ECErN.org

ECErN newsletter 2026 No. 3

Oct 22, 2026 · @Tom

European Christian Ecotheology Research Network

Dear colleague!

Thank you for registering as a participant in ECErN.

Today, the newsletter contains the following:

1. Save the date: ECErN conference in Koper, Slovenia, 21–23 October 2027
2. News from the ECErN Annual Meeting in Rome
3. Ecothe – Journal of Ecotheology approved as a scholarly journal
4. New publications
5. ECEN gathers in Brussels for its 16th Assembly
6. News from SOFTE
7. Events, courses and resources
8. ECErN at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP17) in Yerevan

We hope you will enjoy the newsletter. Feel free to share it with others and to recruit more colleagues to participate in the network.

Sincerely

Professor Tom Sverre Bredal-Tomren (Chair)

1. Save the date: ECErN conference in Koper, Slovenia, 21–23 October 2027

The next ECErN conference will be held on **21–23 October 2027** at the Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Science and Research Centre Koper (ZRS Koper), Slovenia. We are grateful to our vice chair, Nadja Furlan Štante, and her colleagues for

hosting us. The conference at the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, announced in our previous newsletter, has been postponed to a later year.

We warmly encourage all members to **mark these dates in their calendars now** and to start thinking about a paper. The conference is a chance to present ongoing research, receive feedback from colleagues across Europe and beyond, and strengthen the network. Early-career researchers and doctoral students are particularly welcome. A call for papers with the theme and practical details will follow in a later newsletter.

Travel: Koper lies on the Adriatic coast, close to the Italian border. The nearest airport is Trieste (TRS), about an hour away by car or shuttle. Ljubljana (LJU) and Venice (VCE) are also options, roughly 1.5 and 2.5 hours from Koper.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Koper!

2. News from the ECErN Annual Meeting in Rome

ECErN held its annual meeting in Rome on 1 July 2026, during our second conference. Nikolaos Asproulis took the minutes.

Chair Tom Sverre Bredal-Tomren presented the annual report. The network now has 75 registered members, and three newsletters were sent out during the year. The report also looked back on our first conference, where all presentations were recorded, and on this year's conference in Rome. A new platform for sharing information within the network has also been set up. The report was approved without comments or objections.

The meeting expressed its wish for Tom to continue as chair, and he was re-elected. Nadja Furlan Štante was re-elected as vice chair, and the rest of the board was also re-elected. All board members serve a two-year term.

The meeting also discussed where to hold next year's conference. Following these discussions, the 2027 conference will take place in Koper (see above). The full minutes are included below.

Short minutes – 1 July 2026, Rome

1. Election of minute-taker Nikolaos Asproulis was elected to take the minutes.

2. Annual report Tom Bredal-Tomren presented the annual report, which covered:

- the members of the board
- the number of registered members (75)
- the newsletters distributed during the year (3)
- the first conference, where all presentations were recorded
- the second conference (Rome, 2026)

- the establishment of a platform for sharing information

There were no comments or objections to the report.

3. Elections All present wished Tom to continue as chair. Nadja Furlan Štante agreed to continue as vice chair. Tom was re-elected as chair and Nadja as vice chair. The rest of the board was also re-elected. All board members serve a two-year term.

4. Future conferences Nadja told the group about a large upcoming conference and asked whether ECErN could be involved. Tom asked whether there was funding available to host an ECErN conference at Nadja's institution. A possible conference there in early spring or autumn 2027 was discussed. Nikolaos will discuss the matter with his own team and with Nadja, and the two will report back on where next year's conference will be held.

3. Ecothe – Journal of Ecotheology approved as a scholarly journal

We are delighted to announce that *Ecothe – Journal of Ecotheology* has been officially approved as a scholarly journal at level 1 by the National Board of Scholarly Publishing (NPU). It is now listed in the Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, run by the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir). This is an important step for our field: research articles in ecotheology now have a dedicated academic journal of their own, and publications in Ecothe count as scholarly publications.

Ecothe is run by an editorial team affiliated with ECErN and is administered by the research group EcoSE at VID Specialized University in Stavanger, Norway. The first issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) was published on 30 June 2026. It contains articles on ecotheology as an academic field, Orthodox ecotheology, biblical perspectives, indigenous traditions from Madagascar, and the teaching of theology in a time of ecological crisis.

We warmly encourage ecotheologians, both established scholars and early-career researchers, to submit their work to the journal. **Publishing in Ecothe is free of charge** for authors.

