

Father's Day
Safe Children Sunday
Seasons of Creation 1

Gathering

*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.
This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green cloth** or scarf to signify that we are
moving into "ordinary time".*

Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.



Greeting

Welcome to Kiama-Jamberoo Uniting Church website and our worship service for Sunday September 4, 2022. Today is the first Sunday in September, set aside each year to focus on creation. The theme for this year is 'listen to the voice of creation'.

Welcome to worship. This morning brings us together so we can celebrate as we listen to the voice of creation, we think about those men in our lives who have been fathers to us, so matter if they were fathers, uncles, grandfathers, neighbours or friends, we think of those who have been kind and honourable, loving and caring. And we remember the important work we all doing on this Safe Children Sunday. Creation, parenting and keeping children safe, all great things for us to share together.

Light Candle

Acknowledgement of Country

Listening

We listen to the breath of the earth.

May we hear the groaning of creation.

We listen to the sighing of the wind.

May we hear the songs from the skies.

We listen to the movement of the oceans and waters.

May we hear the shared waters of life in our being.

We open our ears to the wisdom

of the Land and her peoples.
May we listen, both to the silence and the speaking.

We honour and pay our respects
to those on whose Land we meet,
especially the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation.
We pause and we listen.

A silence is kept.

Those who have ears – Hear!
May we hear the voice of the Spirit in Creation,
Now and to the end of time.

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Call To Worship

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of God's hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture.

They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Listen to creation tell of God, listen to God's Word in scripture.

Prayer of Lament

God of our vibrant world,
You have given humans the responsibility to care for each other. Indigenous people have historical, spiritual, and personal ties to these lands on which we inhabit. But many of us have failed to recognise the presence of God, our voices have been silence and we have failed to care for creation.

We are thankful to those who offer continuing care and presence on the Earth. We all value the resilience and strength shown through the generations
We turn to the Spirit who dismantles borders and celebrates life giving community. Help us make a place where everyone is welcome and we acknowledge your grace at work in the ways of one another.

Together, may we learn the spiritual richness of our relationships in the web of life.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

O God of the whole of creation. You have created land and trees, animals and all living creatures on the earth. While we have been destroying the forests through poisons and logging, the voices of the birds, insects and forest dwellers are silenced

You created the wonders of the ocean, the fish, shells, reefs, whales, waves, corals. But the oceans are warming and as they drown in plastic, their voices are being stilled.
We turn to you in sorrow and repentance.

Please help us to care for the oceans, the land and the forest, and to recognise that it is your blessing for us. Creation is speaking to us, but its voice has been silenced by the roar of our greed.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Mothering Earth, our Sister, you sustain and govern us. We have silenced the voices of your people, protectors of the Earth who have been killed by those who grab in greed. Many are the voices who have been silenced by flooding, hurricanes and drought as the earth's warming brings destruction.

May we listen to the voices of our mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers and learn to treasure and protect the web of life.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

We turn to you in sorrow and repentance. Please, Creator God, forgive us for the human activities which have overpowered the weather and caused destruction of our environment.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer. Amen

(Adapted from a Prayer of Lament written by members of the four Religious Orders in the Anglican Church of Melanesia. Melanesian Brotherhood, Society of St Francis, Community of the Sisters of the Church, Community of the Sisters of Melanesia)

Listening for God's Voice

Bible Readings

Jeremiah 18: 1-11

The Potter's house

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. ⁴ But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me. ⁶ He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. ⁷ If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸ and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹ And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

¹¹ "Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.'

Luke 14: 25-33

The Cost of Being a Disciple

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and

are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

³⁴ "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

Reflection

This week's lectionary readings included Jeremiah in the potter's workshop, God showing what a potter can do with a marred piece of clay, and Jesus telling his disciples, in Luke, that they have to take up their cross in order to follow him, all of which doesn't seem all that relevant to the season of creation and listening to the voice of creation.

