Season of Creation 5

Act and Pray in the Season of Creation

The Season of Creation was first adopted in 1989 by the Greek Orthodox Church and the concept has rapidly spread to other denominations. Normal Habel took up the movement in Australia 17 years ago. The Anglican Church of Southern Africa has been celebrating the Season of Creation for ten years. The global Anglican Church agreed to promote the Season in 2012 at the Anglican Consultative Council. Last year Pope Francis asked Catholics around the world to celebrate the season and so the Anglican Communion Environmental Network formed a partnership with the Global Catholic Climate Movement, the World Council of Churches and Christian Aid to promote the Season of Creation worldwide. (www.seasonofcreation.org)

As the crisis of climate change and environmental degradation continues to deepen, we must ask ourselves: how do we celebrate the Season of Creation? The invitation is to take our services out of the Church building, be public in our prayer and witness. This year consider hosting a service at athe site of environmental degradation – to pray and draw attention to the situation. For example you could host a service on a beach and combine with a clean-up, or by a river polluted by acid mine drainage. You can find some ideas on http://seasonofcreation.org/#

Other season of creation actions might join with international movements for divestment from fossil fuels (with coordinated events on October 4), or the "Big Shift" campaign which is calling on the World Bank to phase out support for fossil fuels by 2020 and support renewable energies.

Where do you hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor? How can your church bring healing and hope to the desecrated places?

Mash, R.
Season of Creation 5
Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Environmental Network
2017

FOREWORD

"What does development mean if it destroys the water and destroys the food?"

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, International Water Justice Conference,
St George's Cathedral 2017

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa adopted the Season of Creation in 2010. In the last seven years the realities of environmental degradation and climate change have become all too real. Flooding, drought and devastating fires have impacted Dioceses throughout the Province. Care for Creation is not an optional extra for our ministry – for the future of the planet is now at stake.

In this Season of Creation we explore five themes:

- Climate Change and Eco-justice
- Food and Environmental Justice
- Water Justice
- Sustainable Energy
- Biodiversity

Each section contains sermon notes, liturgical materials and a fact sheet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sermon on Biodiversity – Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya

Sermon on Water Justice – Rev Canon Peter Houston

Sermon on Climate Change and Eco-Justice – Rev Shaun Cozett

Sermons on Food and Environmental Justice and Sustainable Energy – Rev Dr Rachel Mash

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Week 1	**Climate Change and Eco-justice**	**Isaiah 24: 1-6**	**Psalm 98**	**Rom 8: 18-25**	**Matt 8: 23-27**
		Lord of all creation through self-interest and greed we have plundered the resources of the world and jeopardised the atmosphere and climate of our planet. Global warming and rising sea levels threaten island nations and vulnerable peoples and habitats. Give us a new vision for our planet and create in us a new sense of social and ecological justice Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen			
Week 2	**Food and Environ-mental Justice**	**Lev 25:8-24**	**Psalm 85**	**James 5:1-8**	**Luke 4: 16-21**
		Eternal God You crown the year with goodness And you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: Grant that we may use them to your glory for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen			
Week 3	**Water Justice**	**Genesis 21: 8-19**	**Psalm 104: 10-17**	**Rev 22:1-7**	**John 4:1-15**
		Lord God, in the imagery of water you reveal the attributes of your Spirit. Deepen in us a due respect for this resource that we may fully drink of the gift of your life giving Spirit Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen			

	Theme	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Week 4	**Sustainable Energy**	**2 Chronicles 7:11-22**	**Psalm 46**	**Col 1:15-23**	**John 3: 16-21**
		Almighty God you created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them help us to live sustainably within creation mindful of the needs of others and of future generations; Through Jesus Christ our Lord who came that we may have life in all its fullness. Amen			
Week 5	**Biodiversity**	**Genesis 1: 12-28**	**Psalm 148**	**Rev 5:11-14**	**Matthew 10: 26-33**
		Eternal and life giving God In diversity you enrich the unity of our existence; Help us to live in harmony with the difference and uniqueness of other creatures. Deepen within us an awareness of our own place within creation that we may be stewards and servants of its variety and beauty. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen			

The Five Movements of the Liturgy

The following five movements form the order of the liturgy: God gathers us, Service of the Word, Responding to the Word, Service at the Table and Commissioning.

- **The Gathering:** The congregation is welcomed and the theme of the service is introduced. The penitence can be positioned here or it may follow the sermon.
- **The Proclamation of God's word:** Here the word of God is read and preached.

  The affirmation of our Faith can be an important part of the Proclamation.
- **Responding to God's word:** Prayers of the People are included here. Creative responses such as drama, liturgical dance or short video clips can be used. The penitence may follow the word.

  The peace may be shared according to custom.
- **Celebrating at the Table:** Natural elements can be used, either a whole loaf or small rolls. This could be baked by a family. Local wine can be used.
- **Sending out:** Post Communion prayers, prayers of commitment on the theme of the day and a blessing.

FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

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

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 for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer etc.

Final Blessing

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

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FROM "CELEBRATING SUNDAY"

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks
and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, Source of all being. Your power invigorates, your presence sustains and your love restores our broken world. You are unceasingly at work: bringing order from chaos, creating, restoring, and filling emptiness with life. In raising Christ from the dead you usher in the dawn of a new age.

Your Spirit is fire in us, your breath is power to purge our sin and warm our hearts to love.

As children of your redeeming purpose, freed by Christ whose resurrection opens the gate of life, we offer you our praise, with angels and archangels and the whole company of earth and heaven, singing the hymn of your unending glory:

Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Risen Lord was recognised in the breaking of the bread, the fearful disciples received a blessing of peace, and the weary fishermen found a ready welcome on the lakeshore. To them all Christ renewed the pledge of his presence and the promise of new birth in the Spirit.

Before he was given up to suffering and death, recalling the night of Israel's release when slaves walked free, at supper with his disciples, Jesus took bread and offered you thanks. He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you." After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks, and gave it to them saying: "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant; it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven. Do this to remember me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Christ Jesus, come in glory!

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be to us the Body and the Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with all your people into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Amen

Eucharistic Prayer from "Celebrating Sunday" ACSA

Week One: Climate Change and Environmental Justice

First reading	Isaiah 24:1–6
Psalm	Psalm 98
Second reading	Rom 8:18–25
Gospel	Matt 8:23–27

COLLECT

Lord of all creation
through self-interest and greed
we have plundered the resources of the world
and jeopardised the atmosphere and climate of our planet.
Global warming and rising sea levels threaten island nations and vulnerable peoples and habitats.
Give us a new vision for our planet
and create in us a new sense of social and ecological justice
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SERMON

Climate Change and Eco-Justice

Introduction

This Season of Creation marks nine years since the first season of its kind was celebrated in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Over the past nine years the church has grown in its awareness of the challenges to the integrity of God's creation. Amongst these challenges climate change remains one of the most significant. Over the last decade we have seen nations coming together to agree on a road map for reducing climate greenhouse gas emission in order to reduce the rate at which the earth is likely to heat from its current state, and the resultant effects on weather patterns, water availability, food production and human health to name just a few. We have also seen the introduction of technology promoting an 'eco-friendly' lifestyle including electric cars, an array of solar, water and wind driven energy generation products. There has been a call for a reduction in meat consumption and many projects now promote permaculture and local food production. National water and energy saving campaigns have also been effective in reducing the amount of water and electricity used within households.

So, does the church still need to talk about climate change? Global attitudes have shifted from climate change being something nice to talk about to climate change being essential. The context of the Season of Creation has therefore changed. The church seeking climate justice is no longer a "voice crying out in the wilderness", ours is now one amongst many voices. The challenge for us is not how to raise the issue of climate change, but how do we speak in this new context?

