



Let Justice and Peace Flow “Christ of the Cosmos”

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 because we are now in “ordinary” time or a time of “growing together”. Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

Video - For The Beauty of the Earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlBkpAm3fhw>

Light Candle

Jesus said:

“I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

We light this candle, and we are invited to be drawn to its flame, just as God draws us to Godself.

So we take a deep breathe and know ourselves loved and held.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Ancient of Days, breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders:

those who have carried the sacred stories from generation to generation

those who carry the sacred stories today

and those who are learning and growing so that the sacred stories may be carried into the future.

We pray for the future of their communities and that our hearts and minds will be open as we shape a future together.

May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler, This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.

Introduction

Today is the second week in our celebrations of the Season of Creation.

And our focus today is the second verse of the song, *Creator and Poet*:

*Christ of the cosmos, you sang into being,
galaxies spinning through measureless space;
coming among us, and sharing our weakness;
singing your songs of redemption and grace.*

So we turn our eyes and ears, our hearts and minds, to the Christ of the cosmos,

the one who was present with God in the beginning,
the one who enters our humanity,
the one who is with us now inviting us to share in the redemption and grace he offers.

Call to Worship

Come and worship Christ,
the visible image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of creation,
the eternal God:
the one through whom all things were created,
and in whom all things are held together.

This is our God!
Let's worship together.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/10/call-to-worship-colossians-1-15-17.html>

Sing - Stars and Planets Flung In Orbit (TIS 186 - tune: TIS 179 - vv1,2,3,6)
We sing a song of praise to the Creator of all that is...

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
Galaxies that swirl through space,
powers hid within the atom,
cells that form an infant's face:
These, O God, in silence praise you;
by your wisdom they are made.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,
beast and fish and swarming insect,
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:
these, your creatures, join in chorus,
praising you in wordless song.

Skies adorned with sunset splendour,
silent peaks in clam repose,
golden fields awaiting harvest,
foaming surf and fragrant rose:
earth, its bounty clothed with beauty,
echoes all creation's praise.

Christ, the Word before creation
as creation's final goal,
once you came for earth's redemption;
by your Spirit make earth whole:
then, O God, the new creation
will your praise forever sing.

*Words: Herman G Steumpfle
Words (c) 1991 by The Hymn Society*

Prayer

Creator of All,
From your communion of love, life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos
came into being.
On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-
giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden.
You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries
of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable.
We broke with the flowing communion of love and have broken your Covenant by not
safeguarding the conditions for life.
We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats,
we grieve the loss of human cultures,
along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished,

and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation.

Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Season of Creation 2023 Celebration Guide, p.11, *adapted*
<https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/#liturgical>

Sing: Creator and Poet (seasons 3-10)

So let's sing our "theme song", what images does it open up for you?

Father and Mother, creator and poet,
speaking your wisdom in forest and glade:
telling your glory in ocean and river,
pouring your pleasure on all you have
made.

Spirit, you danced at the dawn of creation,
rising, rejoicing on jubilant wings.
Yours is the rhythm of cycle and season,
yours is the heartbeat of all living things.

Christ of the cosmos, you sang into being,
galaxies spinning through measureless
space;
coming among us, and sharing our
weakness;
singing your songs of redemption and
grace.

God, you have made us of stardust and
spirit.
Etching your image on ev'ry cell.
We are your love song, your poem and
rhythm.
All co-creators, your story to tell.

© 1993 Sandra Sears

Listening for God's Voice

Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Reading: John 3:11-17

¹¹ ‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ ‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Reflection

Let us pray...

*Christ of the cosmos, you sang into being,
galaxies spinning through measureless space;
coming among us, and sharing our weakness;
singing your songs of redemption and grace.*

Come among us now and open our ears to your song,
teach us to live lives that echo your melody
that all the world may join in, offering their own harmony, as we create beautiful music
together. Amen.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

(John 3:16-17)

In these verses, the Greek word translated as “world” is *κόσμον* (*cosmon*) from which we get *cosmos*: God so loved the *cosmos* that he gave his only Son...in order that the *cosmos* might be saved through him.

God, the creator of all that we can see and so much more that we are yet to comprehend, loves beyond the reaches of our eyes and minds to the full extent of all that is!

The writer of Colossians, opens the letter with a song of praise to the Christ, “the image of the invisible God... all things have been created through him” (Col 1:15-16) and “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:19).

How incredible is it to think of the Creator of the Universe, “coming among us” as we sing in the song, experiencing our life and our death in order to restore us to wholeness of life embraced in the love of our Creator?!

Let me unpack some of this - and, I know, I am only scratching the surface here...

First, for the people of biblical times, the heavens were a mystery that pointed them to the wonder of God. And, now, with the benefit of science, we are able to see so much more clearly how tiny we are in the scheme of the cosmos (have a look at the images coming from the James Webb Telescope: <https://www.nasa.gov/content/first-images-from-the-james-webb-space-telescope> or the Hubble telescope: https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/main/index.html).

