



Season of Creation 2 **REVISED**

Cover Icon: *St Francis*
by Bob Mash, Cape Town 2012

Typesetting and Layout:
Ikhala Graphic Communications

Mash, R
Season of Creation 2 (revised)
Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Environmental Network
20015

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"I am delighted to introduce 'Season of Creation Two', and warmly commend it for wide use across the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, to help us in responding to God's call to care for his creation.

Caring for the environment has been identified as one of the priority areas for action at Provincial level, as part of our Vision for our church. Yet our vocation to be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us is not new, being rooted in the creation accounts with which our Bible opens. Here we read that God 'formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ... and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it' (Genesis 2:7,15).

Sadly, we have not done a great job of taking care of God's good gifts. Instead, all too often we bring about lasting damage. Now we are faced with environmental degradation, climate change, and, in many places, soaring food prices and falling food security. These resources remind us that with God's help, we can rediscover his vision for living in harmony with the world in which he has placed us.

May God bring blessing to your people and community as you use this resource.

Yours in the service of Christ"



(Archbishop Thabo Makgoba)

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the permission to use materials from the following sources:

- Anglican Alliance
- Churches together in Britain and Ireland
- World Council of Churches

Use of this book

This book is designed to be used together with Season of Creation, there are new themes but the liturgical notes and additional liturgical materials from the first Season of Creation can be used again. It is intended to be used during the Season of Creation (the month of September ending with St Francis day on the 4th of October) but can be used at any time during the year.

This book contains material on the following themes: climate change and eco-justice, food and environmental justice, water, sustainable energy and biodiversity. The section on biodiversity links with St Francis day and the blessing of animals.

There is a clear link between care for God's creation and justice, for our degradation of God's world is impacting upon the most vulnerable in society.

**The Environmental Network of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa:
Rev Canon Rachel Mash, Ven. Andrew Warmback, Rev Tim Grey, Bishop Geoff Davies, Kate Davies, Shaun Cozett, Maropeng Moholoa, Nonhlanhla Shezi.**

Revised version

Season of Creation Two has been revised with contributions from the following people:

- Liturgical material - Wayne van Rooyen
- Bible Study and Fact Sheet: Frank Molteno: Elisa Galgut, Sonia de Villiers, Tozie Zokufa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword and Acknowledgements.....	1
Table of contents.....	2
Eucharistic prayer for the Season.....	3
Lectionary for the Season.....	5
Climate change and eco-justice.....	6
Food and environmental justice.....	14
Water.....	22
Sustainable energy	30
Biodiversity – St Francis Day	38
Liturgy for the blessing of animals.....	42
Compassion for farmed animals.....	46
Materials for Sunday School.....	52

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God of all of Creation.

It is right to give him thanks and praise

You spoke the Word and all that is in heaven and on the earth, all things, came to be. Your Spirit hovered over the primal elements, and you brought forth life in forms innumerable, including this our fragile earth, and we amongst its inhabitants.

As our past is in you, so our hope for the future rests with you.

As we have turned from your way, so we turn again to the warmth of your love.

Through you all things are brought to new life.

And now we give you thanks for the glories of your creation given into our care, and for the opportunities we have to share that richness with all your people

And so with the wonders of creation and the songs of praise of all your creatures both in heaven and on earth we praise you now and forever saying:

Holy, holy...

In the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, work of human hands, gift of our earth, and gave thanks to God. He broke the bread to speak to us of the breaking of his body upon the cross. He gave it to his friends and said:

Take and eat, for this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

He took the wine, work of human hands, gift of our earth, and gave thanks to God, Creator. He poured out the wine to speak to us of the pouring out of his blood. He gave it to his friends saying: This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for all creation for the forgiveness of sins. Every time you drink of the wine, do this in remembrance of me.

So we proclaim the mystery of faith

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

Therefore God, we who seek your reconciliation; we who need reconciliation one with another; we who hope for reconciliation with all creation, draw close to this mystery.

In being broken, spilt and buried, life sprang forth again. In the breaking, there is an opening up; in the spilling, there are the roots of sharing; in death and burial, there is the seed of the new life to come.

As we look in our world, in our lives, and in our hearts, for his second coming, keep us close to this vision that we have seen. Through the giving in the bread and wine, reconcile us to our world and give us the broken oneness, the spilt unity, and the buried resurrection by which we can restore your creation and fulfil your will.

Send upon us, and upon all your creation, the life giving Spirit who first moved upon the waters of the deep.

Stir in us the creative and redeem the destructive. Unite us with you through the body and blood of your Son, your Word made flesh as your Word has made flesh.

By whom, and with whom and in whom, in the unity of your Creative Spirit, with all that has been, is, and will be in your universe, we stand before you and worship you, God of all, in songs of everlasting praise,

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours forever and ever.

Amen.

Lord's prayer etc

Final blessing

Go out into the world rejoicing, and encounter the Creator who waits to meet you there;

savour its richness and diversity and live as those who praise God for its bounty;

and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always.

Amen

From Season of Creation. Written by Rev A Warmback. Authorised for use in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa

LECTIONARY FOR SEASON OF CREATION TWO

THEME	OLD TESTAMENT	PSALM	NEW TESTAMENT	GOSPEL
Climate change and eco-justice	Isaiah 24: 1-6 (It speaks of the earth lying polluted under its inhabitants)	Psalm 98:1-9 (The earth responds to the saving work of God and welcomes it)	Rom 8: 18-25 (Human salvation means relief for the created order)	Matthew 8: 23-27 (Jesus' authority over wind and waves)
Food and environmental justice	Lev 25: 8-24 (Restoration and a return to equity through the principle of Jubilee)	Psalm 85 (Link between righteousness and the wellbeing of the land)	James 5:1-8 (Economic imbalances caused by excessive wealth in a few reflect in the cries of the labourers)	Luke 4: 16-21 (The role of the messiah)
Water	Gen 21: 8-19 (Dependency on water)	Psalm 104:10-17 (Recognition of the relationship between water and life and God as the provider)	Revelation 22:1-7 (Water as metaphor for the life that flows from God)	John 4: 1-15 (The spiritual meaning of water)
Sustainable energy	Leviticus 25:8-24 (A sustainable strategy for agriculture)	Psalm 46 (God remains the source of our strength and sustainability no matter what else happens)	Col 1:15-23 (All things created through Christ)	John 3: 16-21 (God sent his Son for the salvation of the whole of creation)
Biodiversity	Gen1:12-28 (The story of the beginning of biodiversity)	Psalm 148 (Eco praise !)	Rev 5:11-14 (Biodiversity –all creatures come together in praise)	Matthew 10:36-33 (God values all of His creatures)

CLIMATE CHANGE & ECO-JUSTICE

The earth's climate has changed throughout history, sometimes drastically. However, the global climate change we are experiencing now has two primary sources, deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels, both resulting in dangerous levels of greenhouse gases. Over 75% of carbon emissions today come from fossil fuels.



The United Nations Foundation has summarized the consequences, unless we take immediate action: the most likely outcome will be rises in the global average surface temperature to dangerous levels (by 0.2 to 0.4 degrees C per decade) throughout the 21st century.

These scientists conclude that we must halt further temperature increases to a minimum of 2 degrees; otherwise climate change will be disastrous. Increases in sea level, extreme weather, and the acidity of oceans may not be reversible, which will result in disruptions in ecosystems beyond the point to which humankind can adapt. The vast majority of people – particularly the poor, women, the elderly and children – in water-scarce regions may not survive.

The academic journal "Science" reported in 2012 that the current rate of carbon emissions and its impact on ocean acidity is unparalleled in the last 300 million years of Earth history. "raising the possibility that we are entering an unknown territory of marine ecosystem change."

**By 2100,
our climate
will have
risen by 3 to 5
degrees since
1750.**



ANGLICAN ALLIANCE
Development - Relief - Advocacy

Currently, about 15% of the world's energy production is based on renewable energy, and this figure can significantly improve with committed, effective political leadership. For example, it has been estimated that measures taken in Brazil to conserve energy since the 1970's have reduced consumption of non-renewables by nearly 50%.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that documented temperature increases have already been observed in the following ways:

- 1 in the Arctic and Antarctic regions with the melting of polar ice;
- 2 in sea-level rise contributing to the loss of coastal wetlands;
- 3 on agriculture and forestry in the Northern Hemisphere (earlier spring plantings and forest disturbances due to fire and pests);
- 4 on agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women are the primary farmers, and where warmer, drier conditions have reduced the growing season;
- 5 on human health, such as infectious diseases and the effects of allergenic pollen.

The World Health Organization concludes that climate change already contributes to the emergence and intensification of infectious diseases, including Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, West Nile virus, malaria, and dengue fever – diseases which are likely to spread more quickly in developing and the least developed countries. Malaria is spreading in populated areas of Zimbabwe and the African Highlands, which were recently not at risk (United Nations Foundation and Sigma Xi, 2007).



Today, 21% of the world's population lives within 30 km of coastlines. Sea level rise, which could reach one meter or more by the end of this century, will profoundly affect low-lying areas in the most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh, resulting in the complete loss of fertile land, massive migrations of human populations, and starvation.

More intense storms and flooding along coasts and mountain valleys will create a staggering number of environmental refugees in search of food and shelter at re-location centers that most governments will be unable to provide.

Increased levels of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels are very likely contributing to the rapid rise of asthma.

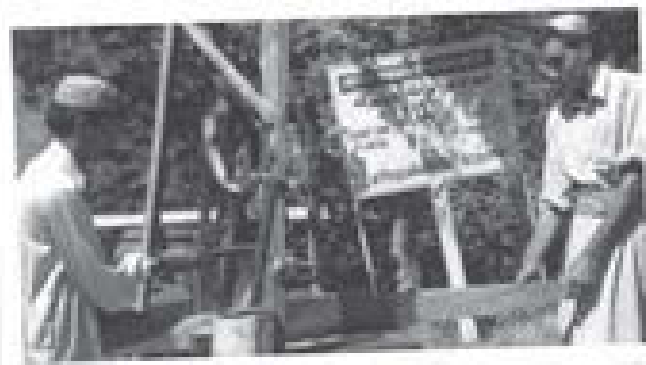
Four sovereign states – Tuvalu, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, The Republic of Maldives, and Kribati – are home to nearly a half million people whose habitable land will be completely inundated by the end of this century.

The impact of increasingly severe coastal storms together with sea level rise would displace roughly 130 to 450 million people during this century.

Indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, especially in coastal areas where sea-level rise has begun. Changes in ecosystems will have a harmful impact on every dimension of indigenous life.

WHAT THE CHURCHES CAN DO

- A good first step in reducing your carbon footprint in buildings and homes is to conduct an energy audit, while beginning to use renewable energy whenever possible.
- Simply turn off electric lights when they're not being used or when they're not really needed.
- Convene congregational discussions to strengthen community ties and promote inter-faith co-operation in relation to the adoption of renewable energy.
- Bring before your political leadership the imperative to use all means, including legislation and the removal of oil/gas subsidies, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Use public transportation whenever possible, and organize car pools in your workplace.



BIBLE STUDY – CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECO-JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

The Bible describes the beauty and abundance of creation. It also talks of human injustice and oppression, distorting relationships amongst people and with the land. The Book of Isaiah offers inspiring images of these relationships being restored, so that all life is in harmony and justice with each other and creation. As Isaiah 58:6 says, this will require a kind of 'fasting' or self-denial, to reject greed and embrace justice. These words speak to us today, where the greed and overconsumption by some is having dire impact on the earth's climate and leading to desperate suffering in many parts of the world. We have little time to act – but must speak and act now.

This Bible study is for use by small groups or individuals, to be adapted to your own context.

ISAIAH 32:15-17 – THE PEACE OF GOD'S REIGN

...until a spirit from on high is poured out on us,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.
Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
The effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and
trust for ever.

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

Isaiah 58:6 – God's justice

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords
of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

DISCUSSION

You may open in prayer. Read the Bible passage twice and then discuss these questions:

In biblical times:

- What do you think these two passages are about? Discuss each and retell in your words.
- In Isaiah 32:15-17, what happens when people live with the Spirit in harmony with the land?
- What happens when justice and righteousness prevail? To what kind of justice do you think this refers?
- Isaiah 58:6 talks of a different kind of fasting or self-denial. What kind of human greed would lead to injustice and oppression of others?
- What do these passages say about God's vision for humanity and his creation?

In our own times:

- What do we recognise from this psalm in our world today?
- In what ways has humanity been unjust and damaged the environment?
- What is the impact of this damage on others, including the poorest communities?

PRAYER

Loving Father,

We give thanks for the abundance of your creation. We pray for forgiveness where our greedy and unjust actions have harmed the environment and our neighbours. Please give us strength to change our behaviour and courage to challenge others. Give us a passion for justice to support those affected by climate change and protect us when we face these challenges ourselves. Help us to see clearly the way to restore right and just relationships with the environment and each other, for the good of all.

In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

- Isaiah 58:6 talks of fasting and ending greed that overcomes justice and oppression. What should people deny themselves to help bring justice for others and care for creation?
- What is our prayer? What practical actions can we commit to take at individual and community level?