The devastation of the Earth: Isaiah 24:1–6

The earth mourns and withers;
the world languishes and withers;
the highest people of the earth languish.
5 The earth lies defiled
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

Today we read from the Book of Isaiah that the people anger God and in return God brings destruction on the land. This passage reminds us of our need for repentance for what we have done and how we have lived. We are reminded again that God ultimately is sovereign over all that has been created. God has entrusted to us the care of His creation and where we have failed we need to ask God to forgive us and help us change our ways. The church has a role to play in reminding the world that we do not conserve and protect the earth only for scientific and economic reasons, we do so primarily because the earth is a gift from God, entrusted to us and we will have to give an account of what we have done to the earth. We must teach that environmental degradation is also a sin – transgressing the laws of God. As the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church says: "the destruction of the natural environment caused by humanity constitutes an offense against the Creator himself… each human act that contributes to the destruction of the natural environment must be regarded as a very serious sin"

The Suffering of Creation Romans 8 :18–25

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the children of God to be revealed"

Our second lesson, Romans 8, reminds us again that 'the earth lies waiting for the children to God to be revealed.' In some Christian contexts passages such as this and others have been used to say that God will just fix the earth if we turn to God. Although there is truth to the statement, the challenge is that Christians could just sit back and watch the earth being destroyed and do nothing. This passage clearly shows that creation is waiting for **us** to take action. In the classic words of Saint Theresa of Avila "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours."

The church must continue to check our message, so that we preach a message of salvation that is for **all** of creation. "God so loved the world, that He sent His Son." (John

3:16) This means that God loved the whole world, not just the humans on it – Jesus came to save the whole of Creation. That same God also gave us the intellect and skills to be able to do the work for which we have been created. The church must continue to speak, but do so in a way that reflects God's working in the world and also our call to be God's eyes and ears; we are co-creators with God.

Jesus Calms a Storm: Matthew 8:23–27

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the disciples marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

Today's Gospel tells again the story of the disciples in the boat with Jesus, who is sleeping while they go through a storm. We see in the story how the disciples are caught in fear and trembling as the waves crash against their boat. It should be noted the sea is often a feature in the gospel because, amongst other reasons, the disciples were previously fisherman. Here we have a story of threats to lives and livelihoods. As seasoned fishermen they could not find their way around the storm. It probably goes without saying that they couldn't fish in these conditions. In the same way, climate change still poses a risk to lives and livelihoods. The latest vulnerability maps confirm again that poorer nations will suffer the most from the effects of climate change. An increase in the average temperature in the long term increases the risk of floods, droughts, storms and sea level rise. The increased variability in weather conditions affects crop production and thus food security and leads to hunger and famine. The poor will pay the highest price for climate change. The church must continue to speak and act for the poor and vulnerable.

Within Southern Africa we have the additional challenges of communities needing development, of high unemployment and poor service delivery. In speaking for the poor and vulnerable we must also seek for developmental solutions that allow for sustainable livelihoods. Although we have limited resources, and climate change threatens the availability of those resources, we must seek solutions to problems of inequality, which itself limits our ability to deal with the effects of climate change.

The gospel today also shows us a very important dialogue between Jesus and the disciples. After they wake Jesus from his sleep, he asks "why are you afraid, you of little faith?" These disciples have been with Jesus for so long and have seen His miracles and heard the parables yet they are still learning. In the same way, although so much is being said and written about climate change how many of us are reading, learning and changing our lifestyles? The need to teach remains important because we cannot become complacent, thinking that someone else will solve the problem. We need to be people of faith and action.

Climate change is a global issue that requires local action. The consequences are indeed frightening. But our gospel shows that we do not need to be afraid – we are part of the solution, God's people are waking up and in partnership with others around the globe, we can limit the worst of Climate Change if we act now.

What we do in our daily lives matters, and the consequences of our actions are not always felt by us but they will be felt by someone. For those of us who are hearing about climate change for the first time, what are the changes we can make to our lifestyles so that we reduce our impact on the earth? How can our churches become role models of sustainable living for the whole community? If we have heard this story before and have changed our behaviour is there anything else that we can change? How can we influence other people?

Rev Shaun Cozett

Fact sheet

The planet is warming, from North Pole to South Pole, and everywhere in between. Globally, the temperature has already risen by more than 0.8 degrees Celsius, and even more in sensitive polar regions. And the effects of rising temperatures are happening right now. Signs are appearing all over. The heat is not only melting glaciers and sea ice; it's also shifting rain patterns and setting animals on the move.

These are some of the impacts of climate change:

- Rainfall in parts of Africa will decrease and droughts will become more common as the temperatures warm.
- Hurricanes and other storms will become stronger. This is because as air warms it is able to hold more moisture.
- Species that depend on each other may become out of sync, so plants may bloom earlier than their pollinating insects become active.
- Sea levels will rise, affecting coastal eco-systems and cities.
- Some diseases will spread such as malaria carried by mosquitoes who will be able to live in areas which previously were too cold.
- There wil be an increase in conflict as communities struggle for access to limited water sources and farm land, leading to an increase in climate refugees.
- If global temperatures rise by more than 2 degrees, then some of these changes may become catastrophic.[1]

THE GATHERING

Confession

God our Creator and Healer
we confess that we have sinned:
we have used creation not cherished it;
we have lived selfishly; not watched the balance of life;
we have been greedy - not sharing earth's gifts;
and our footprints are heavy not gentle.
Forgive us the damage that disturbs our planet.
Grant us the grace to live for the world's healing and our own.
Bless the seasons of the year, may they be restored to Your design.[2]

or

Creator God, how deep are your designs!
You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,
and charged us with their care.
We confess that the way we live today
is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of life,
dispossessing the poor and future generations.
Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,
and, as you promised Noah never to repeat the flood,
so make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:
Choosing life for all that is at risk –
for creation, neighbours near and far,
our children and ourselves. **Amen**.[3]

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of faith

I have faith in God, the Almighty
who created heaven and earth
and who wishes to save the world
from our foolishness and greed.

I have faith in the Spirit
And the might of our community
Which enables and protects life
Which stands up against lethal threat
And paralysing helplessness.

And I have faith in Jesus Christ,
our brother and Son of God
Who grounds heaven
And links heaven to earth
Who suffered from our weakness
Who was crucified by our lack of faith
Who died from our paralysing fear
Who was buried under our indifference
Who rises among us with every new hope
With every drop of good water
With every breath of healthy air
With every flower in full blossom
And he will separate those
Who practise death and those
Who answer for life.[4]

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People

We join with the earth and with each other
To bring new life to the land, to restore the waters, to refresh the air.
We join with the earth and with each other
To renew the forests, to care for the plants, to protect the creatures.
We join with the earth and with each other
To celebrate the seas, to rejoice in the sunlight, to sing the song of the stars.
We join with the earth and with each other
To recreate the human community, to promote justice and peace, to remember our children.
We join with the earth and with each other
We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery:
for the healing of the earth and renewal of all life.[5]

or

Dear Lord, you called your disciples to follow in your way:
You are the Way, the Truth and Life.
And so we come, seeking to follow in your footsteps.
Creator of the earth, as we journey
Help us to walk lightly, treasuring the world you have given us,
And cherishing each other.
And grant, we pray, that our walk
May be part of your plan to care for creation.
Seeking climate justice and the coming of your Kingdom
On earth as it is in heaven.[6]

CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

Proper Preface: "And now we give you thanks that even in the midst of despair, you speak words of hope to your people and can lead us from bondage to our past into a future where your Son will reign supreme over all things"

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Walk lightly

Each leaf, each petal, each grain, each person, sings your praises, Creator God.
Each creature on the earth, all the mountains and great seas, show your glory, Spirit of love.
And yet, the hand of greed has patented and plundered your splendour,
has taken and not shared your gift, has lived as owner of the earth, not guest.
And so, the ice is cracked, the rivers dry, the valleys flooded and the snow caps melt.
God our Father, show us how to step gently, how to live simply, how to walk lightly with respect and love for all that you have made.
Amen.[7]

Week Two: Food and Environmental Justice

First reading	Lev 25:8–24
Psalm	Psalm 85
Second reading	James 5:1–8
Gospel	Luke 4:16–21

COLLECT

Eternal God
You crown the year with goodness
  and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
Grant that we may use them to your glory
  for the relief of those in need
  and for our own well-being;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SERMON

The Land

Any discussion of food and environmental justice must begin with an understanding of the Biblical concept of Land.

