

Sunday 28th August 2022

All material © Heather Whyte unless stated otherwise.

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

Readings Ezekial 37:1-14 ([Living Bible](#))
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15 & 16

Introduction

A year ago we were focussing on COP26 in Glasgow, an opportunity for the world's leaders to reflect upon what needs to happen and how they could make it happen. Since then Russia has attacked Ukraine, the world has responded and we are in the midst of an energy crisis, food disruption and the cost of living is threatening missions of families, and elderly people who live a lone.

We know we have to halt our reliance on fossil fuels and yet we are still ignoring the warnings and worrying about gas and oil. This summer we have witnessed the drastic effects of climate change with incredibly hot temperatures, a lack of rain and the resulting forest and scrubland fires which have devastated habitats and homes.

Over the past 12 months I have taken photographs which remind us of the beauty of creation, but also the vulnerability of life. I have used these photographs to reflect on different aspects of creation and I want to share these with you this morning.



The waterfall

Rain falls on hills, and slowly gathering momentum ,
makes its way downwards.

Grass

Bracken

Moss

Peat

Pebbles

Stones

Rocks

Nothing stops the water falling
ever downwards towards the sea.

We are unaware,
until in a moment of hiatus,
it bursts from its hiding place
to cascade downwards over a precipice.
The water falls and we are reminded
of the perpetual journey from land to sea.

We journey also, from me to we, from singularity to unity,
tumbling over obstacles,
sliding smoothly through pastures,
and ready to fall to reach new ground,
in our journey to know and be one with creation,
with the source of all being, God.

Water is life

Rich velvet foliage, plump with water, vibrant colours reflecting the light, and the life, small hairs, almost invisible a sign of health.
Without water, plants die.
Their colour fades, they shrivel, wilting until they can live no more.
Life depends on water,
we are water,
and without water we cannot live.
The planet needs water, creation needs water.
Our gardens, whether for beauty or produce, are a place of life, a microcosm of creation and without water they die.
As we continue to threaten the balance of creation through pollution in all its forms,
why do we then wonder when the weather and the seasons change?
We are the problem and we are the solution.
Our lives, and those of future generations, are in our hands.



Wetlands

Around our coasts between land and sea we witness the wetlands.
Home to a multitude of life, both large and small, crawling, swimming, wading, flying and plodding.
Seasonal visitors from far off lands and the regulars there all year round.
They are a place of peace, a place of refuge, a resting place on a journey.
We are visitors, invited to share in this place of peace, this place of life in all its varieties.
To sit, hidden from view, watching patiently as life unfolds, is to be at one with creation.
The rhythm of life is soothing as we watch the wading, the swimming, and the flying,
we become one and our hearts beat to the pace of peace.
A sudden arrival, a sudden glimpse of a rare visitor lifts our souls and our heartbeat
as we experience a moment of unexpected privilege,
as we witness something out of the ordinary.
We are reminded that creation is one and we are part of creation, part of the rich tapestry of life.
Let our hearts beat to the rhythm of life, slow or fast, as we treasure creation.

Hymn

Touch the earth lightly

Listen [here](#)



The flowers of the harvest

Flowers are everywhere, wild, weeds, sown and nurtured.

The suppliers of food and the forerunners of produce, flowers abound around.

Without flowers there are no crops, without bees and insects there are no crops.

The success of the harvest is a team event and we are just one player.

Creation provides the theatre for food.

The garden teems with life, a perfect balance of nature when we give it time.

Why then do we rush to protect plants when nature will do the job.

Why do we rush to spray chemicals that pollute and kill,
disrupting the balance that provides so much life.

We are called to share this planet, to live in harmony with creation.

We are one player amongst many

and the love of God is witness to the value of all creation.

Creation is good.

The harvest of flowers is food, we take what we need and leave the rest to be food for others.

The seeds of life to feed creation through the seasons.

There is beauty all around and the harmony of creation is the harmony of life.

The Damselfly



Above the water, on the water, in the water,
life in so many shades and hues, life in so many varieties.

