





1 October 2023



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Asia Sunday

1 October 2023

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Foreword

Asia Sunday-2023: 'God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation'

The Asia Sunday in 2023 will be observed on Sunday, 1 October 2023. Every year, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) observes Asia Sunday on the Sunday before Pentecost. In certain years in the past, the date of the Asia Sunday observance was changed for special commemorations. In 2023, Asia Sunday is scheduled to be observed in conjunction with the 15th CCA General Assembly, which will be held from 27 September to 4 October 2023.

The theme of Asia Sunday–2023 is the same as the theme of the 15th CCA General Assembly: 'God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation'. The suffering and groaning of the creation are evident all around us. We stand at the crossroads of unprecedented progress and daunting challenges. We have come to understand and confess that the crises gripping the world are not merely the result of natural forces but stem primarily from our own choices, actions, and lifestyles. We must strike a balance between human development and ecological preservation, recognising that while technological advancements have brought undeniable benefits, they have also sparked inequalities and degradation that mar the beauty of God's creation.

The call to stewardship takes on new urgency as we are faced with planetary boundaries and the potential irrevocability of our impact.

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Psalm 24:1–2) and this sets the stage for a contemplative exploration of our faith's cardinal principle: that God's expansive love encompasses all creatures, from the smallest life forms to the vast ecosystems that shape our planet.

Rooted in this divine love, this specially prepared liturgy for Asia Sunday–2023 beckons us to rekindle our commitment to care for the earth as God's entrusted stewards. The Asia Sunday–2023 draws us into sacred dialogue with our Creator as we beseech our Lord for divine intervention, 'God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation'.

During the 15th CCA General Assembly, over 500 representatives from Asian and global churches, national Christian councils, and ecumenical partner organisations will meet in Kottayam, India. They will unite with local congregations in and around Kottayam to commemorate the Asia Sunday on 1 October 2023. We respectfully urge all CCA member churches, councils, and ecumenical partners to observe Asia Sunday–2023 on 1 October 2023. We also request special prayers as the CCA begins a new implementation period and continues its journey of accompaniment and of being an instrument of God for the Asian churches.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara General Secretary, CCA



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Asia Sunday–2023

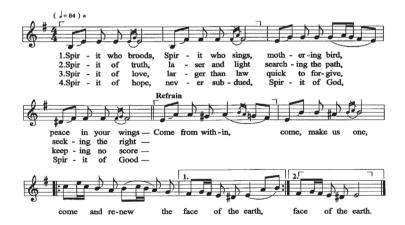
'God Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation'

Sound of the Drum and Flute

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"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:1-2)

∫, "Song to the Spirit"



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Elements on the Altar

(A beautifully decorated and creative altar or worship space may be prepared with elements depicting creation: flowers, plants, a basin or jar full of water, and a lighted lamp or candle. Seeds are to be prepared for planting in a pot full of soil. In one part of the liturgy, the seeds and the pot of soil will be used.)

Greeting

We gather in the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all creatures, Amen.

Praising our God, the Creator

God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.God separated light from darkness.God called the light 'Day' and darkness 'Night'.From then on, there was morning and evening.And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God called the expanse 'Heaven'.

And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." God called the dry land 'Earth', The waters gathered together, 'Seas'. God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth."

And God saw that it was good.



God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." God made the sun to rule the day, the moon for the night, The stars to give light on the earth, To separate the light from the darkness.

And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

And God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." God said, "Let us make [humans] in our image, after our likeness." God gave them the responsibility to care and nurture the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the livestock, over all the earth and over every creeping on the earth. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." **And God saw that it was good.**

God completed the work of creation. On the seventh day, God rested. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. For on that day, God rested from all the work completed. And God saw that it was good.

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♫ "For the Beauty of the Earth"



- 4. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child, friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild: Lord of all, to you we raise This our hymn of praise, This our hymn of grateful praise.
- 5. For your church that evermore raises holy hands above, offering up on every shore her pure sacrifice of love: Lord of all, to you we raise This our hymn of praise, This our hymn of grateful praise.

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Sound of the Bell

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever. In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever. Glorify the Lord, you angels, and all powers of the Lord, O heavens and all waters above the heavens. Sun and moon and stars of the sky, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever.

Glorify the Lord, every shower of rain and fall of dew, all winds and fire and heat. Winter and summer, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever. Glorify the Lord, O nights and days, O shining light and enfolding dark. Storm clouds and thunderbolts, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever.

"Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Now and Forevermore"



Sound of the Bell

Glorify the Lord, all the earth sing praise and give honour forever. Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth, Sing praise and give honour forever. **Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, O whales and all that move in the waters.**

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All birds of the air, glorify the Lord, Sing praise and give honour forever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild, and all you flocks and herds. O people everywhere, glorify the Lord, Sing praise and give honour forever.