There are also other ways to get involved:

- **Special issues:** You can propose a special issue linked to a conference, a workshop or a particular theme. This is a good way to publish papers from ECErN events and other gatherings.
- **Guest editors:** If you would like to serve as guest editor for a special issue, you are welcome to put yourself forward.

Call for manuscripts – third issue, spring 2027 We invite you to submit manuscripts for the third issue of Ecothe, planned for spring 2027. To submit, please first create your own user account on ecothe.org. With an account you can submit manuscripts, follow your

submission through the review process, and register as a reviewer.

Please share this news with colleagues and networks working on theology, religion and ecology. Read the first issue and find submission guidelines at ecothe.org. For questions or proposals, contact the Editor-in-Chief, Professor Tom Sverre Bredal-Tomren.

4. New publications

Bredal-Tomren, T. S., & Lund, A. J. (Eds.). (2026). *Sacred Earth, Shared Futures: Sustainability Education and Ecotheology Across Cultures* (Religionsfag Profil). Cappelen Damm Forskning. https://doi.org/10.23865/cdf.295

This open access anthology connects ecotheology with education for sustainable development. It grew out of the Akteo (Student Active Theology) partnership between theological institutions in Norway, Madagascar and Cameroon. Contributors from the Global North and South look at how theological education can foster ecological responsibility. Their chapters cover indigenous knowledge and Cameroon's sacred forests, liturgy, storytelling, *Laudato Si'*, intercultural and online (COIL) learning, and curriculum development. The volume also includes a new Norwegian translation of Lynn White's classic essay "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis". The book is freely available as PDF, HTML and EPUB.

Dhingra, R. (2026). *Sacred Plants of India: The Science, Customary Law, and Divine Status of Plants Associated with the Gods.* Kindle Direct Publishing.

Dhingra, R. *Eco-Dharma in Celebration: Hindu Festivals and Environmental Ethics* (Eco-Dharma Publication). Kindle Direct Publishing.

Dr. Ritu Dhingra currently chairs the Faith, Spirituality, and Nature Specialist Group under the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP).

5. ECEN gathers in Brussels for its 16th Assembly

The European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), to which ECErN is affiliated, held its 16th Assembly in Brussels from 29 August to 2 September 2026. More than 50 participants from 15 countries gathered under the theme *"Renewing our passion for creation in a time of trial"*.

The theme reflected a difficult moment for Europe. This summer brought heatwaves, wildfires and severe droughts, while political attention has increasingly turned to war and military spending. The Assembly asked how churches can stay committed to the environmental policies and actions that are so urgently needed.

Nicolae Ștefănuță, Member and Vice-President of the European Parliament, spoke about the need for Christians and political leaders to work together for European policies that protect both people and the planet. Two new books were presented by their authors: *How to Survive in a World in Crisis* by Ruth Valerio, and *Practices of Communion: The Task of an Integral Ecology* by Carmody Grey. The Assembly also highlighted the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action (2025–2034).

On 1 September, participants joined the worldwide launch of the Season of Creation. Rev. Frank-Dieter Fischbach, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, and Fr. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, General Secretary of COMECE, were present. Messages were given at a Catholic mass by Rev. Laurence Flachon of the United Protestant Church of Belgium, and at an Anglican service by the Ven. David Waller, Archdeacon of Gibraltar and of Italy and Malta.

Around twenty presentations showed how church environmental work across Europe has developed over the past decades. The Wash in War exhibition and testimonies from Ukraine made a particularly strong impression. They showed the real environmental cost of the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam, considered Ukraine's second worst environmental disaster after Chernobyl. The resilience of those affected by the war inspired participants to renew their commitment to their work.

ECEN was founded in 1998 and brings together churches and church-related organisations from across Europe. Its work includes greening churches, education, awareness-raising and theological research, in cooperation with the World Council of Churches and the Laudato Si' Movement. For more information, contact ECEN's executive secretary, Rev. Claire des Mesnards, at ecen@ecen.org.

6. News from SOFTE: change of leadership and next session announced

SOFTE, the French-speaking ecumenical society for theology and ecology, has a new interim leadership. At its general assembly on 10 July 2026, founding president Fabien Revol announced that he wished to step down. Members thanked him warmly for his visionary work. He first set up an ecumenical, French-speaking seminar, which led to several publications and a conference, and then founded the society in its current form. Since 2015, SOFTE has met every year to bring together theologians and Christian ecology specialists to address theological questions of ecology from an academic perspective. The assembly reaffirmed the society's ecumenical openness and its French-speaking profile, which draws participants from across Europe, Africa and the Americas.

Caroline Bauer will serve as interim president for one year while the society looks for a new president. Fabien Revol remains on the board as vice-president to ensure continuity. On behalf of ECErN, we thank Fabien for his outstanding work and wish Caroline every success.

The next SOFTE session will be held online on **6–8 July 2027**, in the afternoons from 14:30 to 18:30 French time, so that members outside France can take part. It will continue the cycle on a renewed relational anthropology that began in Geneva in 2023, this time with the theme of **evil**. A call for papers will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Contact: asofte2015@gmail.com

7. Events, courses and resources

"Creation Spiritualities in Dialogue" – online conference, 29–30 October 2026 This tricontinental online conference connects Africa, Latin America and Europe to reflect together on integral ecology: its biblical foundations, intercultural and indigenous voices, and community praxis for our common home. Besides presentations, there will be international discussion groups.

The conference is organised by partner institutions in Bolivia, Rwanda and Germany: the Facultad de Teología "San Pablo" in Cochabamba, the Catholic University of Rwanda, the Protestant University of Rwanda, and the Faculty of Theology in Trier.

Registration is free via the conference website. Registered participants will receive further information and the Zoom link.

EuARe 2027 – a meeting place for ecotheology, Münster, 18–21 May 2027 The tenth annual conference of the European Academy of Religion (EuARe) will be held at the University of Münster, Germany, on its new Campus of Theologies and Religious Studies. The theme is *"Being Human – Religions between Peace and Conflict"*. Our 2026 annual meeting and seminar took place at EuARe in Rome, and the conference is an important meeting place for the network. There is always room to present papers and panels on ecotheology, so we encourage members to submit proposals and meet colleagues there.

Key dates:

- Call for proposals (panels): 1 October – 18 December 2026
- Call for papers: 3 November 2026 – 21 February 2027
- Registration opens: 3 November 2026 (early bird)

More information: europeanacademyofreligion.org

Catechesis for ecological conversion – training course (in French) The Ecumenical Institute of Theology Al Mowafaqa in Rabat, Morocco, offers a training course on catechesis for ecological conversion in a hybrid format. Online sessions will run from November 2026 to March 2027, followed by an in-person session in March 2027. The course is designed for anyone who wishes to put education for ecological conversion into practice in Christian communities.

Contact: directeur@almowafaqa.com (Jean Patrick Nkolo Fanga, Rabat, Morocco)

"A Choice of Voices" – Advent resources from Eco-Congregation Scotland Rev. David J. M. Coleman, Environmental Chaplain at Eco-Congregation Scotland, is preparing Advent resources under the title *A Choice of Voices*, inspired by Isaiah 40. A new web page will offer full-length reflections from interesting places in Scotland. It will also include a daily video Advent calendar from 29 November to 24 December, which is still in production.

Find the resources at ecocongregationscotland.org/resources/advent-2026 and watch the trailer for the reflections on Vimeo.

Another conference in 2027: Religion & Spirituality in Society Grenoble, France (and online), 24–25 June 2027. The theme is "Re-enchantments of Yesterday and Today", with eco-spirituality among the sub-themes. religioninsociety.com

8. ECErN at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP17) in Yerevan

ECErN board member Dr. Louk Andrianos is taking part in COP17, the UN Biodiversity Conference in Yerevan, Armenia, from 19 to 30 October 2026. He attends as a delegate of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and as an ECErN researcher, in collaboration with the Faiths for Biodiversity coalition.

As part of this work, Louk has contributed to the *Common Round* report, a valuable document that we are glad to share with our members. [Download the report here.]

The WCC and its partners have also organised two side events and an ecumenical prayer service, in line with our aim to promote ecotheology and creation care:

- **Indigenous and Ecumenical Perspectives for the Triple COPs** – Tuesday 20 October, 11:00–11:50 (WCC side event)
- **Ecumenical Prayer Service for Biodiversity COP17** – Sunday 25 October, 18:00–19:00, St Anna's Church, Abovyan Street and Sayat-Nova Avenue, Yerevan. Organised by the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the WCC and Faiths for Biodiversity.
- **Youth and Faith Communities: Together for Biodiversity and Creation Justice** – Monday 26 October, 10:00–10:50 (WCC side event)

More information: biodiversity.faith



Earlier this autumn, Louk also took part in an online Prayer Service for Creation Day on 1 September 2026, together with Rev. David Coleman and Maria José Tejedor, as part of the Season of Creation 2026 ("Living Water").



Do you have news, publications or events you would like to share with the network? Send them to us for the next newsletter.

With best regards, The ECErN Leadership Team

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