

Parramatta City Uniting Church

10th October 2021

Season of Creation Week 2 – “Earth”



‘And God saw that it was good – Awe, Wonder and Healing’

**Drawing on resources created by Common Grace
for the Season of Creation 2021**

<https://www.commongrace.org.au>

Combined Worship – Parramatta City Uniting Church 9.30am

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/95778738282>

Leigh Fijian 11.15am

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/9134913679>

WELCOME

Welcome to the service today.

In October our congregations are participating in the Season of Creation. Season of Creation is a global annual celebration that encourages followers of Jesus to celebrate God’s beautiful Earth, and renew our shared commitment to preserving and restoring that beauty.

During the Season of Creation, we unite as followers of Jesus, celebrating the bonds we share with each other and with “every living creature on Earth.”

Some of today's liturgy and music has been prepared and provided by Common Grace. Common Grace is a growing movement of tens of thousands of Australian Christians passionate about Jesus and Justice. Common Grace invites us to celebrate this season by spending time in prayer, considering ways to inhabit our common home sustainably, and lifting our voices in the public sphere.

This year, the global theme for the season is "A Home for All? Renewing the Oikos of God".

Oikos is the Greek word for "home," or "household". This Season of Creation we reflect on the Oikos of God, a home for all, designed to live and flourish together. A beautiful creation built on diverse, wondrous and complex relationships that support and sustain. However, God's precious creation has been exploited and harmed. Interconnected, life-sustaining relationships have been disconnected, forgotten and denied.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long walked in the wisdom of these interwoven, interdependent relationships and the need to care for Country, and protect Country, acknowledging the unique role, as Indigenous Christian scholar Randy Woodley¹ expresses, as one part of the "community of creation".

Season of Creation is an opportunity to reflect on the Christian role as stewards of God's beautiful creation and the need for us to renew and restore the Oikos of God as we seek to live out Jesus' call to love our neighbour. As Common Grace CEO and Aboriginal Christian leader Brooke Prentis reminds us, "loving our neighbour means loving our people neighbour, our tree neighbour, plant neighbour, animal neighbour, bird neighbour, fish neighbour, land neighbour, water neighbour, sky neighbour."²

Together we pray for a restoring of right relationship with God and all of creation as we confront the reality of the systems we live in where profit is put before caring for creation, economy before protecting the health of our live-sustaining ecosystems and politics before love for our neighbours.

We pray that we would see clearly the importance of these relationships to the health and flourishing of our Common Home. We pray that we would honor God in the way we treasure and protect God's life-giving gift of creation that sustains, brings joy and heals. We pray that we would restore just relationships with all of God's creation, and as Psalm 96 says, joining our voices with all of creation in singing for joy before the Lord.

¹ [Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision](#), Randy S. Woodley

² https://www.commongrace.org.au/daily_disruptions_climate_connecting

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respect to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the lands on which we gather today.

SONG: “Be Still For the Presence of the Lord”

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here
Come bow before him now
In reverence and fear
In im no sin is found
We stand on Holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with Holy fire
With splendor He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

CALL TO WORSHIP and OPENING PRAYER

Written by Michael Ramaidama

Creator God,
We come before you as a small piece of your vast creation.
We come in awe at the beauty and wonder of our planet,
and we feel its pain.

Let the embers of our burning bushland
Rekindle the flame of Pentecost
Shine your light in us that we may strive for a greener future.

Let the dryness of the land in seasons of drought
Remind us to thirst for your leadership
Holy Spirit, lead us towards the well of hope for a sustainable planet.

Let the waters of our flooded plains and rivers
Drench our hearts with your mercy
Living Water fill us with mercy for your suffering creation.

Let the roaring of raging winds and cyclones
help us hear the cry of Mother Earth
Jesus, give us your peace to calm our storm, and peace to strengthen our calling.

Let the rise in sea levels
raise our concern and love towards our neighbour
Risen Christ, resource us with your love for the world.

Creator God, we are your people, called and purposed to be good stewards of our planet.

Bless this day.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
And God saw that the light was good.

