



Pilgrim
Uniting Church

9.30am Community Worship

Sunday 5th September, 2021

Pentecost 15
COCU55B

Season of Creation

Restoring Our Common Home

1 September - 4 October 2021



The church is fitted with a hearing loop. Hearing aid wearers are advised to sit in the front half of the church and switch their aid to T-setting.

This Service is being live-streamed. The Service will also be available for viewing on YouTube at 'Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide' for two months.

Please help us to comply with the current COVID rules by wearing a mask in church this morning - and wherever you are in the vicinity of others.



Pilgrim
Uniting Church

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INTRODUCTION

Today we begin the Season of Creation, the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray and protect God's creation. The season starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. This year we will be uniting around the theme, "A HOME FOR ALL? RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD." *Oikos* is the Greek word for "home," or "household." By rooting the theme in the concept of *oikos*, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth.

Lighting the candles.... water plants on the table

SETTING THE SCENE

through images,
 reflections,
 poetry,
 soundscape
 and Welcome to Country.

OPENING PRAYER (Season of Creation 2021 Prayer)

Creator of All, we are grateful that from your communion of love our planet offers a home for all. By your Holy Wisdom the Earth brings forth a diversity of living beings that fill the soil, water and air. Each part of creation praises you in their being, and cares for one another from our place in the web of life. With the Psalmist, we sing your praise that in your house "even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." We remember that you call human beings to keep your garden in ways that honour the dignity of each creature and conserve their place in the abundance of life on Earth. But we know that our will to power pushes the planet beyond her limits. Our consumption is out of harmony and rhythm with Earth's capacity to heal herself. Habitats are left barren or lost. Species are lost and systems fail. Where reefs and burrows, mountaintops and ocean deeps once teemed with life and relationships, wet and dry deserts lie empty, as if uncreated. Human families are displaced by insecurity and conflict, migrating in search of peace. Animals flee fires, deforestation and famine, wandering in search of a new place to find a home to lay their young and live.

In this Season of Creation, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism. Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home. In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the breath of God, who moves with God
and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day God will
put an end to death and all destructive forces.

<https://www.greenanglicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/season-of-creation-online2.pdf>

BENEDICTION

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the Son of peace to you

Fiona Macleod, owing credit to John Rutter

PASSING THE PEACE

God's peace be with you. **And also with you.**

A COVID safe sign of peace is passed to our neighbours.

This service was planned by Sandy Boyce, Graham Brice, Rose Milton-Head and Peter Muller. Thanks to Allen Edwards Snr for playing didgeridoo and the Welcome to Country.

Allan Forbes prepared the powerpoint and ran the A-V desk, and Greg Bassani once again took the reins of the livestreaming. The music was led by Norm Inglis with Jenny Ward (piano), Genevieve Bassani (flute), Jeff Telfer (clarinet), Trish Brice (violin), Don Bell (guitar), Ruth Farrent (djembe), Graham Brice (percussion) and singers Alison McDougall, Colin Telfer, Michael Heathcote and Peter Muller. Thanks to Norm Inglis for his leadership. The Gerald Manley Hopkins poem, God's Grandeur, was read by Trish Brice.

Please join us for refreshments and conversation in the hall.

**Please help us to comply with COVID-SAFE Regulations
by wiping areas you have touched on the pews.
Thank you for your assistance.**

BSB: 035-006 (Westpac)
Account Number: 224080 (Pilgrim Church UCA)
Lodgement Reference: Offering

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

"If we do not devote our energies, our thinking, our actions, our decisions, our finance, our policies, toward addressing climate change, we are implicitly, or in fact, even explicitly contributing to more inequality. It is precisely because of the inequality that we have to address climate change".
Christiana Figueres

Let us spend time bringing to mind and praying for those adversely affected by climate change and the accompanying inequality in the world. *(Please turn to those closest to you for prayerful conversation, mindful of COVID protocols).*

SONG: God, You Made Your Good Creation

God, you made your good creation and you hold it in your care —
From each starry constellation to each forest under-layer.
Tiny creatures, mountain splendour, rivers, lakes and ocean floors —
You are loving, kind and tender in your care for what is yours.

Yet, O God, the earth is crying, times are changing, storms are strong.
Now the coral reefs are dying, floods are raging, droughts are long.
Though the circumstances differ, when the earth is in distress,
See! The poor are first to suffer from our greed and selfishness.

God, you love this world we live in, so you sent your only Son.
"Here on earth as in your heaven," God, we pray, "Your will be done."
By your Spirit, may we listen to the earth and to the poor;
May we care for all you've given till creation is restored.

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette
Tune: Gaelic Air, adapted John Bell

Please remain standing for the Creation Creed

A CREATION CREED

We believe in God,
who creates all things, who embraces all things,
who celebrates all things, who is present
in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life
who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one,
the poor one, the malnourished one, the
climate refugee, who loves and cares
for this world and who suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this
world and everything in it.

