne Supplement to the Protestant Hymnal (EG), new edition, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2023
- GA-L Garather Lieder, Strube Verlag, Munich 1997
- GodeLi Gott, deine Liebe, ein Lied [Winfried Heurich], Strube Verlag, Munich 2004
- GL Catholic Hymnal “Gotteslob”, edition for the Archdiocese of Paderborn, Verlag Butzon & Bercker, Kevelaer 2015
- KiGeBu Children's songbook “Das Kindergesangbuch”, Claudius-Verlag, Munich 2022
- ML “Meine Lieder”, around 240 of the most beautiful songs 1970-1995 [Fritz Baltruweit], tdv-Verlag, Bielefeld 1996
- M-LB 2 “Meine Liederbuch” (Ökumene heute), tdv-Verlag, Bielefeld 1992
- NAK-GB Hymnal of the New Apostolic Church, Friedrich Bischoff Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2014
- SSuG “Schöpfer, Schöpfung und Geschöpfe”, Songs for children and children's choirs, published by the Verband Ev. Kirchenmusiker in Baden, Strube Verlag, Munich 2009

Worship service of the ACK

on the Ecumenical Day of Creation 2025

Instrumental music

Entrance

Hymn (to choose from)

"So lang es Menschen gibt auf Erden" GL 425, (1-)3 / EG 427, (1-)3

"Auf, Seele, Gott zu loben" EG 690, 3- 5 / GL 865, 3-5;8 / F&L 500

"Alles, was Odem hat" EG 693 / GL 616

"Alles, was atmet" M-LB 2, B 166

"Gott ist gegenwärtig" (God is here among us) NAK-GB 103, 3

"Wenn ich, O Schöpfer, deine Macht" NAC-GB 267, 4

"Weil ich Jesu Schäflein bin" (Seeing I am Jesus' lamb) NAC-GB 269, 1+3

Liturgical welcome and opening

Do animals have a soul? This question, which many people ask themselves, is as old as mankind itself. Kallistos Ware, an orthodox theologian from Great Britain, comes to the conclusion when thinking about this that it is unsatisfactory to say that animals do not have a soul, and we should avoid making such a claim: "As living beings (...) they are to be approached with gentleness and tenderness; and, more than that, with respect and reverence."¹ That is why our service today for the Ecumenical Day of Creation cannot and will not answer this question. This year's motto is: "God, you save humans and animals alike", which is taken from Psalm 36, which we shall pray shortly. Even this short sentence, which sounds like a brief prayer, shows how close humans and animals are and what they have in common as they stand together before their Creator God. "Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds, praise the Lord," it says in another psalm, "Let them praise the name of the Lord for he commanded and they were created." (Ps 148)

1 Source: <https://www.orthodox-theology.com/media/PDF/2.2019/MetropolitanKallistosWare.pdf>

It is this praise, as well as man's responsibility for his fellow creatures, which is the message of this year's Ecumenical Day of Creation, which the members of the Council of Churches are celebrating together.

So let us begin our service:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Joint interaction by sharing the most beautiful animal stories

During the service, there is repeated opportunity for short but meaningful dialogues between the worshippers. This could lead to an exchange between neighbours about the best experiences and stories concerning animals. This can not only include the sharing of personal anecdotes, but also the experience of shared moments reflecting the special bond between people and animals.

Psalm 36

(The Living Bible)

Direction hint: Different persons can read the psalm passages and the commentaries.

"Sin lurks deep in the hearts of the wicked, forever urging them on to evil deeds. They have no fear of God to hold them back. Instead, in their conceit, they think they can hide their evil deeds and not get caught. Everything they say is crooked and deceitful; they are no longer wise and good. They lie awake at night to hatch their evil plots instead of planning how to keep away from wrong." (Ps 36:1-4)

That must be a horrible person who is described here. A creep, someone you wouldn't want to give the time of day to. He comes across as overbearing and arrogant, because he doesn't think of changing his ways. Whenever he opens his mouth, lies come out. Even in moments when he seems to be doing nothing, he is thinking how he can best harm his fellow human beings. Unfortunately, the psalmist is probably speaking from experience here.