FURTHER PASSAGES FOR READING

Genesis 1: 1 – 2:15

Psalms 8:3-9

Romans 8: 19-23

Revelation 22: 1-3

REFERENCES AND OTHER BIBLE STUDIES

[www.jubilee-centre.org/
uploaded/files/resource_267.pdf](http://www.jubilee-centre.org/uploaded/files/resource_267.pdf)

www.aocha.org

World Council of Churches:

www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/justice-diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/eco-justice

www.ecocongregation.org



SERMON NOTES:

CLIMATE CHANGE & ECO-JUSTICE

Matthew 6.19-34

The current economic crisis is deeply linked to the social and environmental crises. The link is that our relationship with wealth and possession has become idolatrous – as a society we have been seeking happiness through things, rather than through relationships. The values Jesus proclaimed - God's Kingdom values – suggest that we should rather invest in relationships – with God, people and creation.

The Context – a Triple Crisis

The credit crunch is deeply connected to our unsustainable use of the earth's resources, and the pressures this is putting on financial systems and also on human society.

"It is becoming clearer how far we have been mortgaging our children's tomorrow to fund our today, both financially and in our use of the finite resources of the earth ... Free markets cannot flourish within a value-free environment." (Bishop of London)

Both financially and environmentally we cannot keep borrowing from what is not really ours. There is much talk currently about the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. Today, all three are being profoundly shaken. Economically, the myth that unlimited growth could continue forever has been shattered. The global economy may be 5 times the size it was 50 years ago but it is now running up against the twin buffers of unrestrained greed and the planet's limited resources. Oil will peak soon if it hasn't already. Rising carbon emissions are causing unpredictable weather patterns that make agriculture, transport and insurance highly unpredictable. In a world of economic boom, two billion people live on less than R10 a day and 60% of the earth's ecosystems have become degraded.

Moreover, the myth that more money would automatically make us happier is being challenged in most affluent western societies. The psychologist Oliver James has described the social virus 'Affluenza' whereby we are sucked into an addictive cycle of believing that buying more stuff will make us more happy, whereas it simply leaves us wanting more. Economic woes, social unease and environmental depletion – the three pillars on which our societies are built, are being shaken to the core, and people are searching for a different way of being, and of living.

So, we have a context of creation in crisis – a crisis caused by humanity in crisis about its purpose and values. In this context what does our Christian faith have to offer? Recognising that too often we in the churches have simply mimicked the values of wider society, where should we be different?

In our reading from Matthew 6, Jesus offers a radically different approach to how we value the economic, the social and the environmental. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6.19-21 NIV).

Jesus is clear – money and possessions can easily take God's place in our lives. Jesus' challenge to our current crisis is also clear. We have turned creation into commodities and people into units of production. We have been worshipping mammon - economic growth and prosperity, rather than worshipping God. In the Sermon on the Mount, of which this reading is a part, true values lie not in accumulating more material possessions, but in cultivating deeper relationships.

Rather than our happiness depending on balancing economic, social and environmental sustainability, Jesus offers us an alternative model. Our true happiness lies in our relationships – firstly with God and his Kingdom values, and then with people and with the non-human creation.

If we seek first God's Kingdom – his rule and his values – then our current crises fall into perspective. The worries of people in Jesus' time were so similar to our worries today - food, clothing, housing, saving for a rainy day – many of the universal human worries. Jesus does not say these things don't matter. Rather he says something a bit surprising: look at God's creation – at birds and at flowers. Become ornithologists and botanists!

In his wonderful paraphrase 'The Message', Dr Eugene Peterson puts these verses like this:
*"Look at the birds, free and unfettered,
not tied down to a job description,
careless in the care of God.*

*And you count far more to him than birds ...
Walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers.*

*They never primp or shop, but have you ever
seen colour and design quite like it?*

*The ten best-dressed men and women in the
country look shabby alongside them.*

*If God gives such attention to the appearance
of wildflowers*

*- most of which are never even seen –
don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in
you, do his best for you?*

*What I'm trying to do here is to get you to
relax,*

*to not be so preoccupied with getting,
so you can respond to God's giving."*

As we take our minds off our preoccupation with tomorrow's worries and deepen our relationship with God's Kingdom values, so everything falls into perspective. Spending time in God's creation – going for a walk, watching plants, birds, the waves at the beach, the movement of the planets and stars, digging a garden – all of these can be ways in which God helps us to rediscover what is really important. We need to spend time on our relationships with people, with family and friends. We also need to develop relationships with the poor and grow in God's love and compassion. And as we develop our relationship with God, our materialistic values will be challenged and changed

Rev David Bookless: A Rocha

Source: *Churches together in Britain and Ireland*

Global Warning

**Creator God – maker and shaper of all that is,
seen and unseen;
You are in the expanse and depth of Creation, and in the processes that make life possible.**

Yet we are distracted by the gods we make ourselves and our lives become fractured and fragmented. In our brokenness we disturb the Earth's capacity to hold us. Instead we find climate uncertainty and global injustice.

Call us back from the brink.
Help us to choose love not fear,
to change ourselves and not the planet;
to act justly for the sake of the vulnerable;
and
to make a difference today
for life tomorrow.

**In your name – Father, Son and Spirit.
Amen.**

Martyn Goss 2008: Source: Churches together in Britain and Ireland.

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

PREPARATION

The sanctuary and church can be filled with drawings and paintings of the sky, clouds, the cosmos! Prayer flags can be prepared for each congregation member to receive during the service. Flags can be hung in the church. The Youth or Sunday school or other groups can prepare flags and link them to climate change Sunday. Prayers are to be written on these flags for the healing of our skies during the confession or before the service – whichever works logistically.

We join in with the children as they process into the church singing the song “What a Friend we have in Jesus”.

What a friend we have in Jesus

All our sins and griefs to bear.

What a privilege to carry

Ev’ry thing to God in prayer.

As we wave these flags before us,

Waving them for God to hear,

May the wind take them to Jesus,

In a special wave of prayer.

Fans can be blowing at speed to create a sense of air and movement. These will be turned off during the confession. Plants can be placed in the sanctuary and amidst these plants – solar powered lights can be placed. Even the candles on the altar can be replaced with solar lights.

A candle burns in a jar near the altar. During the confession the jar’s lid can be placed on it and we watch as the candle is deprived of oxygen and dies. This is the reality of what we are doing to our planet.

WELCOME

We celebrate with the clouds, the winds, the dusk and the dawn. We listen to the sounds of the sky proclaiming God’s presence. We stand in awe before the vast reaches of space above us and thank God for the fragile piece of stardust we call Earth. The forests and the skies are one. It is only plants that can convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. As we chop down trees and clear natural flora we are adding to climate change and increasing the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We need to find new ways to use renewable energy. Isaiah speaks of doom and the earth being burdened by pollution. However this is not the final inheritance we have – in Christ we have hope – but we are called to be stewards of this fragile creation. Today we will reflect on climate change and eco-justice.

VIDEOS

The following videos can be shown before the sermon or prayers:

Meditative video: This is Air I Breathe <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2ZgRbND2w0>

Video on the impact of climate change in Africa <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7njmXZL0Sx8>

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For the Preservation of the Environment

Sovereign Lord
you are the Creator and Sustainer
of the earth
and you call us to be stewards of
its resources:
forgive us for squandering your
gifts
inspire us to conserve them and
use them aright
in the service of your people
and to the glory of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

An Anglican Prayer Book (adapted)

Alternatively:

Holy God,
earth and air and water are your
creation, and every living thing
belongs to you:
have mercy on us as climate
change confronts us.
Give us the will and the courage
to simplify the way we live,
to reduce the energy we use,
to share the resources you
provide,
and to bear the cost of change.
Forgive our past mistakes
and send us your Spirit, with
wisdom in present controversies
and vision for the future to which
you call us
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

© Anglican Church of Australia Trust
Corporation.

SONGS

1. I, the lord of Sea and sky
SOF 830
2. Wind, wind blow on me
SOF 609
3. Lord, the light of your love
is shining SOF 362
4. Song of the sky *
5. Rise Creator Spirit Rise *

* <http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>

Alternatively:

Jesus Christ, teach us to
empathise with Earth.
Make our spirits sensitive to the
cries of creation,
cries for justice from the air, the
clouds and the sky.
Jesus Christ, make our faith
sensitive to the groans of the
Spirit in creation,
groans of longing for a new creation.
Jesus Christ, make our hearts
sensitive to the songs of our kin,
songs of celebration from the
stars, the rains and the light.
Christ, teach us to care. Amen

Or:

Creator God, we give thanks for
this wonderful earth which we
share with the whole community
of life. We pray for the awareness
that we cannot sustain current
aspirations of infinite economic
gain on a finite planet. Help us to
live in such a way that we respect
all life, accepting that we must
reduce our demands in order
to allow other forms of life to
continue and flourish.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

In our brokenness we disturb
earth's capacity to hold us, so
we have climate uncertainty
and global injustice. Help us to
make a difference today, for life
tomorrow.

O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

Creator God, we pray for our
brothers and sisters of the earth:
animals, birds, fish, plants and
insects.
May their humility and simplicity
inspire us to live according to
your will.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

Spirit of God, inspire our Church
to develop partnerships of
action with others to address the
pressing issues of our planet.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

We pray for visionaries, artists and
writers, that through their work
we may see Creation afresh.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

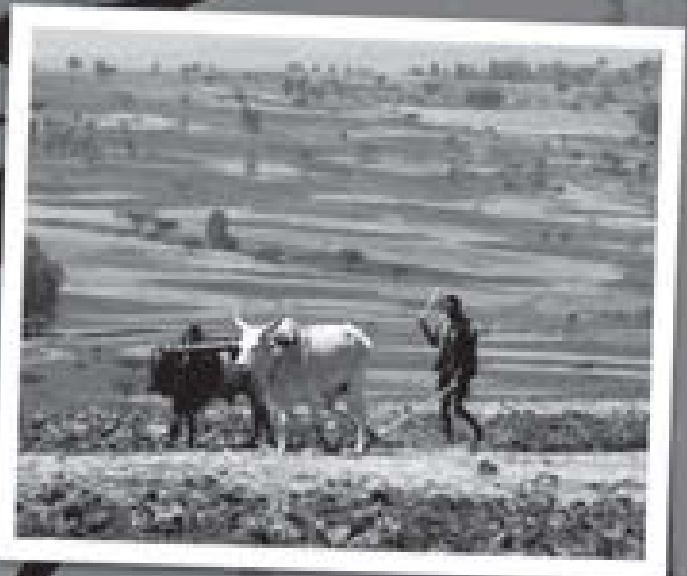
Creator Spirit, we pray that
the Church will re-engage with
Your Creation and reaffirm our
biblical, theological and spiritual
traditions. Lead us to transform
our lives and the Church to reflect
your glory in Creation.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

Spirit of God, You establish the
dance of Creation; bring life out
of death and order out of chaos.
Call us to radical action to care
about the whole created world
and to share resources more
equitably with all life.
O God, hear us we pray
**Give us your love for the whole
of Creation**

Creator God, we are using fossil
fuels and other destructive forms
of energy. We are destroying
the forests, changing the
climate, the seas, the soils, the
biodiversity and the balance of
life on our fragile planet. We are
dispossessing the poor and future
generations.
Help us to choose life for
neighbours near and far and for
those that come after us. May we
honour and nurture all that makes
us one with you. We ask this
through Christ Our Lord. Amen
© Anglican Church of Australia Trust
Corporation

FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Intensive industrial agriculture can undermine human health and the integrity of ecological systems. The historical record suggests that people have traditionally used in the order of 10,000 species of plants for food, which maximizes nutrition. Today, only 20 major crops (primarily wheat, rice and corn) provide 90 percent of the world's dietary intake (The UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 2008).



In sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is becoming a predominately female activity as a consequence of male out-migration. Women now constitute the majority of small farmers, providing most of the labour and managing a large part of the farming activities on a daily basis (The Food and Agriculture Organization, 2002).

Agriculture is also the most widespread user of water. Despite the critical role that women play in reducing food insecurity, through their knowledge of food production, local biodiversity, soils, and local water resources, they are often excluded from decision-making processes in new water management initiatives (The International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2007).

In North Africa and the Near East, 60-70% of all surface and groundwater is used for agriculture. Water demand is steadily increasing as a result, while water supply is steadily decreasing (The Food and Agriculture Organization, 2008).

In 2008, the Food and Agriculture Organization estimated that 1 billion people will face "dire food insecurity" over the next decade.



