

Green Christian Gathering Tavistock 20th March 2010 – Closing Worship

Please join in words in italics

“According to the biblical Jewish and Christian traditions, God created the world for his glory, out of love; and the crown of creation is not the human being; it is the Sabbath. It is true that, as the image of God, the human being has his special position in creation. But he stands together with all other earthly and heavenly beings in the same hymn of praise of God’s glory, and in the enjoyment of God’s Sabbath pleasure over creation, as he saw that it was good. Even without human beings, the heavens declare the glory of God.”

(Jürgen Moltmann)

“Creation is a ‘book of nature’ in whose living pages people can see signs of the Spirit of God present in the universe, yet separate from it... Each portion of creation can be sign and revelation for the person of faith, a moment of grace revealing God’s presence to us”

(Catholic Bishops of the Pacific Northwest)

“To stand at the edge of the sea, to sense the ebb and the flow of the tides, to feel the breath of a mist moving over a great salt marsh, to watch the flight of shore birds that have swept up and down the surf lines of the continents for untold thousands of years, to see the running of the old eels and the young shad to the sea, is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be.”

(Rachel Carson)

“It’s a long way off but inside it there are quite different things going on: Festivals at which the poor man is king and the consumptive is healed; mirrors in which the blind look at themselves and love looks at them back; the industry is for mending the bent bones and the minds fractured by life. It’s a long way off, but to get there takes no time and admissions free, if you will purge yourself of desire, and present yourself with your need only and the simple offering of your faith, green as a leaf,”

(R. S. Thomas)

“Repeated cycles of this abuse to the environment produce poverty, insecurity and desperation. Can we honestly ask God to intervene, or do we write letters to the relevant ministers of government? Do we demonstrate in the streets to register our disappointment with poor governance of natural resources or do we ask the angels in Heaven to do something about it? Do we make the connection between environmental degradation and the problems which communities face every day? When we make the connection, the God in us will move and energize us. It will guide us from apathy to action, from being observers to doers in the hope that those actions can make a difference.

(Wangari Maathai)

The explanation for the goodness of creation is the goodness of God
(St. Augustine)

Silence

**Opening Prayer: (The Anglican Church in Aotearoa,
New Zealand and Polynesia)**

Let us be aware of the source of being

That is common to us all

And to all living creatures.

Silence

Let us be filled with the presence of the great compassion

Towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

Silence

Realising that we are all nourished

From the same source of life,

May we so live that others be not deprived

Of air, food, water, shelter, or the chance to live.

Silence

Invocation:

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all.

Every single creature is full of God

and is a book about God.

Every creature is a word of God. **(Meister Eckhart)**

Hymn: [tune to “For all the saints who from their labour rest”]

© Pat Bennett

1. Creator God, abundant life your mark,
You once poured speech into the formless dark
And from those words sprang forth a living spark
Your inspiration – Awoke creation.

2. But yet the earth is fractured, frayed and torn,
Poisoned, polluted, ravaged, scarred and worn
Its treasures plundered and its beauties scorned
Our transformation – Of God’s creation.
3. Come Holy Spirit, challenge mind and heart!
Inspire our living so that we will start
To make those choices which may yet impart
Love’s liberation – To your creation.
4. We pledge to touch all things with holy care
Until your coming Kingdom ends despair
Then all the world will witness and will share
The jubilation – Of healed creation.

Confession: Sorry (Geraldine Murphy, aged 10)

*Dear loving Father,
we are sorry....
for destroying your world.*

*We are sorry....
for the pollution of the sea
and for pouring gallons of oil into it every year.*

*We are sorry....
for the car fumes in the atmosphere,
for acid rain and all the things it destroys.*

*We are sorry....
for the destruction of animals and their homes,
and for litter in the streets.*

Please help us to make our world a better place. Amen.

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

Other Voices

Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

(Fyodor Dostoyevsky – The Brothers Karamazov)

“Worship is the submission of all nature to God. It is ... the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy of that self-centredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin”.