Lev 25:8–24 Land

23"'The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers. 24 Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land."

In Psalm 85 we read how God will restore the land. According to the Bible, land belongs to God (Psalm 24:1) "the Earth is the Lord's." We may talk about ***our*** land, and buy and sell it, but according to the Bible, the ownership of land by humans is secondary to God, we are only ever stewards or managers.

God's first plan was for humans to live in plenty from the fruit of the land, in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were commanded in Gen 2:15 to "work the land and look after it." They disobeyed God and were cast out. As a result of their sin, the land would bring forth thorns and weeds and they would eat by the sweat of their brow.

So God came up with plan B, calling Abraham and the people of Israel to occupy a special land. Made in the image of God, they were to model the values of God in caring for Creation. This is not a political destiny (with borders and walls) it is about a spiritual and ecological destiny, as God's holy people to model a godly relationship between humanity and the earth by the way they live in the land.

The relationship between the people of Israel and the land of Israel begins with a promise. The land is God's to give and it is God who promises that Abraham's descendants will occupy it. Even though the people conquer the land by force, it is made clear that this is only because God gives them the land. Even when they are settled, the land still belongs to God not to the people. In Leviticus the Lord commands Israel to observe a rest – a Sabbath on the land every seven years, and a jubilee every fifty. When sold, the land would be returned to the original owner's family. God reminds the people that the land is not to be sold permanently because "the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants." Leviticus 25:23

God's people are given commandments regarding sustainable practices of land use, for instance leaving land unused on a regular basis, rotating crops and harvesting. The land is to be used in ways which support the vulnerable and provide a habitat for wildlife (e.g. Exodus 23:11).

There is a strong emphasis on the equal re-distribution of land and other resources, an emphasis on the common good and our common home, caring for the excluded, managing disputes without resorting to hostility and conflict (e.g. Leviticus 25, Psalm 34, Acts 20:35, Matthew 5).

The Bible is full of calls to live simply (Luke 12), share resources (Matthew 6, Acts 2) and rest regularly (Genesis 2, Hebrews 4) and to leave a positive legacy for our children's children – for generations to come (Proverbs 13). The liturgical expression 'world without end' is not to do with the hereafter it is to do with the future of this planet!

Commands such as 'do unto others as you would have them do to you' (The Golden Rule), 'Love your neighbour as yourself', 'replenish the earth', and 'love compassion, seek justice and walk humbly with your God' inspire us to create a just future for humanity and the whole inhabited Earth.[8]

(Martin Goss)

Injustice

James 5:1–8 points clearly to the injustice and oppression that are part of our modern day economic systems.

4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

The history of land has been the history of oppression. Colonialism and slavery have taken people from their land. Neoliberal policies have shifted wealth from the many to the few. According to Oxfam, eight men

own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity, and the gap between rich and poor is growing. Big business and the super-rich are fuelling the inequality crisis by dodging taxes, driving down wages and using their power to influence politics.

"It is obscene for so much wealth to be held in the hands of so few when 1 in 10 people survive on less than $2 a day. Inequality is trapping hundreds of millions in poverty; it is fracturing our societies and undermining democracy."[9]

Across the world, people are being left behind. Their wages are stagnating yet corporate bosses take home million dollar bonuses; their health and education services are cut while corporations and the super-rich dodge their taxes; their voices are ignored as governments sing to the tune of big business and a wealthy elite.

Good news for the poor

Luke 4:16-21

"*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.*"

Food insecurity

Often the response of the church to food insecurity is hand-outs, soup kitchens, etc. All those these have their place in times of crisis, they do not bring "liberty to the captives". How can we help to release people from grinding poverty? As Christians, if we employ people we must make sure that we pay fair wages. Can our churches develop from soup kitchens into income generating projects (food gardens, recycling for money, skills development)?

Developing a spirituality of food

What is our spirituality of food? Here is an interesting quote to get you thinking.

"Our culture is not unacquainted with the idea of food as a spiritually loaded commodity. We're just particular about which spiritual arguments we'll accept as valid for declining certain foods. Generally unacceptable reasons: environmental destruction, energy waste, the poisoning of workers. Acceptable: it's prohibited by a holy text. Set down a platter of country ham in front of a rabbi, an imam, and a Buddhist monk, and you may have just conjured three different visions of damnation. Guests with high blood pressure may add a fourth. Is it such a stretch, then, to make moral choices about food based on the global consequences of its production and transport?" — Barbara Kingsolver, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life

"What can't ***You*** eat?" Are there certain things that you will not eat, because of your faith? Given the fact that we have more than seven billion neighbours on the planet and so many are hungry, how does that affect our food choices?

Act local, think global

Act local:

What food choices can you make that create work for local people? Buying locally grown or produced foods creates jobs and reduces our carbon footprint. What do you do with your waste? 9 million tonnes of food is wasted every year in South Africa.

Think global:

Our food choices have an impact on climate change and water scarcity which in turn leads to food insecurity.

- Don't buy food that has been flown in rather buy food grown locally. Check when you buy where it comes from.
- Consider a more plant based diet. We need to "diet for a small planet". Consider how much protein is produced to provide foodstuffs for animals, so that these animals become protein for humans to eat. Eating more plant based food saves land, water and reduces carbon emissions.
- Find out how the animals or poultry are raised that you are eating. Is it right to torture a living creature so that we can eat more cheaply?
- Eating fish – find out if it is endangered or sustainable.
- Start small – consider a "Meat free Monday" or a "Fish Friday" every week.

Rev Dr Rachel Mash

Fact Sheet

Even without climate change, the world food system faces a challenge: Experts estimate that global food production will need to increase by at least 60 percent by 2050 to feed a growing population and satisfy shifting diets. Expanding urban areas are competing with agriculture for both land and water. And there is a limited amount of land that can be sustainably used for crop production without losing the livelihood benefits that landscapes like forests provide.

Climate change adds to this challenge. Farmers will increasingly face unfamiliar and unpredictable conditions, such as heat stress, changing seasonal rainfall patterns, infestations by diseases and pests spreading into new areas, and sea-level rise leading to saltwater intrusion into aquifers and coastal agricultural lands.

Many communities are also experiencing more frequent severe weather events, such as droughts and floods. Ultimately, climate change puts the sustainability of agricultural development and food security at risk and aggravates hunger and poverty, particularly where farming conditions are marginal and social safety nets are weak.

Fish– 52% of stocks are fully depleted.[10]

Meat– The current food system is responsible for more than a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, and is therefore a major driver of climate change. Intensive livestock-rearing is a major cause of greenhouse gases, in part because of the methane produced by the animals and the massive slurry pits that accompany large farms. It also diverts water and grains to animal-rearing, which is less efficient than directing the grains towards direct human consumption.[11]

GATHERING

Kyrie Eleison

You delight in creation, its colour and diversity;
yet we have misused the earth
and plundered its resources for our own selfish ends.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

You have brought order out of chaos,
light in darkness, good out of evil,
but we have preferred darkness
in words and deeds which dishonour God's holy name.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You have showered us with blessings,
but we have been grudging towards others
and lacking in generosity in word and deed.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.[12]

Confession

God we are sorry for the way we use your gifts to us so carelessly.
We are sorry that our actions are spoiling the precious balance between the earth and the sun so that our world is becoming too hot.
We are sorry for wasting food while others go hungry
We are sorry for wasting water when some children spend hours each day collecting it.
We are sorry for buying things we do not need.
We are sorry for throwing things away just because they are old or unfashionable.
We are ashamed that the world is such an unfair place
We are sorry when we choose to bury our heads in the sand
rather than seek fair solutions.
Lord forgive us and disturb us until we change to make your world a better place.[13]

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

We believe in God,
the Father who always welcomes us
with lavish grace
and longs to be close to us
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings
We believe in God
the Son who was lifted up
so that salvation and abundant life
are available to the whole world
We believe in God,
the Holy Spirit who leads us into the wilderness
where our sin is revealed
and our call to true holiness is renewed.[14]

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People

Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

O God, Creator of the universe and of all that lives and breathes,
from your dwelling place you refresh the mountains and forests.
The earth is filled with the fruits of your work.
You make grass grow for the herds,
plants and fruit trees for people to farm,
drawing their bread from the earth.
You entrusted your creation to us. We beseech you:
save us from the temptation of power and domination.
May your Spirit of wisdom teach us
how best to care for and safeguard what you entrust to us.
Blow your Spirit of life on your creation and all humanity.

Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

We beseech you, bless every effort and every search,
Every struggle and every pain that seek to restore
the harmony and beauty of your Creation.
Renew the face of the earth, so that every human being
may live in peace and justice, fruits of your Spirit of love.
Blow your Spirit of life on your creation and all humanity.

Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

We beseech you, Lord,
bless the fruits of the earth and the work of our hands
and teach us to share the abundance of your goods.
Send rain to the dry soil, sun and fair weather
where harvest is endangered by storms.
Blow your Spirit of life on your creation and all humanity.

Come light, light of God, give light to creation, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

From you, O Lord our God, come all gifts, and we give you thanks.

Hear the sigh raising from your creation,
gather the suffering of all people,
Send us your blessing, so that we may live, in its fullness, the new life
Which you offer us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**[15]

CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

Prayers at the Preparation of the Table

As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom.
Amen.[16]

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Sending out

We will journey with the kind hearted Savior
If we have fed the hungry from our own table
God will feed us with all good gifts.[17]

PRAYER IN TIME OF AGRICULTURAL CRISIS

God of compassion,
we rejoice in the unity that is at the heart of your creation;
look upon our land and heal it,
and from …,
good Lord, deliver us.
As we stand before you in prayer for all who are suffering,
grant that your light may shine in their darkness,
and that we may bear one another's burdens and so fulfil your law of love.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.[18]

A Litany of Thanksgiving

You have given us land and knowledge for our self-sufficiency and to provide for our families. You have given us the bodies and strength to work hard. We will pass this on to our children. **Great thanks to God!**

You tell us to have respect for ourselves and to respect other. This is the way to live in harmony with self and others. We will pass this on to our children. **Great thanks to God!**

You teach us about our responsibility to our village and the value of working together. You show us how to make life better for our people. We will pass this on to our children.
Great thanks to God!

You have given us children to love and through this love we live long after we are gone. Our children are our present not just our future. When we love them they love others. This is the way it is supposed to be We will pass this on to our children. **Great thanks to God!**

You help us to grow old and in our journey you provide us with knowledge and wisdom for living in our land. Our elders are our way to the past, to learn those things we must carry on. We will pass this on to our children. **Great thanks to God!**

You put us upon this great land and put things here that we need to survive. You show us how to care for the land and treat land, animals, trees, waters, plants and weather with respect. We will pass this on to our children. **Great thanks to God!**

Adapted from "Athabascan Traditional Values"
Rev Canon Ginny Doctor. 2007
Anglican Church of Canada

Week Three: Water Justice

First reading	Genesis 21:8–19
Psalm	Psalm 104:10–17
Second reading	Rev 22:1–7
Gospel	John 4:1–15

COLLECT

Lord God,
in the imagery of water you reveal the attributes of your Spirit.
Deepen in us a due respect for this resource
that we may fully drink of the gift of your life giving Spirit
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SERMON

"Give me this Water"

Introduction

There is a substance which is so vital to life, so foundational to all living things, so basic to existence as we know it: water. Water is life. Plants need ample water to grow into the fullness of life, to flower and bear fruit. All living beings, including humans, need water to survive and thrive. Desert plants can go without rain for months. But all living things eventually need access to water, to some form of moisture. To know water is to know life. Where there is no water, there is no life.

The people of the ancient world knew this well. Civilizations were born and flourished where there were strong rivers and reliable wells in the desert. Rivers provided water for consumption, for transport and for agriculture. The life of the river was the life of the society. The fullness of a river, quite literally the flooding of a river, created and sustained agricultural life. Water drove economies. Trade routes opened where wells could be dug in the deserts. The notion that from dust humanity came and to dust we shall return was always important for a people dwelling in a desert. Dust without life-giving water, remains dust.

Water Justice: Genesis 21:8–19

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael his first born to a slave woman Hagar and Isaac his second, born to Sarah his wife. When jealousies emerged, he sent Hagar out into the desert with only a skin of water. Ishmael was so thirsty and crying in pain, that his mother could not bear to hear his cries and placed him in the shade to die. The story of the two sons (on one level) is a story of access to water, and the injustice that one son has water to drink and the other son is left to die in the desert for lack of water. Who are the Ishmaels of our society and who are the Isaacs? What are the consequences when we do not listen to the cry of Ishmael? The Biblical story does not end with the death of Ishmael. We read in Genesis 21:19 that God opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well. God provided a life-saving well, Ishmael gained his life and his descendants grew into a nation.

God – The Wellspring of Life

Water is a deep theme that runs throughout the bible. God is the well-spring of life. The Lord provided wells in the desert for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. An incident at a well in the lands of Midian set Moses on a different course that would end with the burning-bush encounter. Fresh from slavery in Egypt, God turns bitter water into living water at Marah and provides water from a rock in Horeb for the wandering Israelites. Isaiah boldly proclaims a word from the Lord in Isaiah 12:3 "Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation" and in Isaiah 44:3 "For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants." Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47) sees a river flowing from the temple in Jerusalem, providing life and healing for the nations. The liturgy or worship of the temple picks up on this theme in Psalm 1.

Jesus – The Living Water: John 4:1–15

Jesus engages in a wordplay debate around living water in John 4. In the ancient world, living water was any water in motion, like a river or a spring or a well (where the water is flowing beneath the surface). Standing water is water that no longer flows and is held in some way, like in a pond or a dam or a cistern. The Samaritan woman in the story knows this distinction. Her confusion at Jesus' interaction is understandable.

Jesus asks her to give him a drink of (living) water from the well. She is perplexed at first by his request because of the social division between Jew and Samaritans. Jesus replies that if she knew who he was, she would ask him for *living* water. Why is Jesus asking her for living water if he has his own supply of living water to offer? In a wonderfully life-affirming way, Jesus brings the conversation around to himself (God incarnate) being the well-spring of life. The water that Jesus says he provides, will become in people a spring

of life-giving, living water, leading to eternal life. The woman states "Give me this water so I won't get thirsty again."

The woman longs for such water as do all who are spirituality thirsty for more of God. All those who cry out with the Psalmist (42) to say "As a deer longs for streams of living water, so I long for you, my God." Later in John there is a climactic moment regarding water. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, against the backdrop of the ritual of water being poured out in the Jerusalem temple, Jesus stood in the temple precincts and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:37–38).

You and Me – Leaking Vessels

So what does this have to do with you and me? There is a story about a water-bearer in India who had two large pots which hung on each end of a pole which she carried across her neck. One pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house. The other pot had a crack in it and only ever arrived half full. For two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of water to her master's house. The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. The broken pot was ashamed of its imperfection and miserable that it leaked so badly. So it spoke to the water-bearer one day "For the past two years I have only been able to deliver half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my brokenness, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The water-bearer felt sorry for the imperfect pot. So she gently said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

As they went up the hill, the cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path and cheered up a bit. But at the end of the trail, the pot still felt bad because it had leaked so much water. The pot apologized again to the water-bearer for its failure. But she laughed in delight and said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I used it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, the master would not have this beauty to grace his home."

