

twelvebaskets



CLIMATE SUNDAY

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Climate Sunday Special
6th June 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy OR

170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

100 STF – All things bright and beautiful OR

729 STF – Touch the earth lightly

Readings: Genesis 1:1-31; Revelation 21:1-7; Psalm 104

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR

699 STF – God of justice

What are you being called to?

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

376 STF – Crashing waters at creation

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

350 STF – I cannot tell why he whom angels worship OR

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

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Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on www.theworshipcloud.com.

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Call to Worship

Here we are Lord, gathering to meet with you in worship.
Come amongst us, by your Spirit, as we pray, sing, listen and share.
Open our hearts to fall in love with your creation again, O God.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy OR

170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth

Opening Prayers

Wonderful God,

Today we **celebrate** you.

We **celebrate** your creation.

We **thank you** that at the beginning of time
you breathed life into us.

We **thank you** that today you live amongst us
Walking with your creation day by day.

We come to you in worship today God,
Ready to **listen** to your word
and respond in **love**.

Open our hearts today God,
that we might **love** you and **love** our neighbour.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

As we listen to this poem about climate justice, how do we respond? Does it challenge us to think again about our relationships with the earth?

Do I love you when I burn my carbon?

Do I proclaim

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by The Joint Public Issues Team.

And then just bin it.
Not recycling, or up cycling, or even gone-out cycling,
But landfill it,
Kill it,
Oil-spill it.

Do I love you when I burn my carbon?
Every time I turn my car on,
And pour more petrol into the tank,
Blanking out the plankton I'm killing,
Ozone layer I'm filling with toxic fumes,
The plumes of smoke.
Doom looms and yet,
The lupins in the garden still bloom,
So I don't seem to worry.

What's the hurry?

'All things come into being through him', I say,
Then every single day, betray the truth in that verse.

My ignorance for the planet is perverse,
A reverse of what I believe about God's love for the whole of creation.
My recreation is an undoing of God's own creation,
A misdirection of the conception of God in Christ Jesus - God with us.

Do I love you when I burn my carbon?
And my actions add to the inequality,
Affecting the quality of life,
Adding to the strife
Of the husband and wife I met
In Zimbabwe.

How can I say the things I say
About the way we must live,
And still burn my carbon?
Father, forgive.

Show me how to change,
In the face of climate change.
The pace of change accelerating, the exasperating realisation
That creation might not be here to stay...

Show me another way.
To show real love.
Not just feel-love,
But real-love.
Earthy love.
Gritty love.
For the whole earth.
And real grit.

Show me how to love, O God,
And not just burn my carbon.

[You may wish to use the video version of this – this week's Vine Video resource].³

Hymn:

100 STF – All things bright and beautiful OR

729 STF – Touch the earth lightly

Readings: Genesis 1:1-31 (*or you may wish to read 1-4 and 20-31 to keep the reading shorter*); Revelation 21:1-7; Psalm 104

Reflections on the Reading

‘God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.’

In each of the passages we read today, we hear of God pouring life into creation. In Genesis 1, each aspect of earthly life is created, made to be fruitful and to thrive. At the hands of God, the birds of the air, the creatures of land and everything around them comes into being. In Psalm 104, God's hands are at work in creation again, moving and shaping, setting light and dark, feeding and ‘rejoicing in his works’. And in Revelation 21, God steps down to the earth and ‘dwells’ with people, seeking to make all things new, transforming their mourning and instead bringing the water of life.

Each of these encounters between God and creation paint a picture of a creator who gets stuck into the process of creating. God gets his hands dirty: stretching the heavens, watering the mountains, feeding the animals from his palm. God is found in the midst of the details – from lofty mountain to deepest sea. This is a God who is both creator at the beginning of time and curator throughout the life of creation, constantly involved in the process of life on earth.

This picture of an involved God who's in amongst the details spans right from the beginning of time to the end. Genesis 1 shows God beginning every aspect of creation, taking time to outline each aspect and give it life. Later in Revelation 21, we read of God coming once again to dwell amongst creation, in a vision of the end of earthly time. ‘He will dwell with them’ says the writer of Revelation, ‘God himself will be with them’. Once again, we find God amongst creation, taking part in its beginning and end. Embedded amongst his people, God promises to ‘make all things new’, and to once again bring life to all that he has made.

One of the joys of these passages is that we see that not only does God get involved in creation, but he also takes time to marvel at the wonder of creation. In Genesis 1, mixed in with the process of creating, God repeatedly takes a moment to wonder at

³ All Age talk written by Tim Baker

what has been created, declaring it is 'very good'. This is a joyful creator, who sees and loves the flourishing of creation.

It is from this place of joyful creating and ongoing curation that God calls humankind. Right at the beginning, in Genesis 1, God offers humanity the commission of co-curators. He calls humankind to be in relationship with everything that has been made, relying on it for our earthly life and living amongst it, that everything might flourish. God calls humanity to be among creation, that we too might marvel at its wonder, but also play a part in its flourishing.