ANGLICAN ALLIANCE
Development · Relief · Advocacy

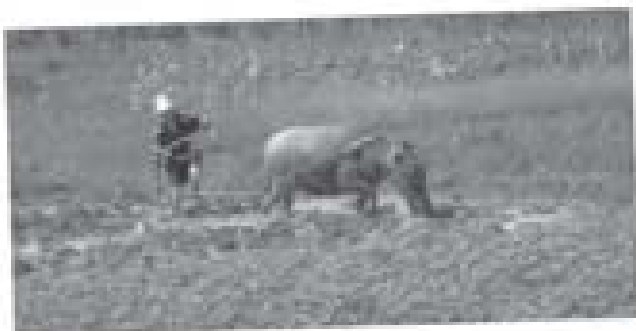
Carlos Marentes of the Border Agricultural Workers Project says, "The current agricultural system destroys rural communities in the South, forcing millions to migrate, risking their lives at the border. Food sovereignty is our alternative. Instead of building walls, we should fight for healthy rural communities, so people can stay on their land, and produce their own food" ("Food Sovereignty," Grassroots International and La Via Campesina).

Emissions from agricultural activities alone account for 12-40 percent of current human-induced climate change (International Yearbook of Environmental and Resource Economics, 2001).

The best estimates for the loss of forests worldwide represents a parcel of land the size of Venezuela. Similar trends continue for the formation of deserts. This has a direct and destructive impact on our ability to produce food for a hungry world (Global Forest Assessment, 2002).

80 per cent of global carbon stocks are stored in soils and forests, and carbon released in them as a result of unsustainable agriculture and deforestation contribute significantly to climate change.

Organic agriculture is based on the effective management of local ecosystems involved in food production. Organic methods protect the environment and produce healthier food for several reasons: they reduce noxious chemicals that contribute to climate change; they store carbon in soil and build organic matter; and they minimize overall energy consumption by up to 70% (The International Organization of Agricultural Movements, 2010).



Some 20 percent of the world's dry lands are affected by human soil degradation, which puts at risk the livelihoods of more than 1 billion people (Global Environmental Outlook, 2008).

WHAT THE CHURCHES CAN DO

- Support local and regional farmers markets.
- Bring local farmers, especially women, to speak with your congregations, where they can describe their experience and express their concerns.
- Organize coalitions of farmers and church groups to educate the public and influence political decisions.
- Voice your concerns to government leaders about following the precautionary principle ("first, do no harm") in the use of genetically engineered seeds and pesticides.
- Encourage your church leaders to explore the relationships between poverty, human rights, and the environment.

BIBLE STUDY – FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

The Bible talks of living in harmony with the land and calls for justice so all people can have secure food supplies. God is shown caring for his people, providing food for life. Sharing food was central to Jesus' ministry. He used bread as the symbol of faith, giving life to body and soul. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus quoted from Isaiah 61 to announce his manifesto, calling for freedom and justice as we turn to God. The 'year of the Lord's favour' relates to the Old Testament concept of a Jubilee year, celebrating God's graciousness to all and showing how humanity and creation must live in harmony to ensure sustainable food for all.

This Bible study is for use by small groups or individuals, to be adapted to your own context.

LUKE 4:16-19

Jesus went to Nazareth... He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

LEVITICUS 25: 10-19 – CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE YEAR

You shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants... you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee, it shall be holy to you; you shall eat only what the field itself produces... You shall not cheat one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God. You shall observe my statutes and faithfully keep my ordinances, so that you may live on the land securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live on it securely.



DISCUSSION

You may open in prayer. Read the Bible passage twice and then discuss these questions:

In biblical times:

- What do you think these passages are about? Please retell them in your own words.
- What do we learn about God's care for the most vulnerable?
- What was the idea of the Jubilee year? How did this help people live in harmony with the land?
- How would these laws help communities to have better and fairer relationships?
- It is written in Leviticus 25: 23 that God says: "The land is mine; you are but tenants" What should this mean for how humans treat the land and each other?

In our own times:

- In what ways do bad or unjust relationships within and between human societies cause hunger in our world today?
- How do human actions damage our environment and lead to hunger?
- What would you put into a Jubilee law for today – so that we produce, consume, buy, sell and share food in a just way?
- What issues can we advocate for to gain reliable daily food for all?
- What is our prayer? What practical actions can we commit to take as individuals and communities?



PRAYER

Loving Father,

We thank you for your loving care for your people and all creation. Forgive us when we have failed to seek justice and allowed others to go hungry. Forgive us when we have damaged creation and created further poverty and hunger. Give us a hunger for justice, so that all may live in harmony with the land with food, dignity and justice for all. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

FURTHER PASSAGES FOR READING

Genesis 41

Exodus 23:11

Luke 12: 13-21

Matthew 6: 9-13

REFERENCES AND OTHER BIBLE STUDIES

Bible: New International Version 1979

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance:
www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/food/

www.arochoa.org

World Council of Churches:
www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/justice-diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/eco-justice

www.ecocongregation.org



SERMON:

FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

'OUR DAILY BREAD' John 6, 1-12

'The great community problem of our modern world is how to share bread.'

These words were said by George MacLeod, the Founder of the Iona Community in Scotland, several decades ago. The gap between the rich of the earth and the earth's poor, after thirty years of narrowing following World War Two, has been followed by thirty-five years in which it has got wider - so wide that there has never been a time in human history when it was so great, or affected so many people. Truly, Lazarus is far away.

But the gospel [John 6, 1-12: Jesus feeds the five thousand] is a vivid reminder that the problem of how to share bread is not a new one. It shows Jesus living with the huge tensions that were erupting round about him, struggling to find time and space for solitude and prayer, and yet following the movement of his heart, going out in compassion to the people who crowded round him wherever he went, full of need, full of a reawakened hope. There is a wonderful description of how everyone ate. John reads, 'they all had as much as they wanted.' It contains one of the most beautiful images in the Bible, this picture of sharing, of a basic need satisfied – and no one going hungry!

But food has become an extraordinarily complex and emotive subject, full of contradictions. Cookery books dominate the bestseller lists, there are whole television channels dedicated to programmes about cooking, restaurants, food-growing, celebrity chefs, and the interesting term, 'food pornography' has entered our dictionary.

Obesity, especially childhood obesity, is turning into a serious national epidemic. We are

confused about what constitutes healthy eating, confused by the labelling on the food we buy, confused about what the solutions might be. The emotional and psychological meanings of food are even more of a minefield; dieting, eating disorders, the role of food and meals in family and community life, the values of hospitality.

And that's before we even start on the big questions of sustainable agriculture, factory farming, climate change, energy use, resource shortages and conflicts, trade rules and global hunger. The bottom line of almost every major global problem has got food in it somewhere. So I think it's still very relevant that in the Lord's Prayer, the family prayer of the church, the first plea we make, the top of the agenda, is: 'Give us today our daily bread' Bread, of course, as well as being a real thing in itself, also stands as a symbol for other things - for homes, healthcare, work, hope, justice - all the things that Jesus was always going on about, the necessities of life, the wherewithal to sustain life.

We need to remember that food for ourselves is a material question but food for our neighbours is a spiritual one

And how does this link to the food we put on our plates? Well, it starts with what we put in our shopping trolleys. We can try to buy locally, especially supporting small farmers and producers, and helping our own local economies rather than buying products made outside of South Africa. When we do our grocery shop, we can buy a couple of extra items to donate to those in need. We could share more meals with friends and strangers. We could enjoy and give thanks for our food as a gift from God. We can cut down on junk food and eat food which is good for our bodies.

He has filled the hungry with good things...' (Luke 1, 46-55)

This verse is from the Magnificat, Mary's song. Hers is the great New Testament song of liberation. She anticipates the nature of glory, and she names it and she celebrates it. This is what God's glory looks like...

*He has scattered the proud with all their plans...
He has lifted up the lowly...
He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands.*

This is how it will be. Mary is the prophet of the poor, announcing the transformed social order. The spiritual realm is embedded in economic and political reality. We are promised a cosmic liberation in which the hungry will be filled with good things. If we share the anxiety and pain, we need to remember that we also share the promise of glory.

Every Eucharist service should also remind us of our commitment to share; the bread was broken to be shared.: the prophet Amos reminds us

'I hate your religious festivals; stop your noisy songs; instead, et justice roll like a river, and righteousness like a stream that never runs dry.' (Amos 5, 21 – 24)

If we get so caught up in the perfection of our own remembrance, or the beauty of our ceremonies and prayers, or our own nourishment, that we forget that people are still hungry and we are embodied with them in Christ's body, then we rather miss the point of Jesus the bread of life. The bread was broken to be shared.

When we envisage our great feast in the kingdom of God where no one goes hungry and all are satisfied, I will be happy to forgo gala banquets in favour of a simple picnic by the lake. But it will not be a true celebration until everyone is included; the street children and those who are suffering from famine as well. God give us grace to share our bread.

Revd Dr Kathy Galloway, Head of Christian Aid Scotland

Source: *Churches together in Britain and Ireland*



**Bless, O Lord,
the plants, the vegetation
and the herbs of the field,
that they may grow
and increase to fullness
and bear much fruit.
And may the fruit of the land
remind us
of the spiritual fruit we should bear.**

Coptic Orthodox liturgy, Egypt.

FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

PREPARATION

The Sanctuary can be filled with harvest goods. This service can be used as a harvest festival however the focus should remain on how we spoil and abuse the bounty of the Earth. We remember the injustice of those going without food.

Each congregation member can be handed an ear of wheat, or a kernel of corn as they enter the church. This reminds us that that Jesus, the Messiah, is the Bread of Life.

Different types of breads can be placed in the sanctuary and distributed to those in need after the service or the bread can be shared in fellowship with different spreads and jams – help yourself style – after the service.

To highlight the food theme, flat rolls could be baked before the service and brought in piping hot by the children during the offertory while the Hymn “I am the Bread of Life” is sung.

WELCOME

Today, we worship amidst a food basket. Today our scriptures remind us of Jesus the Word of Life. We also remember how so many people go without food. Amidst this bounty before us, we are asked to think of those without. What difference would it make, if each one of us were to buy an extra loaf of bread once a week and share it with someone in need.

Each one of us has been handed a symbol of food – a reminder that the love you share is like seeds that bring about a crop of plenty.

VIDEO CLIPS

Ancient Words - Michael W Smith: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouTgX9hcwk4>

Food Wastage footprint Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loCVrkcaH6Q>

Food wastage Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md3ddmtja6s>

SONGS

1. Come ye faithful people, come SOF 75
2. For the fruits of His creation AMRS 457
3. I am the bread of life SOF 200
4. We plough the fields SOF 585

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE

The Prayer For Responsible Citizenship on page 86 paragraph 13 (Anglican Prayer book) may used:

Alternatively

When celebrating Harvest Festival:

For people who love the land and care for it well, making farming sustainable for future generations:
Lord, hear our prayer.

For crop growers and livestock breeders, taking risks to grow food for a hungry world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For rural and regional networks, sharing information to overcome loneliness and isolation for those on the land.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For strategists, planners, policy makers and advisors, offering new ways to grow food and care for the land in changing times.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For seasonable weather, good growth and good yields, so that there may be abundant harvests to feed hungry people,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For just wages, safe work practices and healthy habits for all farmers, so that people and communities may flourish and be strong,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For health and happiness in the home life of all farmers, and for families to work together with love, respect and harmony,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For wise financial planning, land care and asset management, so that farmers may be confident about the future of their farms,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who despair in hard times, that they may be helped and supported by caring services and friends,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For Christians who gather for worship, study and prayer, that their faith may create and sustain community,

Lord, hear our prayer.

© Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

Alternatively:

For children who go to bed hungry at night, and for parents who cannot find food for them, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For communities hungry because of flood, fire or drought, and for governments who struggle to provide for them Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For farmers sowing seed and raising livestock to feed the world, and for their care for the land that provides their livelihood, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For subsistence farmers vulnerable to climate changes, and for cash-croppers vulnerable to market variations, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For plant and animal breeders, soil scientists and catchment managers, and for the technologies that increase the food we produce, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For those who use pesticides and herbicides with care in agriculture, and for those who are committed to organic farming practices, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For the wellbeing and ethical treatment of livestock, and for those who raise, transport and slaughter animals for food, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For remote communities in this country, where fresh food is expensive and in short supply, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For policy-makers and planners in land use and food production, and for community educators in diet and nutrition, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

For cooks, chefs and food scientists, and those who work in food service and hospitality, Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give us thankful hearts for your generous providence whenever we eat and drink and are satisfied. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give us Christ's spirit of hospitality to share our tables with the lonely and the outcast. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Keep us from carelessness, wastefulness and greed when we shop for food, prepare it and eat it. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Gather us around the table of your love, where you feed us with the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give us grace to recognise the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Send us in the strength of this holy meal to bear witness to your power and peace in a hungry world. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Bring us, with all your saints, to the heavenly feast where those who hunger and thirst for justice will be satisfied. Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Amen

© Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

WATER

1.1 Billion people worldwide lack access to clean water.

1.8 million children die each year from waterborne diseases – one every 10 seconds.

5.3 billion people, two thirds of the world's population, will suffer from water shortages by 2050.

The average American family uses 293 gallons of water per day; the average African family uses 5 gallons.



In 1966, the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights established the right to water as a human right in Articles 11 and 12.

In 1999, the Dublin Conference on Water and the Environment established four principles that have subsequently guided world water policy: (1) fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource; (2) water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels; (3) women play a central role in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water; (4) water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.