As we close, here are some things to reflect on:

1. Maybe like Hagar, your life circumstances are dangerously desperate. Ask God to open your eyes to a well in the desert place, to give you and your family a second chance, a fresh start. This may be something practical that helps you to go forward or spiritual resources in Jesus that you never knew you had, helping you to persevere.
2. Maybe like the prophets of old, you recognize that you need to put down deep roots in the streams of God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Read the passages from Ezekiel and Jeremiah and dwell on the imagery of a tree bearing fruit even when things get tough. Commit yourself to further study of scripture and responding to the promptings of God's Spirit.
3. Maybe like the Samaritan woman, you have questions for Jesus and may feel confused by some of his actions. Trust Jesus to draw you to himself and to accept his invitation to drink from him. Be open to his life in you becoming a spring of life-giving water that flows through your brokenness (like the pot) to bring life, to create beauty, to inspire wonder in others you meet along life's journey and ultimately leads to eternal life.
4. Are you an Isaac – with access to far more water resources than you need? What can you do to assist the Ishmaels who are crying out for help?

Rev Canon Peter Houston: Diocese of Natal

Fact sheet

Global water

Water is considered the top long term global risk to industry and society.[19]

Nearly 1 billion (783 million) people do not have access to safe drinking water.

2.4 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation.

One third of the world's population lives in water-stressed areas.

There is significant over-draw on water from aquifers.

Each year water-borne infections killed some 2 million people globally.

Increase in water demand for energy consumption expected to increase by 80%.[20]

Factors impacting on water in Southern Africa

- Rapid population growth
- Water demand exceeds supply
- Lack of regulation & enforcement
- Overloaded utility services and maintenance backlogs
- Urban poverty & inequality
- Collapse of ecosystem services
- Surface water exploited to full
- 4 million people don't have access to clean drinking water
- 7 million people don't have access to safe sanitation services.[21]

GATHERING

Opening sentence

The river of God is full of water
let us worship and praise him

Confession

God of mercy, we come before you seeking forgiveness because we know how much we have failed you.
You created a world of beauty; you gave your people paradise.
But we have not been good stewards of the earth we inherited.
The rivers are polluted; the air in our cities is made impure;
forests are felled and fertile land turned to desert;
and, for pride and greed, whole species are endangered.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Creed

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces[22]

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People

May clean clear water bless us by well-spring or waterfall,
life in abundance – flowing, cleansing, refreshing.
May we use wisely God's gift of water,
cherish each drop, shrinking all scrub land and deserts.
Jesus, pour your water, greening and satisfying,
on the dry dustiness of the deserts within us.
Holy Spirit, flow through us, revive our faithfulness,
cleanse our sinfulness, fill us with prayerfulness.[23]

or

Spirit of Living Water
You hold all of creation in your womb
And spring us forward onto the earth at birth.

Spirit of Tides,
Remind me of the rise and fall of your rhythms
So that I may discover them deep within my own being.

Spirit of Greenness,
Bring moistness and vigour to my life
So that I might savour the experience of your energy
Moving through me out into the world.
Blessings of water be upon me.

May I be carried by the flow of the great river of life.
May I discover a hidden spring within, gushing forth.
May I be carried to the shores of the sacred and renewed.[24]

CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

Prayers at the Preparation of the Table

When the priest takes the bread and wine, he/she can also take the water and say this prayer before adding the water to the chalice.

Blessed are you, Creator Spirit, Source of all life. Through your goodness we have this water to offer, which refreshes, cleanses, enlivens and invigorates all your creatures.

Blessed be God forever.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Commissioning and blessing

In the seas and the rain, God bestowed on Earth the gift of water,
so that his creation could flourish into life.
Through the waters of baptism, God beckons us to a new creation,
so that we may share in a life beyond life.
Today, by water also, including this water here, may the Covenant which we have made be sealed,
and creation renewed and restored to God's eternal purposes.

Go forth now to care for God's world.
Go out into all the world as heralds of a new rainbow covenant
and preach the good news to all creation.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all now and always.
Amen.[25] *(The Congregation is sprinkled)*

"You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour, now you must go back and tell the people that this is the Hour. And there are things to be considered . . .
Where are you living?
What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in right relation?
Where is your water?
Know your garden.
It is time to speak your Truth.
Create your community.
Be good to each other.
And do not look outside yourself for the leader."
Then he clasped his hands together, smiled, and said, "This could be a good time!"
"There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above water. And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt. We are the ones we've been waiting for."

A Hopi Elder

PRAYER

Give us hearts to understand;
Never to take from creation's beauty more than we give;
never to destroy wantonly for the furtherance of greed;
Never to deny to give our hands for the building of earth's beauty;
never to take from her what we cannot use.

Give us hearts to understand
That to destroy earth's music is to create confusion;
that to wreck her appearance is to blind us to beauty;
That to callously pollute her fragrance is to make a house of stench;
that as we care for her she will care for us.

We have forgotten who we are.
We have sought only our own security.
We have exploited simply for our own ends.
We have distorted our knowledge.
We have abused our power.

Great Spirit, whose dry lands thirst,
Help us to find the way to refresh your lands.

Great Spirit, whose waters are choked with debris and pollution,
help us to find the way to cleanse your waters.
Great Spirit, whose beautiful earth grows ugly with misuse,
help us to find the way to restore beauty to your handiwork.
Great Spirit, whose creatures are being destroyed,
help us to find a way to replenish them.
Great Spirit, whose gifts to us are being lost in selfishness and corruption,
help us to find the way to restore our humanity.

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind,
whose breath gives life to the world, hear me;
I need your strength and wisdom. May I walk in Beauty.

Big Thunder (Bedagi),
late 19th century Algonquin

Week Four: Sustainable Energy

First reading	2 Chronicles 7:11–22
Psalm	Psalm 46
Second reading	Col 1:15–23
Gospel	John 3:16–21

COLLECT

Almighty God
you created the heavens and the earth
and all that is in them
help us to live sustainably within the creation
  mindful of the needs of others
  and of future generations;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who came that we may have life in all its fullness. **Amen**

SERMON

Hear the Cry of the Earth, Hear the Cry of the Poor

A Sustainable Earth

In order to understand the importance of sustainable energy we need to look at the calling on us to care for the Earth. It is the use of fossil fuels that poisons our rivers with acid mine drainage, pollutes our air with toxins and creates greenhouse gases that are leading to climate change.

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."[26]

When the people of Israel entered the Promised Land they were told that they would inherit the land flowing with milk and honey – symbol of spiritual and physical blessing. The cattle would grow fat on a thousand hills. In Deuteronomy they are warned that blessing was conditional on them following God's decrees '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). God's blessing was dependent on them keeping his Laws. They needed to remember continually that the Earth is not theirs by right but it is a gift (v1).

We are called to work the land and care for it (Gen 2:15) and to work with God to renew the Earth. Sadly human society, from colonialism to modern neo-liberal policies has adopted an exploitative relationship with the earth. This is far from God's commandments of creation care and sustainability – for one example consider the command to preserve fruit trees even in times of war (Deut 20:19–20).

By definition fossil fuels are part of the extractive industry, and the model is often that the industry takes out of the earth, damages the eco-system and then leaves the poorest communities to suffer the effects of environmental degradation. Meanwhile the profits from the fossil fuels are enjoyed by those who live far from the mine.

In this context – the words of 2 Chronicles 7:13 sound a clarion call for justice!

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

We must reflect on what the sins are that have brought such destruction on our land. We have worshipped other gods – the gods of consumerism, the gods of materialism. "Blessing" has become equated with materialistic commodities. The "blessers" of society now are sugar daddies providing material goods for young girls. Our planet cannot take the rampant consumerism that is pumping carbon pollution into the atmosphere.

We need energy but must push for sources of energy that do not deplete water sources, create greenhouse gases, soil erosion and diminish biodiversity. They cause inequality and poverty and lead to environmental injustice.

Christ the Saviour of Creation

Colossians 1:15–23

This wonderful passage explains so beautifully the relationship between Christ and Creation. We learn three key things:

- Christ is the source of Creation v16: by him all things were made
- Christ is the sustainer of Creation v17: In him all things hold together.
- Christ is the savior of creation v20 he is the one through whom God is pleased to reconcile himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross"[27]

John 3:16–21

God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son. We often think this verse is referring only to the people of the world. But the original Greek says 'cosmos', God

sent his son to save the whole world: people, animals, rivers and oceans – all are precious to him.

