

ST ANDREWS UNITING CHURCH: AT-HOME-WORSHIP

"BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE"

WORSHIP FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



PREPARATION

You might like to get a small bowl of water, some dirt from the garden, a candle and a lighter and a Bible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Take a moment to stand and feel your feet connecting to the earth
Take a moment to feel sun on your face or listen to the sounds around you.

Breathe.

For thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked on this land in their own country, caring for the land is at the centre of their lives, with respect and gratitude let us now acknowledge the land where we live and work and worship.

WELCOME

Good morning. Our worship online today is a collaboration of Uniting Church members and the Uniting Earth Advocates as we stand in solidarity with students around the world

calling for a safer climate future - climate justice for everyone. As you read the Bible readings for today imagine them being read by the older members of our congregation, and then listen to the reflections of our young people.

CALL TO WORSHIP

As we begin our worship today let us
invite all of creation to join us in praising our God.

We bring water, God's gift. (pour water)

We bring earth, God's gift. (touch dirt)

We bring air, God's gift. (blow air)

We bring fire, God's gift. (light a candle)

And we bring the Holy Scriptures, God's gift. (open bible)

Holy God we thank you for your many gifts, both big and small And for all parts of
creation.

Amen

SONG: How Great Thou Art (TiS 155)

O Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all
The works Thy Hand hath made,
I see the stars,
I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout
The universe displayed,
When through the woods
And forest glades I wander
I hear the birds
Sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down
From lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook
And feel the gentle breeze,
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!

Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!
When Christ shall come,
With shouts of acclamation,
And take me home,
What joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow
In humble adoration
And there proclaim,
"My God, how great Thou art!"
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Loving Creator God,

We give thanks that from the very beginning you took time to pause, To look around at all you had created and to name it very good.

We take time to do that now.

We give thanks for animals in the sky, in the sea and on the land

We give thanks for the wonder of the platypus,

the power of the lion,

the industry of the ant,

the beauty of a butterfly

and the beautiful ugliness of the hippopotamus

We give thanks for the wind and for the rain,

for seasons that come and go,

for mountains and valleys,

and vast deserts of warm sand.

For coral reef and deep blue oceans filled with all forms of life- from tiny plankton to the magnificence of the blue whale.

We give thanks for ourselves, God. For humanity in all its wonder.

for creativity, for ingenuity,

for humour , for fun,

for wisdom that is passed from generation to generation, from culture to culture, across the barriers of time and space.

We give thanks for curiosity that challenges the status quo, and helps us to wonder what is right.

In particular today we give thanks for the wisdom of our children,

the young of the world who have made all of us stand up and take notice, and even more to act.

To act for our world,

to act for your creation,

because they,

-our children

have reminded us that it is our responsibility,

to make sure that this world is there,

not just for ourselves but for future generations.

For their children and their children's children.

Because though it is true that each of us will leave this earth through death, Your creation that is the earth and all it contains should not.

We give thanks for the lessons of science, of history
 and for plain common sense,
 for these are the things that will help us to know the way forward.
 The way to act, the way to change,
 the way to heal the damage that we as humanity have done.
 The way to return your creation to how you intended when you imagined it into being.
 Creator God, Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus,
 We give thanks that from the very beginning you took time to pause, to look around at
 all you had created and name it very good.
 May our worship together today help us to do that and so much more.
 We pray in Christ's name
 Amen

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Creator God we acknowledge our complicity in climate change and our sadness at our
 shared responsibility.

I confess that..... *(offer your own confession - eg: lights left on, food that
 goes to waste, convenience over care of creation)*

Creator God, with a heart of sadness
 I bring my confession to you
 Help us to bring healing to your creation

sit in silence

Creator God we bring these confessions to you.
 Thank you for loving us,
 for helping us to find hope,
 and for gifting us with the privilege of being your hands and feet in healing creation.
 Amen

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The scriptures assure us that God is constantly creating and God always wants to give us
 a second chance to try again
 May we through these confessions commit to act for change

SONG. "Now That We've Seen" by Bret Hesla
 Now that we've seen what dominion has done
 Let us pray to be members instead.
 Belief we were placed at the top and could run the whole planet
 Has poisoned our head

On supersized engines of progress we slash
Through gardens we don't understand
And now that we've noticed the gardens' demise
May we humble our ways to the land
May we simply return to the land.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 104. 10-24 (The Message)

You started the springs and rivers,
sent them flowing among the hills.
All the wild animals now drink their fill,
wild donkeys quench their thirst.
Along the riverbanks the birds build nests,
ravens make their voices heard.
You water the mountains from your heavenly cisterns;
earth is supplied with plenty of water.
You make grass grow for the livestock,
hay for the animals that plow the ground.

Oh yes, God brings grain from the land,
wine to make people happy,
Their faces glowing with health,
a people well-fed and hearty.
God's trees are well-watered—
the Lebanon cedars he planted.
Birds build their nests in those trees;
look—the stork at home in the treetop.
Mountain goats climb about the cliffs;
badgers burrow among the rocks.
The moon keeps track of the seasons,
the sun is in charge of each day.
When it's dark and night takes over,
all the forest creatures come out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
clamoring to God for their supper.
When the sun comes up, they vanish,
lazily stretched out in their dens.

