



**uniting  
church**

in Australia;  
Synod of NSW & ACT

**Parramatta City  
Uniting Church**

**SEASONS OF CREATION  
NIGHT SKY**

**you're a sky full of stars  
I'm gonna give you my heart...  
'cause you get lighter**

**the more it gets dark  
I'm gonna give you my heart**

*(A sky full of stars, Coldplay)*

**Sunday  
24 October 2021  
9:30am**

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

## **WELCOME**

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday to celebrate the sky in our Seasons of Creation month.

## **LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE**

This candle lights up the dark as the stars light up the heavens at night, revealing the beauty and wonder of the Creator-Covenant God, and the beauty and wonder of the whole of creation, the beauty and wonder of humankind!

*The candle is lit*

## **FOCUS AND THEME**

We need to be reminded sometimes that a sunrise lasts but a few minutes. But its beauty can burn in our hearts eternally.

*R. A. Salvatore*

In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.

*Gautama Buddha*

Dwell on the beauty of life. Watch the stars, and see yourself running with them.

*Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*

Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light; I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.

*Sarah Williams, Twilight Hours: A Legacy Of Verse*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

As we pause to acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation of the Parramatta City Region as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects 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 land, on which we gather today.

**HYMN** *Abide with me ... Audrey Assad*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84YASWe3\\_2Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84YASWe3_2Q)

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day  
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away  
Change and decay in all around I see  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness

Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me  
Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me

## **GATHERING**

We gather in this moment as a diverse community  
In the name of the Creator, who colours the sky,  
the name of Christ, who died under dark skies,  
and the name of the Spirit, the wind in the sky.  
We gather together with the skies  
in wonder and gratitude.  
We celebrate with the clouds, the winds, the dusk and the dawn.  
We listen to the sounds of sky proclaiming God's presence.  
We remember sitting around campfires  
Under open, expansive skies,  
in awe before the vast reaches of space above us  
and thank God for the fragile piece of stardust we call Earth.  
***Amen.***

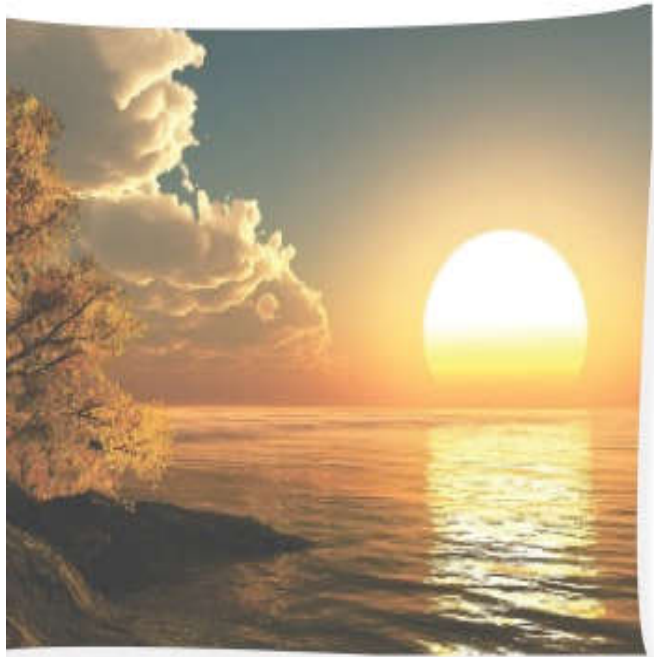
**HYMN** *Morning has broken (TiS 156)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we-n-Zmgt0>

Morning has broken, like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall,  
sunlit from Heaven  
Like the first dew fall,  
on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness  
of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness  
where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight,  
mine is the morning  
Born of the One Light  
Eden saw play  
Praise with elation,  
praise every morning  
God's re-creation  
of the new day



**ALL AGE MESSAGE      How will you shine your light?**

Read -Under the Same Sky –Britta Teckentrup  
Watch-I will be a Hummingbird.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw>

Go outside and look at the sky-how does it make you feel. Take a photo-how does the sky make you feel today?  
How can we protect our sky for us and the creatures that live in it?