When Jesus died on the cross, he did so to restore ALL the relationships that had been broken by the fall. In Colossians it is clear that the Creator became the crucified, in order to bring the whole of creation back into restored relationship with him. "All things" are reconciled, or brought back into relationship with God. The word (panta) for all things means everything on heaven and earth and this includes our source of energy. The Creator God has given us wind and sun and one of the ways in which the world will be restored is through the use of these gifts of God.

As Wendell Berry said, "there are only sacred places and desecrated places".

What a contrast when we compare ecosystems in nature – forests, seas, cities or landscapes – that offer life and hope, with contaminated or sterile spaces – rivers polluted by acid mine drainage, air polluted from burning coal, tar sands destroyed by the search for oil.

As we seek solutions to our need for energy let us follow the words of Archbishop Tutu: "Let us love the Earth as much as God does"

Rev Dr Rachel Mash

Fact Sheet

Non Renewable Energy sources

Fracking

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) is the process of forcing natural gas or oil from layers of shale rock deep below the earth's surface. Wells are drilled to a depth of up to 5km and then turned horizontally for 2 to 3km. Millions of litres of water, mixed with sand and chemicals, are injected into the wells at high pressure. The shale is cracked open and sand and liquid are forced into the tiny cracks. Natural gas, trapped in the rock, is released and returns to the surface with the fracking fluids. Each well requires about 2500 trucks to transport water, chemicals, sand and waste products. This causes road degradation and air, dust and noise pollution. Contamination of the land surface can result from spillage during transfer, mixing, drilling and the handling of flow back liquid; leakage from wastewater storage ponds and evaporation pits; pipeline & cement casing cracking and breakage. There is growing evidence that fracking can be hazardous to human and animal health. Apart from methane in the atmosphere, ground and surface water can be contaminated with methane, arsenic, radio-active minerals, a variety of metals, fracking chemicals and salty brine. Some fracking chemicals are carcinogenic (cancer causing).[28]

Coal mining

Underground mining causes huge amounts of waste earth and rock to be brought to the surface – waste that often

becomes toxic when it comes into contact with air and water. It causes subsidence as mines collapse and the land above it starts to sink. It lowers the water table, changing the flow of groundwater and streams. Coal fires – burning or smouldering coal seams, coal storage piles or coal waste piles – are a significant environmental problem. Underground coal fires can burn for years, filling the atmosphere with smoke laden with carbon-monoxide (CO), carbon-dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), sulphur dioxide (SO_2), nitrous oxides (NO_x) and other greenhouse or toxic gases. Coal fires also contaminate groundwater, soil and air. Acid mine drainage is created when water mixes with coal and other rocks unearthed during mining, taking on toxic levels of minerals and heavy metals. This toxic water leaks out of abandoned mines to contaminate groundwater, streams, soil, plants, animals and humans.

Common health threats posed by coal mining:

Pneumoconiosis, aka black lung disease, is caused when miners breathe in coal dust and carbon, which harden the lungs.

Cardiopulmonary disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertension, lung disease, and kidney disease have been found in higher-than-normal rates among residents who live near coal mines.

Toxic levels of arsenic, fluorine, mercury, and selenium are emitted by coal fires, entering the air and the food chain of those living nearby.[29]

GATHERING

A candle is lit:
Blessed are you, O Lord Our God
the wilderness reveals the touch of your hand
and the mountains declare your presence with us
may Christ be a pillar of fire by night
that leads us beyond the struggles of our past
frees us from prejudice and makes us ready to receive
the extravagant offer of your grace
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Blessed be God for ever.[30]

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Creed

O God, the source of our being
and the goal of all our longing
We believe and trust in you.
The whole earth is alive with your glory
and all that has life is sustained by you.
We commit ourselves to cherish your world
and to seek your face.

O God, embodied in a human life
we believe and trust in you.
Jesus our brother, born of the woman Mary
you confronted the proud and the powerful
and welcomed as your friends
those of no account.[31]

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People

Lord of energy, teach us to pray …
Our Creator - source of all power,
we want to align ourselves like iron filings to your magnet.
We want to be drawn to your intent;
to live in a society that responds to your beckoning,
to feel the surge of your life-giving energy.
Grant us wisdom in our use of physical energy.
Help us to live by the standards we choose,
not those of others:
to focus our desire on you,
not the fake comforts of modern living,
to be satisfied by a sense of your love,
not our own power or status.
Because we know that your way is the only true way,
that everything we love and are is a gift from you,
and that to know you as our Creator
is to glimpse eternity [32]

Compassionate and loving God,
you created the world for us all to share,
a world of beauty and plenty.
Create in us a desire to live simply,
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.
Creator God,
You gave us responsibility for the earth,
a world of riches and delight.
Create in us a desire to live sustainably,
so that those who follow after us
may enjoy the fruits of your creation.
God of peace and justice,
You give us the capacity to change,
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,
so that the pillars of injustice crumble
and those now crushed are set free.
Amen.[33]

CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

Post communion prayer

Most Holy God, give us grace
to praise you not only with our lips
but also with our hearts and minds:
and grant that when our worship ends
we may continue to give you glory by our lives
to honor Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**[34]

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Go forth in the miracle of the grace of God.
And may you be touched by the fire of the Spirit,
the gentleness of the Christ
and the wisdom of your Maker.[35]

"One of the main sinks of energy in the 'developed' world is the creation of stuff. In its natural life-cycle, stuff passes through three stages. First new born stuff is displayed in shiny packaging on a shelf in a shop. At this stage, stuff is called 'goods'. As soon as the stuff is taken home and sheds its packaging, it undergoes a transformation from 'goods' to its second form, 'clutter'. The clutter lives with its owner for a period of months or years. During this period, the clutter is largely ignored by its owner, who is off at the shops buying more goods. Eventually by a miracle of modern alchemy, the clutter is transformed into its final form, rubbish. To the untrained eye it can be difficult to distinguish this rubbish from the highly desirable 'goods' that it used to be. Nevertheless, at this stage the discerning owner pays the dustman to transport the stuff away.[36]

I arise today, through
The strength of heaven,
The light of the sun,
The radiance of the moon,
The splendor of fire,
The speed of lightning,
The swiftness of wind,
The depth of the sea,
The stability of the earth,
The firmness of rock.
I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
of the Creator of creation.

Prayer of St Patrick

For an outdoor service or celebration

We turn to the East.

From the East comes the dawn, the day, hope and strength. We are made from sun, light, heat, wisdom and growth

We turn to the West.

We turn to the place where the sun sets. Let us be aware of the destructive steps that we have taken towards every form of life, and the times when we have remained indifferent when it was destroyed.

We turn to the North.

From the north came the oppressive currents that enslaved us and dominated the land. We do not accept this injustice, but we are ready to forgive, to work together to restore wounded humanity and creation, to reestablish justice and right relationships.

