



Shalom



Listen to the  
Voice of creation  
SEASON OF CREATION 2022

The Burning Bush  
Ex 3:1-12

Dear Sisters, Associates, Colleagues and Friends!

With this letter we share with you a Prayer Service for the Season of Creation and International Day of Peace. From September 1 to October 4, Christian churches celebrate the *Season of Creation*, during which they pray for the protection of God's creation. They also call for all to take responsibility for God's creation and to act. This period includes the UN *International Day of Peace* on September 21.

### Themes

The themes "*Listen to the voice of creation*" for the Season on Creation and "*End racism. Build peace.*" for the Day of Peace at first seem to be in a certain tension: Creation as something made "very good" by God; racism made by humans. The symbol for the *Season of Creation: The Burning Bush* reflects this tension. The thorn bush in the book of Exodus is a place of God's encounter with Moses. In the symbol, it seems as if the world is set on fire. This reflects the reality of our earth. God's creation is on fire! If we continue reading about God's encounter at the thorn bush, we see that God heard the cries of his afflicted people and of creation. God sent Moses and now us to lead the people out of their distress.

### What We Can Do

Pope Francis, in his message for the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2022*, urges us to repent and change harmful lifestyles and systems: "The sweet song of creation invites us to practice an 'ecological spirituality' (*Laudato Si'*, 216), attentive to God's presence in the natural world. It is a summons to base our spirituality on the 'loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion' (*ibid.*, 220)." Are we able to recognize in any of our actions

- ... that we do it on holy ground?
- ... that we are in the presence of God?
- ...that each human being is the dwelling place of the divine?

It is becoming more urgent each day to respond to the challenges of climate change. We can start in small ways with choices we make daily. Let us think about what we need to do in our communities, families, work places and public institutions to counteract the *burning of all life in our planet* . It is incredibly exciting to also consider this with younger children.

We also hear about people who are deprived of their human dignity because of racism. The theme of this year's International Day of Peace "End racism. Build peace." is an invitation for us to consider to what extent we have contact with people who are victims of racism. Is our knowledge of this reality based only on what we see in the media or also on what we personally experience? Let us take heart and invite people from diverse backgrounds (different nationalities, cultures, social classes) to a personal exchange about their life situations. The

important thing is that people feel that they are respected and that they have a human dignity given to them by God. That is certainly of great value in contributing to peace.

### **Creating a Prayer Setting**

We suggest creating up a prayer setting for the Season of Creation and the International Day of Peace. Create a *Burning Bush* made of *thorny* branches to be a central element in the chapel or prayer space until the end of the Season of Creation, October 4. All visitors are invited to help create this bush by hanging colored flames or the name of a particular concern about the environment or violations of human dignity, on the dry branches, the *Burning Bush*. We also suggest posting in the chapel or a larger public space an **invitation** for a prayer for creation in conjunction with a prayer for peace.

Blessings!

*Prepared by the Shalom Contacts from the European Shalom Branch for the SSND Shalom Network.  
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