

Sunday 27th June 2021

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.
God is ever present, around us and within us,
though separate let us worship together in God.

This Sunday we are holding a Climate Change Service. Churches across the UK are being encouraged to hold such a service before the 21st November and to register this with the Climate Change Group. There has never been a more important time in the life of our planet and so today we dedicate this time to reflecting in word, prayer and song upon the planet on which we live and depend. We will draw on many resources already available through the internet.

Suggested hymn Look at the world

Listen [here](#)

Prayer (taken from [Hope in God's Future](#) URC/Methodist/Baptist publication)

Wonderful God, Sometimes, as we immerse ourselves outdoors, an intoxicating sense of your presence steals upon our spirits. Myriad colours dance in a sunlit garden or park, and our hearts sing. The joyful chorus of birdsong sweetly fills and strangely deafens our ears. Awesome snow-capped mountains and tumultuous waterfalls speak to us of your eternal timelessness. Scurrying, flitting insects and the amazing variety of grasses absorb us on a lazy summer day. In six days you created the world, and then on the seventh, you stopped and paused to delight in your Creation, seeing its goodness and seeing our goodness, so that you trusted us to be caretakers with you. You call us in this kairos moment to pause with you, to take time, to drink in deeply the wonderful gift of Creation. Help us not to continue to carelessly spoil it in thoughtless, rushing lifestyles. May we deeply see, hear, smell, touch, taste and cherish the fragile inter-connected garden of the earth – your gift to us. Amen.
Lord's Prayer

Reading Genesis 1- 2:4

Watch the URC Youth and Children video story of creation (from 11m 20s – 20m)

Watch [here](#)

Reading Psalm 8

Suggested hymn In Christ our God took flesh
Tune Carlisle as shared by *all* that live
Listen [here](#) The rainbow and the breath of life
to *people*, purpose give:

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|---|---|
| 2. as shepherds, stewards, made
as partners in God's care,
to own the task but not the world
and balance toil with prayer. | 4. To learn from all the trees;
be taught by Mother Earth;
Consider birds, and read the skies
requires, in Christ, new birth. |
| 3. No ground, defence or plea;
extenuation, cause,
can justify that we deny
Earth's pain at flouted laws. | 5. Though damage dire is done
and hope's in short supply,
still may the Church, and folk of faith
change course, with love comply! |

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Reflection - [watch this challenging video from National Geographic](#)

Prayer

Gracious God, we have been slow to open our eyes to the damage we have done to the Earth. We have failed to recognise the effects of our pollution and plundering habits which have robbed other species of their habitats and homes and put the lives of other people in danger. We have stood by as politicians and governments have made selfish decisions benefiting the few whilst the majority struggle. May we change our hearts, minds and attitudes, remembering the challenge to care for the

world, and work to change our small part of the world whilst campaigning to bring the whole world into a harmony of care, conservation, and sustainable living. In Jesus name. Amen

Suggested hymn

Tune Lauadate dominum

Listen [here](#)

Creation renewed, its emptiness filled;
its brokenness healed, as God at first willed.
Old voices of chaos to order rescored,
with Christ as the root of each resonant chord.

Our vision is clear, but actions are dark;
we wound and destroy our precious earth-ark.
We break down our forests and poison our streams,
we murder our children and shut out our dreams.

Come, Spirit of power, and change us we pray,
for we would be changed and walk in the day.
Come, kindle within us our love and our care;
teach us to uphold all creation in prayer.

Then translate our prayer to action and deeds,
commitment to care for the world and its needs.
Come, Lord, recreate us, and help us to play
our part with you, making creation's new day.

David Fox

Reading

Luke 3:10 - 14

Video

[What can we do](#)

Thoughts

The videos we have watched make one thing clear this is a global issue and requires a global response. In November COP26 will meet in Glasgow, a global meeting to look forward and plan the possibility of a future for our planet. Without a plan there is no future because our actions have already set in motion the end of creation as we know it. Yet, it does not have to be that way, we can take steps to use our ingenuity to create a sustainable planet.