SONG: The earth is the Lord's

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."
Creation reminds us, O God, of your love.
By grace we are learning, as year leads to year,
We're called to be stewards, your caretakers here.

Your rainforests nurture the world that we share.
Your wetlands give animals shelter and care.
Your coral reefs cradle the life of the sea.
You've shown us, in love, what your good world can be.

Too often, O God, we abuse your good earth.
We fail to remember its beauty and worth.
We take from creation much more than we need,
We threaten your world through indifference and greed.

May we be good stewards of all that you give,
Protecting creation wherever we live.
May we be a church that renews and restores
And lovingly cares for this earth that is yours.

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette
Tune: ST. DENIO, Welsh melody

WELCOME

EARLY WORD

We begin Season of Creation with deep listening. Listening to the earth. It's an opportunity to step back from the edge of a cliff/stop the clock at minutes to midnight. A time to renew our covenant with the earth. For rebirth.

Thomas Merton saw nature as an icon, a window into God, a sacrament of the presence and goodness of its Creator. He said: "All creatures are like syllables in a song which God is singing. Everything that is - is just a little syllable in this song which God is continually singing." By listening to the messages that created things convey by simply being themselves, one comes to know God a little better.

Merton believed that to awaken to nature is to awaken to God. He wrote: "The world is willed and held in being by God's love and, therefore, infinitely precious in God's sight." The most minuscule of creatures is important to God. Hence, according to Merton, "If you love God, you will respect God's creatures."

Merton believed that silence and solitude are requisite for the prayerful consideration of nature. He said: "Let me seek the gift of silence and poverty, and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer, for God is all in all."

He lived in the woods and would get out of bed in the middle of the night so he could hear the silence of the night, alone, and, with his face on the floor, say psalms, alone, in the silence of the night. He spent his whole

monastic life listening for that secret pulsating in the heartbeat of creation, and wedded the forest so he could listen with absolute rapture and commitment as one would to a spouse, "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health, until death..." What he heard in the murmurings of wilderness were "the sweet songs of living things" whose choirs he joined as a solitary monk offering a psalm of glory and thanksgiving on behalf of humankind, open to the cosmos in awe and wonder.

<https://blogs.sjme.edu/theology/merton-on-nature/#:~:text=For%20Thomas%20Merton%2C%20nature%20is%20an%20icon%2C%20a,syllables%20in%20a%20song%20which%20God%20is%20singing.>

So let us be still, and breathe, and listen. *A time for silent reflection*

VIDEO: She's Alive... Beautiful... Finite... Hurting... Worth Dying for. (4:58)
<https://youtu.be/nGeXdv-uPaw>

LAMENT

The earth breathes. The earth weeps. If the earth could speak, if earth was singing a song, what would that song be? In Scripture, trees are praising God (Ps. 148:9). Isaiah 55.12 says one day they will also sing and clap their hands "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands". And yet now, the whole creation is groaning as in the pains of childbirth. Romans 8.22

We have seen the cracks for some time. That catastrophic apartment building collapse in Florida had warning signs, cracks in the basement, water seeping in. There are cracks all over the world, cracks everywhere if we have eyes to see. And predictions of catastrophe everywhere if we have ears to hear. Mention of climate change seems too big to handle - after all, what difference can one person make? Our efforts to conserve God's creation seem so inadequate, given the enormity of the problems.

VIDEO Don't give up on us (words and music: Shane Howard, visuals: Geoff Boyce)

A time for quiet reflection.



Gracious God, thank you for the beauty of this world. Sometimes we can get wrapped up in its pain and brokenness so much that we miss its wonders. We do not always see your creative fingerprints in the good things in our world. Today we pause to thank you for the beauty of your creation. We thank you for how you have made so much that is good grow from small, insignificant seeds. Help us to think of the world this way. Open us to your abiding presence.

Open us to each other. Open us to our own selves. Open us to your Creation. In gratitude, may we live life abundantly with all people, and all Creation. Creator God, may all that has breath praise and enjoy you forever. **Amen!**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

We let Jennie and Bob tell the story of recovery on Kangaroo Island. The regeneration has bonded the community, and seen a healing of the land.

VIDEO: Jennie and Bob Teasdale, KI recovery

SONG: TIS181 Come O God of all the earth

Come, O God of all the earth;
come to us, O Righteous One.
Come and bring our love to birth;
in the glory of your Son.

Chorus

*Sing out, earth and skies!
Sing of the God who loves you.
Raise your joyful cries,
Dance to the life around you.*

Come, O God of wind and flame;
fill the earth with righteousness.
Teach us all to sing your name;
may our lives your love confess. (*Chorus*)

Come, O God of flashing light;
twinkling star and burning sun.
God of day and God of night;
in your light we all are one. (*Chorus*)

Come, O Justice, come, O Peace;
come and shape our hearts anew.
Come and make oppression cease;
bring us all to life in you. (*Chorus*)

Words and music: Marty Haugen