The Season of Creation is not just about us getting touchy feely about the planet, here from the safety of Kiama. It's really about understanding the Creator. The Creator, whose Spirit in the poetry of Genesis, hovered over the waters, called for light and saw that the light was good. The Creator who separated the water from water and created sky, saw that it was good, who then gathered the water into one place and called it sea and let dry ground appear, and saw that it was good.

The Creator who called for the land to produce vegetation, fruit and seeds, who gave lights in the sky to separate day from night, Sun and Moon, and saw that it was good, is the same Creator who called for the sea to be filled with fish, the land with animals and the sky with birds and saw that it was all good. And finally said let us make humans in our own image', and God blessed them. And he saw that all he had created was very good...

This season of creation is about getting to know the Creator. A Psalm set for this week is Ps 139.

Ps 139 says this:

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
- 17 How precious to me are your thoughts,^[a] God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.”

If this is how well the Creator knows each of us, then it's up to us to get to know the Creator well. This season of creation allows us to more fully understand the character of God, as Creator and Sustainer.

Marion Haigh and I are sharing the weeks in September and we are using material from the World Council of Churches. The material asks that we all think about, and celebrate, creation across the whole Christian church. This is a time to learn more about the Creator, through His creation. (Pause)

There's a part of me that wonders what the Garden of Eden must have looked like, smelt like, felt like. Now I'm not an outdoorsy sort of person, I don't mind a bit of a walk in nature as long as there are no spiders, mosquitoes or anything that will sting or spit or bite...

So my image of that garden is a bit like Narnia, as described in CS Lewis's novel, 'the Lion, the witch and the wardrobe', where all the animals could talk and were friendly and invited people home for tea.

The thing about God's garden was that it was perfect and God would come and walk in the garden in the cool of the evening. How many of us relish that evening stroll down near the water when the nor-easter is cooling the sting of summer? How many of us enjoy the smell of a garden in full bloom? Or sit in the deep shade of a broad tree in the middle of a hot day? How many of us stand in awe watching the surf pound relentlessly on the rocks, shaping, refining, moving boulders, grinding basalt into sand?

These readings invite us to understand and get to know more of the Creator – Ancient One, Son and Spirit. Jeremiah's lesson from the potter's wheel is that whoever we are, if we are held in the Creator's hand we will be refined, taught, honed and skilled by this life, to be useful and beautiful, in His eyes.

The Psalmist reminds us that even knowing all the science we know about our own anatomy, there is mystery and wonder in life, in creation, in the depths of the ocean and the grandeur of a night sky as well as in each of our own lives. We are reminded that God knows it and lives us with us, before and behind.

And Jesus calls for us to understand that the way of the cross is not easy, it will cost but, and the Creator knows and has borne that cost. The Creator knows and assures us that this life, this creation is not something we are left to do alone or on our own.

And in the final reading set down for this week, Paul writes to Philemon asking him to take back a runaway slave, who has been supporting Paul while in prison in Rome. Paul pleads with Philemon to see Onesimus not as a disgraced slave due his punishment, but in the same way God sees him, a child reborn into the life of Christ – a dear brother in the Lord. God is creating a new family, a new way of relating to each other.

We are called to be community within and for each other and all of creation, and to be as salt to that community; to be flavour, to make fresh, and to make easy for the path for others to get to know the Creator, too. And the way we don't lose our saltiness is to stick together, be part of a community which acknowledges and advocates human and creation rights, seeks to reconcile and restore, make peace and build the Kingdom, here on earth, as in Heaven.

What do we do to mark this season of creation? We get to know and love more of the Creator, in and through His creation. Amen

Responding

Prayer for Others

A Prayer for Our Earth

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.

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.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Offering prayer

You are making all things new.

A new heaven

A new earth

A new way of thinking
A new way of being.

You are making all things new.
No more Death
No more mourning
No more crying
No more pain.

You are making all things new.
Renew our minds
to renew the world
by living out your
commandment of love.

You are making all things new and so take these our offering, including ourselves.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

News – see the newsletter on the website.

Sending

Sending and Blessing

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 listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation. (adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Meredith Yabsley
4 September 2022



**Listen to the
Voice of Creation**
SEASON OF CREATION 2022