



**The symbol for 2024 is:**

**The First Fruits of Hope**

Hope is an instrument enabling us to overcome the natural law of decay. Hope is given to us by God as a protection and guard against futility. Only through hope may we realize the gift of freedom in fullness. Freedom to act not only to achieve enjoyment and prosperity, but to reach the stage in which we are free and responsible. Freedom and responsibility enable us to make the world a better place. Only when we work together with Creation can the first fruits of hope emerge.

**Wisdom from Laudato Si**

“All is not lost. Human beings.....are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start....and [embarking] on new paths to authentic freedom *Laudato Si* 2015

**Holy Union Collegial Assembly 2017**

**We are missioned:**

**To live simply and risk sharing our resources, being in right relations among ourselves and with all of Creation.**

**Holy Union Collegial Assembly 2023**

Called to Holy Union, each of us carries a longing for oneness among ourselves, with God and with all of Creation.

**The theme for this year’s Season of Creation is:** *‘To Hope and Act with creation.’*

This theme is inspired by Romans 8:19-25 which reminds us of the connection between the significance of hope and stewardship of the Earth. This theme demonstrates that hope is not a passive, quiet or still state. Instead, it is to actively shine towards goodness and new life amidst struggles and obstacles.

**In the letter of Paul the apostle to the Romans,** the biblical image pictures the Earth as a Mother, groaning as in childbirth (Rom 8:22). Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his *Canticle of Creatures*. The times we live in show that we are not relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used.

And yet, there is hope and the expectation for a better future. To hope in a biblical context does not mean to stand still and quiet, but rather groaning, crying, and actively striving for new life amidst the struggles. Just as in childbirth, we go through a period of intense pain, but new life springs forth.

**Collegial Assembly 2023 Prayer**

God of Faithfulness

*Empower Us* to choose life for ourselves, others and all of Creation.

*Grace Us*

with the vision to see beyond the obvious, to recognize your presence in all that is unfolding.