Second, “Christ of the cosmos”, or the cosmic Christ is an invitation to contemplate how God is present to us in the world today. Many of us are comfortable speaking of “Jesus Christ”, using the term, “Christ” almost as if it is Jesus’ surname, rather than the descriptor it really is, “Jesus *the* Christ”. That is, the word “Christ” or *Messiah* (often used interchangeably in the gospels) means God’s chosen one and is deeply embedded in the Hebrew understanding of God’s promises made through the ancient prophets that God’s chosen one would one day come to save them. But in understanding the Christ as a descriptor, invites us to draw together the promises spoken by the prophets, with the person of Jesus - the one who was with God in the beginning, now walks among us and whose purpose was to call not just the Hebrew people, but all peoples and, indeed, all of creation to return to God. So to speak of “Jesus Christ” is a short-hand way of drawing together the person of Jesus, the historical figure who walked the earth, fully human; and the Christ, for some, the risen one, the ongoing presence of Jesus in the world, which is somehow the same as the one who was present with the Creator at the beginning of time.

Which brings me to the third aspect which is naming the mystery.

*Christ of the cosmos, you sang into being,
galaxies spinning through measureless space;
coming among us, and sharing our weakness;
singing your songs of redemption and grace.*

Science tells us something of how the universe was created - and scientists continue to search the height and depths of the heavens to discover more of how it all works and where it all came from.

In our humanity, we know in the depths of our being the power of love to defeat hatred and greed and all that threatens to divide and destroy not only us but the world we inhabit. We know that when people come together, we are always stronger than our individual parts. We know that grace and hope create spaces where people can have the opportunity to choose a different path.

We know that our gathering around this table, nurtures and refreshes us, creating an image, a glimpse of the world in harmony as God intended it to be.

But how it all works, is also an incredible mystery - one that fills us with awe and wonder - if we take the time to stop and think about it.

Here we are, tiny dots of humanity on a tiny planet made of dust and rock and water, spinning through the universe, immeasurable in time and space.

And yet, the Creator of all this, the one who shaped the stars and planets and set them spinning, loves us so much, offers all of God’s self in life and death, meets us here in bread and juice, and invites us to participate in the healing of this world, in offering grace, in demanding justice, in loving, and loving and loving some more...

So that’s what we are going to sing about now - this God, comes among us, and calls us to be among the people and creation of which we are a part.

Let’s stand and sing...

Responding

Sing - From Heaven You Came (TIS 256)

From heaven you came helpless babe,
entered our world your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
"Yet not my will, but yours," he said.
This is our God...

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God...

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God...

© 1983 Graham Kendrick

Prayer for Others (Helen Laidlaw)

Our dear loving Creator – both Father and Mother,
As we think about the extreme weather being suffered in so many parts of the world, you must long for us to use our knowledge, our science and our compassion to change our reckless use of the resources we have been given. We ache for those who have lost everything in floods, landslides and wild fires. We pray for those in mourning whose family members are dead or injured.

We also pray for peace in our world. So many wars have decimated countries and continue to cause people to flee into camps and other countries. How can we help? Being generous to requests for help can allow others with medical and organisational skills to change suffering people's lives.

But we must never forget our own country, community and congregation. Each of us has a role to play here. Thank you for all those who are so aware of others needs and through friendship, phone calls and visits can include others we know.

I also pray for the First Nation people as they hear the racist talk which has come to the surface, as we prepare for a Referendum to acknowledge them as the First Nations of this country. Comments are being made around the world about our colonisation of this beautiful land, and I pray that we can be proud of making changes which will change how things can be decided.

I pray for the Pacific countries who are losing their land and crops as the seas rise. We know what we should be doing, but our own wellbeing, profits and comfort are the priority.

In our congregation we need more people to step up to take on empty roles as our members age and suffer from illnesses. We have that chance as the Congregational Meeting is close. Thank you for all members who work so hard to keep things going and link us to our community.

You know us so well. Listen the deepest yearnings we have and encourage and comfort us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Holy Communion

If you would like to share in Communion and are unable to join with us in-person, please let Rev Kath or Rhonda Back know. We would love to bring Communion to you in your home at a time that suits you.

Offering

As we have received, so we consider our response...

We make space now to think about what we have heard and seen today and consider our response to God's nudging today.

Let us pray,
Creator of all that is,
here in our small corner of the cosmos, we offer ourselves to you.
Take our gifts of money, time, energy and talent,
take our offerings of acts of kindness and mercy and grace,
and shape them into a reflection of your love for all the world, we pray. Amen

Sending

Sing - Praise The God Who Changes Places (TIS 178)

Praise the God who changes places,
leaves the lofty seat,
welcomes us with warm embraces,
stoops to wash our feet.

Friends be strong!

Hold your heads high!

Freedom is our song! Alleluia!

Praise the rabbi, speaking, doing
all that God intends,
dying, rising, faith renewing,
calling us his friends.

Friends be strong!...

Praise the Breath of Love, whose freedom
spreads our waking wings,
lifting every blight and burden
till the spirit sings:

Friends be strong!...

Praise, until we join the singing
far beyond our sight,
with the Ending-and-Beginning,
dancing in the light.

Friends be strong!...

Words: Brian Wren, © Hope Publishing

Sending

Let us pray...

God of all creation,
may our senses be awakened to your presence in the beauty of this land,
may our imagination be awakened to your suffering in the cries of this land,
may our hearts be awakened to your compassion in the peoples of this land,
may our consciences be awakened to your commitment to the poor of this land,
may our whole being be awakened to your Spirit enfolding this land. Amen.

Be Our Freedom Lord, p.237

Blessing

And may the blessing of
the Creator, the fountain of life,
Jesus the Christ, the pulse of life,
and Holy Spirit, the breath of life,
be with you always. Amen

Rev Kath Merrifield
10 September 2023