(William Temple)

“The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because he wanted it made. He thinks the world is good and he loves it. It is his world; He has never relinquished title to it. And he has never revoked the conditions, bearing on his gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care of it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it?” **(Wendell Berry)**

“Since for the Christian, God is always incarnate and present, there is no place on earth, no joy or wish that any creature experiences, no need or despair that they suffer, that is not a possible route to God. Wherever reality is seen as hopeful, joyful, and loving, God is there; wherever reality is experienced as despairing, cruel, and hopeless, God must be there also. If God is love, then where love is, God is; where love is not, God must needs be. In nature’s health and beauty, I see God; in nature’s deterioration and destruction, I see that God is here also. In the first case as a Yes and in the second as No: in the first case as a positive affirmation of God’s glory through the flourishing of creation; in the second, as a negative protest against whatever is undermining God’s creation.” **(Sallie McFague)**

“How we treat the earth and all of creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God...To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation...for humans to degrade the integrity of Earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands...for humans to injure other humans with disease...for humans to contaminate the Earth’s waters, land, air, and life, with poisonous substances, these things are sins. **(Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)**

Hymn: A Song of God's Goodness [Tune: Tell Out My Soul]

© William Whitson

1. *Creator God, you made this wondrous earth
and filled it with the creatures of your choice:
all look in hope to you, who gave them birth,
and all together praise you and rejoice.*
2. *In all the oceans and the seas they play,
in fields and deserts creep and walk and run;
birds fill the air, their song greets each new day;
all creatures have their homes beneath the sun.*
3. *We too, like these, are creatures of your grace;
you send us grain for bread and grapes for wine;
in all you give your generous love we trace
and know that all Creation is divine.*
4. *Until the end of time we'll sing our praise
To you, the Source and End of all that lives,
Give thanks for the delight that fills our days
And all the strength and hope your Spirit gives.*

The Blessing:

In your breathing,
In your sleeping,
In your dreaming,
May the breath of God
Fill us all, body and soul. *Amen.*

Dismissal:

Let us go in peace to love God and to renew the Earth
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Devon Churches Green Action
The Old Deanery, The Cloisters, Exeter, EX1 1HS
(Tel: 01392-294940 / joanie@exeter.anglican.org)

Prayer for Healing: (Lutheran World Federation)

Christ, our wounded healer
Suffering the pains of creation,
Lead us back to the tree of life,
To the source of healing for the Earth. *Amen.*

Psalm 104

*Bless the Lord, O my soul;
O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness.*

*You make grass grow for the flocks and herds
And plants to serve us all;*

*That they may bring forth food from the earth,
And wine to gladden our hearts;*

*You appointed the moon to mark the seasons,
And the sun knows the time of its setting.*

*You make darkness that it may be night,
In which all the beasts of the forest prowl.*

*The lions roar after their prey
And seek their food from God.*

*The sun rises and they slip away
And lay themselves down in their dens.*

*The labourer goes forth to work
And to toil until the evening.*

*O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
The earth is full of your creatures.*

*Bless the lord, O my soul;
O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness.*

Reading: Isaiah 55: 6 - 13

Hymn:

*Bless the Lord, my soul,
And bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul,
Who leads us into life. (x3)*

Reading: Revelation 21: 1-4

Silence

Lord's Prayer (version by Monica Evans)

Our Father in Heaven, Creator of the Universe and all Life on Earth
*Grant that we recognise the gifts you have given us and keep your name holy
always in our hearts and in our communities.*

Let your Kingdom grow here on Earth as we do your will; as we love
and respect your Creation, your truth and all your people.

Let us 'act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with you, our God'.

We ask you for our daily bread; for all our needs.

*Move us to share with the millions who starve, and have less that they need
for a dignified human life.*

Forgive us for blindness, for willful ignorance, for the selfishness and
greed that lead us to exploit the Earth's resources for our luxury and
comfort.

*Forgive us for thus degrading agricultural land, contaminating land and
water supplies.*

Forgive us for our contribution towards global warming and climate
chaos that are further endangering the lives of the poorest people and
places on Earth.

Help us to understand and forgive people who feel violence is the only
effective method of resolving problems of greed, abuse or injustice.

*Lead us, Lord, to see through the temptations of the world to 'have it all', cost
what it may to those already in the greatest need.*

Deliver us from blindness and hardened hearts, from excuses, and lack
of understanding others' suffering and the causes for hatred that are all
around us.

*The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are yours, Almighty Creator; Give us
the grace to reflect your Kingdom everyday of our lives in this world. Amen.*

Hymn refrain:

*Bless the Lord, my soul,
And bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul,
Who leads us into life. (x3)*

**Prayers for the Earth and her people
(UN Environmental Sabbath Programme)**

We join with the earth and with each other.

To bring new life to the land
To restore the water
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 of the earth.

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 the renewal of all life. *Amen.*

Symbolic Act: And God saw that it was good....

Reflection: (Fyodor Dostoyevsky - The Brothers Karamazov)