

Sept 4, 22 – online worship – Creation Sunday/Climate Change
Bonni-Belle Pickard

Pre-service music

Creation Sings – Third Ave

In the wonder of creation – Everingham

Earth's Creator – Everingham

For the fruits of all creation -- Everingham

==ORDER OF SERVICE==

Call to worship: Psalm 104

Hymns: Sing for God's glory – **StF 116**

Prayer/Reflections

Zoom Interview with **Kate Chesterman**, from Christian Climate Change

Intro to hymn

Hymn: Touch the earth lightly – **StF 729**

Prayers of confession

 Lord's Prayer

Hymn: O Lord our Lord throughout the earth how glorious is your name – **StF 112**

Benediction

Call to worship: Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.
You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.

The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God;
The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens.
Then people go out to their work, to their labour until evening.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal;
All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.
When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the Earth, wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.
All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.
When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

The Earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever!

Sing for God's glory – StF 116

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEi0UpfjGns>

Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation,
racing across the sky, trailing bright clouds of elation;
sun of delight succeeds the velvet of night,
warming the earth's exultation.

Sing for God's power that shatters the chains that would bind us,
searing the darkness of fear and despair that could blind us,
touching our shame with love that will not lay blame,
reaching out gently to find us.

Sing for God's justice disturbing each easy illusion,
tearing down tyrants and putting our pride to confusion;
lifeblood of right, resisting evil and slight,
offering freedom's transfusion.

Kathy Galloway (b. 1952)

Prayer

Understand, if you want to know the Creator, created things.

■ Columbanus

The beauty of the trees,
The softness of the air,
The fragrance of the grass
Speak to me.

The summit of the mountain,
The thunder of the sky,
The rhythm of the sea
Speak to me.

The faintness of the stars,
The freshness of the morning,
The dewdrops on the flower
Speak to me.

The strength of fire,
The taste of salmon, the trail of the sun
And the life that never goes away,
They speak to me.

And my heart soars.

■ Chief Dan George

Lord our God, who created us and all things out of love and energy and goodness,
We thank you for the ways you continue to speak to and with us
Through creation.

We thank you for rosy sunsets and soft, refreshing rain.

For sun that warms our backs and breezes that cool our cheeks.

They remind us of your love.

Lord, you also send scorching heat and flooding waters,
And fires and storms sometimes torment us.

We call these 'acts of God', as if catastrophe is all of your making.

But we're learning, Lord, perhaps we're learning late,

That so many things we'd like to blame on you,
Are actually our own doing.

In your mercy, Lord, we come to you today,

Asking your forgiveness for the way we have spoiled your creation.

We'd like to be able to say we are truly sorry,

But in reality we are eager to change only when we are made uncomfortable.

Forgive us, Lord.

Keep prodding us to do what is Good and Right and True
To preserve and celebrate your good earth,
For the sake of all creation. Amen.

Reflections -- BBP

A year ago, I used this online service to reflect on the apparent 'failure'
Of the COP26 meeting in Edinburgh,
Of the on-going distress of so many parts of the world
 Where climate change is reeking havoc on the lives of people and planet...
I used prayers and scriptures and hymns – some of which I'm using again today –
To remind us of our Christian responsibility to care for God's good earth.
Indeed, our scriptures remind us from the very beginning
That our responsibility was and is to be good 'stewards' of the earth –
That is, to take care of the earth and its creatures.

That word, 'Steward', is important to us in a church sense –
Imagine if the stewards at your church had as their main concern
 Their own welfare...

Imagine, for instance, that the Stewards would only let people enter the church
 Through a tiny, cramped entrance,
 While they themselves flung open wide the big doors for their own entrance.
Imagine that they demanded everyone sit on the floor or out of sight,
 While they put large couches in the front row for themselves.
Imagine that they insisted everyone provide them with food and drink
 While depriving those giving of the same.
Imagine that they destroyed the homes of anyone who was 'in the way'
 Of places where they themselves wanted to live or play...
I imagine they wouldn't stay stewards for very long!
 Or if they did, that church wouldn't last very long....
 Everyone would stay away.

Sometimes it seems to me that this is the warped attitude of 'stewardship'
 That we have adopted with regard to the earth.
We have done our best to banish wild animals from the places where we want to live.
 We have banished the insects that made us feel uneasy or 'creepy'.
We have decided for ourselves where trees and plants can grow
 And where they can't, and which ones are 'weeds' and which ones we like...
Our own needs have been paramount...

And now we are starting to suffer.
 Now we have record-breaking heat waves and drought –
 Our planet has seen tremendous fires and floods and storms –
 We are beginning to face global food poverty...
We here in the UK are starting to take notice.
 We've been an island for a very long time,
 And sometimes it's hard to recognize
 That what happens far away
Now that we're in the midst of a drought and hose pipe ban,
 We hear voices saying indignantly:
 "I pay for my water, so I should get it!"
This is privilege speaking.
The saying used to be that water only flows downhill,
 But more truthfully, water flows where there is money...

If we have the money, we feel we can make the demands...