None of this is new, and we have books on our shelves which are older than we would like to admit that warned we need to change the way we do things. Government has begun to take steps, but it really is up to us, up to every human being to change the way we live and ensure our grandchildren have a future because without that their future is looking very uncertain.

So, what can we do? We have seen the bigger picture – as a species we need to stop using fossil fuels, change our diet and how we produce food, manage our oceans and rebuild our relationship with the planet and the species with which we share it, rewilding wherever we can to rehome and re-establish wildlife and the biodiversity the planet needs to survive. The question is how do we as individuals play our part?

One of the major factors in local change is the paving of gardens to accommodate cars. Paving does not allow the water to naturally soak away, instead it runs off and creates flooding and more importantly the water table is affected. In addition, we have fewer plants to balance the atmosphere and fewer habitats for wildlife. If we were less dependent on cars, we would not need to pave gardens. In the gardens we do have we could commit to using fewer pesticides and instead move towards organic gardening, working with nature to create balance. If we live with black flies for three weeks, they will become the food for many predators and the balance will re-establish naturally. We need to create our own compost, or support local councils who have composting schemes, stop using peat-based compost, grow more of our own food and create creature friendly habitats for the wildlife who will help to create a balanced eco system within our garden.

We need to be more energy efficient and when we must replace equipment ensure we buy AAA+ rated appliances, but we also need to refuse the temptation for new items for the sake of it, repair items when possible, reuse items, through charity shops etc, and if all else fails ensure we recycle as much as we can. We had an old leather sofa which had lost its fire labels so could not be donated, it

was destined for landfill, instead we broke it down and recycled the metal part, the wooden frame and kept the leather which Norman used to make kneeling pads for gardening. Recycling is not the first option, and we are all too aware that often what we think is recycling is simply the shifting of our problem onto the doorstep of poorer communities around the world.

Cutting back on the amount of energy we use will make a huge difference and so we should be using LED lightbulbs wherever possible, switch to a sustainable energy provider, and where possible turn down the heating by one degree and wear appropriate clothing if we are cold. Pollution is a major factor in the fight against global warming. World Wildlife Fund research has shown that humans have over 300 man-made chemicals circulating in their bodies, and we know what harm is being done to wildlife through the waste from our way of living. Our world is becoming clogged with plastic, much of it entering our food chain.

Living responsibly means refusing to accommodate single use plastic, using pump action sprays rather than aerosols as not only do they cut down on the chemicals required to emit the spray but they can be re-filled and re-used. We need to switch to environmentally friendly cleaning products and we need to save water. It also means not just changing what we eat and reducing our reliance of animal products it means cutting down on food waste as rotting food created methane gas which is part of the problem. Choosing locally produced food cuts our carbon footprint, working with neighbours to buy in bulk cuts our carbon footprint, buying organically produced food cuts down on pollution, ensuring that when we eat animal products the animals have been well cared for and reared appropriately rather than intensely cuts down on pollution, and finally supporting fair-trade ensures that suppliers in the poorest countries are able to sustain their families. It is also important to be aware of what our clothes are made from and how they are made, we should be buying fewer clothes made from sustainable fabrics which will not pollute our water system with plastic particles when they are laundered.

We have all experienced the frustrations and restraints of the pandemic, but it was noticeable that as lockdowns occurred the air quality improved. Many are desperate to go on holiday, but we should also be aware of our carbon footprint when we holiday. Trains are recognised as the most energy efficient means of travel apart from cycling and walking, with planes the least efficient. We are encouraged to take fewer holidays abroad and to ensure that we travel efficiently, long haul flights being less damaging than many short hop journeys.

All this seems prohibitive compared the way of life to which we have become familiar, but it is not nearly as prohibitive as finding we live on a planet which is dying. We have all seen apocalyptic films of end times brought about by natural disasters or alien invasion and none of us would want to find ourselves or our grandchildren living in such times but on our current path we are the natural disaster that is happening, our way of life is changing the planet's ability to sustain life.