Meanwhile, men and women go out to work,
 busy at their jobs until evening.
 What a wildly wonderful world, God!
 You made it all, with Wisdom at your side,
 made earth overflow with your wonderful creations.

Job 12.7-10 (NRSV)

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
⁸ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to
 you. ⁹Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? ¹⁰In
 his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

John 3.9-16 (NRSV)

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a
 teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet
 you[a] do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do
 not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has
 ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.
 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be
 lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the
 world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
 but may have eternal life.

REFLECTIONS:

'Asking the Animals' by Ian Tjoelker aged 16

Asking the Animals, asking the earth...asking God's creation. Imagine that. What would
 they say, what would the earth say? What if all that had to happen was for us to listen?
 What would we hear? A cry for help, or songs of praise to the creator.

Creation is beautiful. Our planet is teeming with the amazing gift of life. From blue
 whales in the depths of the ocean to our land loving alpaca friends, and black cockatoos
 soaring high above us. However, lost in our own bubbles, our phones and computers
 and our massive cities we lose our connection to nature. In some cases, this is
 unavoidable, but this planet is our responsibility.

I believe this passage is saying is that largely, we as a society have lost touch with nature, But, there are those who know and understand. Job refers to the fish and the birds and the earth, but we also have Climate Scientists, Biologists and nature experts who all understand this big blue rock much more than we do. We have our indigenous brothers and sisters who lived on this land for thousands of years and have place and country tied to the very core of their culture.

It is our responsibility to ask questions of those who know and use these answers to inform our decisions.

We can learn from nature; we are learning from nature. Anyone can find connection with nature. Our house plants, backyard gardens and pets are already speaking. Are you ready to listen?

I think right now, if I asked the birds...they would say help. If I asked the fish...they would say help. If I asked the earth; it too would say...help. The air is polluted, the oceans are warming.

The earth needs us to listen. Amen.

'Climate Change Sermon' by Latu Suli aged 14

Job reminds us that god created all of Creation.

God created all humans, the plants,
our oceans that we love to swim in,
the animals and all living things.
but we have a responsibility to look after God's creation.

Just stop and think about verse 10, "in his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being".

How comforting is that?

Job is inviting us to open our eyes to new ways
in how god is leading us forward in how we as a church can respond to climate change together.

Like we can talk about sharing God's love and being God's people.

but I believe we also need to put into action God's love in the way we live life by protecting our earth.

think about what you can do in building a better future.

Now I know that COVID-19 has made life even more difficult not just for our nation but for the whole world.

We need to stand together,
look out for each other and build a better future.

A future that moves us away from coal
and towards clean energy and safer jobs for communities
and we can do this together. Amen.

'My Favourite Thing' by Issac age 14

One of my favourite things to do in my spare time is take myself for a walk. To listen to the birds flying overhead, watch the ants as they quietly march around, going about their quiet business.

It's one thing, I think, in all the business of modern life, that we, as humans can forget to appreciate. Always trying to get from here to there then from there to here, sometimes we don't remember to appreciate the little things in life. But as our scripture reading from Job today tells us, we have much to learn from what many of us consider the most unimportant and small things in our day to day life.

But the simple fact is, what many of us today take for granted, we learned from animals. For example, if birds were not existent, we would not be able to travel the world as we do today, as the aviation industry would not be nearly as advanced. Our building structures would not have been as advanced, had we not studied the structure of plants. 'Ask the animals, they will teach you'.

'Ask the plants of the earth, they will teach you'. God created the world to live in harmony, not apart. What we must begin to realise is that our planet was crafted with the loving image that we would all coexist, not have one species that destroys everything. Take the tiger, for example. An alpha predator. The tiger takes what it needs and leaves the rest for the other species to eat and utilise. This is coexistence in its very essence. Humans were created by God to live in harmony with every other species on this planet. We have seen the impacts of us being the complete opposite to this.

In the 2019 alone, 24 species were declared extinct.

It is time that we learn again to coexist with all of creation, not work against it.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Creator God, amidst the health crisis we find ourselves, we pray that you will help us to stay energised and focussed in our fight for climate justice

We remember that as people of God, we are called to care for the earth. We pray that we won't lose sight of this calling amidst the pressures on our economy due to COVID 19.

We pray for people who are currently suffering from the effects of climate change, particularly communities who are still rebuilding after the bushfires and people in the Pacific recovering from Cyclone Harold. As we regain some sense of normalcy after isolation, we acknowledge those victims of climate change whose lives will never be the same, whether it be lost homes, or loved ones.

We thank you that despite health and economic crises that birds continue to sing, mountains continue to stand and rivers continue to run. We eagerly await a time when we can return to wild spaces and reconnect with your face in the non- human world. Finally, we pray for the climate movement in our homes, in our churches and internationally. Though it is quietened, we ask for strength to sustain our campaign

during this time, so that when we can be together again, we come with refreshed hearts and spirits. Amen

SONG: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (TiS 152)

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Hail Thee as the sun above.

Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Bloss'ning meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise;

Thou the father, Christ our Brother -
All who live in love are Thine:
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

BLESSING

A great cloud of witnesses surrounds us singing
their praises to God.

We go knowing that the love of God

and the kindness of Jesus

and the communion of the Holy Spirit goes with
us all,

as we walk the way of Jesus today and every day.
Amen.