An experience that we can also share today. One can surely recall various encounters with people who fit this description. Disappointment, lies and deceit from those who are only following their own advantage. It is a good thing that the psalmist does not stop here, but goes on writing:

"Your steadfast love, O Lord, is as great as all the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your justice is as solid as great mountains. Your decisions are as full of wisdom as the oceans are with water. You preserve men and animals alike. How precious is your constant love, O God! All humanity takes refuge in the shadow of your wings. You feed them with blessings from your own table and let them drink from your rivers of delight." (Ps 36:5-8)

What a picture! Sky, clouds, mountains, sea, animals – everything is in God's hands. He is the pioneer and perfecter of all creation. Just as he created the world in its infinity, he is kind, faithful, just and immeasurable.

And what a contrast to the first part of the psalm! Is the psalmist suggesting here that God's goodness also encompasses the sinner, the wicked person mentioned there?

Indeed, all people find protection and security in God's goodness. Animals and people experience God's help alike and can be richly blessed with his gifts.

"For you are the Fountain of life; our light is from your light. Pour out your unfailing love on those who know you! Never stop giving your righteousness to those who long to do your will. Don't let these proud men trample me. Don't let their wicked hands push me around. Look! They have fallen. They are thrown down and will not rise again." (Ps 36:9-12)

And now? Yet another restriction? Please only love those who know you, and only be faithful to those who are faithful to you?

And then it is a two-tier society after all: the evil people fall to the ground and cannot get up again, the good are showered with God's gifts. In a way, our sense of justice applauds this. Good things happen to the good, bad things happen to the bad – so everything is balanced out. And yet one strange thought lingers: if God's goodness is as wide as the heavens, then why is there not room for everyone?

In the end, we can join the psalmist in hoping and trusting that God's decisions are immeasurable and that mischief-makers will not have the last word.

Psalm 36 GL 40

(Possibly interspersed with the psalm)

Hymn (to choose from)

"Tanzen, ja tanzen wollen wir" GL 462, 2+3 / EG plus 154, 2+3

"Erfreue dich, Himmel" (Rejoice, all the heavens)

GL 467, 3 / EG 673, 3

"Geh aus, mein Herz" (Go forth, my heart, and seek delight)

G 503 / GL 462 / F&L 493

(can also be sung verse by verse between the psalm readings)

Prayer for forgiveness

Brothers and sisters in faith

God's word is a word of life. It is a word of creation.

It liberates and broadens our view,

but also lets us recognise failure and guilt in the past and present.

Let us pause for thought, and lay before God in the silence of our hearts all that burdens us.

- Short silence -

OR

Hymn "Nach deinem Bilde, Herr" GA-L, p. 26-27

God, creator of all life,

We confess that we are often thoughtless and selfish in our treatment of your creatures, animals, plants and the earth's resources.

We have exploited animals, destroyed their habitat and caused them suffering instead of honouring their dignity and treating them with respect.

Forgive us where we have neglected our responsibility for your entire creation.

Fill us with your creative love so that we may treat animals and the whole of creation with more awareness, respect and care.

As brothers and sisters, let us find ways to make your world more just and peaceful.

Amen

Old Testament reading

Gen 6: 9,11-14, 17-22 (NRSV)

These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring

two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.’ Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Die Schar der Heiligen

5. Ton

Johannes von Damaskus / trad. byz.

Die Schar der Hei - li - gen fand die Quel - le des Le - bens und das Tor des Pa - ra - die -

7

-ses, auch ich wer - de fin - denden Weg durch - die - Um - kehr, das ver - lor - ne Schaf bin ich,

14

Herr, ruf zu - rück mich, mein Er - ret - ter, und er - ret - te mich.