Working together we can fulfil Jesus' message to share responsibly with our God-given gift of care for the planet. If we, as people of faith do not take this seriously then we should probably shut our doors. We have a message of hope, but we must be the hope and use our buildings, where we have them, to encourage and enable others to live responsibly and sustainably. Around the country there are many community initiatives such as repair cafes, tool exchanges, sewing hubs etc all of which encourage us to think deeper about how we live, some churches are already at the heart of this, but we could be also. As we face the challenge of the future, we need all our God-given creativity to play our part in creating Hope for the Future.

We are all encouraged to sign up to The Time is Now campaign which urges the Prime Minister and the Government to

- **Unleash a clean energy revolution** that boosts jobs across the UK, making our transport, power and housing fit for the future
- **Protect, restore and expand our green and wild spaces;** allowing nature to thrive, taking carbon from the air and boosting the nation's health
- **Leave no one behind** by increasing support to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change at home and abroad

The petition further urges - The UK must lead the world by ensuring our recovery gets us on track to net-zero emissions and limits the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees C. Our best chance of building a resilient economy goes hand in hand with tackling climate change. We are ready to play our part, and we call on you to join us.

You can find the petition [here](#)

Suggested Hymn **Touch the earth lightly**

Watch [here](#)

Prayers (taken from Hope in God's future)

God, who provides what we need for life in all its fullness, we thank you for the gift of energy, providing warmth, light, access to multimedia communications. May we be mindful of how we use this life-enhancing gift. Help us stop our careless squandering of it, aware of the big impact on climate change for poorer communities and future generations.

God create in us a new heart and renewed lives.

We thank you for the gift of transport, swift travel to diverse places. May we be mindful of how we use this life-enriching gift, which can also complicate and busy our lives. May we be disciplined about its frivolous and unnecessary use, aware of the big impact on climate change for poorer communities and future generations.

God create in us a new heart and renewed lives.

We thank you for the gift of diverse possessions, which bring enjoyment and status. Make us mindful to distinguish between passing wants, and true needs. To humbly recycle, re-use and reduce land-polluting waste. To see that true wealth does not rest in 'things'.

God create in us a new heart and renewed lives.

We thank you for creating us as inter-connected creatures. Make us mindful of the deep privilege of this. To honour our bodies by living a healthy lifestyle; loving, laughing, suffering alongside others; to honour the precious, finite resources of earth, that we might have life without depriving others of what is needful for their fullness of life.

God create in us a new heart and renewed lives.

In Jesus name Amen

Offertory

As we continue to worship apart but together, we pledge our commitment to sharing in the work of our church through our continued offering and by exploring new ways of living generously, and may we know your blessing on all we do. Amen

Suggested song

Tune Sine nomine

Listen [here](#)

Creator God, abundant life your mark,
You once poured speech into the formless dark
And from those words sprang forth a living spark
Your inspiration – Awoke creation

Throughout this world, in which we live and move,
All that we sense below, around, above
Displays the imprint of your longing love
Its revelation – Throughout creation.

But yet the earth is fractured, frayed and torn,
Poisoned, polluted, ravaged, scarred and worn
Its treasures plundered and its beauties scorned
Our transformation – Of God's creation.

From blight and guilt, we cannot walk away
Our will and actions shape the world today
And ours the greed, insisting on its way,
Whose depredations – Despoil creation.

Come Holy Spirit, challenge mind and heart!
Inspire our living so that we will start
To make those choices which may yet impart
Love's liberation – To your creation.

We pledge to touch all things with holy care
Until your coming Kingdom ends despair
Then all the world will witness and will share
The jubilation – Of healed creation.

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Blessing

May the blessing that is the knowledge of God, source of all being, the love of God discovered through Jesus and the inspiration of the Spirit which binds us together be with us on our journey this day and every day. Amen.