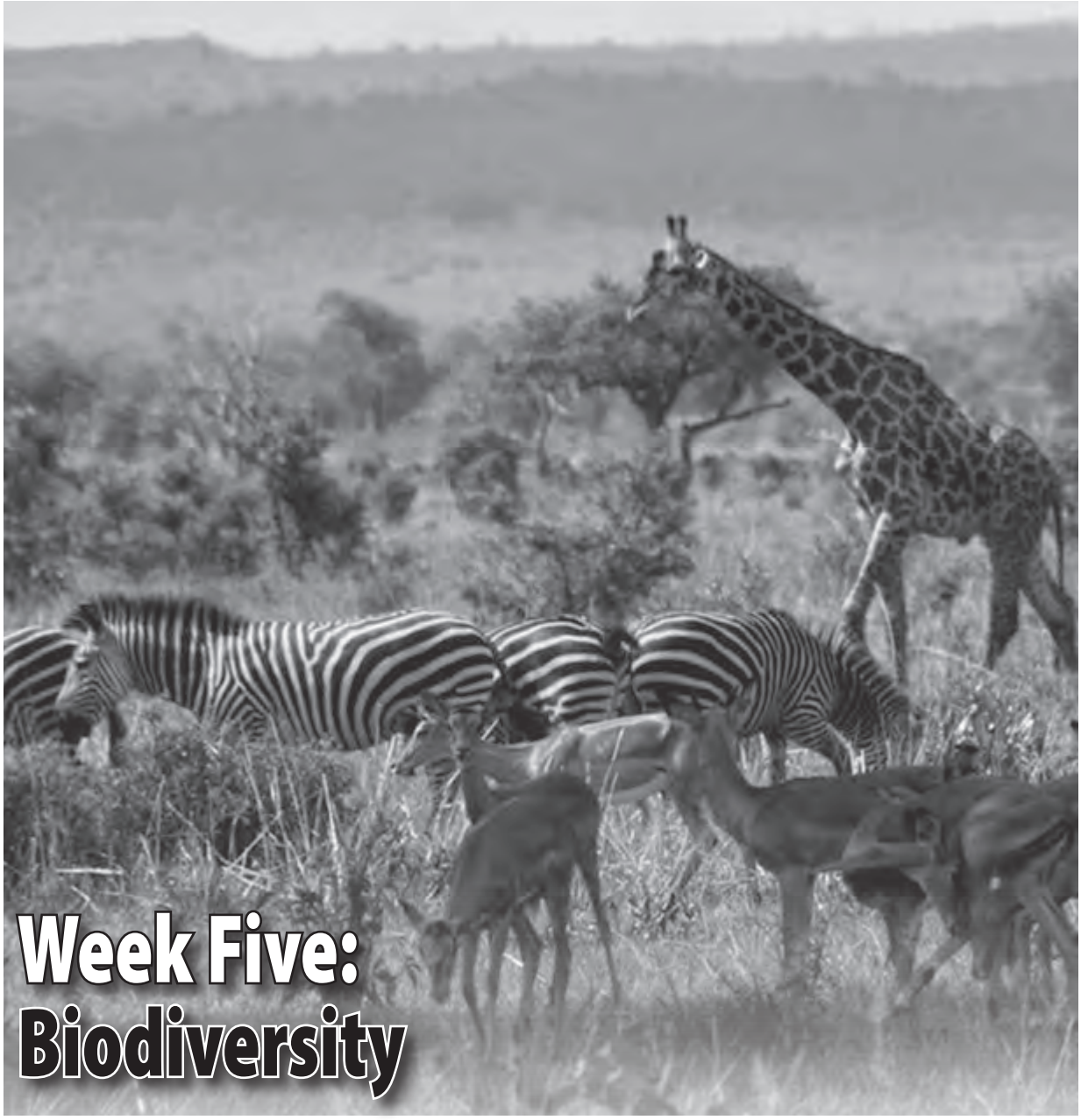
We turn to the South.

The south is the land of great plains and mountains the fragrance of hope for the poor, strength for the suffering , the union of the marginalised, the song of the poets and the message of the prophets.

We turn to the Centre.

We become more aware of ourselves, looking at others we are filled with love and solidarity because now we know that we are not alone, we are many and we are journeying together.

(Franciscans for Ecology: www.francis35.org)



Week Five: Biodiversity

First reading	Genesis 1:12–28
Psalm	Psalm 148
Second reading	Rev 5:11–14
Gospel	Matthew 10:26–33

COLLECT

Eternal and life giving God
In diversity you enrich the unity of our existence;
Help us to live in harmony with the difference
  and uniqueness of other creatures.
Deepen within us an awareness of our own place within the creation
  that we may be stewards and servants to its variety and beauty.
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

SERMON

God saw that it was good!

Introduction: Genesis 1:12–28

Introduction Genesis 1:12–28

From the onset in the order of creation God separates the formless chaos into heaven, water and land. After the separation, he then begins to fill the realms he has created with plant life. For the benefit of the plant life he creates the light that is essential for plants to flourish. He then proceeds to fill the water and sky with fish and birds – these could not have survived without the plant life he had created earlier (Gen. 1:20–23). Lastly, at the apex of creation, he created humanity to populate the land.[37] However the difference with other created beings is that God decided to share the creative responsibility with human beings.

God gave his creation independence. God created plants that yield seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it. (Gen. 1:11). God creates everything, but he also literally sows the seed for the perpetuation of creation through the ages. Creation is forever dependent on God, yet it remains distinct. God is the source of our work, yet it has its own weight and dignity.[38]

God sees that His work is Good

Genesis declares on each day of creation the "God saw that it was good". The climax came on the sixth day with the creation of humanity, when he declared that it was very good. Created in the image of God, humanity was to be co-creators with God. While humanity performs the spiritual tasks, we cannot ignore the material in God's good world.

God is relational, at creation as he created human beings he spoke in the plural, "Let *us* make humankind in *our* image" (Gen. 1:26). Humankind, created in the image of God, is therefore expected to relate to all that God has created in the way that God would. Being created in the image of God who works in the material world, who works in relationship, and whose work observes limits, we have the ability to do the same. For the first humans to be able to work in the Garden of Eden, God equipped them to handle the interrelationship between dominion, relationships, fruitfulness, growth, provision and to handle the limits.

Dominion

Working in God's image is exercising dominion. This has sometimes been interpreted to mean that we can 'use and abuse' the earth. Our work – in God's image – should actually begin with faithfully representing God. Made in God's image we should mirror God who declared that all is good. This means that to exercise "dominion" means to represent God – and all the works should be for good. In Genesis we see that everything that God created works in relationship with God and one another (Gen. 1:26). When God created animals he created them in twos, male and female, this then means the relationship is with God and with fellow creatures.

Delegated Authority

God delegated the naming of animals to Adam. Whatever name he gave it was its name. The delegation empowered God's creation to foster teamwork. We should also remember that we only name the creatures we love.

Bear Fruit and Multiply

God created a flawless creation and then created humanity to continue the creation project. Working alongside God, we are expected to help the universe to realise its true potential, with all that he has created in harmony bringing glory to God. We see this picture reflected in the beautiful 'Choir of Creation' in Psalm 148. It is important to note that God at work in creation showed a wonderful imagination, creating everything from exotic sea life to elephants and rhinoceroses. The way in which we imagine things, it is the way in which we shall carry out our work. Every part of God's great web of life is wonderfully made.

God provides for his creation. God said, "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. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so (Gen. 1:29–30).

We need God's continuing provision for air, water, earth, sunshine and the miraculous growth of living things for food for our bodies and minds. In acknowledging God's provision we are warned against self-confidence because without Him, our work is nothing.

Song of Praise to the Lamb

In Revelation 5:13–14 is a grand finale in which all of God's creatures in heaven and earth and in the sea unite in praise to both God the Father and God the Son. The stones, the birds, the animals and the fish finally will cry out. All creation had been groaning under the futility of the curse, now they know that they are about to be set free (Rom. 8:18–23).

God is praised as the Creator in Revelation 4. It is the Son who is praised in Revelation 5, as the Reconciler of all creation (Col. 1:20)

God Cares for His Creation

The lesson from the gospel is that Christians' goal is to be like Christ, we are to embody the wisdom and ways of Jesus into our being. We are to belong to Christ as a slave belonged to his / her master including caring for the diversity of creation. Furthermore, the New Testament contains many favourable references to protecting animals and nature. Christians attach significance in the story of Jesus beginning his life among animals (Lk 2:7) surrounded by shepherds.

Jesus stressed that even the lowliest of creatures is loved by God. God in Luke says that "no sparrow is forgotten before God." Sparrows are perceived of less value but God cares for them. As disciples we are expected to care for all God's creation by word and deed on this earth as he does. Jesus' appreciation for animals is demonstrated by the repeated references to animals that he used in his teachings. He referred to his followers and those who worship the Lord as sheep and he compared God's care for Jerusalem with a hen's concern for her brood. Often in his teaching Jesus compared himself to such animals as the lamb and dove, known for their innocence, meekness, and docility. He often represented animals as being under God's providence and Jesus' repeated statements to practice love, mercy and compassion are fundamental to and ethic which calls for humane treatment of domestic animals and to conserve those wild animals that are at risk.[39] Where there is disagreement on issues of biodiversity we not to be afraid, not keep our month shut and hide in the safety of silence because we are afraid of rejection and conflict.