The sun glistens on the pool, diamonds of light lifting our hearts.
The sun warms the air,
and life which is dormant responds and all around is the quiet hum of life emerging.

At the edge of the pool, amidst the plants resplendent in their shades of green,
play the damselflies, themselves a myriad of colours.
They flit and fly, they land and hover, they shine, catching our eye and drawing us into their play.
Fragile and fleeting, they live for just a week or two
but in that time they fly free, mate and life continues.

When we feel weighed down, our wings become furled and we forget how to fly
let us reflect on nature, sitting still and letting our hearts emerge from their cocoon of care.
Let nature inspire, nourish and prompt a different approach, a simple approach.
We are one with creation and though our days are unknown
may we use each day to spread the love that is God,
and may we sparkle with light to lift the hearts of those we meet.

Nature resplendent



Is it just a year ago that August was a riot of colour, every
bush ablaze with flowers.

Now bushes are ablaze in different ways as across lands,
near and far, nature is threatened, lives and livelihoods lost,
and swathes of forest lie no more than skeletons in the dust.

Elijah dreamt of life restored, of bones being fleshed and life
returning,

and nature will recover, for now
but our ways threaten nature, threaten life.

The climate is changing and we experience more heat and
less rain, more drought and weaker harvests, and the
splendour of creation is a victim of our ways.

If we are to dream Elijah's dream then we must change our
ways, you and me, now.

We cannot keep blaming others and expecting others to
change if we do not change,
such action mirrors the injustice we shout against.

If we are to live and our planet is to sustain that life we must
change our ways.

We complain , we debate, we discuss, we fear
but nothing changes except the planet's chances,
and with them our descendants chances of life as we know it.

Nature resplendent a sign of the Kingdom.

Nature distressed a sign of our weakness.

Let us hold onto the dream
and be strong in our resolve to work together for the kingdom.

Video Seven billion dreams one planet

Watch [here](#)

Song The time is now

Watch [here](#)

Reflection

The writer of Hebrews reminds the followers of Jesus that they have a mission, and we have a mission today. Two weeks ago we explored the idea of faith as ultimate concern, so what is our ultimate concern today, what is our mission today? For Jesus, and those early followers it was about sharing love with those in different situations than themselves. To love our neighbour as we love ourselves is to remember those who are in prison, as though we were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though we were suffering as they are.

Our mission as church is to be a place of safety and friendship, a place of refuge from the storms of life, to be there with those oppressed by worries, concerns and fears, to be there with those whose lives are different, whose lives are oppressed by circumstances over which they have little or no control, who are denied the freedom to choose and feel persecuted. We are urged to keep our lives free of the love of money, or the power of possessions, and think before you purchase something, do we need this or do we want this and if we buy this what difference will it make to our neighbour, wherever they are?

There are many opportunities to use our building creatively, to use our skills and talents generously, to make a difference to someone's life through our sharing of God's love. We have all heard of NIMBY – NIMBY will kill the planet. What makes us different and why should we not experience the challenge and solution of saving the planet? We are the followers of Jesus and there can be no more important mission than securing the future for life on the planet that is God's creation.

Suggested Song A simple change of heart (Carrie Newcomer)

Watch [here](#)

Prayers

Loving God all around we see the signs of your love for your people, and all around we see the signs of our neglect of creation. As we worship together we pray for the world in which we live, and the people with whom we share the world. We are facing challenges but they are nothing compared to the challenges some people face. People without homes, or whose homes are threatened by the effects of climate change. People with no food, who fear tomorrow for it is another day when their children may die of malnutrition, people who rely on the crops which are being held hostage in conflict situations. People who have no means of getting medical help, whose daily health is threatened by polluted water sources, whose lives are dominated by the diseases that for us are a distant threat.

As we worship together we bring our hopes and dreams and pray for the inspiration and guidance to bring the kingdom closer to reality for all your people. May we be creative in our use of buildings and seek new ways of working together to make a difference in our local communities.

As we pray together, may we hear your voice in our hearts, challenging us to look afresh at our lives and to move to sustainable and generous living.

In oneness we pray. Amen.