

Joint service at Christ Church, Climate Sunday 29 August 2021. Written service circulated to all

Today we are celebrating Climate Sunday and it is also the 5th Sunday of the month, so we are trying something a bit different with café-style church, a later start time and a lunch afterwards. The next 5th Sunday is 31 October, Halloween and Sandy and I plan to do another café-style service, All Age, so do please give me your feedback on what you like and what you don't like!

Being café-style and more interactive, makes it a bit difficult to send a complete written service but I'm including as much as I can. Partly due to the restrictions still in place on singing, especially when facing each other round tables, and partly because of our focus on the environment, all of today's recorded music is from the Resound Worship Doxecology CD, especially written music about 'creation, ecology and hope'. We have permission to use all the music in worship: "Resound Music grant all necessary additional permissions to use our recordings and videos in online worship, via whatever platform, where used with a OneLicense or CCLI streaming license."

I know it won't be to everyone's taste, but it is a one-off and kills two birds with one stone, so to speak. And they say a change is as good as a rest!

Remember – from next week we start our trial-run of worship starting at 10.30am. Also next Sunday, at 3pm, we have a special service of thanksgiving for the lives of all the members who died during 2020 and 2021, for whom we were not able to hold a service in church. All are welcome and the service will be followed by tea and cake.

As both our **Call to Worship** and first song we listen to 'Heaven's Voice brings the Dawn' <https://youtu.be/msWH0HQJTJRQ> if you want to listen at home

Heaven's voice brings the dawn,
out of chaos is born new creation
exploding with wonder;
planets spin into space,
earth and sky find their place,
all of nature awakes to its maker.

You say everything you've made is good:
the sun, the moon,
the stars that shine above.
You say everything you've made is good:
the land, the seas
and all that lives and breathes.

*We sing praise to the maker,
to our King, our creator:
praise to Almighty God.
All creation together
singing one hallelujah:
praise to Almighty God.*

We are formed from the dust,
with your image in us,
given life by the breath
you are breathing;
called to work and to care,
called to nurture and share;
called to serve you
and walk where you're leading.

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Introduction

I believe the climate crisis is the most important thing that is happening in our world and as Christians, people mandated to care for God's creation, and as an Eco-Church, it is our duty to do all that we can to live lives in which we consume as little as possible, destroy as little as possible, and perhaps most importantly speak out about the climate crisis as much as possible. It is only 64 days to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), hosted by the UK government in Glasgow at which the leaders of the world's governments must take action to stop climate change and stop the dangerous warming of our planet. The COP26 summit, 31 Oct. to 12 Nov., will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. You can learn more here <https://ukcop26.org/>

There are two important ways we can all play our part – we can eat less meat, or if you can manage it go vegetarian, and that is why our lunch today will be vegetarian. Another thing we can do is reduce or eliminate food waste which is why the dessert will be 'best before' items – still perfectly safe and good to eat, or give away to those in need, rather than throw them away. Now we will watch a short video from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) on the Countdown to COP26: <https://youtu.be/3ymXFIEu0ww> if you want to watch at home

Prayer of confession

Lord God, you made the world and declared it was 'very good'.
And yet, we have not treated the earth and our fellow humans
with the care and respect they deserve.
We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness.
Give us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency,
which affects people living in poverty the worst.
And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people,
so that conflicts end in peace, and relationships are restored. **Amen**

We continue our prayers of confession by listening to 'If the fields are parched'
<https://youtu.be/-LsqrROrAcM> if you want to listen at home

If the fields are parched
and the trees are felled
will the rocks cry aloud on their own?
If the birds are starved
and the beasts are killed
will the bones in the dust lift a song?

*Have mercy, Lord,
have mercy, Lord.
Forgive our broken ways.
Have mercy, Lord,
have mercy, Lord.
Renew the world you made*

As the oceans rise
and the wells run dry
do we care if disaster is near?
If our children starve
will they cry to God?
Will they curse us for closing our ears?

Still a day will come
when the Lord returns
and the earth will be perfect again

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No more greed or war,
no more tooth and claw,
for the wolf and the lamb will be friends.

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Biblical reflection by Revd David Coleman, Environmental Chaplain shown at the URC General Assembly - https://youtu.be/3FIH6y_a8Ho

Every Sunday, in the lectionary, there is a psalm. Sometimes we don't read it, but I usually try to include it in some way – in the Call to Worship or a hymn choice. One of the tracks on the Doxecology CD, struck me very much as a modern psalm and so we listen to that now:

'Where are you in the storm' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzmB9xW2cT0>

Where are you, in the storm,
in the chaos can you hear
our desperate call?
Water rising, are you sleeping:
are you Lord after all?

Where are you, in the rain?
Earth is crying
for an end to all its pain.
We are sinking, heaven weeping:
will we see light again?

*In the storm, you're the anchor,
you are our hope, you are the shield.
Every rainbow a promise:
you love this world,
all of creation will be healed.*

O speak your mighty word;
raging waters will bow down
before their Lord.
Peace commanding, promise keeping:
of a planet restored.

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What will we commit to as individuals and as a church in the next 64 days? Discussion

Distinctively Christian Actions

- **Prayer**
- **Declarations and confessions** (which we will make after our prayers of intercession)
- **Vigils** do we want to hold some sort of vigil at the start of/during COP26?
- **Scripture reading (public)**
- **Worship** (such as today, but also in general – including hymns about creation and prayers for the planet)

Prayers of intercession

We pray for the Church: that she may be a beacon of hope throughout the world, reminding us all of our responsibility to care for and protect God's precious gift of creation. Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may hear its cry of the damage done and be moved to protect it for future generations to enjoy. Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those people who are already facing droughts, floods and storms: that God may grant them strength and hope for the future as they work to adapt to the changing climate. Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our local church and community: that through the grace of God we may hear the urgent cry of the earth and of the poor and be inspired to respond at this crucial time. Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world we live in: that God may open our eyes to recognise the goodness of all creation and help us to do what we can to restore and care for the wonderful gift that we have been given. Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for world leaders: that God may grant them wisdom to make just decisions which respect the earth and all that lives in it, especially those who are poorest and most vulnerable.

Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our local community: that through God's grace we may be good neighbours to each other and to the whole of creation, restoring and caring for all that God has made.

Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

In the silence we bring to mind those known to us who particularly need your grace and healing at this time... Lord, in your mercy... **hear our prayer.**

For people living with the affects of climate change now:

Leader: For the sake of those facing rising temperatures, drought and water shortages,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of those facing unpredictable weather, disrupted seasons and failed crops,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of those facing flooding, land loss and salination of vital water supplies,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of all those who fear the changing climate,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of the poor, the vulnerable, and the refugee

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of us all,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, recreate our hearts that we might partner with you to renew this damaged world.

Father of creation, we thank you for all that you have made;

For the joy and glimpses of you we find in nature's beauty,

For the variety of all you have provided through its resources.

Help us to tread lightly and use wisely,

Valuing the needs of others, and of creation, above our own desires.

Challenge us where we need to change our lifestyles,

Convict us when we need to speak out on behalf of a voiceless people, or world

And soften us where we have stood in judgement of others.

Father in your mercy, change us and use us

For the restoration of your world, and the protection of all your children. Amen

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We re-commit ourselves to the commitment we made last Climate Sunday, 6 Sept. 2020:

Commitment to environmental action

As members of the United Reformed Church, we believe that the world that we live in is given by God. It is our responsibility as God's children to be good stewards of the bountiful resources that God has provided. The United Reformed Church (URC) has set, as one of its Five Marks of Mission

to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation,
to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

On this climate Sunday, we make a commitment that we will continue to act in the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint, both as a church and individuals, and help bring awareness to others using the church, and the community, to do likewise. To be mindful of the way we use electricity, paper and water – that we create as little waste as possible and recycle whatever we can.

We renew our commitment in demonstrating and encouraging an environmental and climate friendly way of life to the community we serve and other local churches.

We will commit to thinking of how to support climate and environmental organisations by signing petitions and writing to MPs.

We commit to ease flood waters, carbon dioxide and pollutant levels, and climate warming by maintaining our church garden. To also plant it in a way to attract insects and birds as well as being pleasing to the human eye and mind.

In our church worship we commit to singing hymns that celebrate creation, and that express God's call to us to care for creation and environmental concerns.

In the church's prayer life, we commit to praise God the creator and to confess and say sorry for the harm done to creation and to give thanks for the gift of creation and pray for its healing. We commit to work with fair trade, Christian Aid, and Christ Church's partner church in Budiriro, so promoting environmental care globally.

We commit to continuing to bring awareness of environment and climate to youth and children's groups and house groups.

We commit to investing and maintaining our church buildings in an environmentally friendly and ethical way.

Source, Guide and Goal of all that is: to God be eternal Glory. Amen.

Blessing

Go forth into this week remembering that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. Touch the world lightly, nourish the planet and all that is in it, and may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and evermore. Amen

Closing Song

'You saw that it was good' <https://youtu.be/cjfOphqiWZM> (words on next page)

At your bidding there was beginning,
at your summons this world was formed,
all things living brought into being
by the power of your word.
You saw that it was good,
you saw that it was good,
help us give you thanks
with the praise and awe we should.

*For all your ways are good,
yes, all your ways are good;
God of all creation,
all your ways are good.*

In this garden that you have given,
we were hungry for all its fruit,
so we plundered the earth and oceans,
seizing more than we were due.
We stole from what was good,
we stole from what was good,
help us face the truth
with the honesty we should.

For all your ways are good...

As the planet longs for redemption,
spoiled and reeling from nature's loss,
we remember the source of healing
flowing out from Jesus' cross.
You came down for our good,
you came down for our good,
help us look to you
with the hope and faith we should.

For all your ways are good...

If we bow down and seek your mercy,
will you hear us and still forgive?
Holy Spirit, make us determined
to reshape the way we live.
Restore all that is good,
restore all that is good,
help us change our hearts
so we show the care we should.

For all your ways are good...