Global consumption of water doubles every 20 years – more than twice the rate of human population growth.



ANGLICAN ALLIANCE
Development · Relief · Advocacy

In 2001, 800 delegates from 35 countries attended the Water for Peace and Nature Summit in Vancouver. They endorsed and signed the "Treaty Initiative to Share and Protect the Global Water Commons," which says: "the intrinsic value of the Earth's fresh water precedes its utility and commercial value," and that "the Earth's water belongs to the Earth and all species, and therefore must not be treated as a private commodity to be bought, sold, and traded for profit."

While it is obviously true that we need water for basic survival, continuing attempts to categorize water as a "need," rather than a "right" have been legal attempts to justify privatization – that is to say, companies claim that their mission is to fulfill this basic "need."



WHAT THE CHURCHES CAN DO

- Church leaders, lay and ordained, must speak directly to government representatives at all levels – local, regional, and national – about the right to safe, clean water and preserving that right as a basic public trust.
- Use the water in your baptismal font both as a sacrament and as an educational tool linking spiritual teachings, environmental stewardship practices, and basic human rights.
- Invite women in your congregation to share their experiences about the significance of water, its uses, and the issues surrounding it.
- Visit nearby wells, streams, and rivers with your congregations and communities to examine and bless the water.
- Implement water conservation strategies in your parish church or other places of worship.



BIBLE STUDY – THE RIGHT TO WATER: THE RIGHT TO LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The Bible talks repeatedly about water. The Spirit hovered over water at the beginning of creation. Water is a common theme in stories about sustaining life and communities. There are many accounts of women collecting water, including the Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at the well. In the New Testament, water becomes symbolic of new life in Christ.

In this story from Genesis 21, God provides water to save the lives of Hagar and her son, Ishmael. Hagar, a slave and a foreigner and the mother of Abraham's son, was rejected and sent out into the desert with her child.

GENESIS 21: 14-19 – GOD PROVIDES WATER TO SAVE LIFE

Thanksgiving for Earth's Bounty

Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she began to sob.

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

PRAYER

Loving Father,

We rejoice in your gift of water in creation. We give thanks for the resource of clean, safe water that sustains life. We ask your forgiveness where we have misused water supplies or not cared about others. We pray for places where people and creation suffer from lack of water. Please guide humanity to come together to preserve and share water for the life and flourishing of all.

In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

DISCUSSION

You may open in prayer. Read the Bible passage twice and then discuss these questions:

In biblical times:

- What do you think this passage is about? Please retell it in your own words.
- What factors made Hagar so powerless in this situation?
- What did Hagar experience when her son was dying of thirst?
- How did God respond to the suffering of this foreign female slave?



- What do we learn from this story about God's care for the most vulnerable?

In our own times:

- What do we recognise from this story in our world today? What is our prayer?
- God showed particular concern for the most vulnerable: a woman and a child who were enslaved foreigners. Who are the most vulnerable in our communities and world? How should the Church respond?
- Discuss some specific situations and consider why people are denied the right to enough water and clean water.
- "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:24) What does justice mean in relation to water access in our world? Do we help or harm others in our personal use of water?
- What practical actions can we commit to take at individual and community level to change our own practices and to advocate for the right to water?

FURTHER PASSAGES FOR READING

John 4: 5-15

Amos 5: 12-13, 24

REFERENCES AND OTHER BIBLE STUDIES

Bible text cited from New International Version 1979

Ecumenical Water Network:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/activities/ewn-home>

www.tearfund.org/en/what_we_do_and_where/issues/water_and_sanitation

www.wateraid.org/uk

www.erocha.org

SERMON:

WATER

'Waters of life - Enough for all!'

Isaiah 55:1, 10-13, 1 Peter 3: 18-21,
Rev. 7:16-17, John 4:4-15

God's great and wonderful gift of water is so necessary for both our bodies and our souls. Without water there is no life. Nothing can survive, grow and flourish without water.

It is not surprising, then, that water is a very significant image in the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament, we learn that God provides his creation and us human beings with an abundance of waters. As a matter of fact, the earth could be called 'The Water Planet' since it consists of so much water. Even our own bodies consist of more than 70 % water! The river from Eden (in present day devastated Iraq?) flowed abundantly and supplied the garden with plenty of fresh and healthy water.

The Psalms and the Proverbs and other books in the Bible also tell us about this wonderful abundance. Our text from Isaiah speaks about its life-giving abundance to sustain agriculture and food for the whole creation. It is clear that God provides us with enough water - even in a desert situation of Biblical lands. We human beings must recognize God as the giver of all water. If we stop doing that, it will have serious effects. We will suffer the consequence of our own ignorance with polluted water and an unliveable environment. Already in the Old Testament it is clear that this abundant supply of water requires planning and care from the side of human beings. Obedience and worship of God are necessary for us to have enough water. God's economy is always an economy of abundance, but also stewardship.

After the Israelites follow Moses into the desert, they doubt God's abundance and complain to Moses that they are being brought into the wilderness to die of thirst. Moses strikes the rock with his shaft and waters flow out of the rock.

The abundance of Exodus and Numbers has a simple formula. Worship God above all and you will have all that you need. "You shall worship God and I will bless your bread and your water" Exodus 23:25. Numbers 24:7 promises, "water shall flow from his [Israel's] buckets and his offspring shall have abundant water."

Many Psalms and Proverbs remind us of God's bountiful gift of water and our need to share that gift. Proverbs 25:21 reminds us that the one who gives water will get water.

For Christians, water certainly has both a direct real importance and a deep spiritual significance. Jesus is concerned with both!

Jesus' discussion with the Samaritan woman in the gospel for today deals with both these aspects of water. Jesus and the woman met at a deep well in Sychar. It was not a water tank or other device for gathering water. It was the ancient well of the city, well known by all, cared for and respected by all, since all the inhabitants of the city were totally dependent on it. It was probably surrounded by some sheltering trees with its roots deep down in the moist of the soil close to the well. Out of this well of Sychar came fresh and living water, gushing forth out of the depths.

The dialogue in this gospel text moves from ordinary water to the thirst for depth within us, a place where we can anchor our whole life, for ultimate meaning and satisfaction. All our thirst is a thirst within a greater one - for God! As he tells the woman at the well: "Those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I give them will become a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4:14) What a beautiful image! The simple gift of water on earth becomes the sacred gift of God from heaven - to cleanse, heal and transform both our bodies and our souls.

Why is it that Christians today have so much trouble making the connection between the physical and spiritual aspects of water? How can we read all these things about water in the Bible and not see any relation to the alarming state of water all around us in the world?

Despite the abundance of water on the Earth, we humans have done a poor job of taking care of it. We abuse it for other purposes. We are diverting rivers and streams unnecessarily, we poison it, and waste it, indifferent to the consequences: too many people, too little water, water in the wrong places and in the wrong amounts. 1.2 billion people in the world do not have access to clean safe drinking water, and 2.4 billion do not have adequate sanitation due to polluted waters.

The World Council of Churches recently found out that 80% of all disease in poor countries is related to poor drinking water and poor sanitation. As much as 40% of the world's population goes thirsty every year nowadays, with some countries consuming more and more while others get less and less. Women and children in East Africa now walk an average of 21 minutes for each trip to collect water.

Jesus came that all human beings might have life and have it abundantly. He clearly showed throughout his life that he cares both about our spiritual and physical well being. Abundant life is a combined spiritual and physical reality. The one who is touched by his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love, the fountain of living water cannot close their eyes to the physical water situation of the world. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters: and you that have no money come buy and eat!" (Isaiah 55:1) What could we do in our congregation to make this become a reality in the full sense of 'abundant life for all?' Here are some practical suggestions:

- We need to repent of our uncaring ways and attitudes towards creation and the natural environment in general and today in particular towards God's wonderful gift of water.
- Do not use bottled water, rather use tap water. Tap water in South Africa is completely safe to drink.
- Participate in a beach or river clean up.
- Do not use running water for rinsing the dishes when you are washing up.
- Install a water-saving showerhead, and choose to shower rather than bath

Source World Council of Churches



Creating God, your name is written in every leaf, every bird, every river, every stone, every living being.

Thank you for calling us by name.

Thank you for your continued creating power in water, rivers, forests and oceans.

Make us attentive to the wounds of the earth and willing to work for the healing of the whole creation.

Let our children enjoy an abundant nature and live a long life on earth.

2003 LWF Assembly in Winnipeg.

WATER

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

PREPARATION

A water fountain can be placed in the sanctuary. The sound of flowing water should fill the entire church. Each congregation member can be handed a bottle of water to be blessed during the service.

Bowls of clean water can be placed in the sanctuary that will be “polluted” during the confession. Rocks can be placed in one of the bowls to symbolise how we affect the natural flow of water and in so doing render it lifeless. Green food colouring can be thrown into the other bowl to symbolise how we poison our water by disturbing the natural plant life in our water systems.

WELCOME

Welcome! This Sunday we worship beside a river among all the river life in our sanctuary. We celebrate the water flowing in our sanctuary, water that symbolises Christ, the water of life. We also see these bowls filled with clean water. Each family in the congregation has also received a small bottle of water which will be blessed later on in the service as a reminder of how precious water is and that Jesus is the wellspring of life.

SUGGESTED VIDEO CLIP

Running Dry, South Africa <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XjplU25nP4>

SUGGESTED SONGS

1. Let your living water flow SOF 334
2. As the deer pants SOF 27
3. Song of the sanctuary <http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>

BLESSING

May God free you, may God guard you night and day.
May God set you in your right place, and may you spread out like the grass of the prairie.
Spread out like palm leaves, continue your walk, and may life be with you.
May God place you where God's stars are placed at dawn and at night.
Spread out like the water of a lake.

SAMBURU, KENYA

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord God,
We thank you for the gift of life.
We thank and praise you for the
mystery of creation.
We know that you are in us,
And we in you.
Guide us, therefore,
In our efforts
To hand on the earth to future
generations,
So that others can seek to
understand
Your will and purpose in the
world,
Bring your love to perfection
And magnify your holy name.
Help us overcome godlessness
with love.
Help us support and protect
the victims of climate change
everywhere;
Those who've lost
their homes or livelihoods
to the ravages of famine, fire and
flood.
Teach us to live in peace
And harmony with all creation.
Lord, in your name,
Amen.

[http://hopeforcreation.com.au/
learn/](http://hopeforcreation.com.au/learn/)

Salinity Prayer

O God, the land suffers because
of our foolishness.
We felled trees, cleared scrub,
planted crops, grazed sheep and
cattle, and planned to feed the
hungry with everything we grew.
But the salt has risen with the
groundwater,
poisoning plants, damaging
buildings, destroying livelihoods,
threatening communities.
Forgive us, we pray, for the harm
we have done in ignorance,
carelessness or greed. Teach us
to mend the damage, and to take
better care of the fragile, fruitful
earth that you have entrusted to
us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

© Anglican Church of Australia Trust
Corporation.

Clouds, oceans, seas, rivers, lakes and waterfalls
are your sacred gifts of life and beauty to us, O God;
teach us how to use and preserve the waters of our planet.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Rain down your Spirit upon the waters of our earth;
and upon those responsible for decisions concerning their purity and
availability.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Nourishing God, may all the peoples and creatures of this earth
have the water they need to live their lives fully.
Help us to solve the problems of drought, flooding, sanitation and
disease
so that all may share in the banquet and none be in want.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Creator God, you are the source of living water.
We confess our inadequate ways of dealing with the world's water.
Free us from our misuse and waste of this precious gift, and forgive us.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

God of life-giving waters, God of all those who carry water for miles,
God of those whose only supply is contaminated,
God of those lacking good sanitation,
may water, clean and life-giving, be available to every living creature.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Compassionate God, forgive your people for their wasting, pollution,
commodification and privatization of water.
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Compassionate God, we pray for perseverance and courage
for individuals, communities, agencies and organizations
throughout the world working for water justice.
May we be generous in supporting them,
Creator God, hear us we pray,
Give us your love for the whole of Creation.

Lord we pray for your Church throughout the world especially in its
mission to promote justice, peace and the integrity of Creation. May
we work to transform unjust structures in the provision of clean water
and good sanitation. Bring churches together to work in unity so that
clean water will be available to people and all creatures for today and
for future generations.

Amen. www.ctbi.org.uk/creationtime

SUSTAINABILITY: ENERGY AS GODS GIFT



Energy is a gift from God as part of his creation but one we hardly notice... until there's a power cut! But one in five people in the world has no access to electricity at all and two in five rely on burning anything from wood to animal excrement for cooking and heating and the fumes damage their health: two million a year die as a result

2012 is the United Nations Year of Sustainable Energy for All, with a target of giving the whole world reliable and clean energy by 2030. We need to make radical changes to move away from electricity which is generated by fossil fuels which cause climate change and are becoming increasingly expensive. We also need to move to greater efficiency and lower consumption. Renewable sources of energy (green energy) also create more jobs than fossil fuels.