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Psalm 8   Divine power (of beauty and wonder) and Human Dignity**

1 Elohim, Yahweh, Creator and Covenant God,  
how full of wonder and beauty is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory above the heavens.

...

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;  
4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
finite beings that you care for them?  
5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God,  
and crowned them with beauty and honor.  
6 You have given them responsibility over the works of your  
hands;  
you have put all things under their feet,

...

9 Elohim, Yahweh, Creator and Covenant God,  
how full of wonder and beauty is your name in all the earth!

### **Psalm 19**

1 The skies declare the beauty and wonder of God;  
the skies proclaim the Creator God's artistic expressions.  
2 Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.  
3 They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.  
In the skies God has pitched a tent for the sun.  
5 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
...  
6 It rises at one end of the skies  
and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

### **Mark 15: 33ff The skies darken as Jesus dies**

33 At noon darkness covered the land, and the darkness lasted  
for three hours. 34 At three o'clock Jesus cried in a loud voice,  
"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." This means, "My God, my God, why  
have you abandoned me?" ...

37 Then Jesus cried in a loud voice and died.

### **Mark 10: 46-52**

46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind “seeker of compassionate sharing”, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” 48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 49 Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” 52 Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

### **RESPONSE**

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

**REFLECTION**     *You are a sky full of stars*

**HYMN**     *I the Lord and Sea and Sky (TiS 658)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0p1ak22jNLI>

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard My people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin,  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear My light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.



I will hold Your people in my heart  
I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have born my peoples pain.  
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak My word to them,

Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them,  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide,  
Till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give My life to them,  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

God, our Creator, through your love you have given us the gifts that we share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our concern for those in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth. ***In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!***

### **PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION**

There is no plant in the ground  
But tells of your beauty, O Christ.  
There is no creature on earth  
There is no life in the sea

But proclaims your goodness.  
There is no bird on the wing  
There is no star in the sky  
There is nothing beneath the sun  
But is full of your blessing.  
Lighten our understanding  
Of your presences all around, O Christ  
Kindle our will  
To be caring for creation.

Let us pray in our minds and hearts  
for our sky and our earth!

***Amen!***

*J Philip Newell, Celtic Prayers from Iona*

## **THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US**

Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:  
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples  
of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.  
With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and for ever.



## ***Amen.***

*A modern version of the prayer of Jesus from the Anglican Church of New Zealand, which both honours and reflects indigenous Maori culture.*

**HYMN**      *Come as you are (TiS 693)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7mkPL9LO6w>

Come as you are: that's how I want you.  
Come as you are: feel quite at home.  
Close to my heart, loved and forgiven,  
Come as you are, why stand alone? *(Repeat)*

## **BLESSING**

As light departs to let the earth be one with night sky  
Silence deepens in the mind and thoughts grow slow:  
The basket of twilight brims over with colours  
Gathered from within the secret meadows of the day  
And offered like blessings to the gathering Tenebrae

After the day's frenzy may the heart grow still  
Gracious in thought for all the day brought,  
Surprises that dawn can never have dreamed,  
The blue silence that came to still the mind,  
The quiver of mystery at the edge of the glimpse,  
The golden echoes of worlds behind voices.

Tense faces unable to hide what gripped the heart,  
The abrupt cut of a glance or a phrase that hurt,  
The flame of longing that distance darkened,  
Bouquets of memory that gathered on the heart's altar,  
The thorns of absence in the rose of dream.

And the whole while the unknown underworld  
Of the mind turning slowly in its secret orbit.

May you be blessed as you go with refreshment and release

And the angel of the moon call the rivers of dream  
The soften the hardened earth of the outside life,  
Disentangle from the trapped nets the hurt and sorrow  
And awaken the young soul for the new tomorrow.

Adapted; John O'Donohue, *Eternal Echoes*