©: Radu Constantin Miron

New Testament reading

Mt 21:1-11 (NRSV)

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, ‘*Tell the daughter of Zion, I look, your king is coming to you, I humble, I and mounted on a donkey, I and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*’ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, ‘*Hosanna to the Son of David! I Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! I Hosanna in the highest heaven!*’ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

Hymn (to choose from)

"Jesus zieht in Jerusalem ein" EG 314 / GL 218

"Zaget nicht, wenn Dunkelheiten" (Fear thou not, when darkness hideth)
NAC-GB 178

"Der Hirte stirbt für seine Herde" (The Shepherd for His flock is dying) NAC-
GB 47, 3

"Jesus nimmt die Sünder an" (Sinners Jesus will receive) NAC-GB 160, 2

Sermon

Instrumental music or song (to choose from)

"Kein Tierlein ist auf Erden" EG 509 / GL 531

"Gottes bunter Garten" KiGeBu 136

"Schalom für Dorf und Stadt" M-LB 2, B 204

Symbolic action (suggestions)

Blessing of animals

If it is possible where the service is being held, a blessing of animals and people can take place. As an alternative for children, they can bring their cuddly toys with them and receive the blessing together with their dearest toy companions.

Joint interactivity

Exchanging personal animal stories with one another can be part of the symbolic action. Participants can share their favourite experiences with animals and get talking to each other.

Picture meditation on the meaning of animals

A reflection on the different functions and roles of animals in our lives

- Farm animals: their importance for food and work.
- Predators: their role in nature and the fascination with their strength and ferocity
- Wild animals: their independence and the wonder of their creation.
- Pets and assistance animals: their support and companionship for people, especially when they are lonely or in difficult life situations.



CHRIST BREAKING THE BONDS OF ANIMAL SUFFERING -

©: Dr Christina Nellist

Pan-Orthodox Concern for Animals

Creed

Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople (ecumenical version)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate
from the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried;
on the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven.
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
he will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father;
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified;
who has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Intercessions

- M1 Creator God, you have entrusted the earth to us with all its living creatures. We pray to you: let us treat your creatures with respect and ensure them protection and a place to live. Help us to respect the dignity of animals and to stand up for their welfare.
- C Sung response: *Sende aus deinen Geist und das Antlitz der Erde wird neu* (Send forth your Spirit and the face of the earth will become new) (GL 312.2)
- M2 God of justice, we pray for all those who bear responsibility in politics, retail and agriculture. Strengthen them to make decisions that promote the welfare of animals and ensure the sustainable, fair use of resources.
- C Sung response (GL 312.2)
- M3 God of mercy, we pray for the animals who suffer from living conditions that are inappropriate to their species, from inadequate care, from animal experiments or during transport. Touch our hearts and minds so that we may support efforts towards better conditions.
- C Sung response (GL 312.2)
- M4 God of wisdom, grant us a new awareness of our responsibility as guardians of your creation. Give us wisdom and courage to organise our way of life in such a way that we do not exploit animals, but live in harmony with them.
- C Sung response (GL 312.2)
- M5 God of love, we pray for all people who work for the protection and welfare of animals – in animal welfare organisations, animal shelters or by their personal commitment. Give them strength and perseverance to continue their important work.
- C Sung response (GL 312.2)

M6 God of diversity, we are exploiting your creation excessively and driving animal species to extinction. Help us to treat the gifts you have granted to us mindful and gratefully, so that future generations can also marvel at the diversity of your creation and enjoy their life within it.

C Sung response (GL 312.2)

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Announcement of the collection

Hymn (to choose from)

"So lang es Menschen gibt auf Erden" GL 425, (1-) 3 / EG 427, (1-)3

"Jeder Teil dieser Erde" (Every part of the earth) EG 672

"Du hast uns deine Welt geschenkt" EG 676, 6-9 / GL 568 / F&L 499

"Das gleiche Wort" M-LB 2: B 192

"O wie köstlich sind die Stunden" NAK-GB 346, 3

"Jesu, Lebensfürst, geladen" NAK-GB 176, 2

"Die Liebe ist viel stärker als der Tod" NAK-GB 243, 3

"Es ist etwas, des Heilands sein" NAK-GB 359, 1+3

Prayer for people and animals¹ (from the Orthodox tradition)

Let us pray with words of St Modestos. He was Archbishop of Jerusalem in the 7th century and is venerated in the Orthodox Church particularly as the patron saint of animals. Let us take these words that are more than a thousand years old and pray together with all the witnesses of faith for humans and animals alike:

God who is merciful and all-good, who in wisdom created every visible and invisible creature, who pours out his compassions upon all that he created, who through your all-good providence foresees and troubles over for all your creatures. You are he who opens his hand and fills all living things with goodness. To you we pray, O creator of all, hearken to this entreaty, and drive away every fatal sickness and danger from the oxen, horses, donkeys, mules, sheep, goats, bees, and any other animals in true need.