I "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Now and Forevermore"



Glorify the Lord, all you people sing praise and give honour forever. Glorify the Lord, O servants of the Lord, Sing praise and give honour forever. Glorify the Lord, O spirits and souls of the righteous, Sing praise and give honour forever.

You that are holy and humble of heart, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever.

Let us glorify the Lord: Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit; sing praise and give honour forever. In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, sing praise and give honour forever.

Sound of the Bell

God of unchangeable power, when you fashioned the world, the morning stars sang together and the host of heaven shouted for joy; Open our eyes to the wonders of creation and teach us to use all things for good, to the honour of your glorious name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



🕽 "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Now and Forevermore"



Glory to you for the feast-day of life, Glory to you for the perfume of flowers, Glory to you for each different taste of fruit, Glory to you for the sparkling silver of early morning dew, Glory to you, O God, from age to age. For you are the One who blesses and feeds and sanctifies all creation, O Christ our God, and to you we give glory, together with your eternal Creator, and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages. Amen.

♫ "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Now and Forevermore"



Sound of the Chimes

Call to Confession

(At this point, printed photos of the destroyed and disrupted creation are brought by the youth and children and hold the images while standing during the time the prayers of confession are uttered. An alternative way to show such images is to flash them on the projectors or TV monitors.)

"The earth, our home, and the whole of creation groans in pain and despair from humanity's abuses. As one community in Asia and beyond, In humility, we confess the sins we have committed against God, our neighbours, and the whole of creation."



Prayers of Confession

God of creation, we are at fault in the degradation of the planet

and for our lack of action, to defend and protect the world you have made.

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We are guilty of contributing to global carbon emissions and to climate change.

We have been denuding our forests and mountains due to our greediness.

We are guilty of polluting the bodies of water for the sake of development.

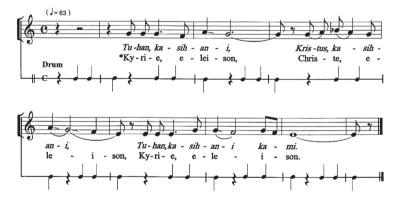
Forgive us, O God.

For as humans, we think that we are the centre of your creation.

Forgive us, O God, for neglecting the rights of the earth and the rest of your creation.

Forgive us, O God, for exploiting the earth's resources for our human benefit.

♫ "Kyrie Eleison"



O God of the heavens and the earth, we have sinned against your creation.

and disrupted the rich biodiversity due to our greed and selfishness.



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We are guilty of acts that contribute to the destruction of animals' natural habitats.

We are guilty of unsafe acts of mining that endanger the lives of communities.

We are guilty of neglecting the rights of the indigenous peoples whose ways of life are geared

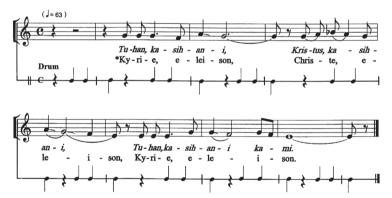
toward protecting the environment and their ancestral lands. We have been apathetic to the mining and deforestation activities conducted near our locations.

Forgive us, O God, for ignoring the importance of ecological balance over profit.

Forgive us, O God, for exhausting the minerals and precious stones from the earth.

Forgive us, O God, for destroying mountains, hills, and the earth.

♫ "Kyrie Eleison"



O God, who has made us in your image and likeness,

We have denied fellow friends of a better life by supporting powers and systems

that oppress, alienate, marginalise, dehumanise, exploit, and abuse them.

We have denied our siblings who have been displaced and forced into statelessness.

We have not provided them with an equal opportunity to

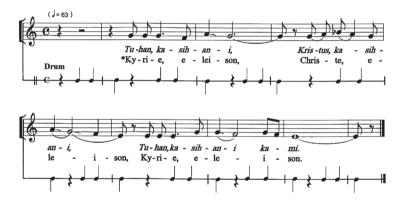


earn a sustainable living. Apathy and indifference have drowned us. We have not shown compassion and solidarity. We have turned a blind eye to your people's pains and sufferings. ۱_

Forgive us, when we choose to cover our ears; when we hear screams and shouts for help. Forgive us, when we have closed our hands for those who need our compassion and care.

Forgive us for neglecting the oppressed, deprived, and exploited by unjust powers and structures.

∬ "Kyrie Eleison"



Assurance of God's Love

May the fire of the Holy Spirit purify us from all our transgressions.