But what about those who can't pay – do they not deserve this life-giving resource!
What about those for whom there is no water available, whether or not they pay?
[drought in India]

We tend not to think about those in the desert areas too much –
But we, too, are running out of water.

Just demanding that the water companies harvest water better
Is not the ultimate answer –
Because there is only so much water to be had.

Loudly proclaiming our indignant privilege is not going to serve any of us well.

So what can we do?

Many of our churches have become Eco-Churches

And have started to look at ways our church buildings and habits
Can be more eco-friendly,

As well as how our own lifestyles at home can change
to meet new understandings of how we can treat the earth more gently –
How we can be the good stewards of the earth as God commands.

Our Methodist Conference this year has made strong recommendations

About how our buildings, our churches and manses,
Need to become carbon neutral in the very near future...

For too long we've assumed it's everyone else's problem and not ours...

That it would be just too expensive for us to make major changes
To how we heat or cool our buildings....

But the truth is that we ALL must do all we can to protect the earth –

If only to protect ourselves...

In the words of the Native American Chief Seattle,

Speaking in 1854 when the US Govt was making a 'treaty' to buy native American land:

"Teach your children what we have taught our children:

That the earth is our mother.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughter of the earth.

If men spit up on the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know: The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth.

This we know: All things are connected like the blood which unites one family.

All things are connected.

We did not weave the web of life.

We are merely a strand in it

Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves."

■ Chief Seattle

There are small actions we can all do,

But increasingly we're realizing that these small actions

Are not in themselves going to be enough to address the huge problem before us all.

Recently I had a conversation with a Christian woman named Kate Chesterman,

Who is involved with an organization called 'Christian Climate Action.'

She has some interesting thoughts about her own frustrations

With the agonizingly slow progress being made with regard to climate change.

I invite you now to listen in on our conversation.

Interview with Kate Chesterman, from Christian Climate Change

Touch the earth lightly – StF 729

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGHU2F2g3K0&t=2s>

Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder,
ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger,
who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster
clouds of disaster -
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening,
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden,
hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living,
God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ reconnect us,
using us gently and making us one.
Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)

Prayers

Confession (based on Leviticus 25:1-25)

We praise you God, for the Earth that sustains life.
Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal and growth,
you open your hand to give all creatures our food in the proper time.
In your Wisdom you gave a Sabbath for the land to rest.
But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits.
Our demand for growth,
and an endless cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world.
The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail,
the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify.
Humans and animals are forced to flee in search of security.
We have not allowed the land to observe a Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to renew.
And so we confess.
God of mercy and justice,

You tell us the land must rest, free from the burden of production.

**We confess our demand that the Earth produce beyond its limits,
and our bondage to desire more.**

You call us to pause from sowing, pruning, and reaping in ways that destroy the soil.

We confess our vicious consumption of food and energy.

You assure us that we can be filled from the yield of the land.

We confess our lack of trust that we can thrive within the Earth's limits.

You affirm that our security is found in enough.

We confess our lack of courage to resist the myth of endless growth.

You tell us that the land must not be sold permanently,
because the land is Yours, and everything in it.

We confess to thinking of creation as given, instead of a gift.

You call us to leave enough fruit on the vine and in the fields
to feed our neighbours, animals, and replenish the Earth.

We confess our failure to share what we receive from the Earth.

You call us to fairness and justice.

**We confess our lack of faith,
not loving you with our whole heart and strength and mind,
or our human and non-human neighbours as ourselves.**

Turn us from fear and mistrust,

**and free us to imagine a life reconciled to the Earth and all creatures,
through the Good News of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

(adapted from the Lutheran World Federation)

We remember, Lord, that even as the world is changing,
you remain the same.

Fear often grasps us, but your perfect love remains.

Tomorrow is uncertain, but you're there already.

Strengthen us to continue to stand with the poor throughout.

As it is always they who suffer first and most.

We remember, Lord, the commands in the scriptures,

That we are to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.

We give thanks for those who dare to speak out

Even when their speaking makes us uncomfortable.

Help us, Lord, to find ways to speak as well,

To not stay silent only so that other can stay comfortable in their privilege.

Help each of us also to show leadership

In our homes, our workplaces, our schools, and our churches.

Remind us that we inherit

The earth from our ancestors

AND we borrow it from our children.

Lord, we thank you for your love.
The love that restores.
The love that renews.
The love that builds hope.
Help us each day
To seek practical opportunities
To put that love into action.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

O Lord our Lord throughout the earth how glorious is your name – StF 112
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWPQkLlmzM8>

O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth
how glorious is your name,
and glorious too where unseen heavens
your majesty proclaim.
On infant lips, in children's song
a strong defence you raise
to counter enemy and threat,
and foil the rebel's ways.

When I look up and see the stars
which your own fingers made,
and wonder at the moon and stars,
each perfectly displayed;
then I must ask, 'Why do you care?
Why love humanity?
And why keep every mortal name
fixed in your memory?'

Yet such as us you made and meant
just less than gods to be;
with honour and with glory, Lord,
you crowned humanity.
And then dominion you bestowed
for all made by your hand,
all sheep and cattle, birds and fish
that move through sea or land.

O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth
how glorious is your name!
John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Benediction

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.
(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)