The candle is lit

SONG – "Longing for Light - Christ Be Our Light"

<https://youtu.be/ZJq3bhdgQoc>

Longing for light, we wait in darkness
Longing for truth, we turn to You.
Make us Your own, Your holy people
Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.

Longing for food, many are hungry
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us Your bread, broken for others
Shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us Your building, sheltering others
Walls made of living stone.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.

*Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.*

Many the gift, many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another
Making Your kingdom come.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.*

ALL AGE TIME

SCRIPTURE READING – Genesis 1:1-25

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so.

⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so.

16God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, 18to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.’ 21So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. 22God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ 23And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. 24 And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. 25God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

RESPONSE

*O God our nurturer,
may your word live in us.
And colour our living. Amen!*

REFLECTION

“And God saw that it was good – Awe, Wonder and Healing”

SONG – “Garden”

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“Garden” is written by Mikali Anagnostis and performed by Mikali, Emma Sproul, Hannah Buckley and Gabby Cadenhead and filmed by Sybil Mendonca of Leichhardt Uniting Church.

We’re making a garden;
We’re working the ground;
In land that’s bombed and torn,
Your love soaks through the soil;
New life can yet be born.

All welcome to the building;
All invited to the fruit.
On Earth, God’s planned a garden;

Every hand that's gripped a sword,
Can make a ploughshare too.

Come, join the work;
God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Hands in the same dirt;
Enemies are one body now.

Come sing new words;
God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Lay down your swords;
The wars you've learned are over now.
God's turned our weapons into ploughs.

Our hands won't be idle;
Our hearts won't grow cold.
In the barren ground before us,
We can see a garden;
We can see a home.

Though drought is around us,
Though fires will come,
We've tasted the harvest;
Our God has drawn us close;
Your love has made us One.

Come, join the work;
God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Hands in the same dirt;
Enemies are one body now.

Come sing new words;
God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Lay down your swords;
The wars you've learned are over now.
God's turned our weapons into ploughs.
New life will come from death somehow.

PRAYER FOR HEALING COUNTRY

Written by Aunty Dr Doseena Fergie

God of Mercy and Grace –

in your quest to bring about justice. You understand what it is like to persevere in an unjust society when you suffered and died on the Cross Have mercy on us.

This Land weeps in sorrow. It is filled with sadness and grief because of the atrocities of the past and present. Have mercy on us.

We yearn for conciliation and peace in this place. To yarn and listen deeply to each other with Care and Compassion.

God of Truth –

You are pure and true – we worship you for who you are. There is no one like you – for you shine in the darkness.

Enable all the peoples of this Country to desire, listen and understand the True History of this Land. For only then can we walk this journey together.

Jesus, you are the tree life. Help us to be your instruments of Truth, by the Power of your Holy Spirit.

We pray for discernment and wisdom to impart your Truth.

Deliver us from devastation and bring about Healing to Country and our communities.”

Our Healer –

May all Creation, the birds, animals, fish, trees, plants, rocks, mountains, waters, and peoples be healed to flourishing.

Strengthen us, lead us, inspire us into action, ignited by our faith in you Lord Jesus.

Help us not to lose Hope.

For it is only through justice, forgiveness and Love can there be Healing and Peace.

Amen.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

WORDS OF MISSION AND BLESSING

Written by Brooke Prentis

Creator God,
May we see,
Your love in each others hearts,
Your joy in the Golden Wattle,
Your peace in the morning sunrise,
Your patience in the mighty mountain,
Your kindness in the Quokka,
Your goodness in the Rainbow Lorikeet,
Your faith in the ancient Grasstree,
Your gentleness in the Leafy Sea Dragon,
Your self-control in the dry desert plains.
Now with the fruits of the spirit, and all of creation,
Go in truth, justice, love, and hope.
Amen

BLESSING SONG - "For You, Deep Stillness"

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland
For you, deep blue of the desert skies
For you, flame red of the rocks and stones
For you, sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands
and when you're burnt by the journey
may the cool winds of the hovering
Spirit soothe and replenish you.

In the name of Christ, In the name of Christ