Receive God's mercy and the assurance of God's everlasting love like the morning dewfall upon the leaves, flowers, trees, and vegetation.

Rise in faith, and claim God's bounty of forgiveness and love, in the name of the One, Holy, and Living God. **Amen.**

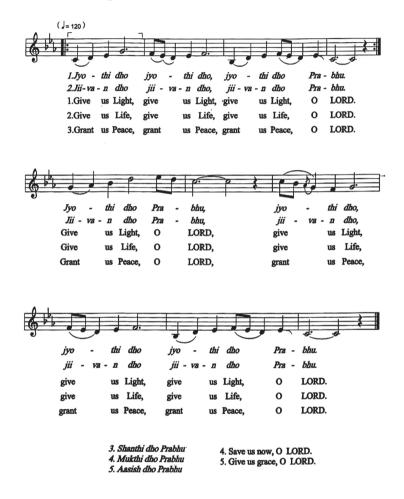


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Lighting of the Lamp

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□ "Give Us Light"



Prayer of Illumination

O Eternal Light, shine in the dark paths of temptation, selfishness, and greed! Illumine our minds and direct our ways that we may follow you, O great Shepherd.



God in Jesus, Word made flesh, Liberate our minds from the selfishness; inspire us with your words and actions, that we may shine your light to others.

Fire of the Spirit, holy flame of love, purify our thoughts and minds; Open our beings and hearts to discern and obey your will. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 104:24-33

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, great and wide; creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

Isaiah 65:17–25

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime, for one who



dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them: they shall plant vinevards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit: they shall not plant and another eat, for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long eniov the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD and their descendants as well. Before they call. I will answer, while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

Sermon

Prayers of Intercession

(Act of Planting the Seeds for every petition uttered; one person may be assigned to each prayer and after uttering the prayer, one will also be tasked to plant the seed in the pot.)

God of love and unity, we come to you in prayer with hearts contrite and repentant;

We utter supplications on behalf of your people in Asia and beyond.

As we utter prayers, we plant seeds to symbolise that new life and hope spring from you alone amid hardships and trials.



God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer

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Reader 1:

We pray for the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), an organ and a forum of continuing cooperation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia, and we pray for its pursuit of your mission and ecumenical ministry.

Loving God, we ask that you constantly reveal to CCA and its partners your purpose for the churches in Asia so that we may live together in common obedience as witnesses to your mission in the world.

🎝 "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)



Reader 2:

We pray for the ongoing CCA $15^{\rm th}$ General Assembly in Kottayam, India.

God of unity, bless the gathering with your presence and guidance so that all may come together to celebrate faith and to reaffirm the unity of the fellowship in the ecumenical journey, to renew and restore God's Oikoumene;

while making visible the hidden purposes of God's working, making vocal the silent mystery of God's grace, and making credible God's intention to redeem all people and all God's creation.

♫ "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)





Reader 3:

We pray for those who have dedicated themselves to the leadership of the CCA: officers, the members of the different committees, and the church and ecumenical leaders in Asia.

Merciful God, grant them wisdom, strength, and courage to pursue firm actions geared towards the renewal and restoration of the whole Oikoumene.

♫ "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)



Reader 4:

We pray for the constituencies and members of the CCA, and their respective leaders, that they may be strengthened to continuously commit and work for the building of God's reign on earth.

God of wisdom and truth, grant them renewed hearts and souls, by the guidance of your Holy Spirit, so that they may follow your will and courageously carry out your mission amidst the challenges brought about by the changing times and the adversities of today.

♫ "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)



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Reader 5:

We pray for all the participants attending the CCA's 15th General Assembly to remember and pray for the people who need special concern and care:

For those needing food or drink or clothes;

For the sick and all those who are in pain;

For the disabled;

For those oppressed and wronged against, and for refugees and asylum seekers;

For those who are affected by human trafficking, domestic violence, statelessness, hate, discrimination, and indifference; For the othered, outcast, and marginalised;

May we embrace with courage the call you have given us to do ministry to those who are treated unjustly by oppressive systems and powers.

♫ "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)



Reader 6:

We pray for the churches gathered in common faith, challenged to proclaim the prophetic mission, and called to take part in the building of God's reign of unity, justice, reconciliation, and inclusion.

God of creation, Christ the Liberator, Spirit and Sustainer of Life, grant, we pray, that by your leading, O Triune God, the ecumenical journey of CCA may move forward with new horizons and visions in doing ministry and in fulfilling your mission here on earth. Lead our paths, and by your Holy Spirit, grant us courageous hearts to live out the faith you have gifted us to reshape the communities in Asia and beyond.



♫ "God Renew Us, Hear our Prayer"

(A seed is planted in the pot of soil while the response is sung.)