Currently the majority of energy comes from burning fossil fuels, either directly or to generate electricity. This emits carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which we know to be causing global warming and climate change. We are already at substantial risk of exceeding the 2 degree Celsius rise beyond which it is generally believed dangerous effects will occur.

Oil, gas and coal were created over millions of years and there is only a limited amount available on the planet. Although we are not going to run out of any of them completely in the

near future, we have certainly discovered and extracted the bulk of the easily accessible and high quality supplies. This is why we're drilling for oil and gas in increasingly deep water, surveying the Arctic, and starting to extract from the Alberta tar sands and through oil fracking, at relatively high environmental and economic cost. Trends in coal are similar but less advanced.

Many argue that we cannot continue to produce oil and gas in the quantities we do currently, but even if we can, the combination of increased extraction costs and increased demand by countries such as India and China means that the trend of increased energy prices we've seen in recent years is going to increase, putting the cost beyond the reach of the poorest in the world.

Cleaner cooking can be provided by supplying stoves that run on electricity, solar power, or smokeless fuels such as propane and charcoal pellets. (Although these still produce CO₂, they produce less than traditional methods, due to greater efficiency.)

What does this have to do with us?
It combines three principles of our Christian life and relationship with God:

- Care for God's creation: we should care about the effects that our energy use is having on the planet God has given us to live on and look after.
- Care for God's people: we should care for the poor and suffering, and be concerned for the injustice that some in the world have little access to energy while others use vast amounts.
- Wise use of what God has given us: energy is a gift from God for our benefit and enjoyment. Is our use of it faithful to him, or are we being wasteful?

As Christians, we have responsibilities both to care for the poor and to care for the planet. So we need to be aware of the issues and know what we can do both as individuals and as churches.

It's very easy to take energy for granted. Without thinking about it we'll plug something in, flick a switch, turn on the gas or start the car and expect something to happen. Only on the rare occasions that something goes wrong do we realise just how dependent we are.

The United Nations have made 2012 Sustainable Energy for All year, with two goals:

- Everyone in the world should have access to clean electricity and heating. A consequence of all this burning is fumes which damage people's health, and also pollute the wider environment.
- The world should move to sustainable energy: our use of fossil fuels is also polluting and causing climate change.

As Christians, we have an additional insight. All this energy originates ultimately in God's creation of sun, moon and Earth. And he gives us vastly more, in solar radiation hitting the earth, than we can currently use. Our bible passage will help us reflect on this.



WHAT THE CHURCHES CAN DO

An electricity fast: Take a day to live using no electricity, or as little as possible. Reflect on how different this day was.

Be thankful: Each time you use energy, whether electricity, gas, driving a car, or using something that has taken energy to produce, take the opportunity to thank God for what his gift of energy has enabled you to do.

Energy efficiency and consumption: Think about how you can cut your electricity usage. Some suggestions are: using a 'wonder box', only filling your kettle with as much water as you need, making sure you put the lids on pots, turn off the oven ten minutes before your food is ready, use energy saving light bulbs, turn your geyser down to 50 degrees and use a blanket, turn off heaters and wear more layers, keep your car serviced and the tyres inflated. Use teleconferencing, form a lift club...

Share ideas with other members of the congregation.



BIBLE STUDY – SUSTAINABLE ENERGY: ENERGY AS GOD'S GIFT

BIBLE REFLECTION - READ PSALM 146

- God creates everything and provides for us. Can we expect as much energy as we like? Why or why not?
- How do we reconcile verses 7-9 with all we've talked about?
- Do we have a role in providing the poor with energy, and if so what?
- Given that God is the ultimate source of energy, what does that say about how we use it?

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER

Thank God for his gift of energy and that we have plenty. Pray for those who are without, and for efforts to give them a better future.

BIBLE REFLECTION -
READ GENESIS 1:26-30

- This well-known passage doesn't mention energy directly, but what conclusions can we draw?
- The earth is given to all of humanity, past, present and future. But ... "Humanity always wants a free lunch, but isn't prepared to do the washing up so that someone else can have a meal later." Is this true, why is it true, and can we do anything about it?
- Can it ever be right to use our increasingly scarce resources for unnecessary things? (e.g. TV, entertainment, electronic devices for that do things we could do by hand, etc.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER

Thank God for what we can do with electricity. Pray for wisdom for our leaders and those in energy companies as they try to meet the challenging sustainability targets.

BIBLE REFLECTION - READ ISAIAH 58

This chapter is often quoted when talking about helping the poor and social injustice issues generally, but in the original context it is as much about wider lack of community.

- What three things are the Israelites called to do? (See verses 6, 7, 9a.)
- How might these apply to the issue of sustainable energy and the reasons why many still live in energy poverty?
- Are there any limits to our obligations? What is “poor” and do we need to help everyone who has less energy access than us? What would be the practical consequences if we did succeed in getting them all to our own level of consumption?
- Does this passage advocate that we should “fast from energy use”, whatever that might mean in practice?



“Let us be protectors of creation,
protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.
Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world!”

*Pope Francis I
Installation Mass*

SERMON:

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

James 1:17-27

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

When faced with a flat packed piece of furniture to assemble I am always tempted to ignore the maker's instructions, thinking that I know how best to do it. The consequence of persisting with my way of doing this frequently results in a lopsided wardrobe and various screws left over that don't appear to fit anywhere.

As a human race this is often our way of operating; devising our own rules and ways rather than obeying God's commands. The consequences for human beings and the natural world have been devastating. Wendell Berry claims that "our destruction of nature is not just bad stewardship, or stupid economics, or a betrayal of family responsibility; it is the most horrid blasphemy."

Deuteronomy 4 is set at the edge of the Promised Land, with the people of God poised to enter. They are on the border both geographically and theologically. It is vital therefore that they get it right for the sake of themselves and coming generations (v9). The writer implores the people to follow the decrees and laws taught by God, not as a strait jacket but as means of ensuring human flourishing. These are guidelines for godly living that will allow a good life for the people of God through the generations and for the rest of the created order. Possession of this land flowing with milk and honey, that is a place of great natural and spiritual richness, is a wonderful opportunity to be celebrated. It is also a gift of God requiring stewardship. Therefore our responsibility is to 'be careful and watch yourselves so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart' (Deut 4:9). Central to this human flourishing is the need to remember

continually that it is not theirs by right but the land is a gift (v1). It is when we assume possession is by right rather than gift that we enter into an exploitative relationship with the land.

Further exploration of Deuteronomy and the rest of the Torah gives hints and indications of how closely aligned to God's commandments are the concepts of creation care and sustainability, for example preservation of fruit trees in the times of war (Deut. 20:19-20).

Jesus takes this theme up in addressing the Pharisees in **Mark 7**. He urges them, who thought that they were faithfully following God stipulations, to look again at both the bigger picture and more closely at the heart of the matter. So caught up in seeming to do the right thing and ticking the religious boxes, they had lost sight of God's real purposes.

The observance of Corban (v 11) was a sophisticated way of pretending to do one's duty to God whilst neglecting those who needed help. Jesus continues in the long line of Old Testament prophets and is unabashed in his condemnation, labelling those who do this 'hypocrites' (v 6). 'You have let go of the commands of God and are holding to the traditions of people' (v8). In these words Jesus holds up a mirror to our own hearts both individually and as a nation. Do we play religion or do we live in a way that makes the call of God on our lives to love God and love our neighbour our primary concern?

This call to love God and to love our neighbour has implications on how we steward the God-given natural resources of the earth. Are they used to help the poorest and the neediest? The temptation is to cry 'Corban', and to carry on concentrating on our internal church life and church buildings whilst neglecting the marginalized. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation fall hardest on the poorest of the world. Creation care and working for sustainability is an integral part of the dual obedience of caring for the poor and looking after God's good earth. Sustainable energy is an example of this dual obedience; for example the United Nations aim to promote and provide clean stoves provides a key need for some of the most marginalized poor people

on the planet whilst at the same time helps to preserve the natural habitat around them. This is an attempt to love God through helping sustain the resources of the natural world.

James 1:17-27. The epistle for the day is one of the starkest and most challenging passages of the New Testament. It is also in many ways one of the simplest and clearest. James is quite explicit that real religion is a matter not so much of orthodoxy but of orthopraxis, not just believing the right thing but doing the right thing as well. Looking after widows and orphans, in other words the poorest of this society and of any society, is not an optional extra for Christians. Simply saying 'stay warm, eat well' is not what Christians are called to do. Our calling is to be part of the solution and help provide warmth and stoves and food. That is how James would understand true religion.

"If in piety the church says, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' and in fact is no different in thought and action from the general community, who will be drawn to her word and worship to 'come and see' that her work or salvation has any meaning?"

Source: *Churches together in Britain and Ireland.*
Rev. Mike Gilbert.



A morning prayer

Show us how to do things well today,
so that others may not suffer,
here or there,
now or in the future.

Show us how to make
our contribution
as we change the way we live,
travel, make and consume,
pack and unpack,
use, misuse and re use energy,
heating and lighting.

Show us how to do simple things
well in our home,
places of work and lifestyle choices.
Show us how to protect the world
you made,
in all its diversity and goodness,
from our carbon emissions,
global warming and climate change,
rising temperatures and sea levels,
the displacement of peoples,
environmental poverty,
harm and destruction.

Show us how and show us why,
so that alone and with others
our contribution will
make a difference.

Amen

© Robin Morrison 2006. Reproduced by ECEN for
Creation Time 2008.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

PREPARATION

The sanctuary and if possible the whole church is lit with solar powered lights. Members of the congregation can be invited to bring them from home. Candles are replaced with lights that won't increase our carbon footprint.

WELCOME

Today our sanctuary is filled with sustainable light forms. Whenever we turn on lights and use fossil fuels such as oil or coal we are increasing our footprint on God's Earth. Our Gospel today reminds us of God's love displayed in Jesus and whose love and example has sustained generations before and will sustain generations to come.

COLLECTION

Members of the congregation can be invited to donate one energy saving bulb per family and in this way the whole church building can be converted to energy saving bulbs.

VIDEO CLIP

God Be in Everything – Kees Kraayenoord <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnTilxNH334>

AFTER CHURCH SNACK

Try to prepare something made renewably- for instance some soup that was prepared in a wonder bag or bread baked in a solar cooker. http://www.iwillprepare.com/cooking_files/Wonder_Box.htm

SONGS

1. The cosmic Christ <http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>
2. Lord, thy word abideth AMNS 166
3. Mother Earth, our mother birthing <http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>
4. Servant Song SOF 54

A prayer for wisdom

Stand at the crossroads and look,
Ask for the ancient paths,
Ask where the good way is,
And walk in it.
And you will find rest for your souls
St Oswald of Northumbria

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Prayer for Responsible Citizenship in the Anglican Prayer Book page 86 paragraph 13 :

Or alternatively :

Create in us a new heart and a new vision, O God, that the gifts of Your Spirit may work in us and renew the face of the earth. May we be one with you so that our work is yours and your work is ours. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives with you and with the Holy Spirit for ever.

Amen

Or

Prayer of Intercession based on Colossians 1:15-20

O Christ, your cross speaks both to us and to our world.

In your dying for us you accepted the pain and hurt of the whole of creation.

The arms of your cross stretch out across the broken world in reconciliation.

You have made peace with us, Help us to make peace with you by sharing in your reconciliation work.

May we recognize your spirit disturbing and challenging us to care for creation and for the poor who must feel the effects of its abuse.

O Christ, the whole of creation groans,
Set us free and make us whole.

Meister Eckhart

Creator God, you have generously blessed us with an abundance of gifts in this, your world. Help us to share in that generosity by living in a way that ensures that your gifts will continue to be available for future generations.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, we rejoice that, as human beings, we have been created in your image and likeness. But we also recognise that humanity alone cannot adequately reflect you. The whole diversity of the earth is needed to give us even a glimpse of your wonder and greatness. Help us to live in a sustainable way so that this marvellous diversity is respected.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, we live in a world where some of us throw out food while others go to bed hungry; where some have the modern amenities of life at their disposal and others struggle to find drinking water. May we learn to share with one another and, in this way, come to share in your generosity to all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, the sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life on earth. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Through scientists, engineers and scholars new knowledge comes to light; may new developments in the production of sustainable energy

protect our fragile planet and promote the well-being of all peoples and all creatures on their journey to wholeness.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

We pray for the United Nations, for all international, national and local leaders and for managers of companies that they may be guided by your Spirit to make wise decisions about sources of sustainable energy for all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, You have blessed humankind with understanding, imagination and memory. Show us how to learn from past mistakes and plan for the future creatively and responsibly.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Create in us a new heart and a new vision, O God, that the gifts of Your Spirit may work in us and renew the face of the earth. May we be one with you so that our work is yours and your work is ours. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives with you and with the Holy Spirit forever.

Amen

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change/time-for-creation/2012-prayers-energy-1>

BIODIVERSITY: ST FRANCIS DAY



The Community of All Creation

What is biodiversity?

This is a technical term for the variety of life on Earth. It refers not just to the diversity of species of plants, animals, fungi, bacteria etc, but also to the variety within any one species and to the various ways species live together in ecosystems.

Why does biodiversity matter?

Many people feel delight in the diversity itself and want to preserve it for its own sake and for its beauty and inspirational value. There is also a sense of preserving genetic diversity so that future generations can draw on it as a resource, e.g. for new drugs in medicine or resistance to pests in crop plants.

Biodiversity is also important because it:

- is crucial for sources of food, fuel and energy,
- is needed to regulate the Earth's atmosphere,
- is essential for pollination, waste-disposal, pollution control, agriculture and clean water.

Why is it important to Christians?

The accounts of the Creation in the early chapters of Genesis emphasise the delight God takes in his Creation. More specifically in Genesis 2.15 Adam is instructed to 'till and care for' the earth and many modern interpreters take this in a strong sense that we are accountable to God for the care we take over our fellow creatures and our shared world. Currently, human activities are destroying biodiversity at alarming rates and these losses are irreversible.

In the biblical view the earth and all that fills it comprise a community. One of the basic errors of our culture is to separate humanity from the rest of creation. The very term 'the environment' suggests that we are a separate entity, while everything else is 'out there'. In the Genesis account of creation, humans and other creatures are formed together (Genesis 1:24-31). Humans, endowed with a special calling and special privileges, have a pivotal role in the development and well-being of creation. When we fail, all creation suffers.

Correspondingly, the redemption of creation awaits the full redemption of human beings (Romans 8:18-23). We are called to do two things – to help to save the species that he has created, and to turn from the arrogance and idolatry that incurs his judgment.

Some people think that the disappearance of natural species doesn't really matter that much. In planning matters, economy often is more important than ecology. Partly as a result of such a mindset, we are living through the sixth great extinction in the history of the Earth – and the first to be caused by humans. The current rate of extinction is said to be 100 or even 1,000 times above the natural level. A true sense of the value of God's creation would cause us to repent of such callous disregard.

In our globalised economy, greedy and abusive trading practices dispossess both people and natural species. Destruction of tropical forests assaults both indigenous races and wildlife. Trade in ivory and 'bushmeat' threaten elephants and primates. Sometimes forests are destroyed by people who are themselves desperate for land in order to feed themselves and their families. In many cases demand from the rich nations drives the exploitation both of people and of the natural world. For instance the demand for fish has depleted stocks worldwide. Thus in our world oppression of the poor, such as is denounced by Amos in his time, is inseparable from the destruction of species and ecosystems. Rather than just feeling guilty, we can take practical and political actions towards fair and ecologically responsible trade.

Litany for the Planet

Grasses multiply and wild flowers proliferate
Because you God in Christ set the earth free

Vegetables colour the garden and herbs give aroma to the spiral
Because you Spirit led us into the new creation

The lion and the lamb are making friends; the worms love the lettuce
Because you Wisdom inspired new natural companions

The insects live in diverse croplands with birds sharing the spoils
Because you Lord of Love taught us to share

Every part of the creation is significant from flies to mosquitoes
Because you Creator of all, reasoned everything into being

Now teach us triune God to transcend ideology to sustainability
Because Christ you are the peace between us

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

BIBLE STUDY – BIODIVERSITY

Read together: Job 38:1-27
(Ideally use 'The Message' – a fresh, modern version)

Questions for reflection and discussion

- Why does nature flourish? What does Job suggest about this?
- What images does Job 38 use to describe God's work in creation?

(Answers include designer / architect / parent / ruler / provider)

- What do these tell us about God's character?
- What other attributes of God's character have people seen in their own experience of nature?
- What does Job 38:25-27 suggest about whom creation is for? Is it only for people?
- How does human behaviour today inhibit creation from flourishing?
- What are the root causes of this – where have we gone wrong?
- How do we need to re-orientate ourselves to regain the perspective of Job 38?
What might this mean for:
 - our priorities?
 - our lifestyles?
 - our church-life?
 - our work-life?

- Pray for areas of the world that are suffering the effects of Climate Change and biodiversity loss.
- Pray for those who work in the environmental & conservation sectors.
- Pray for Christian organisations which are seeking to care for God's world
- Pray for God's Church worldwide to recover the foundational importance of creation care in its worship and mission.

Source (Rev Nigel Cooper : Churches together in Britain and Ireland)

SERMON:

BIODIVERSITY

Good News for All Creation

At the end of St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples "Go and share the good news with all creation." All creation. The task of believers is not simply to go and communicate a few ideas to a few promising human beings, it is to transform the face of the earth. We are to be the bearers of good news for the world that God has made. Not for any one little bit of it, for any one community at the expense of others. Not even it seems for humanity at the expense of everything else in the universe. Good news for all creation.

And that is why we're here, to ask today what is going to be good news for creation? It looks in the last few decades particularly and perhaps the last few millennia as if the human race has on the whole not been very good news for the rest of creation.

And that's catching up with us, catching up with us in terms of its practical effects. We are seeing pollution of our oceans, loss of biodiversity, and increase of hunger.

We are more and more beginning to realise how we have turned our back on that command of the risen Lord, to be and to carry good news for all of his world. We need to ask God to rally us and unite us and inspire us around a vision of universal good news, which is justice for creation and justice for God's human children also. These two things are inseparable.

We do not have to make some kind of choice between looking after human beings and looking after the planet. We are as human beings, in case you haven't noticed, creatures. In Job 38:18 we can find that wonderful reminder of where we stand in creation. God says to Job with unforgettable fatherly sarcasm "Have you comprehended the expanse of the Earth? Declare if you know all this." So we are part of a great interwoven system of life. We live because we are creatures. We depend on the health of the world around us. And because of that, the health of the world around us and our own long-term health are not two things but one. Let's not lose sight of that.

Sadly, we hear all too often how climate change is affecting the most vulnerable communities on the earth. Of our failure to attend to the health and wellbeing of creation, the failure to share good news with creation itself.

St Paul's words in the Letter to the Romans 8:19-21

"For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God".

Hold that vision with enormous clarity and power. When human beings are healed of their sin and their fear, when human beings find their healing, their deliverance from selfishness and greed and anxiety it begins to make a mysterious difference to everything. You begin to see that God's purpose for the whole creation is glory for all that is made in which human beings share with all other things. Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Somehow our deliverance into joy and thanksgiving, into reconciliation with God and one another spills over into the reconciliation and the transfiguration of the whole world we're in. Our liberation is the world's liberation. Good news for us should be good news for the whole of God's world. So for us to be sharing good news with the whole human race and the whole world in which and from which it lives, is for us to be set free first of all. Set free from the myth that somehow human beings really exist somewhere else than in the world as it truly is. That somehow we're in charge. That somehow this is given to us to use as we wish, as if we were not embodied but disembodied.

We need to be delivered from that, we need to be delivered not only from untruth but from fear. The fear that if we take steps of courage and generosity in relation to the world and to one another somehow we will make ourselves a little bit less comfortable.

This is not about fear; this is not about all of us as Christians saying to the rest of the human race "It's time to panic. Worry harder." Because mysteriously that doesn't actually change very much. What we have to say is in the sharing of good news there is life for us, life for our neighbours, life for the creation in which God has

placed us. And that is something for joy not fear. So please, let's focus on the thanksgiving and the wonder of the gift we've been given in our universe. And the gift of faith, perspective, courage, spirit filled vision that is ours.

Back to Job again. "Who determined the measurements of the Earth, who stretched the line upon it? On what were its basis sunk? Who laid its cornerstone? When the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy." Now that is where our passion for creation comes from. It's the singing of the heavenly beings; it's the morning stars rejoicing. It's creation as a gift for which we must be grateful. A gift in whose life and for whose life we must act not out of fear but out of love, out of generosity. And out of the hope of that freedom of the glory of the children of God.

"Go..." says Jesus "...share the good news with every creature, with everything that has been made. We have been privileged to hear good news and so we renew our commitment to speak that good news courageously in a world so appallingly hungry for it. To speak good news to the poorest and the most vulnerable, to speak good news to the creation abused and exploited by us.

If the God of Job and the Lord Jesus Christ and St Paul are right then our witness in this respect truly is a sign of our liberation. And a sign of hope in the world.
May it be so..

*By Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury.
Source: Churches together in Britain and Ireland.*



Good Lord, most High Almighty,
to you all praise is due,
all glory, honour, blessing,
belong alone to you;
there is no man whose lips
are fit to frame your name.

Be praised then, my Lord God,
in and through all your creatures
especially among them,
through noble Brother Sun,
by whom you light the day;
in his radiant splendid beauty
he reminds us, Lord, of you.

Be praised, my Lord.
Through Sister Moon and all the stars;
you have made the sky shine in their lovely light.

In Brother Wind be praised, my Lord,
and in the air,
in clouds, in calm,
in all the weather moods that cherish life.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water;
she is most useful, humble, precious, pure.
And Brother Fire, by whom you lighten night;
how fine is he, how happy, powerful, strong.

Through our dear Mother Earth be praised, my Lord,
she feeds us, guides us, gives us plants, bright flowers
and all her fruits.

Be praised, my Lord, through us,
when out of love for you
we pardon one another.
When we endure
in sickness and in sorrow.
Blessed are they who preserve in peace;
from you, Most High, they will receive their prize.

Be praised, my Lord, praised for our Sister Death,
from whom no man alive can hope to hide;
wretched are they who die deep in their sin.
And blessed those, Death finds doing your will.
For them there is no further death to fear.

O people! Praise God and bless him,
give him thanks
and serve him most humbly.

*The Canticle of the Creatures - St. Francis of Assisi;
translation by Molly Reidy
Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2001*

BLESSING OF ANIMALS

Saint Francis day

Concerning the Occasion

Animals are a vital part of the creation of which human beings have been given stewardship. They provide us with companionship, and in some cases assist in independent daily living. The rite which follows is intended for use when it is desired to give thanks and to pray for God's blessing on pets and other domestic animals. It is anticipated that a significant number of children will be present, and their participation and leadership should be encouraged. Portions of this material may be incorporated into the Sunday Eucharist of a congregation..

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

Leader: We thank you, God, for the gift of life: for the beauty and wonder of creation, and for our own

life which comes from you.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader: We thank you for the richness of animal life: for fish and birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader: We thank you for the animals who give us faithful companionship, joy when we are happy and comfort when we are sad.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Leader: We thank you for calling us to care for these animals. May we learn love and respect for all living things.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

The priest says the prayer of blessing.

Blessed are you, living, loving God.

All creation praises you,

yet you have given the earth into our hands.

You made animals as our companions,
that in caring for them
we might learn to love and care
for all your creatures,
and find in them a sign of your grace.
As we fulfil this calling
may we draw close to you,
the giver of all life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The animals are blessed

The service may continue at the Peace

From Canadian Book of Occasional Services

Reader: The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and all that dwells therein.

All: We live in God's world, we are not alone.
We share this life with the heavens and the earth,
with the waters and the land,
with trees and grasses,
with fish, birds, and animals,
with creatures of every form,
and with all our brothers and sisters.

Reader: God saw all that was made, and behold,
it was very good.

*Source: A Service of Worship - The Earth Is the Lord's,
United Church of Canada*

Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2003

BIODIVERSITY

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

PREPARATION

The sanctuary and church may be filled with plants. This can also be an animal blessing service. If there are practical considerations about bringing animals into church, then boards can be placed on easels where people can pin up pictures of their pets. Candles will also be lit, or you can replace the candles with solar powered lights.

WELCOME

This Sunday we worship in the forest. We celebrate among the living trees, ferns and forest life in our sanctuary.

In our call to worship we join with our companion animals and all God's creatures to worship our Creator. In our psalm we call on all creatures to praise God. In our confession we recall how we have hurt or neglected animals. The gospel reading reminds us that God cares for his entire creation and that we are all linked in the web of life. One cannot exist without the other. We have placed photographs of our pets on the boards displayed in the Church and these companion animals will be blessed during the service

We will now light the three candles (or turn on our three sustainable lights):

- L We kindle a light to God, the Creator,
who created light in the cosmos
and breathed life into all creation.
A light is kindled.
- L We kindle a light to Jesus Christ,
The light of the world,
our hope and our salvation.
A light is kindled.
- L We kindle a light to the Holy Spirit,
who sets our faith on fire
and gives us courage to follow the truth.
A light is lit.

Per Harling. Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2001

KYRIE

As we come home to Earth.

Lord have mercy

As we seek to love our home.

Christ, have mercy.

As we seek to care for our kin.

Lord, have mercy.

**God, our Creator, help us to love
all creatures as kin,
all animals as partners on Earth,
all birds as messengers of praise,
all minute beings as expressions of your mysterious design
and protect all creatures as voices of hope. Amen.**

<http://seasonofcreation.com/>

VIDEO CLIPS

Creation Calls – Brian Doerksen - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0>

His eye is on the Sparrow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOjq5zXNbS0>

What a wonderful world: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auSo1MyWf8g>

Penitence: <http://seasonofcreation.com/various>

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

While the congregation receives communion, instead of music being sung, put on CD of birdsong.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Prayer for Responsible Citizenship on page 86 paragraph 13 (Anglican Prayer Book) may be used.