Hear the prayer of your servants who call upon you, the giver of life, just as you know and hear the bleating of sheep and all other cries for help from animals. Grant compassion on the suffering animals.

Lord, you are he who makes grass to grow for the cattle and green herb for the service of men. You preserved the animals in the Ark, as your goodness and compassion prevailed. Grant that the earth might be worked by the well-ness and multiplication of the oxen and that fruit may be harvested. Let your servants be preserved without any corruption and be able to partake of their very harvest, so that they, having all necessary things, might increase in every good work and glorify you, who grants every good thing.

For to you belong all glory, honour, and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

¹ Adaptation of an Orthodox "Prayer of St Modestos for the animals". St Modestos, Archbishop of Jerusalem (7th century), is venerated in a special way in the Orthodox Church as the patron saint of animals. It is interesting to note St Modestos' reference to the vegan diet prescribed by God in Genesis and to point out that the rescue of the animals in the ark was the result of God's compassionate kindness. It should also be noted that the animals mentioned are supposed to help with the work in the fields so that the fruits of the earth can be harvested and not that the animals themselves be killed.

Greeting of peace

M In the book of the prophet Isaiah we read: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, / the leopard shall lie down with the kid, / the calf and the lion and the fatling together, / and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, / their young shall lie down together; / and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, / and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den." (Is 11:6-8)

God promises us this peace for all of creation in the Bible. Let us give each other a sign of his peace and include all creatures in our desire for peace. May the peace of God be with us all at all times.

C And with your spirit.

Blessing

M God, the Creator of all life, bless us humans and all creatures here, which he has called into being in his wisdom. May he bless the animals in this region, the animals in the stalls, stables and houses, in fields and forests, rivers and seas.

May he fill the world with his goodness, so that all people, all animals and the whole creation can live in harmony. May we, the animals here with us and all living beings be blessed by the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

M Go forth in peace – and bring this peace to people, animals and the whole world.

C Thanks be to God, the Lord.

Song (to choose from)

"Rainbow" KiGeBu 137

"Segne uns mit der Weite des Himmels" KiGeBu 142

Instrumental music

Exit

The Ecumenical Day of Creation

Christians believe in the triune Creator God. They view with concern the over-exploitation of nature. For this reason, the European churches have committed themselves in the Charta Oecumenica to "establish an ecumenical day of prayer for the integrity of creation in the European churches". The Council of Churches in Germany (ACK) has adopted this self-commitment and introduced an Ecumenical Day of Creation which has been celebrated annually since 2010. The nationwide celebration usually takes place every year on the first Friday in September. The focus is on praising the Creator, personal repentance in the face of the destruction of creation, and practical advice for concrete steps to protect the threatened creation. In local parishes, the Day of Creation can also be celebrated on another day within the Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October. In this way, traditions that have already grown up in different places and regions as well as the dates of school and public holidays can be taken into account. The ACK strongly recommends that the Day of Creation be celebrated locally in ecumenical solidarity and denominational diversity by at least three different denominations.

This booklet contains the worship schedule for the Ecumenical Day of Creation 2025 under the motto "You save humans and animals alike, O Lord" (based on Psalm 36:7) as a suggestion for preparing and conducting your own worship services. Churches are invited to use this service booklet.

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Invitation to the central celebration 2026

The central celebration of the Ecumenical Day of Creation will take place in Marburg on Friday, 4 September 2026.
You are cordially invited to attend!

Further information can be found at:
www.schoepfungstag.info

In co-operation with:



Arbeitsgemeinschaft
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and with the members of the Council of Christian Churches in Soest and the surrounding area.