

Sunday 7th November 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 as we worship together governments and negotiators, campaigners and charities are in conversation in Glasgow at the 26th UN Conference of the Parties. The main topic of conversation is the planet Earth and the threat to its fragile ecosystem by the choices we make in the way we live. Many have suggested that this is our last chance to commit to the change needed to make future life on earth sustainable, and that is the near future rather than the distant future.

It is time to cherish the earth. So, this Sunday our worship focus is simply cherishing the earth and prayer for the future of life on earth.

Suggested hymn For the beauty of the earth

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

Let us take time to cherish the earth through four short films that explore four facets of creation, the earth, the forest, the ocean and the sky.

I am the earth – watch [here](#)

I am the forest – watch [here](#)

I am the ocean – watch [here](#)

I am the sky – watch [here](#)

Reading

Psalm 8 (Psalms for a quantum world)
Eternal God, source of all being,
your essence is woven throughout creation,
your love shines within the fabric of life.
From the laughter of a child,
to tears of joy glinting in the eyes of memory,
the sparkle of your love surprises us
and nourishes us.
When I look at creation in its glory and intricacy
I wonder at our place within all this,
but then I remember the laughter and the tears
and I know.
We are one with creation
for we are one with you
and together we are love.

Suggested hymn

Tune Aurelia

listen [here](#)

The glory of creation, throughout the universe,
So wonderful in essence, delightfully diverse.
Antarctica to Asia; the jungles of Brazil,
Established by the Father, with loving care and skill.

From mountain tops to valleys; in forests and in parks,
We watch the playful squirrels; we hear the joyful larks.
Wild orchids so unusual; bright parakeets so loud,
Rare butterflies so fragile; the tiger standing proud.

Deep mysteries, of oceans and unknown outer space,
Migration paths of swallows, the eagle's nesting place.
The more we gain in knowledge, the less we understand
This world so rich and complex, created by God's hand.

But crisis looms upon us; the planet's under threat,
The global climate's changing, the balance is upset.
The melting of the ice caps; diversity declines,
Extinction of key species; we're overwhelmed with signs.

So Father please forgive us for spoiling Planet Earth,
Give us a chance to change it; to instigate new birth,
Let's care for your creation, in details and in whole
Protect, preserve and cherish; may this be our new goal.

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Watch this [UN video](#)**Reading**

1 Timothy 6:2c – 10 & 17 – 19

Story

The Whale who wanted more

Listen [here](#)**Reflection**

In our developed countries we have all been subjected to advert after advert encouraging us to have the latest technology, buy disposable goods and increase our dependence on plastic. We have been persuaded, like the whale, that happiness is to be found in material things but this is not the Jesus Way. Happiness comes through right relations and a loving, caring outlook. The sad thing about climate change is that the actions of the developed countries has most affect on the people who live in countries less developed, people who do not have the means to buy things we take for granted, live in meagre homes in lands already changed by rising water levels.

Last Sunday on the news, reporting from the G20 meeting on the eve of COP26, the Russian delegate asked the question why the focus on 2050, saying that no one had given him an explanation for the significance of that date. In a book published on behalf of Christian Aid in 2010 the answer was given and if we take the time to listen to scientists and campaigners we will find the situation is now worse. This is what was shared in that book:

The overwhelming scientific consensus is that increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere caused by human activity are responsible for climate change. The amount of oil we burn in six weeks would have lasted for an entire year in the 1950s. We use five times more fossil fuels than we did 20 years ago. 20 per cent of the world's population, living in industrialized countries, consume 60 per cent of the world's commercial energy.

- Because of climate change, 150 million people will become environmental refugees by **2050**.
- 30 million more people will go hungry by **2050**, because of climate change reducing agricultural yields.

- A rise of 2–3° Celsius, expected by **2050**, will lead to water -scarcity for two billion people.
- By **2080**, 75 per cent of Africa's population could be at risk of hunger due to climate change.

The facts could not be clearer, and most campaigners, including Sir David Attenborough, say we must act NOW or in less than 30 years life as we know it will no longer be possible for most of the population. If the average life expectancy of humanity is rising, then for people born in the last 50 years the end of life on earth could come sooner than the end of their expected years.

Pope Francis, commenting on COP26 said, it would be "a scandal" if the money governments are spending to rebuild economies and save businesses in the aftermath of the pandemic "were to focus on rescuing those industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation".

When the representative of one of the top five countries contributing to CO2 emissions asks the why 2050, then we know we are in trouble. Yes, many countries will be hugely challenged to meet the targets of reducing emissions and their reliance on fossil fuels, and life as we have become used to it will have to change but we have been neglecting the care of the earth for too long and not stewarding the wonderful diverse life on the planet. It is not only animals that are in danger of extinction but the populations of some of the poorest and countries are threatened by climate change. To put it bluntly, if we who can afford to make changes to our way of life fail to do so, then in the moral court we are murderers.

We must challenge our local and national governments to make the changes necessary, we must sign every petition we can that demands change to avoid irreversible changes to our world, and we must do our bit to change our own life patterns.

Re-use, repair and recycle, in that order. Only buying what is essential.

Local, organic, animal friendly and fair-trade goods should be our priority.

Eating less meat.

The elimination of single use plastic, replacing cling film with re-usable beeswax wraps and plastic bags for food with re-usable tubs.

Buying clothes made with sustainable fibres, and only when we need them.

Reducing our reliance on chemicals, replacing plastic wash pods with eco-products and cleaning products with planet friendly product.

Turning the heating down by one degree and wearing an extra layer on the colder days.

As churches we can investigate becoming an eco-church and offer space for repair cafes and tool banks.

If, as Christians, we don't care enough about the future of the planet to change the way we live how can we expect others to care and what does it say about our love of God?

Suggested Hymn Touch the earth lightly
Watch [here](#)

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.

Creator 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, aware of the big impact on climate change for poorer communities and future generations.

Loving God may your love inspire and challenge our actions every day.

We thank you for the gift of transport. May we be mindful of how we use this life-enriching gift, guarding against frivolous and unnecessary use, aware of the big impact on climate change for poorer communities and future generations.

Loving God may your love inspire and challenge our actions every day.

We thank you for the gift of diverse possessions, which bring enjoyment and ease to our lives. May we be mindful and distinguish between passing wants, and true needs. May we re-sue, repair and recycle, and reduce land-polluting waste, and recognise that true wealth and happiness does not rest in 'things' but in our relationships with others.

Loving God may your love inspire and challenge our actions every day.

We give thanks for our oneness with creation and each other through which we journey to the fullness of our humanity. May we be mindful of the needs of others, and live a healthy lifestyle, loving, laughing, suffering alongside others. May we honour the precious, finite resources of earth, that we might live without depriving others of what is needful for their fullness of life.

Loving God may your love inspire and challenge our actions every day. 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.