# Order of Service of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK) for the Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation[[1]](#footnote-1) 2017: “Higher than the earth and the heavens”

*The* ***hymns*** *in this service should be thematically appropriate to the motto “Care of Creation” and taken from hymn books used in your churches; wherever possible, they should be familiar to worshippers of various denominations.*

**Instrumental music** for the entrance

**Entrance**

**Hymn**

**Liturgical greeting**

**Antiphon from Psalm 103:**Bless the Lord, O my soul, blessed are you, O Lord.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
Blessed are you, O Lord.

**Old Testament reading**   
*Isaiah 55:6-13* (New Revised Standard Version)

6 Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

7 let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

12 For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 65

1 Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;   
and to you shall vows be performed,

2 O you who answer prayer!   
To you all flesh shall come.

3 When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,   
you forgive our transgressions.

4 Happy are those whom you choose   
and bring near to live in your courts.

5 We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,   
your holy temple.

6 By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,   
O God of our salvation;

7 you are the hope of all the ends of the earth   
and of the farthest seas.

8 By your strength you established the mountains;   
you are girded with might.

9 You silence the roaring of the seas,   
the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.

10 Those who live at earth's farthest bounds   
are awed by your signs;   
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

11 You visit the earth and water it,   
you greatly enrich it;

12 the river of God is full of water;   
you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.

13 You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges,   
softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

14 You crown the year with your bounty;   
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

15 The pastures of the wilderness overflow,   
the hills gird themselves with joy,

16 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,   
the valleys deck themselves with grain,   
they shout and sing together for joy.

17 Glory be to the Father and to the Son   
and to the Holy Spirit.

18 As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be,   
world without end. Amen.

**New Testament reading***Gospel according to Matthew 14:22-33* (New Revised Standard Version)

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.

26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.

30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**Music**

**Sermon**

**Instrumental music**

**Creed**   
The Nicene Creed (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  
form 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;  
with the Father and the Son  
he is worshiped and glorified;  
he has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in 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**

*The congregation (C) responds to each intercession with the sung response   
“You are with us! Remain with us!”*

L Lord, our God, united in faith and in love as brothers and sisters, we testify to our confident hope with our prayer: You are with us! Remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, we are thankful for the ecumenical fellowship in our country and in this town. May it become a sign of hope! Guide our steps towards one other in the spirit of obedience and assurance! You are with us! Remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, we thank you for the gift of your creation. Help us always to appreciate it anew and to care for it in faithful stewardship! You are with us, remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, we pray to you for peace in the world, especially in the Holy Land. Let us become messengers and workers for the peace that you alone can give! You are with us, remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, we pray to you for the victims of violence and injustice. Help each one of us never to tire of bearing witness to your righteousness and proclaiming it in our world! You are with us, remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, we bring to you those who are sick or dying, those who are in prison and all who suffer. Grant us hands that can help and words that give consolation, wherever there is need of healing. You are with us, remain with us!

C You are with us! Remain with us!

L Lord, our God, you are with us, remain with us! You are the Father of all, and your glory is above the heavens. United in faith and love as brothers and sisters, we repeat our requests in the words that your Son has taught us:

**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**

*The collection should be earmarked for a project which protects the environment.*

**Offertory** **Hymn**

**Exchange of peace**

**Hymn**

**Announcement of the procession**

**Music***or***Hymn**

**Exit**

**Procession** *The congregation leaves in procession through the cloisters of Lübeck Cathedral down to the Mühlenteich. In places where a procession is not foreseen, the closing prayers and the blessing may be spoken in the place of worship.*

**Hymn**

**Prayer** for the town/city*This prayer may be spoken not just in Lübeck, but at every place.*

Bless the people who live in this town,  
and let them find satisfaction and fulfilment.  
Bless their apartments and houses,  
and let them live peacefully together.  
Bless their streets and paths,  
and spare them from stumbling and accidents.  
Bless their bridges and landing stages,  
and let them hold hands across the waters.  
Bless the harbour and the ships  
and let strangers find a home.  
Bless the railway station and the trains,  
and let all people reach their destination.  
Bless the rivers and the lakes;  
and let no one founder in the struggle of life.  
Bless the churches and the towers;  
and let them proclaim your praise everywhere.  
Bless the flowers and the trees  
and let them be a source of strength and stillness.  
Bless [***name of town/city***], dear God, bless our town!  
And show us Christians, who are in fellowship with you,  
where we should be active in your name in our town.

**Blessing**

**Hymn**

**Background information: Ecumenical Day/Time of Prayer for the Care of Creation**

Christians believe in God, the Creator. They are deeply concerned about the devastation of the earth. Therefore the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I. invited “the entire Christian world ... to offer together with the Mother Holy Great Church of Christ (The Ecumenical Patriarchate) every year on this day [September 1] prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both in thanksgiving for the great gift of Creation and in petition for its protection and salvation.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The European Churches made his suggestion part of their “Charta Oecumenica”, which was proclaimed at Easter 2001: “We recommend the introduction in European churches of an Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Preservation of Creation.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Council of Churches in Germany (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland, ACK*) took up the recommendation and in 2010, during the second Ecumenical Kirchentag in Munich, established an “Ecumenical Day of Creation”. The Ecumenical Day of Creation is intended both to be a common witness to our belief in God as Creator and to remind us of our joint task in preserving God’s creation. This Day of Creation is to be celebrated each year on the first Friday in September. The initial celebration of the Ecumenical Day of Creation was held by the ACK in an Orthodox church in Brühl near Cologne. Today the Day of Creation is observed in cities all over Germany. The Council of Churches in Germany encourages all German Christians to celebrate this day and publishes suggestions for worship services and additional material well in advance of September so that people can use it to plan their own celebration. The worship material is an inspiration to engage in the “Season of Creation” from September 1 to October 4 (Feast of St. Francis). Please see for more information: <http://seasonofcreation.org/>.

1. For information on the Day/Time of Prayer for the Care of Creation see p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See: https://www.patriarchate.org/-/message-by-h-a-h-ecumenical-patriarch-dimitrios-upon-the-day-of-prayer-for-the-protection-of-creation-01-09-1989- [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: http://cid.ceceurope.org/who-we-are/charta-oecumenica/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)