



## Let Justice and Peace Flow “Co-Creators”

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### Gathering

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*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 - A Creation Hymn** (Illustrated Ministries)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_PFviVtPbXg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PFviVtPbXg)

### Introduction

Today is the 4th and last Sunday in the Season of Creation. For the last month, we have been exploring themes of creation using the song, *Creator and Poet*.

Our focus today is the last verse:

*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.*

So we will be thinking about who we, you and I, are called to be in the context of God's good Creation.

### 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.



## Call to Worship

In Christ we set out from what we have known  
**trusting God for each step of the way**  
Discovering kinship in all who have breath  
**in feather and scale in bright eyes and song,**  
**in cells' patterns,**  
**in blood, flesh and bone!**  
Come, let us together worship the God of all!

*Sustainable Sunday for the Season of Creation,  
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of WA*

## Prayer

God of all creation,  
the mountains, the oceans, the rivers, the valleys, all point us to your wonder;  
even the trees clap and shout their praise.  
Sustaining God, through joy and love and hope,  
in the beauty and ruggedness of the world around us,  
and in the creatures with whom we share this planet, you look us full in the face.  
Our breath is shared with all living things,  
and as trees breathe out what we breathe in,  
so the cycle of life is shared.  
Dear God and Friend, and Source of Wisdom  
blow your Wild Wind where there's a need to stir us up,  
open our hearts, minds and bodies to the serving and tending of your creation.  
Help us to let be  
As also to step in  
Whatever serves your will for Sky and Soil, Heaven and Earth. Amen.

Prayer for Season of Creation, by Val Brown, Head of Christian Aid Scotland , adapted

## Sing: Creator and Poet (seasons 3-10)

*So let's sing our "theme song"*

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.

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**Prayer - based on Psalm 139:13-16, 23-24**

Let us pray...

God of all Creation, *you made every part of me*  
You knit me together in my mother's womb  
*And I praise you, for I am wonderfully made.*  
Your image etched on every cell of my being.

*Your works are wonderful, I know them very well.*

The expansive blue-green of the ocean,  
the gold of the canola bursting into bloom,  
the green of the grass swaying in the breeze,  
the burst of colour as spring flowers bud and bloom,  
each creature - shaped and breathed into life through your hand.

*I was not hidden from you while I was being made*  
*I was intricately, specially woven in the deep earth*  
*You saw me before I was fully made*  
*Your works are wonderful, I know them very well.*

God of grace, you see us and know us long before we see and know ourselves,  
you see potential in every one of us and you call us to reach to fulfil our potential in you,  
to live fully in our humanity,  
to love extravagantly.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart.*  
*Test me, reveal my thoughts and thinking.*  
*See for yourself whether I have done anything wrong -*  
*then guide me on the path of eternal life.*

Loving God, help us to be honest with you, honest with each other and honest with ourselves. Give us courage to see and own the things that we do and say that fall short of your dream for us. Give us humility and hope as we seek forgiveness and reconciliation - with you, with our friends and family and neighbours, with ourselves...

Lift our hearts and minds to once again embrace the vision of your way for us and for all creation; and as we take our first, hesitant steps towards you, may know, deep within, your love and grace for the world and be embraced in the fullness of life you give. Amen.

**Sing - Search Me, O God (All Together OK 394)**

*So we are going to sing a version of Psalm 139 - for people familiar with classical music, the tune may be familiar...*

Search me, O God,  
and know my anxious heart.  
Behind me and before me,  
you lay your hand upon me.

*surround me at my birth, my dying.*

Where might I hide  
to flee your tender touch?  
No darkness or the ocean  
hides me from your devotion.

Woven by you  
deep in my mother's womb;  
that moment of conception  
you knew my life's direction.

*You know my every need:*  
*you know my thoughts,*  
*my joy, my crying.*  
*God, your wisdom ways*

Search me, O God,  
and purify my ways.  
O teach me love surpassing,  
guide me in all that's lasting.

*Chorus and repeat v. 1*

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## Listening for God's Voice

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### Reading: Genesis 2:4b-9, 18-22

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; <sup>6</sup>but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup>then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

...