Alternatively

O Christ,

who brought all things into existence from nothing,
and with infinite wisdom
gave to each one to accomplish unerringly
the goal which you laid down in the beginning,
O Saviour, Lover of humankind, as you are powerful,
bless the whole creation which you fashioned.

Verse: If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord who could stand? For with you there is forgiveness. (Psalm 129,3)

Give peace to all the nations, Lord,
and understanding in all things,
so that we may lead our life in justice
and always keep the laws
which you laid down for all creation
for the unalterable maintenance
and government of the universe.

Verse: For your name's sake I have waited for you, O Lord; my soul has waited for your word, my soul has hoped in the Lord. (Psalm 129,5)

Lover of humankind,
keep unharmed the environment that clothes the
earth,
through which, by your will,
we who inhabit the earth live
and move and have our being,
that we, your unworthy servants,
may be delivered from destruction and ruin.

Verse: From the watch of dawn until the night, from the watch of dawn, let Israel hope in the Lord. (Psalm 129,6)

Fence round the whole creation, Christ Saviour,
with the mighty strength of your love for humankind,
and deliver the earth we inhabit
from the corruption which threatens it;
for we, your servants, have set our hopes on you.

Verse: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him abundant redemption, and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. (Psalm 129,7)

Put an end, O Saviour, to the evil designs
which are being devised against us by senseless
greed,
and turn aside from the earth every
destructive action of the works of human hands
which contrive corruption leading to perdition.

Verse: Praise the Lord all nations! Extol him all peoples. (Psalm 116)

O Lord, who wraps creation in clouds,
as godly David sang,
watch over the environment of the earth,
which you created from the beginning
for the preservation of mortals,
and give us the breath of the winds
and the flow of waters.

Verse: For great is his mercy to us, and the truth of the Lord endures for ever. (Psalm 116)

Adapted from an Orthodox Office of Supplication
for the Environment and for the Whole Creation.
Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2005.

SONGS

1. All things bright and beautiful AMNS 116
2. Be still and feel the presence <http://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/habel-hymns-volume-one.pdf>
3. Now thank we all our God
4. You shall go out with joy SOF 640

ADDITIONAL LITURGICAL MATERIALS

Blessing

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.

Amen.

Gaelic blessing, from Words and Songs of Reconciliation and Praise, Graz, 1997)

Sending forth

Leader:

Go forth now to care for God's world.
Use energy wisely. Share your knowledge.
Sacrifice where necessary. Live in harmony with all creation.
Go out into all the world as prophets of a new way of living
and preach the good news to all creation.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be with us all now and always.

All: Amen.

From Prayers for the Planet, at a service at Hinde Street Methodist Church, London, before the Climate March, December 2005

Reading on food and environmental justice

Psalm 65 v1a, 9-13 Good News Bible:

O God, it is right for us to praise you...
You show your care for the land by sending rain;
you make it rich and fertile.
You fill the streams with water;
you provide the earth with crops.
This is how you do it:
you send abundant rain on the ploughed fields
and soak them with water;
you soften the soil with showers
and cause the young plants to grow.
What a rich harvest your goodness provides!
Wherever you go there is plenty.
The pastures are filled with flocks;
the hillsides are full of joy.
The fields are covered with sheep;
the valleys are full of wheat.
Everything shouts and sings for joy.

A litany for sustainable energy

Creator God, you have generously blessed us with an abundance of gifts in this, your world. Help us to share in that generosity by living in a way that ensures that your gifts will continue to be available for future generations.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, we rejoice that, as human beings, we have been created in your image and likeness. But we also recognise that humanity alone cannot adequately reflect you. The whole diversity of the earth is needed to give us even a glimpse of your wonder and greatness. Help us to live in a sustainable way so that this marvellous diversity is respected.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, we live in a world where some of us throw out food while others go to bed hungry; where some have the modern amenities of life at their disposal and others struggle to find drinking water. May we learn to share with one another and, in this way, come to share in your generosity to all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, the sun, the wind and the waves are your gifts for the flourishing of the whole community of life on earth. Help us to use them creatively to produce sustainable energy for all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Through scientists, engineers and scholars new knowledge comes to light; may new developments in the production of sustainable energy protect our fragile planet and promote the well-being of all peoples and all creatures on their journey to wholeness.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

We pray for the United Nations, for all international, national and local leaders and for managers of companies that they may be guided by your Spirit to make wise decisions about sources of sustainable energy for all.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Creator God, You have blessed humankind with understanding, imagination and memory. Show us how to learn from past mistakes and plan for the future creatively and responsibly.

O God, give us your love for the whole of Creation

Priest/leader

Let us pray: Create in us a new heart and a new vision, O God, that the gifts of Your Spirit may work in us and renew the face of the earth. May we be one with you so that our work is yours and your work is ours. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives with you and with the Holy Spirit for ever.

Amen

(Source: Churches together in Britain and Ireland – resources for creation time)

Compassion for farmed animals

SERMON "WE ARE ALL CREATURES OF ONE FAMILY"

Isaiah 11: 6-9 "The wolf shall live with the lamb"
Psalm 50: 7-15 "The cattle on a thousand hills are God's"
Luke 10: 25-37 "Who is my neighbour?"

How does our Christian faith guide us in knowing how we as human beings should relate to and treat our fellow living beings, our brother and sister animals of the Earth?

First: everything in Creation has value to God

In Genesis we read: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." [Gen 1:31] It is God who gives life to all living beings. "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being." [Job 12:10] In Genesis 1, God sees the 'goodness' – the inherent value – in each aspect of Creation prior to and independent of human beings. The Creation story is not all about human beings. To portray God's love as limited to only a part of Creation would be to misinterpret Scripture. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." [John 3:16] – not 'For God so loved human beings': "For God so loved the **world** . . ." In Greek the word for 'world' is *Cosmos* – God so loved the whole of creation!

Second: God cares for all of Creation

Like a loving parent God cares for all that He has brought forth. "He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills. He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry." [Psalm 147: 8-9]

We living beings – both human and non-human are all precious to God. ". . . even the hairs of your head are all counted." And, likewise, not even a single sparrow "is forgotten in God's sight." [Luke 9:6-7] "Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord." [Psalm 36:6] God is love – infinite love, infinite compassion and mercy.

God wishes us to share this love. In the story of the Good Samaritan, when the lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus answered him in the way that we all know so well. He said: "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You

shall love your neighbour as yourself.' [Matthew 22:34-40]

Throughout his life, Jesus showed his concern first and foremost for the powerless – 'them', 'those' on the margins of the community, 'others' and especially the poor, the sick, the vulnerable, the prisoner, the hungry. Jesus quite explicitly calls on us to follow the example of the Good Samaritan in caring for our neighbour. We have typically limited this sense of 'neighbour' to our human neighbours, but God's love encompasses all that is around us, fellow human beings, animals, forests and birds. In God's kingdom, all created beings are our neighbour.

Our animal neighbours have needs, they show and respond to love, they hunger and thirst, they think, they remember, they fear, they suffer pain and deprivation, they get bored and frustrated, they grieve . . . they are animals just like us. ¹⁸ *I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals.* ¹⁹ *For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity.* ²⁰ [Ecc 3: 18-20]

Third, God is all about relationships.

At the very heart of our faith is the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three in One, bound together in relationships of pure love. At the centre of our faith journey as individuals and as God's Church is the movement towards a right relationship with God, with one another as human beings and with every other component of God's creation. As humans, we are part of the whole of God's creation, with God at the centre. To put ourselves at the centre of Creation and to use what is of benefit to us humans as the touchstone of what is good, is a form of idolatry. For Christians there can only be one centre: God. Intrinsicly we are in relationship with our fellow living beings. The question is: are we in right relationship with them?

With this as our framework, what can we conclude about how we should regard our fellow living beings, brother and sister animals, how we should relate to them, how we should treat them? Most people relate decently to the animals whom they know personally – for instance, the companion animals they have as pets, the horses they ride and

the animals whom they live alongside in the case of small-scale and subsistence farmers. But what about all the animals that end up as meat on our plates, that lay the eggs or milk that we consume? How do you relate to them? How aware are you of what these animals experience? In a single sermon we cannot describe the conditions inflicted on animals by factory farming. Know that it is indescribably callous and cruel.

And all for what? To maximise the profits of factory farmers and produce, at devastating cost to the environment, a diet of animal-based protein for humans which is unsustainable as well as unhealthy.

One of the most disreputable strands within human history is the tendency for people who have become powerful enough to impose themselves on others, to turn such others – for example slaves – into ‘things’ (‘property’) and then to make laws to give themselves the ‘right’ to do with these ‘others’ as they wish. We humans of the modern era have done just this to animals. We have defined them as things, as property and we have crafted our laws in such a way that only humans have rights.

No matter how cruelly and inhumanely we treat animals, all is justified by virtue of it benefitting us humans. No reference to the feelings, wellbeing and rights of these other sentient beings! No reference to God! The current situation of abuse and cruelty to animals must be anathema to God’s whole way and being, nature and spirit.

In the words of the Revd Dr Helen Hill, Chairperson of the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals, *“For Christians, the belief in a loving God is central to our faith. Indifference to suffering is incompatible with our understanding of the Deity and we cannot imagine God being uninterested in the pain of living creatures with thoughts and feelings.”*

Clearly something has gone awfully wrong in our relationship with our fellow beings, with mother Earth and with God. What can we do to start putting right our wrong relationships?

Frank Molteno, Bishop Geoff Davies, Rev. Rachel Mash
[\[http://www.aswa.org.uk/page/about_aswa/message_from_our_chairman/\]](http://www.aswa.org.uk/page/about_aswa/message_from_our_chairman/)

WHAT CHURCHES CAN DO

Pray!

- Pray “Thy kingdom come” Kingdom where “The wolf shall live with the lamb” and “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord”;
- Pray for the millions of animals that continue to suffer so grievously in Southern Africa and across the globe;
- Pray for the people whose job it is to work with animals on factory farms and slaughter them in abattoirs;
- Try to ensure that prayers for nonhuman animals – especially farm animals – are regularly included in your parish’s prayers of the people. Include them in sermons and Bible studies.

Become a more mindful eater!

- If you eat meat and other animal products, find out what the animals experience on the farms from your which your food comes.
- Depending on what you do and don’t eat at the moment, you might want to consider moving from animal-based protein to plant-based protein. Reduce the amount of meat you eat.
- As Jane Goodall, famous primatologist and the world’s foremost expert on chimpanzees, has shared: “When I learned about intensive farming, I found I was thinking about meat differently. I looked at the piece of animal on my plate, and it symbolized fear, pain, and death.”
- And remember what God said in Genesis 1: “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.” [Genesis 1: 29-31]
- Be mindful around the food we share at church gatherings and events – at a minimum always being sure to include options for those who choose not to eat meat and fish (vegetarians) as well as those who choose not to partake in any animal products including eggs and dairy (vegans);

Become a more conscious consumer!

- Try to buy only what has been ethically produced. Ask yourself: ‘Has the production of what I am buying involved other people, animals or mother Earth being violated, injured or exploited?’ If ‘ethically produced’ products cost more, buy less or don’t buy at all.
- Support with your time and/or your money an organisation that works for the rights, welfare or protection of animals.
- Spread awareness! Help your family, friends, fellow parishioners, work colleagues, the shops you use and the community you are part of to become more aware of the plight of factory-farmed animals. Do it one-on-one and/or write a letter to your local newspaper or phone in to your favourite talk show on the radio.
- Be mindful when shopping for the church, regarding the source of what we buy and ask about the ethics of how particular products are produced: in producing them, has violence or other injury been done to people, animals or the environment? At the very least ask the following: Was child labour involved in producing this product? Was it produced locally or did it have to be transported from far away? Was it produced organically? If animals were involved, were they factory farmed or were they ‘free range’ (noting that many products labelled ‘free range’ turn out to be a far cry from any such thing)? Does the product contain ingredients the cultivation of which is contributing to deforestation, the destruction of animals’ habitat, climate change or violation of the rights of indigenous people? (Palm oil, for example, ticks all the latter boxes.)

Please don’t do nothing because you can’t do everything! Do something . . . and know that you’re doing it for God.

BIBLE STUDY

Scripture Reading: Creation of the Web of Life

Genesis 1: 24-31

Read this passage slowly with a pause after each verse. Invite the group to close their eyes and to picture the scene. Please remember that this is not a scientific account, but a profound theological story of God's purpose for creation and our place in it.

Question One

In Genesis 1, what was the relationship between humans and animals?

Read Gen 1:28 *"God blessed them and God said unto them be fruitful and multiply and **replenish** the earth and subdue it and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth over the earth"* (KJV)

How do you understand the word *"replenish"* and what does it mean to have *"dominion"* over creation? What sort of 'dominion' does God model for us over Earth?

Please note that in verses 29 and 30 God gives us, and all creatures, *"every green plant for food"*. This was in the Garden of Eden, before our disobedience.