Concluding Prayer

God of peace, you have knit us together as one family in Asia and beyond. Listen to our prayers, we beseech you. Hear our earnest petitions. With the seeds we have planted for every petition we have uttered; may you grow in our hearts the compassion and hope that the world needs today for us to strive and work for the renewal and restoration of your creation. May your compassionate love bind us closer to you, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, who lives and reigns with you now and evermore. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer



♫ "The Church That is One" (2nd Stanza)

Pouring of Water into the Pot with Newly Planted Seeds

As water is poured on the newly planted seeds, we pray that God will pour down renewal through the Holy Spirit in our beings, in our families, communities, and the whole creation. (The leader or an assigned person will pour water into the pot with newly planted seeds.)



Call to Offering

Called to be partners with God in the renewal and restoration of the whole Oikoumene, come and offer gifts of life and blessing to God. Come, offer yourselves to the work of God in a broken and disrupted world.

Offertory

♫ "To the One Creator of All" (1st verse only)

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Celebration

Praise, thanksgiving, and honour be to you, Triune God, For the blessings you have bestowed upon the ecumenical movement in Asia:

The gifts of people and leadership, the gifts of talents and arts, The gifts of service and commitment to the welfare of all people and creation.

God of life, we are filled with gratitude. For blessing us with strength and wisdom in overcoming challenges and difficulties. For sustaining our lives throughout the years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

God of wisdom, we are thankful,

For the gifts of knowledge and science, the gifts of analysis and application. For the gifts of new insights and ways to bear your message to the whole of creation.

God of unity, we are thankful,

For knitting the churches in Asia together through the ecumenical movement,

For the life of faith shared together despite differences in culture, traditions, and theologies.

God of compassion, we are thankful,

For calling us your people to participate in the work of renewal of your creation.

For the shared responsibility of being stewards of your divine handiwork.



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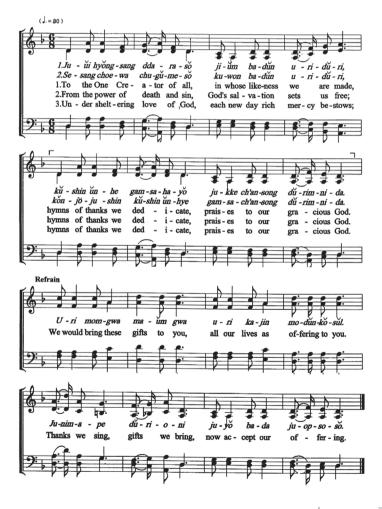
God of creation, our hearts are filled with your joy and blessing.

We praise and thank you for all you have made. We celebrate your divine imprint in all creation.

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All praise and thanksgiving, may our loud voices proclaim, Glory to You, Triune God—Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen.



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Benediction and Sending Forth

Go now, from this sacred gathering, and bear God's renewal and restoration. Live according to God's holy will as good stewards of creation. Walk in the path of God's righteousness, justice, and love. Journey with humanity and creation toward attaining life in its fullness. In the name of God, our Creator and Parent, In the name of Christ, God's Son, our Liberator, In the name of the Spirit Sustainer. **Amen.**

Sound of the Flute and Chimes

All hymns in this liturgy are from the CCA hymn book, Sound the Bamboo (2000):

- J For the Beauty of the Earth (No.171) Words by Folliot S Pierpint and Music by Mo-Li-Hua, Chinese Folk Song
- Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Now and Forevermore (No.23) Words by Hanaoka, Japan and Music based on Japanese

traditional melody

- J Kyrie Eleison (No.119) Music based on Moluccas melody from Indonesia
- J Give Us Light (No.58) Words and Music by Charles Vas, India
- J The Church That is One (No.239) Words and Music by A.K. Saragih, Indonesia
- J To the One Creator of All (No.75) Words by Won Yong Ra and Music by Un-yung La, Korea

The 'Glorify...' prayers on pp.9–11 are sourced from the Liturgical Materials for Honouring God in Creation, The Episcopal Church

You are encouraged to make a special Asia Sunday Offering and contribute to

CCA's Asia Solidarity Relief Fund

CCA Bank Account Details

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Account No.	: 295-4-709594
Account Type	: Multi-currency account
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"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it' (Psalm 24:1–2). This sets the stage for a contemplative exploration of our faith's cardinal principle: that God's expansive love encompasses all creatures, from the smallest life forms to the vast ecosystems that shape our planet. Rooted in this divine love, this specially prepared liturgy for Asia Sunday–2023 beckons us to rekindle our commitment to care for the earth as God's entrusted stewards."

(from the Foreword by the CCA General Secretary)