<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' <sup>19</sup>So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. <sup>21</sup>So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

### Reading: Romans 12:3-8

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup>We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

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

God of life,  
as we listen for your voice,  
shape us, we pray,  
breathe the breath of your Spirit into our hearts and minds, we pray,  
that we may know come to understand more of who you are,  
and of who you call us to be. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

*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.*

Did you notice anything about the reading from Genesis 2?

Did you notice that it is not simply a follow-on from the creation story in Genesis 1 - you know, the familiar one with its "In the beginning" and a description of 6 days of creation? Rather it is another story - another version of the creation story.

And they can't really be synthesised - the different elements of creation are treated quite differently in each story and occur in a different order - the two stories are quite different.

God is still the creator of all that is.

In the first story, the wind, the spirit - its the same word in Hebrew - hovers over the face of the waters. And all that is created is declared by God to be "good".

The second creation story, in Genesis 2, emphasises that we, and indeed all of the earth, its trees and its creatures are shaped from the dust (Genesis 2:7,9,19), and that we humans are God-breathed - God breathes the breath of life into the nostrils of the man (Genesis 2:7) - wind, breath, spirit - again, all the same word - *ruach*.

Science tells us that our planet was formed as stars and galaxies collided, that the dust of earth is, in effect, star-dust. Our bodies are made up of these same elements - stardust. God shapes us from the dust, the star-dust, and breathes life into our lungs, breathes spirit into our being. God's image etched on every cell...

Just think about that for a moment...

What does it mean for you to be shaped by God of star-dust and spirit...?

Paul speaks to the fledgling church in Rome about how God has given each one of us unique gifts to offer in serving the world. It is a theme he also explored in his letter to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12).

It is the idea that each one of us is unique - shaped by God out of the dust and spirit breathed into us to enliven our being.

But it is not for our own self-aggrandisement - it is an offering to the world - our lives are an offering to the world in love - God's love song.

And when we work together, as the body works together, as we find a rhythm together, so God's love is known, God's story is told. And this story is not only narrative - the what and why - but it is poetry, capturing the beauty, the emotion, the wonder and perhaps even the mystery of who God is, and who God creates and calls us to be.

And so, in our being, in our living and sharing together, the idea is that God's vision for the world, God's intention for the world, comes to be, is known, in and through us. So we are co-creators with God.

God did not create the world for it to be God's personal plaything.

Genesis tells us that God creates the world and declares it to be good.

Humans are placed in the world to tend, care for and nurture it.

Well, we know that hasn't been going so well, don't we.

But the Scriptures hold before us a vision - an opportunity, perhaps - a way of living in the world that holds the wonder of all creation and is held in the extravagant love of its Creator. God breathes life, God breathes spirit, in us and invites us to be a part of it all.

We are not and cannot be idle by-standers - we are participants, co-creators in the love with which God embraces the world. We are agents of that love - in whatever way and whatever shape God has created us to be - preciously unique, and part of the whole.

So we cannot stand by when we see someone who is hungry or homeless or hurting.  
We cannot stand by and hope that someone else will “fix it”.  
Despite the way our world tries to box us, we are not merely consumers.  
We are called to be co-creators, shapers of God’s way, God’s realm, participants in the shaping of a society, a world where God’s love and justice and hope and compassion and known and shared.  
So today, we offer love, prayers and practical help to people in our community who are in need, to the people of Libya, Morocco, Hawaii, Ukraine who are impacted by flood, fire, earthquake and human violence.  
We care for people affected by domestic and family violence.  
We care about fair treatment for people suffering from drug addictions.  
We call politicians and businesses to account for the damage caused by gambling addiction and demand their practices change to protect people who are most vulnerable.  
We pay attention to the way people who are differently-abled are treated and catered for.  
We advocate for the rights of First Nations who are simply asking for us to hear them.  
We share our tables with friend and strangers alike, offering hospitality and safe haven.

Together, together with God, we are co-creators of the kind of world God intended for us to enjoy - a world where there is enough for everyone, where each individual is valued and their gifts recognised and shared, where we are each known and loved and nurtured.  
What part are you singing in God's love- song?

Let’s pray...

*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.*

When we forget the words and actions to your song, remind us.  
When our voice and bodies grow tired, breathe your spirit in us again.  
When we miss a beat, draw us back into your rhythm.  
May we always be willing participants in your love song to the world you created. Amen.

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## Responding

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**Listen** - Beautiful Things (Gungor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyPBtExE4W0>

### **Prayer for Others**

God, bless all who know the value of the land  
and who have the courage to put themselves on the line.  
Bless peaceful protesters and persistent letter-writers.  
Bless those who work hard to till the land and nurture livestock in order to provide food for us all.

God, bless the indigenous peoples of our world  
who stand up for their land and culture and spirituality, who grieve at the loss of cultural and spiritual sites kept sacred for millennia.

God, bless the indigenous  
speaking out against the destruction of lands,  
asking for justice in the way they are treated in this country.

God, bless people across the world who are displaced by natural disaster -  
people in Libya,  
people in Morocco,  
people in Hawaii,  
may they find comfort in community and strength to rebuild their lives and livelihoods;  
and bless the many people who work to relieve their struggles - rescue teams, aid  
workers, doctors and nurses, engineers and builders.

God, bless the artists, film-makers, presenters and others who use their talents and vision  
to move people to wonder and action.  
We give thanks for people internationally like Sir David Attenborough who has shown us  
some of the wonders of the living world,  
and locally, presenters like Craig Reucassel in the 'War on Waste', who has modelled local  
concern and action.

God, bless people working in organisations like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, the  
World Wildlife Fund and others who campaign for a healthier world.  
Bless, too, the work of the Climate Council and the voice of ARRCC - the Australian  
Religious Response to Climate Change, particularly the small group who meet here in  
Kiama and invite us all to participate in prayer and protest together.

God, bless politicians and leaders who are prepared to make decisions that value the  
earth and its creatures above profits and the power of corporations.

God, bless each one of us in our efforts to recycle more and consume less.  
Bless us as we work for change and follow courageously in the footsteps of Jesus.  
Bless us and all the world, we pray. Amen

*Sustainable Sunday for the Season of Creation,  
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of WA  
Adapted*

## **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.*

*As we make our offering - we remember again that this is not just about money - either  
here in the plate or through a bank transfer - this is also about how we are generous with  
our time and energy and gifts; and about how we resolve to live differently because we  
have encountered the living Christ.*

Generous God,  
here we offer something of the abundance we enjoy,  
here we offer something of the skills and time and energy you have given,  
here we offer something of ourselves.

Take what we offer, and use us to transform the world you love. Amen.

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## Sending

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### **Sing** - One Body In Christ (Seasons 8-23)

*We go sing a song that reminds us that we are each created in the image of God, different parts in the one body...*

*One Body in Christ  
called to share the Good News with the  
world.*

*Each of us gifted,  
made in God's image,  
we have a story to tell,  
a story of love.*

We have been baptised in Christ,  
the love of our God  
poured into our hearts.  
Called to share the mission of Christ,

the Spirit of God alive in our hearts;  
to be a light of welcome  
in the darkness of exclusion,  
an out-stretched hand of love to ev'ryone.  
*We are one body in Christ...*

To give voice to the voiceless,  
the unheard in the wilderness,  
an outstretched hand of love to ev'ryone.  
*We are one body in Christ...*  
(repeat chorus)

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### **Sending**

May the God  
who established the dance of creation,  
who marvelled at the lilies of the field, and  
who transforms chaos to order,  
lead us to transform our lives, and the Church,  
to reflect God's glory, God's presence, in all of creation.

From Eco-congregation, adapted

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/9-prayers-leeds-diocese.pdf>

### **Blessing**

And the blessing of God -  
Divine Creator, Divine Word, Divine Presence,  
be with you and remain with you always. Amen.

Liturgy adapted from material from:

Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of WA, *Sustainable Sunday for the Season of Creation*  
Uniting Church Assembly, *Season of Creation 2023*, <https://uniting.church/season-of-creation-2023/>

Rev Kath Merrifield  
24 September 2023