Reading

In Genesis 1 we read of God's creation of the Earth and all living forms on it.

This is followed by the Fall in Genesis 3 which led to the breakdown of relationships:

- between God and humans *"They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God"* (v8)

- between humans and animals *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers"* (v15)
- between humans *"To the woman he said, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."* (v16)
- between humans and the environment *"cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life"* (v 17)

Reading

Share some of the facts from the fact sheet (pg 49)

Question 2

"The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." [Genesis 9:2-3 NRSV]

This passage describes the relationship between humans and animals after the Fall. What has changed in the relationship between humans and other animals? How do we see this relationship in the way we treat animals today?

Question 3

What do you see as God's original intention for relationships between humans and other creatures in the light of Genesis 1?

What changes do we need to make in our lifestyles?

End the session with some meditative quiet, reading Isaiah 11:6-9.

Close with prayer.

Almighty and Merciful Father, whose care and loving kindness are over all thy creation, breathe forth into us thy spirit of compassion and tenderness towards all creatures thou hast made and in whom thou are the indwelling life. Teach us, O Lord, to look upon our younger brethren as a trust from thee, that the day may be hastened when men shall neither hurt nor destroy in all thy holy mountain; through Christ our Lord.

Amen

-From The Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church (London : St Alban Press.)

Fact Sheet

People the world over are beginning to choose healthy nutritional food that is nourishing for the body and soul, and are moving away from food that harms the environment, disrespects Earth's creatures, and is filled with toxins and chemicals. Unfortunately, in South Africa today, much of our food is still produced in ways that are contrary to health and compassion. By becoming aware of how our lunch and dinner arrive on our plate, we can become empowered to make ethical choices that reflect our growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all life - and thus become true stewards of God's Earth.

Factory farming:

Many animals are raised in "factory farms". These are known as confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Conditions in these operations unlike organic farms are unhealthy and cruel. Animals who are intended by nature to forage for food are fed corn and soybeans instead of grass. To prevent the inevitable spread of disease from stress, overcrowding and lack of vitamin D, animals are fed a steady diet of antibiotics. Animals often develop antibiotic-resistant bacteria in their guts, which contaminates the food chain and poses a threat to human health.

Damage to the Global Environment:

The intensive livestock industry contributes to deforestation, reduction of biodiversity, pollution and water degradation. Globally the livestock sector is responsible for a major proportion of greenhouse gas emissions measured. It is also the single largest user of land by humans. Livestock production accounts for 70% of all agricultural land and 30% of the land surface of the planet. It is also responsible for massive deforestation – 70% of previously forested land in the Amazon is occupied by pastures, and feed crops cover a large part of the remainder. Factory farming is not a cheap, efficient solution to world hunger. For every 100 food calories of edible crops fed to livestock, we get back just 30 calories in the form of meat and dairy. That's a 70% loss.

Factory farmed pigs: (2.6 million per year)

Sows spend each pregnancy confined to a sow stall only slightly larger than her body, making it impossible for her to lie down comfortably. The slatted flooring of a sow stall causes foot injuries. Sow stalls have been banned in Europe. Shortly before piglets are born, sows are moved to 'farrowing crates' where the piglets will be nursed. The crates are so small that the mother pig cannot turn around to see her piglets. At three weeks, the piglets are taken from their mothers and undergo castration and tail docking without any sort of pain relief. They spend the next 6 months of their lives confined to pens until they reach 'market weight'; when they are trucked to slaughter.

Factory farmed egg-laying hens (24 million)

Most of the egg-laying hens in South Africa spend their lives in an area less than the size of an A4 piece of paper; unable to spread their wings, they often engage in aggressive pecking, or self-mutilation. As a result, they are routinely de-beaked and de-clawed, without anaesthetic. In nature, a hen can live for up to 8 years, but egg-laying hens are considered 'spent' at less than 2 years of age. They are then sent to slaughter, or sold to informal traders. Male chicks, considered wasteful by-products by the poultry industry, are normally ground up alive - (that's over 65 000 per day).

Factory farmed chickens raised for meat (1 billion per year)

Chicken raised for meat (broilers) are crammed into indoor sheds - over-crowding results in filth and disease, and causes aggressive behaviour, weakened immune systems, and ammonia burn. Genetically bred to reach slaughter weight in 6 weeks; unnaturally large, they often cannot support their own weight - many crippled chickens on factory farms die when they can no longer reach the water nozzles.

Fact Sheet

Factory farmed dairy cows and their calves (2.9 million per year)

On factory farms cows are regularly impregnated in order to produce milk, but are prevented from expressing their mothering instincts: calves are removed before they are weaned – often within 24 hours – causing psychological distress. Every year more than 200 000 male calves, useless to the dairy industry, are killed at birth or sold into impoverished settlements, where, deprived of their mothers' colostrum, they may die from malnutrition or disease. Once a cow's milking days are over – normally when she is about 4 years of age – she is sent to slaughter.

Authors: Elisa Galgut, Sonia de Villiers, Tozie Zokufa, Frank Molteno

Information provided by Compassion in World Farming - South Africa; the National Council for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA); Beauty Without Cruelty South Africa and the Landmark Foundation.

References:

- *Compassion in World Farming South Africa:* <http://www.animal-voice.org>
- *Beauty Without Cruelty:* www.bwcsa.co.za - see "Issues" > "Animals as Food"
- *NSPCA:* <http://www.nspca.co.za/>
- *World Watch Institute – Livestock and Climate Change* <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6294>

"I am writing this appeal as one of the followers of Jesus Christ who said in John 10:10 "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

My appeal is that we pay special attention to this and request all people of faith to pause, reflect and act as stewards of all that God has created.

This crisis is human-induced, caused among other things by industrialised agriculture which depends on monocultures, pesticides and factory farming of animals, as well as our prevailing culture of consumerism. The challenge to overcome this crisis lies in the human heart. Combating Climate Change requires nothing less than a radical change of direction, a change of heart and mind, a transformation of our society at the level of culture itself.

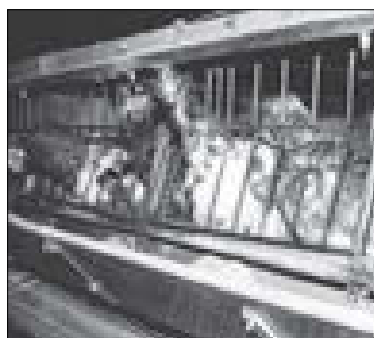
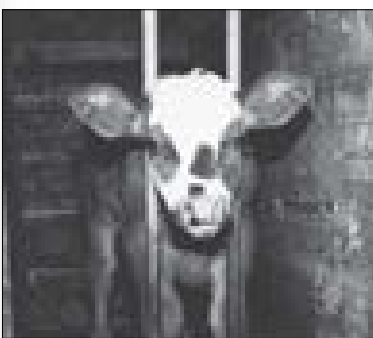
The over consumption of animal-derived products – meat, eggs, milk and so on – is part of this culture of consumerism and places an enormous burden on human health, as well as on the lives of animals which are crammed into factory farms in order to supply our demands, especially for cheap meat.

Farmed animals eat grass and bushes by nature – food that we, as humans, cannot eat - and 67% of land in South Africa is available and suitable for grazing and browsing.

Yet we take the animals off the land and cram them in large numbers into huge sheds, feeding them vast amounts of fish and grains in order to make more meat, more eggs, and more milk, cheaply. The meat, eggs and milk from these animals is directed towards the Consumer Culture which then, in turn, struggles with obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, while the oceans become depleted of fish and rural farmers lose their livelihoods because they are unable to compete with cheap supermarket products. As for the animals, they live and die without ever seeing a blade of grass or a ray of sunshine.

The church has a moral and theological responsibility to set aside this stupidity and embrace its role of stewardship of our beautiful earth and all its creation. We need our congregations to become eco-congregations transforming culture to promote a healthy diet for all, sustainable livelihoods for rural farmers, as well as the well-being of the land and all its creatures. Only in this way can we ensure sustainability and establish justice for all."

Bishop Ziphozihle Siwa President of the South African Council of Churches.



Photos courtesy Compassion in World Farming

PRAYERS

Hear our humble prayer, O God,
for our friends, the animals,
especially for those who are suffering;
for animals that are overworked,
underfed, and cruelly treated;
for all the wistful creatures in captivity,
that beat their wings against bars;
for any that are hunted or lost or deserted,
or frightened or hungry;
for all that must be put to death.
We entreat for them all
Thy mercy and pity,
and for those who deal with them,
we ask a heart of compassion
and gentle hands and kindly words.
Make us, ourselves,
to be true friends to animals
and so to share
the blessings of the Merciful.

From a Catholic Prayer Book

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship
with all living things, for our brothers and sisters,
the inarticulate beasts, to whom Thou gave the
earth as their home in common with us. We
remember with shame that in the past we have
exercised the high dominion of humanity with
ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which
should have gone up to thee in song has become
a groan of anguish and a cry of torment. May
we realize that they live not for us alone, but for
themselves and for Thee, and that they too love the
sweetness of life. **Amen.**

Attributed to St. Basil the Great

O God, I thank thee
for all the creatures thou has made,
so perfect in their kind--
great animals like the elephant and the rhinoceros,
humorous animals like the camel and the monkey,
friendly ones like the dog and the cat,
working ones like the horse and the ox,
timid ones like the squirrel and the rabbit,
majestic ones like the lion and the tiger,
for birds with their songs.

O Lord give us such love for thy creation,
that love may cast out fear,
and all they creatures see in humans
their priest and friend,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

--George Appleton in *The Oxford Book of Prayer*, Oxford University Press, 1985.

O Lord our God
creator of our land,
our earth, the trees,
the animals and humans,
all is for your honour.
The drums beat it out,
and people sing about it,
and they dance with noisy joy
that you are Lord.

Ashanti Prayer, Ghana

Bless those minding cattle,
And those minding sheep,
And those fishing the sea
While the rest of us sleep.

Celtic prayer

O Lord, Creator of the entire world,
O Loving God,
This prayer is for Africa.
Bless the plains, rivers, trees
And all the African lands.
Bless the birds, fish and animals
That bring beauty and abundance to Africa.

Education for Justice

CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES

Invite the children to close their eyes and picture their favourite place in the world. Now think of one thing each one of us could do to take care of this world e.g. recycling, wasting less water, switching off electrical appliances instead of leaving on stand by, not dropping litter etc. Even the small changes we all make can make a difference. In pairs or individually, ask the children to produce posters, either showing small changes we could all make to care for our world, or celebrating the world's biodiversity. Put these posters up around the church or building.

Make a green colour strip

Take the children out to collect as many different green leaves as possible or provide these for them. Put a strip of double sided sticky tape on a piece of white card and arrange the leaves (or parts of the leaves if too big) in colour order from lightest green through to darkest green onto the tape. This gives a colour strip showing something of the diversity of plants in the local environment.

Leaf collage

Draw a large leaf shape on an A4 piece of paper. Fill the leaf shape with as many different leaves found in the local environment glued on using PVA glue as a collage of plant diversity.

Psalm of praise

Read Psalm 8 to the children. Using a large sheet of paper, create a "thought shower" of things in the natural world that the children would like to give thanks to God for. These might include favourite places, animals, food etc. Then, scribe the children's Psalm of praise beginning and ending with, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" And including the children's suggestions in the main body of the "Psalm". Read the joint piece of work together. Use this Psalm in church next week.

Story Board

Read the story of creation from Genesis 1 to the group. You may prefer to use a children's version of the Bible or The Message for this. Provide an A3 piece of paper divided into six squares to the children, to work on in pairs or individually. Ask the children to draw the creation story in each of the boxes to represent the six days of creation, reminding them that the seventh day was a day of rest.

Creation Cube

Read the story of creation from Genesis 1 to the group. You may prefer to use a children's version of the Bible or The Message for this. Provide the children with a cube net (template) on A4 card. On each face of the cube, draw one of the six days of creation. Cut out and make up the cube. Each toss of the cube will remind the children of a different aspect of the creation story.

Flower collage pen pots

Provide the children with pictures of flowers from gardening magazines or seed catalogues etc and a cardboard cup. Use PVA glue to cover the cup with the flower pictures, which can then be used as a pen holder. As the children make the flower collage pen pots, discuss the diversity of plants in the world.

Wildlife garden

Use a corner of the church garden, a window box or large plant pot to sow some wildflower seeds for the children to create and care for their own wildlife garden. Talk about the importance of providing the right environment for bees and other wildlife, how we depend on bees for pollination, the importance of supporting native species etc.

Creation musical

Listen to the story of creation. Either make musical instruments out of junk or use percussion instruments to produce a soundtrack for each aspect of the creation story. Reread the story with the children playing their music.

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty
of the earth and sky and sea;
for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers;
for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers.
We praise you for these good gifts
and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity.
Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful
enjoyment of your abundant creation,
to the honor and glory of your name, now and forever.

*(Source: The Book of Common Prayer;
Church Publishing, New York)*



Green Anglicans
Anglican Church of
Southern Africa
Environmental Network

Funded by:

