

Night Prayer

September 2021
The Season of Creation



Introduction

Climate change is not a distant danger — it is already with us.

As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs — we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation. The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge. Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation.

Churches throughout the world now celebrate a monthlong Season of Creation throughout September. During this season, people all around the globe pray and act to address climate change and to protect the earth.

People of faith have a unique call to address the causes of climate change. Let us act together in ways that will safeguard our shared gift of creation — and the lives of those who will inherit it from us.

(Archbishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury)

Opening

“Let the heavens be glad and let Earth rejoice” Ps.96.11

In the name of God, who created the Earth
In the name of Jesus Christ who redeemed the Earth
And in the name of the Spirit who renews the Earth.

As the day fades into night
We come together to worship God
The creator of heaven and earth and of all that is in it.

We raise our voice in songs of praise,
worthy are you of endless blessing,
sun of our night, light of our days.

Singing

We hear the hymn based on the words of St Francis – All Creatures of our God and King.
I like the pictures that accompany this music. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d3gO6qDLNA>

A candle may be lit.



'The Creation' 1935, by Aaron Douglas, American, in the Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington.

Reading

Jeremiah 2: 5-7, 11b-13.

This is what the Lord says:

“What fault did your ancestors find in me,
that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.

⁶They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord,
who brought us up out of Egypt
and led us through the barren wilderness,
through a land of deserts and ravines,
a land of drought and utter darkness,
a land where no one travels and no one lives?’

⁷I brought you into a fertile land
to eat its fruit and rich produce.
But you came and defiled my land
and made my inheritance detestable.

^{11b} But my people have exchanged their glorious God
for worthless idols.

¹² Be appalled at this, you heavens,
and shudder with great horror,”
declares the Lord.

¹³ “My people have committed two sins:
They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Confession

Merciful and sustaining God, we have sinned against you.
We confess our lack of gratitude
for the beauty and bounty of your creation:
teach us to see that your earth sustains us and all that lives.

We confess that we have misused your earth:
grant us amendment of life.

We confess that we have been greedy and selfish:
strengthen us in self-control.

We confess that we have taken the abundance of your world for granted:
make us urgent now for its protection.

Forgive and renew us now
through our Saviour Jesus Christ, by the
power of the Holy Spirit, with whom you

live and reign, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

(Standing Committee for Liturgy and Music)

Reading

Acts 17: 24-28

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

Reflection

We probably all agree that we are called to stewardship – but in this reflection we are encouraged to question exactly what that means. There are different viewpoints.

Christians believe that this world belongs to God by creation, redemption and sustenance, and that he has entrusted it to humankind, made in his image and responsible to him, we are in the position of stewards, tenants, curators, trustees or guardians, whether or not we acknowledge this responsibility. Stewardship implies caring management, not selfish exploitation, it involves a concern for both present and future”

(Report of the Board for Social Responsibility of the General Synod 1991)

Rediscovering the community of all creation

The concept of “stewardship” has weaknesses. The idea of stewardship sets humans over creation, not within it. It depicts the relationship of humans to other creatures in a purely vertical way. Stewardship does not acknowledge that we are also creatures, as we care for creation, creation also cares for us! The focus on a vertical relationship (ruler, steward) has separated us from creation. Modern western thought has denied our creatureliness, our embeddedness within creation, and our interdependence with other creatures. It can be more helpful to refer to us as part of the “the community of all creation.

(Richard Bauckham: Bible and Ecology 2010)

Silence or music.

If you would like some music, visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJMaNZ84xsw>

for ‘O Lord, all the world belongs to you’ (Turning the world upside down).

Words are on the screen.

Affirmation of faith

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.
You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal;
you overcome death.
You are our God.
We worship you.

(New Zealand Prayer Book)

Prayers

Prayers of the People

Creator God, you have called the whole of creation into covenant with you
and have called us to care for the earth and its creatures.

We pray for all to whom you have given life and being, saying,
“Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.”

For the well-being of the earth;
for its resources of water, air, light, and soil, that they may be tended for the good of all
creatures, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For the waters of the earth;
for their careful use and conservation, that we may have the will and the ability to keep
them clean and pure, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For the mineral and energy resources of the planet,
that we may learn sustainable consumption and sound care of the environment from which
they come, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For the animals of the earth,
wild and domestic, large and very small, that they may be protected in the web that sustains
all life, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For all who shape public policies affecting the planet and its creatures [especially and our
local leaders],
that they may consider wisely the well-being of all who come after us, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For all those engaged in conservation, in agriculture and fishing, in mining and industry, and
in forestry and timber-harvesting,
that the health, fruitfulness, and beauty of the natural world may be sustained alongside
human activity, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

For the creatures and the human beings of your world who are ill, or in danger, pain, or
special need [especially...], and for all who suffer from the unjust, violent, or wasteful use of
the earth's resources,
that all may one day live in communities of justice and peace, we pray:

Merciful God, keep your planet and people in peace.

Amen.

(Standing Committee for Liturgy and Music)

Benediction

Creator God,
Provider of all
We bring our thanks today
And we bless each other
That the beauty of this world
And the love that created it
Might be expressed through our lives
And be a blessing to others
Now and always

Amen

Closing Music

'Father, Lord of all creation'. Sung for us here by the Collegium Regale Network. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5fqJaLg3ug>