Finally, taking up the cross implies identification with marginal people including marginalised creation. The more we love this life's reward, leisure, power, popularity, financial security at the expense of diversity, the more we will discover how empty they really are. The best way to enjoy life therefore is to loosen our greedy grasp on earthly rewards so that we can be free to follow Christ.

Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya, Bishop of Swaziland and Chairperson of Anglican Communion Environmental Network

The high
The low
all of creation
God gives to humankind to use.
If this privilege is misused
God's justice permits creation to punish humanity.[47]

Fact sheet

"We are the termination, not the fulfilment of the earth process. If there were a parliament of creatures, its first decision might well be to vote humans out of the community, too deadly a presence to tolerate any further" – Thomas Berry.

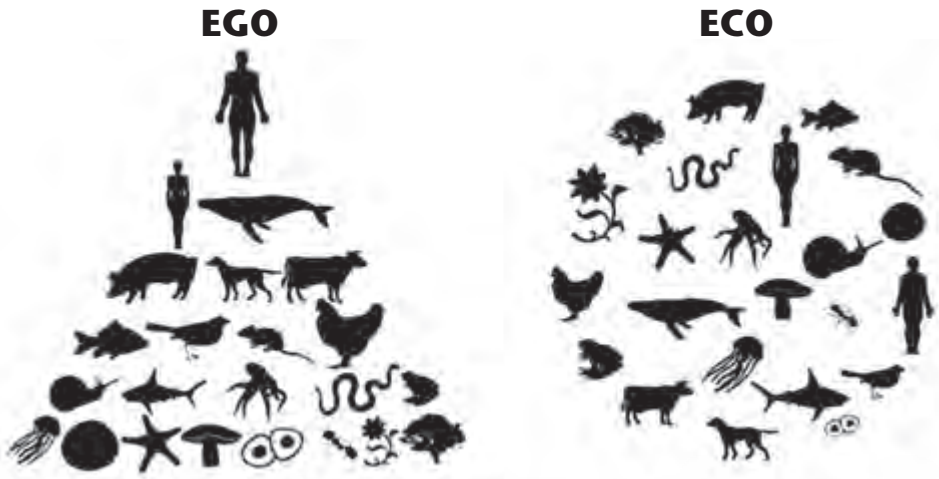
What is biodiversity? Bios means life (as in biology). Diversity means variety, so biodiversity means the variety of life. Scientists estimate that there may be more than 4 million species on earth, maybe as many as 30 million. The problem is that one single species seems intent on wiping out all the others. Many environmentalists have been warning about the impact of the rapid rate of extinction of plant and animal species and the loss of biological diversity. *More than one third of these species may be lost during this century, at a rate of hundreds per day.*

The extinction of species is primarily caused by the destruction of natural habitat, especially through agriculture, industry and urbanisation. This plunder of nature is epitomised by the slash and burn of tropical forests and the mass stripping of ecosystems in oceans and seas. A further problem is that land allocated for nature conservation has become fragmented so that cross-fertilisation has become more and more difficult.

The loss of species is a very serious problem. Biological resources feed and clothe us, provide us with housing and medicines and spiritual nourishment. The rainforests may yield many untapped forms of food. For example a drug that comes from the rose-coloured periwinkle of Madagascar has helped many people to recover from leukaemia (a form of blood cancer).

Each time we crowd out another species, when this species vanishes from the earth forever, this leads to "much beauty, irrevocably lost". Moreover, the community of all forms of life is interdependent. In many ways that we still do not understand fully, our livelihood is dependent on the variety of life in the ecosystems in which we live.

The whole human population of 7.3 billion people represents a single species – homo sapiens.[40]



Moving from the "ego-system" to the "Eco-system"

GATHERING

Come Creator

Come Lord, come down
Come in, come among us
Come as the wind to move us
Come as the light to prove us
Come as the night to rest us
Come as the storm to test us
come as the sun to warm us
come as the stillness to calm us
come Lord come down
come in come among us [41]

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

An Environmentalist's Creed

I believe in God, the Creator of the universe and all that it contains.
I believe that God is love and that God's love is evident in all created things.
I believe that everything exists for a purpose.
I believe that we can learn of this purpose only after we acknowledge
the cosmic harmony of the universe.
I believe that in God's son, Jesus, is revealed the ultimate purpose of humanity's existence - to experience God's love to the fullest
and to share that love with all of Creation.
I believe that all of my efforts to love are tied mystically to all of Creation;
That when any created thing is reduced from being all that it can be,
it reduces my capacity to become all that I might become.
I believe that I have been called in a special way to care for my planet.
I believe that God's Spirit can be experienced in all of Creation.
I believe that the Church is called to be a steward not just of souls
but of every created thing.
I believe that Jesus' resurrection points to the transformation of Creation itself.
I believe that, with God's love, the effects of sin can be overcome
in my life and in the life of the world.
I look forward to the renewal of every created thing at the end of time.
Amen [42]

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People

How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands!
The heavens declare your glory; the arch of sky displays your handiwork.
In your love you have given us the power to behold the beauty of your world robed in all its splendour.
The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills, the rivers and
lakes all disclose your presence.
The roaring breakers of the seas tell of your awesome might;
the beasts of the field and the birds of the air speak of your wondrous will.
In your goodness you have made us able to hear the music of the world.
You are in our midst. A divine voice sings through all creation[43]

A Prayer of Healing

We join with the earth and with each other.
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air
We join with the earth and with each other.

To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures
We join with the earth and with each other.

To celebrate the seas
To rejoice the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars
We join with the earth and with each other.

To create the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children
We join with the earth and with each other

or

God of the sun and the moon
Of the mountains, deserts and plains
God of the mighty oceans, of rivers, lakes and streams
God of all creatures that live in the seas and fly in the air
Of every living thing that grows and moves on this sacred Earth.
We are formed by Christ into Your People
Called to bring the world into Your marvelous light
As the Body of Christ, we are messengers of ecological vocation
We are entrusted with caring for this Earth which You have created.
Help us to love and respect it
To repair what we have damaged
To care for what You have made good and holy
Give us the wisdom and the passion to change our minds, our hearts and our ways.

Let us be mustard seeds in our world
Bringing about ecological conversion which grows and
Spreads to every corner of the Earth
For our sake now and for every generation which is to come
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. **Amen**[44]

CELEBRATING AT GOD'S TABLE

Invitation to communion

Creator God, meet us in this bread and wine and be with us on the journey which is the future
that we and all creation may make anew the story of Life
and all that is may live to praise and magnify your name forever
People of God, draw near in faith and travel far in grace.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prayer for our Earth

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.[45]

All God's creatures got a place in the choir, some sing low and some sing higher

Apprehend God in all things
for God is in all things
Every single creature is full of God
and is a book about God
Every creature is a word of God
if I spent enough time with the tiniest creature – even a caterpillar –
I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every creature.[46]

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been give the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things.

We are all thankful to our mother the earth for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginnings of time.

We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life, we know its power in many forms – waterfalls and rain, mist and streams, rivers and oceans

We are thankful to the fish life in the water. They are instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water.

We turn to honor and thank all the food plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped people survive. May other living things grow strength from them too.

We gather our mind to send thanks to all the animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.

We turn our thoughts to the trees. The earth has many families of trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many peoples of the world use a tree as a symbol of peace and strength.

We thank all the birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life.

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, we send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth.

These words of thanksgiving came to us from the Six Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca and Tuscarora.

Anglican Church of Canada

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Green Anglicans
Anglican Church of
Southern Africa
Environmental Network
www.greenanglicans.org

SEASON OF
CREATION
www.seasonofcreation.org

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

– Pope Francis, Laudato Si

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