The Psalmist in Psalm 104 is a wonderful example of where this calling begins. The psalmist can't seem to get enough of the wonder of creation, and finds themselves lost in worship and praise for the creator. They encounter God through creation, seeing God at work in the life of each aspect of the earth. For the psalmist, God's constant involvement in the flourishing of creation inspires worship and praise.

Today too, this is the place where we begin. God calls humanity to be amongst creation, and see the way that its beauty and wonder points back to the creator who made it. It is here we begin in our relationship with creation – in worship of the God from whom it came.

From this place of worship, we are called to play an active part in the ongoing life of creation. In Genesis 1 humanity is called to be 'fruitful', to multiply life and to do all of this in the image of the creator, who loves and delights in creation. To do so and truly reflect God's love for creation is not to subdue it, suppress it or use it for our own gain, but to strike a balance of wonder and encouragement, that all created life might flourish.

This is an ongoing commission which spans thousands of years, and one in which we find ourselves placed today. To be people who marvel at creation, and play a part in its flourishing.

Where do you find yourself in wonder at creation today? In the summer months, perhaps we find this easier. New life emerges from tired ground. Leaves uncurl from tree buds. The sun takes pride of place in the sky. Have you found yourself responding in worship to creation in recent weeks?

Where do you find yourself playing a part in the flourishing of creation? It can be easy to feel distant from the natural life of the world. To feel like the way we live doesn't have an impact on its flourishing. But God's calling to us to be co-curators of creation is not a passive one, where we can stand back and observe, but a calling to get stuck in. Following the example of God who is in the detail, we are called to get our hands dirty in the details of creation. To connect with the earth, and understand how our actions have an impact.

As part of today's Climate Sunday, we have begun in worship. Like the psalmist, we have taken time to marvel at creation, and singing praise to the God who created it.

But we're also invited to respond to the next part of our calling – to commit to playing our part in the flourishing of creation.

How might we begin this today?

As individuals?

As community?

We are invited and inspired by a God who loves deeply each aspect of creation, and longs to get stuck into its flourishing. How will we respond?

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR

699 STF – God of justice

What are you being called to?

As part of Climate Sunday, churches are being asked to consider how they might take the next step to commit to action in creation. At this point in the service, you might want to consider the next steps you can take as a community. If you are already an Eco Church or Eco Congregation, could you take the next steps to achieving an award? If you haven't started on this journey, perhaps now is the time?

Explore more at climatesunday.org/commit .⁴

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

376 STF – Crashing waters at creation

Prayers of intercession

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

Living God

Thank you that at the beginning of time, you breathed life in to creation.

We marvel that from then until now, you have continued to dwell among us,

Rejoicing and celebrating all that you have made.

We pray that today we might notice you in the creation around us,

Taking time to see life flourish,

And worship you as creator God.

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

⁴ Reflection written by The Joint Public Issues Team

Generous God

There are too many ways in which we ignore how our lives limit your creation.
For when our quick and easy choices have a lasting impact,
When we choose us over the earth,
And for when we have no other good choice available to us –
We are sorry.
Would we be inspired and empowered by your love for creation
To put life before ease, and commit to change.

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

Loving God

We know that changes to our climate and environment aren't just a future possibility,
but a present reality for so many.
We hold before you those who live on the frontlines of the climate crisis,
Whose lives and livelihoods have been flooded by sea level rise, crops spoilt by
drought, families worn down by illness.
Might we weep with them, and turn towards action,
Knowing that you call us to better living which enables all your people to thrive.

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

Empowering God

As we approach COP26, we hold before you our elected leaders, who have the
opportunity to seek your justice and peace.
In the months ahead, we pray that they might encounter you,
In stories, in lives, in creation.
We pray that they might be inspired by hope, to make choices which are filled with
the possibility for new life.
Help them to be courageous, to seek new structures and choices that enable all
creation to flourish.

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

Transformational God

We are agents of your change, and have been called to be alongside you in the
journey of renewal.
Help us not to take this calling lightly, but to speak up,
Using our voices to be part of transformation.
Helps us to see that the time is now for new life to come,
And that we can usher in your kingdom in our daily lives today.

Call: God who lives in and with creation,

Response: Be with us here.

We hold all of these prayers before you,
God who created at the beginning of time,
And continues to breathe life in us today.
Empower and embolden us to be courageous,
That we might live for your glory in all the earth.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the Offering

Creator God, who was there at the beginning of all things, and is drawing all things back towards yourself – move through us today.

God of the natural earth, use these gifts, and guide all of our choices, that we might use what we have to protect your creation and enable all life on earth to flourish.

This is your world, may we be guardians of it, in Jesus' name.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

350 STF – I cannot tell why he whom angels worship OR

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

Go from this place inspired and encouraged that you can make a difference.

Go from this time knowing that this is your moment – this day, this week, this year is the moment to make a change.

Go from this act of worship, overflowing with worship and praise for a God who created the whole earth and everything in it.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by The Joint Public Issues Team

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker