



Season of Creation 7

ECO UBUNTU

Front Cover

ECO UBUNTU

Before colonization, most Africans lived in societies that were almost closed systems. Any material goods, energy, love that you gave 'away', never really went 'away', they built up the community that protected you, comforted you, counselled you, corrected you, mourned and celebrated with you.

People living in that time were acutely aware that physical survival and a human identity were not possible as individuals. Humans don't survive or thrive as individuals. When hard times came, as they surely do in Africa, when drought gripped the land, and fire consumed the plains, it was groups of people that searched together for food, for water, for grazing. It was a few families, a clan, and a tribe that survived together, or perished. Ubuntu acknowledges what we are, biologically. We are not individual beings; we have evolved as social organisms. This is the literal meaning of the expression which defines Ubuntu; Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu - "A person is a person through people".

As we grow in awareness, we see how we are linked to all living beings by flows of matter and energy, how we breathe the same air, drink the same water. Shouldn't we extend Ubuntu beyond people to all other living beings? Ubuntu arose as relatively small groups of people cooperated to survive in a challenging environment, in an ecology that was often dry, hard, thorny, and hot, periodically scorched by fire, permeated by diseases, parasites and venomous creatures, not

to mention larger creatures with teeth, claws, hooves and horns.

We are in the midst of the sixth great extinction event, facing planetary crises of climate change, water availability and pollution. This suggests a need for a change in our relation to the web of life, for a new gentleness and appreciation. We are human because a lion is, because a snake is, because a mountain is, because rain and drought are. We are totally dependent on the ecosystems which support us, so to see those ecosystems as 'us', as a system that we are embedded in, as an extension of our being is pragmatic, and accurate. As is the traditional practice of Ubuntu.

If Ubuntu encourages us to cultivate and care for ourselves, for our families and our brethren, so too should we care for our larger, extended body –the veld, bush, soil, air, water, and the wetlands. We need to widen the circle of our Ubuntu as we become aware of the totality of what we are. Our bodies extend into the soil, into the air, into the rivers and oceans.

Let us practice planetary Ubuntu, widen, and deepen the circle, act with love to all that we are, to our entire community, to our extended planetary being.

I am because you are

We are because the planet is

Archbishop Emeritus Tutu
Enviropaedia.com

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Psalm 8
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Gospel: John 1: 1-5, 10-13



Week 2

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Week 3

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FOREWORD

SEASON OF CREATION - UBUNTU AND ECO-JUSTICE

The Season of Creation begins on 1 September, with the World Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on 4 October, the day on which the church remembers St Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Ecology. This season offers us wonderful opportunities for creativity and collaboration as we celebrate God, hear again that we are called to be carers of creation and recommit ourselves to this end. Our theme this year seeks to honour the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu and focusses on his life's work of seeing goodness in everyone and reminding us that we are all connected.

Our weekly themes this year bring the theology of Ubuntu into conversation with the call for ecological justice and offers us an opportunity to preach a message of hope during this Season Creation:

1. **Land Justice and Ubuntu**
2. **Water Justice and Ubuntu**
3. **Gender and Climate Justice**
4. **Justice for all God's Creatures**
5. **St Francis and Ubuntu**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Introduction and Liturgy for the Season

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Land Justice and Ubuntu

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Gender and Climate Justice

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INTRODUCTION

Rev Shaun Cozett, Diocese of Cape Town

Desmond Tutu's Ubuntu Theology

In his book "God has a Dream" Archbishop Tutu explains that the Biblical narrative at the core of his theology is the Transfiguration. He describes how, as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, he was to host a meeting between church leaders and the then State President, B. J. Voster. It was his responsibility to lead a devotion at the start of the meeting and while he was meditating in the garden, in preparation for the morning devotion, his attention was drawn to a hibernating tree in the garden. He thought about how the tree looked tired and lifeless in the cold, winter conditions but would soon, with the changing of the season from winter to spring, be green, lush and full of life. This led him to the image of the Transfiguration and the reflection that God is at work and changing what looks lifeless on the outside and turning what looks unsightly into images that reflect His glory. In the same way, he realised God was able to take a country ravaged by the injustices of Apartheid and turn South Africa into a beacon of hope. Tutu writes, "the principle of transfiguration says nothing, no one and no situation is 'untransfigurable', that the whole of creation, nature, waits expectantly for its transfiguration, when it will be released from its bondage and share in the glorious liberty of the children of God, when it will not be just dry inert matter but will be translucent with divine glory" (Tutu, 2004, p. 3).

Archbishop Tutu is probably best associated with his theology of Ubuntu. Tutu would often start by saying that Ubuntu is difficult to define. Instead of a definition, he used the African idiom "A person is a person through other persons" to explain the principle. He writes, "none of us

comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. I am because other people are" (Tutu, 2004, p. 25). On the same topic he also writes, "we say 'A person is a person through other persons.' It is not, 'I think therefore I am.' It is rather: 'I am human because I belong. I participate, I share'" (Tutu, 1999, p. 31).

The inter-dependence of all humanity is sometimes difficult to understand in a world seeking personal gain but Ubuntu helps us see the truth; that we are all created in the image and likeness of God and called to live together in our shared home, the earth. If we are thus connected, then what happens to people all around the world should matter to us. This is especially true as we consider that there are parts of our world where the effects of climate change are already being felt very severely. Ubuntu says that we are all need each other and that we are called to care for each other not just for those who look like us or live where we live, we are called to care for all of humanity. Climate change offers us an opportunity to do that in our personal lives because what we do has an impact on others and by choosing to live consciously of humanity and all of creation, our actions can help create a more just and sustainable world for all.

Impacts of Climate Change around the world

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022 Report notes that climate change has already altered ecosystems on land, in and around freshwater and in the oceans. Plants and animals have already died in large numbers to the extent that we are experiencing climate-

driven extinctions. In Africa, the changing climate is causing biodiversity loss, water shortages, decreases in food production and lower economic growth. In Latin America, increasing sea-levels and more frequent extreme weather events coupled with inequality, poverty and high density has caused a decrease in water, which in turn has impacted on food production and human health. In small island nations, increased sea-level and tropical cyclones have led to loss of life and damage to infrastructure. In Asia, climate change has already led to loss of species and the current trends indicate significant risk of habitat loss for plants and animals across the continent. Europe is already experiencing an increase in extreme weather and loss of human life due to heat waves. In North America, cities and settlements have been severely affected by extreme natural events and indigenous communities have also experienced changes to culture and livelihoods since for many their way of life is linked to functioning ecosystems.

Preaching Hope in a time of Crisis

For many preachers this topic may be difficult to preach on because climate change is not

usually seen as the domain of the preacher. Rather, climate change is seen as a topic within the realm of science or politics or economics. The reality is that climate change is real and a threat to all of creation. There are great benefits to preaching about climate change as “hearing a strong sermon can dissolve fear, awaken moral responsibility, and mobilize action” (Bullitt-Jonas, 2021, p. 210).

Rev Bullitt – Jonas offers us a framework of six things to hold in mind as we preach:

1. Frame the climate crisis in terms of Christian Theology,
2. Respect the lectionary, but do not make it an idol,
3. Share some science, but don't worry too much about being a scientist,
4. Find an entry point and connect the dots,
5. Infuse your sermon with the empowering love of God
6. 6. Build hope by taking action.

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Five Movements of the Liturgy

The following five movements form the order of the liturgy: God gathers us, Service of the Word, Responding to the Word, Service of the Table and Commissioning.

- **The Gathering:** The congregation is welcomed, and the theme of the service is introduced. The penitence can be positioned here, or it may follow the sermon.
- **The Proclamation of God's word:** Here the word of God is read and preached.
- The affirmation of our Faith can be an important part of the Proclamation
- **Responding to God's word:** Prayers of the People are included here. Creative responses such as drama, liturgical dance or short video clips can be used. The penitence may follow the word.
- The peace may be shared according to custom
- **Celebrating at the Table:** Natural elements can be used, either a whole loaf or small rolls. This could be baked by a family. Local wine can be used.
- **Sending out:** Post Communion prayers, prayers of commitment on the theme of the day and a blessing.

FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to God

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God of all of Creation

It is right to give God thanks and praise

You spoke the Word and all that is in heaven and on the earth, all things, came to be. Your Spirit hovered over the primal elements, and you brought forth life in forms innumerable, including this our fragile earth, and we amongst its inhabitants.

As our past is in you, so our hope for the future rests with you. As we have turned from your way, so we turn again to the warmth of your love. Through you all things are brought to new life.

And now we give you thanks for the glories of your creation given into our care, and for the opportunities we have to share that richness with all your people.

And so with the wonders of creation and the songs of praise of all your creatures both in heaven and on earth we praise you now and forever saying:

Holy, holy...

In the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, work of human hands, gift of our earth, and gave thanks to God. He broke the bread to speak to us of the breaking of his body upon the cross. He gave it to his friends and said:

Take and eat, for this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

He took the wine, work of human hands, gift of our earth, and gave thanks to God, Creator. He poured out the wine to speak to us of the pouring out of his blood. He gave it to his friends saying:

This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for all creation for the forgiveness of sins. Every time you drink of the wine, do this in remembrance of me.

So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

Therefore God, we who seek your reconciliation; we who need reconciliation one with another; we who hope for reconciliation with all creation, draw close to this mystery.

In being broken, poured out and buried, life sprang forth again. In the breaking, there is an opening up; in the pouring out, there are the roots of sharing; in death and burial, there is the seed of the new life to come.

As we look in our world, in our lives, and in our hearts, for his second coming, keep us close to this vision that we have seen. Through the giving in the bread and wine, reconcile us to our world. Send upon us, and upon all your creation, the life-giving Spirit who first moved upon the waters of

the deep. Stir in us the creative and redeem the destructive. Unite us with you through the body and blood of your Son, your Word made flesh.

By whom, and with whom and in whom, in the unity of your Creative Spirit, with all that has been, is, and will be in your universe, we stand before you and worship you, God of all, in songs of everlasting praise,

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer etc

Final blessing

Go out into the world rejoicing, and encounter the Creator who waits to meet you there;

Rejoice in its richness and diversity and live as those who praise God for its bounty; and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit

bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always.

Amen



SECOND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

We thank and praise you almighty Father. In wisdom you guide the course of the world and cherish us with all tender care.

We thank you that we can come together around this table in the name of Jesus your Son, the first born of all creation. In him all things were created, visible and invisible, and all things hold together in him.

We thank you that you have sent your Holy Spirit to make of us a new community of faith to serve you within your creation.

And now we give you thanks because you have given the earth into our care, and call us to praise you day by day for the marvels of your creation.

And so with the wonders of creation and the songs of praise of all your creatures both in heaven and on earth we join in one great act of awe and adoration:

Holy, holy, holy...

God of all creation, send your Spirit upon the goodness of the earth, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that in them we may recognize and receive the fullness of the Risen Christ: bread broken and wine poured, Body given, and Blood shed.

On the night he sat at table with his disciples and with them recalled the wonder of your creation and the wonder of your covenant with your chosen people, He took bread,

gave you thanks, blessed it and broke it, saying:

Take this all of you and eat it. This is my Body, which will be given up for you.

In the same way he took the cup and giving you thanks and praise, He gave the cup to his disciples and said:

Take this all of you and drink from it, this is the cup of my Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

So we proclaim the mystery of faith

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again

As we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate the goodness of the earth, our companionship in this world and the sharing of all skills and arts that enrich our lives. We share the cup of our humanity matured over the unnumbered centuries of the long struggle that has gone into making of this world; our living and dying, our fears and our hopes.

Together with those who have drawn sustenance from this soil, those with whom we share it, and those to whom we pass it on, we share this bread and raise this cup in fulfilment of the Lord's command: through him, with him, in him in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer etc

Final blessing

Go forth confident in the hope in which you have been saved:

praise God in all creation:

follow Christ through whom all things are made:

in the power of the Spirit become a beacon of hope to the world:

and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always.

Amen

Authorised for use in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa by the Synod of Bishops

CHURCH IN CREATION

As we move back into our buildings, there are still concerns around health risks with COVID19. What better time than to take our services outside during the month of September and to worship God in Creation. Here are some practical suggestions.

1. REGULAR SERVICE – TAKEN OUTDOORS

If you hold your regular Sunday service outdoors, here are a few things to bear in mind

- **Seating** – if you don't have plastic chairs, ask people to bring camp chairs or sit on blankets
- **Music** – it is often quite hard to sing without accompaniment, so do choose very well known hymns or choruses.
- **Preaching** – sound is likely to be tricky so do keep the preaching very short
- **Prayers/liturgy** – to reduce paper, just print out the responses, or you can have a few copies and ask people to take a photo with their cellphone take the challenge to go as paperless as possible
- **Weather:** for the leader of the service, think about wind – candles will blow out and papers blow around so be prepared! Ask people to dress warmly or bring sunhats as required!
- **Fun and fellowship** – ask families to bring their picnics and combine with some fun!

2. CREATIVE CHURCH IN CREATION

This is an opportunity to be creative and to combine the service with a short walk, visit to a place of beauty or environmental destruction

- Gather for some opening prayers. Keep the responses short so that you don't need extra papers.
- Walk in silence meditating on the prayers, gather together for the readings and prayers, walking in between each section.
- Gather at a site of environmental degradation for the confession
- For the sermon/homily – a short message works best. You can then give people a question to reflect on (can be written on a small piece of paper, or make a few copies for people to copy on their cell phone), and then they find a place on their own to sit to reflect.
- Singing- choose well known songs/hymns/ or a repetitive chant such as Taize music
- Consider those who will need to sit in a chair, and bring a few folding chairs for them
- If you are leading Eucharist in Creation, you will need a backpack to bring all the requirements (unbreakable!)
- End with fellowship snacks and fun!



WEEK 1

Land Justice and Ubuntu

9

SEASON OF CREATION

LITURGY

First Reading

Genesis 2: 4b – 20

Psalm 8

Second Reading

Romans 8: 18 – 25

Gospel

John 1: 1-5, 10-13

COLLECT

Creator God

**The good earth you created has been damaged by our actions
Give us strength to work with you
for the restoration of the earth
that all may know your goodness
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
One God forever and ever.
Amen**

SERMON NOTES

Rev Mkhuseli Lujabe, Diocese of Cape Town

Introduction

LAND JUSTICE AND UBUNTU

This week's theme – "Land Justice and Ubuntu" teaches us that Eco-Justice must explore the significance of land in creation care. It is equally important to understand our responsibility as human beings towards land justice. We will use the concept of "Ubuntu" as a lens to help us see how our humanity finds full expression when we respond to issues of injustice that destroy the harmony between land, people and all other creatures. The readings seek to expound our understanding of the sacredness of land in creation, highlight the effects of human injustice towards the land and makes clear God's invitation to humanity in restoring harmony and land justice. They express God's desire for a renewal of the fullness of beauty in the created order.

"One also gets a clear affirmation of this relationship between the land and humanity from the manner in which God first assigns the human being to care for the land and all its inhabitants,

Genesis 2: 4b – 20

This is the second account of the creation of the world, which presents a significantly different version to the creation account in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. One of the common things to note from both accounts, is the fact that the earth was created ahead of everything else in the created order i.e., before the light, the oceans, plants, fruits, vegetables, animals, and people. The earth alongside the heavens, pre-dates the creation of the entire human order.

Thus, with the creation of vegetation, animals, and humanity,

the formless state of the void earth is given a new purpose as it becomes a new habitat for all creation. In this version of creation, human beings are created directly from the content of the land, from the dust of the earth, and God institutes a special relationship between the earth and its people, as a way for humanity to identify in a special way with land and with creation at large.

One also gets a clear affirmation of this relationship between the land and humanity from the manner in which God first assigns the human being to care for the land and all its inhabitants, and secondly from

the manner in which God instructs that from all the trees of the garden can be consumed what would give life and strength to human beings, so to identify with the created order and to be nourished by its beauty. Therefore, the earth becomes the source of life for the entire created network that it inhabits and sustains.

Psalm 8

This Psalm is a beautiful poetic meditation on God's amazing being and God's majestic work in the creation of the earth and all its creatures. The heart of this Psalm is in the affirmation of how from a lowly and negligible position, from nothingness God created humanity and uplifted human beings to a position of eminence and honour. The purpose of this position is to bring about dignity and reverence for all creation through the care and nurture by human beings. The Psalm evokes a deep sense of conscious and invites humanity to heed to an invitation to take seriously the responsibility placed upon it of preservation of all life on earth and to bring about harmony in the entire created order on earth.

Romans 8: 18 – 25

This passage expresses lamentation, and a declaration of hope concerning creation. Paul acknowledges the breakdown of harmony between humanity and the rest of the created order. From the beginning, God intended for there to exist a close relationship between humanity and the rest of the created order. Through human failure to remain faithful to that mutual relationship, the entire created order fell into destruction alongside humanity through sin and unrighteousness. Paul

laments the injustice caused by the irresponsibility caused by the human fall to sin which subjects all creation to suffering and groaning. Paul describes this suffering as birth pangs describing the agony that creation feels as it awaits deliverance from the turmoil of suffering to a complete restoration of perfect peace and harmony as it was originally intended by God at the beginning of all creation.

In this passage we also read a message of hope to all who seek redemption, both human beings and the rest of the created order. Christ will once again usher in a season of emancipation, for creation to reclaim perfection and the restoration of former glory. The earth and all its inhabitants will live perfectly together in a relationship of peace and harmony

John 1: 1 – 5, 10 – 13

This section of John's gospel is also known as the prologue to the entire gospel. It is the point of departure for understanding the meaning of the good news. The gospel passage affirms the Pre-existence of God, who was the Word before everything else came into being. Nothing came to be created without God, the Word that gave and continues to give life to everything in the created order. God's eternal presence is inherent in creation, and through God's dwelling within all things the sacredness of the created order in the earth and all that dwells in it, is deeply affirmed.

Land Justice

These selected readings become very important for our understanding of our topic about land justice. It is important to highlight that both



The purpose of this position is to bring about dignity and reverence for all creation through the care and nurture by human beings.

God intended for there to exist a close relationship between humanity and the rest of the created order.

In this passage we also read a message of hope to all who seek redemption, both human beings and the rest of the created order.



From God's very being the earth was first created as the only home for all that God created at the beginning.

We see the unequal concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy few while masses of poor people live in smaller, informal, and over-crowded spaces with limited land..

One can challenge humanity to rephrase the concept of Ubuntu and say, "Without you, I am not"

"Can I recognise the number of ways in which creation still suffers because of land injustices in my own circles?"

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biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, do not make a distinction between the words: "earth" and "land", as both languages refer to words like "Land, ground, earth, soil, dust" when one looks up the meaning of both words in the biblical dictionaries. When God created the earth, God created land to be the permanent habitat for all creation – i.e., for humanity and everything else in creation to freely and equally co-exist on the land. From God's very being the earth was first created as the only home for all that God created at the beginning.

We see now how this original perspective of land justice has been utterly shattered, and how the many injustices and imbalances caused by humans have destroyed the intended harmony and unity of existence on the earth by all creation.

We hear in so many places that human beings continue to mourn and grieve or suffer unfair loss or continued exclusion from original ancestral land, perpetuated by processes and systems of inequality and inhumanity. We see the unequal concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy few while masses of poor people live in smaller, informal, and over-crowded spaces with limited land. Ongoing calls for land grabbing and continued protests for land redistribution indicate the desire for a harsh reversal of unfair and unequal sharing of land in just and equitable ways. These land disparities tell of a heritage of suffering under the long-standing colonial and apartheid systems.

Further consequences of such land injustices are felt by the rest of the created order and the environment. In many informal settlements there

is limited or no space available to produce vegetation and there is no fertile land, water is unclean, drainage systems do not work, resulting in polluted waters, and there is no space for parks or outdoor facilities for children and animals. In areas with fewer and more wealthy citizens, you see beautiful gardens, play areas, and restored eco-systems.

The concept of Ubuntu speaks about a relationship of interdependence and co-existence between human beings and the environment and the rest of the created order. One can challenge humanity to rephrase the concept of Ubuntu and say, "Without you, I am not", and in this way humanity will acknowledge that the existence of humanity is an incomplete representation of God's perfect creation, and the earth and all creation will continue to suffer in turmoil as Land injustices continue to prevail.

These lessons should leave the listener with the challenge to act in bringing about land justice: to allow the listener to the sermon to ask "What is my role in bringing about land justice in my own space?", "Can I recognise the number of ways in which creation still suffers because of land injustices in my own circles?", "How can the church be a catalyst of awareness where the oppression of creation still continues to be perpetuated in our presence?". These reflections will assist the hearers to take practical decisions about a change in attitude and develop a new view of how God's earth is to be nurtured and give life to all creation through us.

LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR WEEK ONE

THE GATHERING

Call to worship

All you big things, bless the Lord.
Mount Kilimanjaro and Lake Victoria,
The Rift Valley and the Serengeti Plain,
Fat baobabs and shady mango trees,
Bless the Lord.
Praise and extol Him for ever and ever.

All you tiny things, bless the Lord.
Busy black ants and hopping fleas,
Wriggling tadpoles and mosquito larvae,
Flying locusts and water drops,
Pollen dust and tsetse flies,
Millet seeds and dry grass,
Bless the Lord.
Praise and extol Him for ever and ever.

(Traditional African)

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am
Be still and know that I
Be still and know that
Be still and know
Be still and
Be still
Be

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Intercessory Prayers

Almighty God, who is able to do so much more
than we can even imagine,
We bring to you the desires of our hearts:

We pray for an end to the waste and desecration
of your precious creation,
That humanity would take responsibility for the
state of this planet
And seriously consider the effects our attitude of
greed and consumerism have on this earth.
May we find ways of balancing progress and the

finite resources of this planet.

We pray for an equal sharing of the resources of
this planet,

So that all may have enough and all be cared for.

May we think of each other before ourselves.

We pray that as we consume what we need to live

That we will find responsible ways of dealing with
our waste.

May we use only what we need and recycle and
reuse what we can.

Loving God, we pray for South Africa,

Our country has vast economic disparity between
the rich and the poor,

We pray for wisdom for our government in the
policies they make to address this

And for transparency and accountability as they
implement them.

We as a country are dependent on this earth for
our economy,

Mining of gold and platinum, farming, fishing,
tourism,

Help us to appreciate these are all gifts from you
and to treasure them as such.

Help us to implement responsible practices to
protect this earth and what it provides for us

And to ensure equal distribution of its resources
for all people living here.

Help us each in our own local communities to
value the resources you provide for us,

To carefully and responsibly use the water, soil,
plants and animals that are gifts from you

And share these with those who are in need.

Lord God help us to find a balance between the
needs of humanity and the limited resources at our
disposal.

Help us to care for this earth and our neighbours.

We know that on our own these are not possible
but through you all things are possible,

In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Church Unity Commission Service, Season of Creation 2021)

SHARING OF THE PEACE:

If we are in Christ, we are becoming a new creation.

**We see God around us. We see God within us.
We give thanks to our Creator.**

Let us greet each other as a sign of God's justice of peace, love, forgiveness and grace. The peace of our Creator be with you in all things.

And also with you.

You are invited to share the peace with your neighbor, and speak a word of peace to the land in which you gather, and the creatures who share this common home.

(adapted from Celebrating Creation: Honoring Indigenous People, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, ELCA)

CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE

Invitation to Communion

Holy Father, make us holy.

Holy Jesus, make us holy.

Holy Spirit, make us holy.

Holy God, make us whole.

Amen

(Institute for Spirituality)

SENDING OUT

Disturb us, O Lord

when we are too well-pleased with ourselves
when our dreams have come true because we
dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord

when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord

to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas
where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons
of our hopes and invited the brave to follow.

Amen

(Desmond Tutu, adapted from a prayer Sir Francis Drake)



WEEK 2

Water Justice

COLLECT

Creator God,
In the imagery of water you reveal the attributes of your Spirit.
Deepen in us a due respect for this resource
that we may fully drink of the gift of your life-giving Spirit
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

SERMON NOTES

Rev Sabelo Mthimkhulu

Introduction WATER JUSTICE

Although water covers 70% of our planet, freshwater which we can drink or use to irrigate our crops is very rare. Only 3 percent of water is fresh and two thirds of that is frozen.

And so 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to water, and a total of 2.7 billion find water scarce for at least one month of the year. Inadequate sanitation is also a problem for 2.4 billion people—they are exposed to diseases, such as cholera and typhoid fever, and other water-borne illnesses. Two million people, mostly children, die each year from diarrheal diseases alone.

Many of the water systems that keep ecosystems thriving and feed a growing human population have become stressed. Rivers, lakes and aquifers are drying up or becoming too polluted to use. More than half the world's wetlands have disappeared. Agriculture consumes more water than any other source and wastes much of that through inefficiencies. Climate change is altering patterns of weather and water around the world, causing shortages and droughts in some areas and floods in others.

At the current consumption rate, this situation will only get worse. By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population may face water shortages.

(WWF - water scarcity report)

Today's readings all address the importance of water, water plays a very important role in our Christian journey, on our baptism we entered into salvation and were made members of Christ's body through water (Anglican Prayer Book 369). Even though we might know this, but clean water is still something that is easily taken for granted, especially in highly developed areas. Like with many other issues, it is quite difficult for most of us to sympathize with "other" people's issues if they are not directly affecting us.

Africa is not exempted from this crisis, many of us didn't pay so much attention to the need of clean water until natural disasters like droughts

LITURGY

First Reading

2 Samuel 23: 8-17

Psalm 65

Second Reading

Revelation 22: 1-5

Gospel

John 4: 1-15

*1.1 billion people
worldwide lack
access to water, and
a total of 2.7 billion
find water scarce for
at least one month of
the year.*

*on our baptism we
entered into salvation
and were made
members of Christ's
body through water*

in Cape Town and Floods in Durban occurred. The issue of clean water in Africa cannot be separated from issues of race, poverty, climate change and gender.

Natural disasters resulting from Climate change and environmental destruction have one way or another contributed to the suffering of those on the margins. The rich have taken advantage of their access to clean water and misused it while the poor have suffered from lack of clean water and safe sanitation.

It is quite unfortunate that in most cases we as the church have lost our prophetic voice and drifted from those in the margins to join those in the center. Our God has taught us to be more than the Church when God becomes a loving, caring, merciful and just God to those in the margins. Our God is a God of those mostly affected, those in the margins of our societies.

The issue of clean water in Africa cannot be separated from issues of race, poverty, climate change and gender.

Our God is a God of those mostly affected, those in the margins of our societies.

Water has many meanings, it links you to a place, and it has spiritual meaning of blessing and liberation

"The rivers of God are full of water".

2 Samuel 23: 8-17

This passage begins with listing the warriors King David had, and the writer tells us the Lord had been on their side. Here we find King David being visited by three of the thirty chiefs at the cave of Adullam. David longs for water from the well of Bethlehem. It is interesting that because of our commercialised use of water we forget that water from different areas has a different taste – and David longs for water from Bethlehem, which has been taken by the Philistine garrison.

Three of his warriors brought to him the water he was longing for, but David could not drink it, but offered it back to the Lord and poured it as a libation on the ground. This seems a very strange thing to do. But he was calling for water not because of physical thirst (surely the army could provide water for him), but as a symbol of the liberation of Bethlehem.

But when they bring him the water he realizes his mistake, for he had put people's lives at risk. So he listens to God and pours the water out as a blessing and thanksgiving.

The blessing of God has more value than a small drink of water.

So, we realise that water has many meanings, it links you to a place, and it has spiritual meaning of blessing and liberation.

Psalm 65

The psalmist gives praises to God, this psalm could also be read as a song to God. Here the Psalmist praises God who overcomes deeds on iniquity and forgives our transgressions. The Psalmist also reminds us that God can silence an angry sea, God is a God who waters the earth and God's river is full of water. So, God doesn't join those in the margins empty handed, God carries water within Godself.

The Psalm reminds us that water is a free gift from God "The rivers of God are full of water". This speaks against the commodification of water. Although we must pay for the purification and delivery of water, the water itself must be seen as a free gift.

Revelation 22: 1-5

The writer here shares a vision of the New Jerusalem, the person who receives this vision saw seven angels and one of them speaks to them. One of the things the Angel shows them is the river of water of life. The water of life is “bright and crystal”, which could symbolize the cleanliness and purity of the water, and the source of this water is the throne of God. It is in this water of life that we as Christians are baptized and renewed.

This picture is of Eden restored. Just as in Genesis the Garden of Eden was watered by the rivers, now the new Jerusalem is a vision of hope that we can restore Eden, with clear crystal streams and life-giving trees.

John 4: 1-15

“Give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty”

The challenge with this narrative is not so much that we are unfamiliar with it, but that it is all too familiar, we’ve probably heard too many sermons on it, some which even go as far as referring to the Samaritan woman as a prostitute, I don’t think John makes that point. If one were to summarize the gospel of John to one word, “relationship” would be suitable. For John its all begins with the relationship. Even God is about active community, this is evident in his opening verses “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.

So, to understand John’s message we need to understand God’s relationship with nature and people. John begins today’s narrative with

Jesus heading back to Galilee from Jerusalem. His route goes through Samaria, Jesus gets tired during journey and decides to rest at Jacob’s well which marks the scene of this quite long conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

Jacob is the mutual ancestor for both the Jews and Samaritans, this is probably the same well where Jacob met Rachel for the first time. Even though Jews and Samaritans could have shared the common ancestor, but their relationship was not good. Jews viewed the Samaritans as “unclean” and “outsiders”.

Samaritans worshiped foreign gods in addition to God hence they were considered to be idolatrous worshipers by the Jews, so there were these boundaries separating them. The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman marks the crossing of social boundaries. Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for water, this surprises the woman, No Samaritan (even worse in this case a woman) would have expected a Jew to hold a conversation with them. She is not the only one surprised by the interaction, but it later confuses the disciples too.

The direct translating of living water refers to water that is flowing rather than still, fresh water rather than stationary water in a vessel. This is the water that makes the woman to cross all the barriers between her and Jesus and asks Jesus for this water. As soon as the woman asks for the living water, the conversation moves to her life.

The water of life is “bright and crystal”, which could symbolize the cleanliness and purity of the water, and the source of this water is the throne of God

“Give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty”.

John 4: 15



Jesus knows everything about the victim of an oppressive and divisive system. Jesus knows because He cares.

The mission of Jesus was to do away with the old system and establish a new kingdom with new flourishing life for all.

Like the woman in the well, are we also being invited into a continued theological conversation with Jesus in order for us to full grasp His identity and the life he brings?

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Preaching the Word

Jesus knows everything about the nameless woman. Jesus knows everything about the victim of an oppressive and divisive system. Jesus knows because He cares.

The mission of Jesus was to do away with the old system and establish a new kingdom with new flourishing life for all. He brought good news to the poor, sight to the blind, Jesus was and is still about bringing a new way of life. Jesus did not come for the most important people of the world, but for the nameless, those who are easily cast aside. It is exactly those nameless vulnerable people who are willing to cross societal barriers and boundaries to receive living, flowing and fresh water.

The use of water clearly marks the injustice of society, where some homes irrigate large lawns, fill their swimming pools and have more toilets than people in the house. Others queue for water from a communal tap and used shared toilets, risking harassment if they use them at night.

Climate change is all about water – drought, flooding and sea level rise. We have seen the misery of the floods in KZN, we have seen the near disaster of drought in Cape town and so many smaller towns. It is time for us to recognise that climate change is real and to take action as individuals, families and churches.

With so much awareness on environmental and water justice issues, many of us still participate in the system that deprive the poor and other living creatures of their right to clean and healthy water.

Like the woman in the well, are we also being invited into a continued theological conversation with Jesus in order for us to full grasp His identity and the life he brings?

Like the woman are we also being challenged to go out and testify and invite others to the "Water of Life"?

Like Jesus and the woman, are we invited to overcome the intersectional boundaries of religion, ethnicity, and gender?

Like Jesus, are we willing conserve and share clean and fresh water with those in the margins?

What are the practical steps we can take?

- Put pressure on our politicians to make sure that the human right to water and safe sanitation is fulfilled.
- Make our churches models of water sustainability – install jojo tanks, get rid of alien plants and put in indigenous. Mend dripping taps and toilets. Use gray water on our lawns and plants.
- Make the links between 'natural disasters' and climate change. Educate our congregations.

LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR WEEK TWO

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Come now all who thirst

And drink of the water of life

Come now all who hunger

And be filled with good things

Come now all who seek

And be warmed by the fire of love

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Profession of Faith:

We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of
creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptizes this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one,
the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate
refugee, who loves and cares for this world and
who suffers with it.

And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world and
everything in it.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God and who moves among and
with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day
God will put an end to death and all destructive
forces.

*(Gurukul Theological college, India / adapted by Keld B.
Hansen 2009)*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God

Living water and giver of everlasting life.

Let justice flow down like a river.

let unity hover over the earth like your Spirit
hovering over waters.

Graciously hear our prayers,

That we may learn to share water with those
struggling to access it.

Help us to overcome our differences.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE

All who are thirsty,

All who are weak

Come to the fountain

Dip your heart in the stream of life

SENDING OUT

Post communion prayer

O Creator God

Pour out on us the water of life

That we might quench our thirst

And draw strength from you

Help us to stand alongside

Those who struggle daily for clean water

So that all might be refreshed and renewed

By your abundant love

Revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord

(Archbishop Thabo Makgoba)



WEEK 3

Gender and Climate Justice

21

SEASON OF CREATION

COLLECT

Holy and loving God,
whose Spirit brings liberty to all your children
encourage us to keep striving
for the full and equal participation of women
for the enrichment and blessing of us all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.
Amen

LITURGY

First Reading

Genesis 21:8-16

Psalm 133

Second Reading

Galatians 4:21-30

Gospel

John 4:13-19

SERMON NOTES

Tercia Meyer

Introduction

GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our theme this week is Gender and Climate Justice. What are the links? When we consider disasters, caused by flooding or hurricanes, we find that women are more likely to die in a disaster, for often they are at home caring for children or the elderly and cannot flee fast. There are cultural norms also against girls learning to swim or climb trees, which are vital skills in a disaster. In refugee camps, women are often victims of abuse or sexual harassment. Women are more impacted by drought than men, as they often have to walk long distances to fetch water or firewood, which puts them at risk of sexual harassment. Often women are considered responsible for providing food with a fixed household budget and as food prices rise, they may become victims of gender-based violence for not providing 'what their partner expected' on the table. As crops fail in the rural areas, young women working in town are asked to send more money home, and may be tempted to ask for financial assistance from a 'sugar daddy'.

God is universal justice thus the term Ubuntu – "I am because we are", allows for us to incorporate the concept of gender justice and climate justice into our spiritual lives while keeping the term "Ubuntu" in our minds. Gender justice is recognising women and men as being fully equal to each other. Climate justice means recognising that we all share one common home, this planet. But it all means that we must recognise that some countries have contributed more to the damaging of the eco-systems, whereas other countries are bearing the brunt of climate change. It is vitally important that we treat God's people and God's creation with the best of our abilities, ensuring that we follow what God has called us to do on this planet instead of damaging or abusing it.

Gender justice is recognising women and men as being fully equal to each other.

Climate justice means recognising that we all share one common home, this planet.

Genesis 21: 8-16

This passage contains the overall view of Hagar being sent away

into the wilderness along with her son (Genesis 21: 8-21). We bear witness in this passage to the abuse she has experienced from Abraham

and Sarah. We bear witness to her starving and being thirsty and God provides for her well-being to survive in the wilderness.

Hagar is doubly abused, living in a patriarchal structure, and also being a slave, she has no rights. She is given to Abraham by Sarah to have his child which would then become Sarah's to raise, but when Sarah has her own child, she becomes jealous and rejects both Hagar and Ishmael and presses Abraham to do the same. When Hagar is sent out into the desert she is given only some bread and a skin of water – enough for Abraham to not feel guilty, but not enough to keep her alive more than a day or two.

But God hears Ishmael's cry and comes to rescue them. Blinded by despair and abandonment she had not seen the well of water, the water of life. She was able to reclaim life and a future for her son and would become the mother of a great nation.

Psalm 133

The passage of Psalm 133 allows us to embark on the concept of ascent. Many scholars believe the title indicates that these psalms were sung by worshippers as they ascended the road to Jerusalem to attend the three pilgrim festivals of Passover (Pesach), Tabernacles (Tents or booths) and Weeks (Pentecost) All ancient Israelites who were able to would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem, as commanded by the Torah. When they arrived In Jerusalem, they would take part in festivals and worship..

Having not been able to celebrate our large festivals during COVID,

we can identify with the joy of the pilgrims as they travel together to ascend to Jerusalem, singing their psalms of joy, in particular Psalm 133 which is celebrating the unity and fellowship.

Where the overall view contains that as human beings, we are able to live in unity with each other, thus it allows us to ascend as Christians in Christ. The Church supposedly has been divided throughout centuries; and this Psalm calls for the Church to become united in Christ. The blessings we receive from the Lord allow us to live in "life evermore" (Psalm 133: 4).

The Psalms remind us that we are united not just as humans when we worship but with the whole of creation. In Psalm 148 the boundaries between gender, status, human and non-human fall away when we worship with 'great sea creatures and ocean depths ... small creatures and flying birds.. as well as kings and young men and women'. (Psalm 148 : 7-12)

Galatians 4: 21-30

This passage highlights the text used in the Old Testament reading, it differs from the abuse that Hagar experienced as it rejoices in the birth of both Hagar and Sarah's children.

Paul makes use of the teachings of salvation, how humanity strives to reach the favour of God through good deeds and as human beings we constantly fall short of reaching God's standards; however, it is through God's grace that we are able to obtain God's favour and salvation (Dexter, 2022).

Whereas in Gen 22;2 God had said to Abraham

Hagar is doubly abused, living in a patriarchal structure, and also being a slave, she has no rights.

God hears Ishmael's cry and comes to rescue them

this Psalm calls for the Church to become united in Christ.

Psalm 133

it is through God's grace that we are able to obtain God's favour and salvation.

Dexter 2022

“Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah”, now the second son, Ishmael is recognised. This passage also challenges us to work with the many young boys who do not know their fathers and are in desperate need of positive role models in their lives.

John 4: 13-19

This particular passage that John introduces to us expands on the universal love God has for humanity. The love that God has for humanity ensures that humanity shall never be thirsty after drinking from Christ. Materialism or worldly possessions will not quench the thirst that one has for Christ unless one turns to Christ. Our faith leads us to the love we ought to have.

The woman at the well, was female in a patriarchal society, and a Samaritan, despised by the Jews. Not only that, but she was also a social outcast because of her morals. No wonder then that she has to fetch water in the heat of the mid-day sun and not join the other village women in cool of the evening to fetch water and have a social catch-up.

And yet, her encounter with Jesus is the longest between the Messiah and any other individual in the Gospel of John. She receives living water of salvation and convinces an entire town to believe as well!

Sermon outline

Reflecting on Gender and Climate Justice gives us the opportunity to embrace our God who reveals universal justice as well as, the concept of Ubuntu. Therefore, we are apt to ask, how are we ensuring that God's universal justice prevails


in our climate and among ourselves, particularly focusing on how we treat our neighbour no matter their gender.

We have unpacked the concept of Hagar who was faced with abuse from Abraham and Sarah; however, to further expand on the concept of abuse; have we considered the possibility that Abraham was abused too by Sarah? The type of abuse that Abraham possibly could have endured was emotional abuse, due to the fact that Sarah was unable to bear a child, she forced him to become intimate with Hagar, thus he could have possibly been both victim and perpetrator in this particular setting (Donovan, 2010).

Hagar was sent away to the wilderness with her son, without any of their necessities needed for survival. Furthermore, we are introduced to God who provided for them. God quenched their thirst and filled their bellies, whilst being in the wilderness, they did not destroy God's creation, and instead they depended on God to provide for their needs. Thus, as human beings in the current era, why is it so difficult for us to protect God's creation?

It is clear that in the Gospel passage, that Christ provides the woman at the well with the opportunity to quench her spiritual thirst.

Stedman (1967) highlights that through the grace God gives us we are able to obtain God's favour and God's salvation. It is our faith that leads us to the love of God, and this leads us to exploring the love we have for each other. We ought to love each and every person we come across equally, because we are made in the likeness and



The love that God has for humanity ensures that humanity shall never be thirsty after drinking from Christ.

It is our faith that leads us to the love of God, and this leads us to exploring the love we have for each other.

Women and children are impacted more severely by climate change.

Jesus' example of kindness to the woman at the well ought to be our guide on how to be kind to one another and to our environment.

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image of God, thus we are not any different to our fellow neighbour. Therefore, why is it that we are able to abuse each other if we are supposed to love each other? This means that we also need to care for our neighbours who are impacted by climate change by reducing our overuse of fossil fuels.

Despite the experience that Hagar experienced of being abused, the pain Sarah experienced of being unable to bear a child, we are introduced in Galatians how they rose up from their pain and were able to embrace their situations by allowing God to lead their way.

The beauty of the Psalm assists us to remember that we ought to live in unity with each other, we ought to embrace the world we are living in and we ought to protect the world we are living in because it is God's creation.

As we are in the Season of Creation, how are we going to embrace the creation of God? How are we going to embrace humanity and the web of Creation, and be concerned about the climate?

People are constantly being abused; people are being abusive to each other and the environment, may this give us the opportunity to embrace one another, may it give us the opportunity to unite in the injustice that is occurring in the world and strive towards God's universal justice. Women and children are impacted more severely by climate change, and gender-based violence, and of course men are impacted as well.

May the heart-breaking scene of Hagar leaving her child under a bush because she cannot bear to hear his cries of anguish remind us

of the climate refugees, fleeing from drought with their children, many of whom may die on the way of hunger and thirst. May we commit to stand against xenophobia.

Jesus' example of kindness to the woman at the well ought to be our guide on how to be kind to one another and to our environment. Despite the woman having had five husbands, Jesus did not chase her away, he did not use abusive and degrading language when he spoke to her; rather, he gave her an alternative option and that was to be cleansed by the Spirit. May we embark on a path where we are able to choose the path of being cleansed by the Spirit, may we cleanse our thoughts and our deeds to ensure that we are not being abusive to God's creation.

May this season allow us to be gender and climate sensitive, and commit to taking care of our resources and our people, and the whole of creation.

May we strive to live our lives according to God's Universal Justice and Ubuntu.

LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR WEEK THREE

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

We gather in the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the Earth and all its creatures!

Praise be to the Holy Trinity! God is sound and life, Creator of the Universe, Source of all life, whom the angels sing; wondrous Light of all mysteries known or unknown to humankind, and life that lives in all.

(Hildegard of Bingen, 13th Century)

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

We say Yes

To a world where all are valued for themselves
where no one is exploited or abused,
where all can stand proud and strong,

We say Yes

To a church where healing and love embrace all
where there is acceptance of dissent and difference
where conformity gives way to the spirit of freedom

We say Yes

To lives grounded in peace and justice
where struggle and self-acceptance walk in joy
where strength and tenderness join hands

We say Yes

(www.churches-together.org.uk/resources/leaflets)

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Penitence

O God of the whole of creation.

You have created land and trees, animals and all living creatures on the earth. We are 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. 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 their voices have been silenced by the roar of our greed

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Mother Earth, our Sister, you sustain and govern us. We have silenced the voices of your people, especially the voices of women - protectors of the Earth who have been killed by land grabbers, mining companies and oil companies. Many are the voices of our sisters 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 and sisters 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

CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE

The Taking of the Bread and Wine

Be gentle when you touch bread
Let it lie uncared for-unwanted.
So often bread is taken for granted,
There is so much beauty in bread-
Beauty of sun and soil,
Beauty of patient toil,
Winds and rains have caressed it.
Christ often bless it

Be gentle when you touch bread

Blessed be God for ever

At the taking of the Wine.

Be loving when you drink wine
So freely received and joyfully shared
In the spirit of Him who cared,
Warm as a flowing river,
Shining and clear as the sun,
Deep as the soil
Of human toil,
The winds and the air caressed it,
Christ often blest it.

Be loving when you drink wine.

Blessed be God for ever

(Traditional Celtic Prayer)



SENDING OUT

Post communion Prayer

Let it be according to your will, O God
Let there be justice in the nations
Let there be forgiveness among people
And let us learn to love our enemies
Let the hungry be fed, O God
Let the poor receive in abundance
Let those who weep, laugh again
Let those who suffer, hear news of deliverance
And let us, and all people learn to be merciful
As you are merciful, O God.

Amen



WEEK 4

Justice for all God's creatures

COLLECT

**All powerful God
You are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
Pour out upon us the power of your love
that we may protect life and beauty
living as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen**
(Adapted from Laudato Si by Pope Francis)

SERMON NOTES

Rev Seipati Ngcobo

Introduction

JUSTICE FOR ALL GOD'S CREATURES

At the core of ecological justice lies the recognition that creation has intrinsic value. When engaging eco-justice from a theological perspective, the intrinsic value of the cosmos is in the recognition that all that is, is a creation of a Holy and life-giving God. As a life-giver, God not only made all creation to come alive, God also constantly promoted conditions for life. However, humanity's destructive ways of misusing and abusing creation have resulted in the unjust treatment of creation, that has led to deterioration and extinction of other members in creation.

One of the powerful principles that can assist humanity in working for eco-justice, is the principle of ubuntu. Although ubuntu is an abstract concept that primarily speaks about humanity, it ascribes value to the interconnectedness of one's life, dignity, and humanity to another. In ubuntu, the life of another matters because it is intrinsically interconnected with my own. Luke Pato argues that life is the highest gift of God to humanity. Therefore, anything that undermines and destroys life also undermines God's gift to all humanity. If the concept of ubuntu is understood in conjunction with this understanding of life, then life in creation should not be undermined and destroyed because that would result in undermining and destroying God's gift of life. This would ultimately undermine not only the environment but human life. Placing this value in life can enable humanity to treat non-human creation justly.

Genesis 9: 8-16

It is important to read this text in the context of Genesis chapters 1-9. After creating all things, God declares that it was very good. However, in the chapters that follow, we see sin, shame, disobedience,

violence, and death, all which are not good. As humanity increased in number on the Earth, God saw that the Earth was corrupt and filled with violence and decided to "make an end of all flesh" (Gen 6: 11-13). God instructed Noah to build an ark for himself, his family

LITURGY

First Reading

Genesis 9: 8-16

Psalms 96: 7-13

Second Reading

Colossians 1:15-20 (21-23)

Gospel

John 3:16-17

Although ubuntu is an abstract concept that primarily speaks about humanity, it ascribes value to the interconnectedness of one's life, dignity, and humanity to another.

As humanity increased in number on the Earth, God saw that the Earth was corrupt and filled with violence and decided to "make an end of all flesh" (Gen 6: 11-13).



The covenant between God and all creation is signed by a rainbow, which will be a present reminder of God's everlasting covenant to "never again" with all living creatures.

*"all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens"
(Psalm 96: 5).*

Paul's assertions place Jesus at the beginning of all time and shows that Jesus was not only there at the beginning, but that all creation is attributed to Jesus.

and other living creatures, whose lives would be spared in the ark. This text for today comes after all creatures have exited the ark into a fresh start. Speaking to Noah, God makes a covenant with him and every living creature on the earth that never again will life be ended by the waters of a flood. Although Noah has acted as an executor of God's instructions, Noah himself remains silent throughout this text. God is the main initiator and actor, while Noah and all living creatures are beneficiaries of God's preservation of life on Earth.

One could think that it is only human creatures that are worth saving, but God's preservation of life, which stems from God's nature as life giver, conditions life for all creatures. The covenant between God and all creation is signed by a rainbow, which will be a present reminder of God's everlasting covenant to "never again" with all living creatures.

Psalm 96: 7-13

This Psalm is a wonderful hymn of praise to God. Written at a time when many deities were worshipped, the Psalmist gives vivid imagery that there is one God who created all things and has sovereignty over all things. Thus, families of the nations ascribe glory to God, heavens rejoice, earth trembles and is glad, sea resounds with all that is in it, fields are jubilant, trees sing for joy. All this is to show that "all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens" (Ps 96: 5).

This Psalm is filled with powerful examples of the incomprehensible greatness of God. A God in whose presence all the earth is to tremble. Even nature participates in ascribing praise to God. Towards the end of

this Psalm, the incomprehensibly great God, "comes to judge the earth" and perhaps this points to a deeper promise and concern that possibly points to the incarnation of our Lord Jesus.

Colossians 1: 15-20

In this text, Paul raises significant Christological arguments about the person of Christ. The text opens with the argument of Jesus as the image of the invisible God and the first born of all creation, the one in whom all things were created. Paul's assertions place Jesus at the beginning of all time and shows that Jesus was not only there at the beginning, but that all creation is attributed to Jesus. Jesus is not only a Creator but is also a part of incarnation through the person of Jesus. Yet, Jesus' divinity is in no way diminished by the incarnation, but is fully demonstrated in the person of Jesus, the one in whom God was fully pleased to dwell. Therefore, when we see Jesus, we see an image of the invisible God, by whom all things were made.

John 3:16-17

A man named Nicodemus went to see Jesus to ask him questions that he probably could not personally provide the answers for as a teacher of the law. Nicodemus' questioning of Jesus was more than just seeking answers, but it was about seeking understanding. Jesus' response seems to make Nicodemus more confused. These responses were probably not as simplistic as Nicodemus had hoped. Still, Jesus engaged with Nicodemus on these ideas of faith that are sometimes a complicated idea to grasp and a difficult truth to live. Jesus took the time to explain his identity, purpose and his relation to the world. Some

key themes to be noted in this text include: God's love, God's giving to the world, belief and salvation. Alone, these words can lead to an array of sermons and teachings, none which should be explored simultaneously so as to not miss their depth. Furthermore, in as much as we investigate what the text says, it is also a good exercise to look at what the text is not saying. The text does not say that God so loved humanity, but 'the world', accurately translated as the cosmos, that is, everything in creation. Thus, God in the person of Jesus reconciles all creation, not just humanity, to himself.


Sermon notes

Some of the central themes emerging from these passages are that of God, as Creator, God as life Giver, God as Saviour of the world (that is, the cosmos). The Genesis text predates Jesus' time, but it already foreshadows God's salvation of the cosmos in the person of Jesus. When we follow the story of God and Noah, we soon see that the salvation of humanity was not separate from the survival of living things. If that were the case, God would have only allowed Noah and his descendants into the ark. However, the ark was a refuge of all kinds of creatures in a chaotic world drowning in its own violence and corruption. For the primary hearers, the story of Noah also highlights humanity's role in participating in God's salvific work in creation. God instructed Noah, and Noah believed what God had said and did all that God had told him to do. In so doing, we see that respecting and caring for all creation stems from faith in God, and from the recognition of life as valuable and worth being respected and cared for. If like

Noah, we are to respond to God's call in doing our part to participate in the work of God's salvation of the world, how can we express this in challenges that face the world today. Challenges such as unnecessary human consumption, misuse of natural resources for financial gain, pollution, and many other acts of injustice upon creation

Chapter 1: 15-20 of Paul's letter to the Colossians is referred to as a hymn. For an audience that did not have in-person contact with Jesus, the full humanity and divinity of Jesus would have been a difficult concept to grasp. Paul's teaching connects Jesus' nature as the Creator who was there at the very beginning, with a loving God who saves the world. All these would have been understood as attributes strictly belonging to God, and to know that these attributes are also that of Jesus, would have revealed the identity of Christ to the church in Colossae.

The gospel reading consists of what has come to be commonly referred to as the gospel in a nutshell. However, it is much deeper than that. This gospel reading points to a deeper truth about God's sacrificial love for the cosmos. This idea would have been unheard of for Jewish listeners who had come to believe that God loved only Israel. Jesus comes into the scene showing that God's love extends to even those who are not of Jewish descent, those referred to as 'gentiles'. In addition to that, God's love, God's compassion and God's mercy and righteousness is extended to all in creation, the whole cosmos. All life, considered foreign and unclean, would also be transformed and redeemed by the sacrificial love of God in his son Jesus. Again here, value is not only given to a certain



When we follow the story of God and Noah, we soon see that the salvation of humanity was not separate from the survival of living things.

we are to respond to God's call in doing our part to participate in the work of God's salvation of the world, how can we express this in challenges that face the world today.

This gospel reading points to a deeper truth about God's sacrificial love for the cosmos.

God's compassion and God's mercy and righteousness is extended to all in creation, the whole cosmos

*What does it mean
that Christ is the first
born of all creation
and how can this
truth be expressed in
how we relate to all
creation today?*

*God's love is wider
than the confines
that humanity is
always so eager to
restrain God's love
in.*

*As humanity,
we should find
something within
ourselves to give and
affirm God's giving in
creation.*

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people, but all people. Value is given not only to human creatures, but to all creatures. The idea of God's salvation for all, also calls into question how we can act justly towards all in creation.

The preacher may wish to explore the sanctity of all things by virtue of creation being attributed to Christ, like is done in Paul's letter to the Colossians. What does it mean that Christ is the first born of all creation and how can this truth be expressed in how we relate to all creation today? Similarly, if it is for the cosmos that Jesus lived, died, and rose, what then is the role of a believer? God's love is wider than the confines that humanity is always so eager to restrain God's love in. However, the scriptures of the day teach us of God's overarching and all-encompassing love.

How then can we do our best not to discard that which God has loved? We are in the perpetual danger of corrupting that which God has created by reducing creation to merely something available for our use. On the other hand, Jesus in John opposes the idea of loving for the sake of possession and consumption and embraces the idea of loving and therefore giving. God so loved the world that he gave, so says John. If this is Jesus' way of modelling how humanity can act justly towards creation, by giving, then human beings should also seek to love creation, not to possess it. As humanity, we should find something within ourselves to give and affirm God's giving in creation.

When all is said and done, ecojustice is the work God calls us to participate in practically. Therefore, we need to explore ways of how we can live out the gospel in our time.

What changes can we make in our own lives to express a recognition and awareness of the value all life? How can this be translated into how we treat all living things, be it animals, plants, land, and human beings. How can communities of faith form strong bonds in doing advocacy work for the life of all in creation? When we see our actions and that of others as a deviation from the affirmation of life, we can boldly intervene by moving towards the just treatment of the earth and all who live in it. Are there ways we can turn our churches into hubs of public advocacy for creation? Can we implement initiatives of impact, such as reduction of unnecessary consumption, clean ups of our churches and communities, recycling waste, where each person takes the responsibility to care for creation? Are there ways of reaching corporate companies and collaborating with others to sensitise the corporate world into caring for the earth? Are there ways we can treat all with the concept of ubuntu, acknowledging that my environment has an effect on me? If there is a slight possibility to do these things, then we must do them. Living what we preach can inspire others to do the same.

LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR WEEK FOUR

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Penitence

Creator God, we confess that even though we are created in your image, we have not appreciated your creation as you have.

We have become arrogant and greedy and instead of seeing the beauty and diversity around us, We have seen wealth and progress and have wanted it for ourselves.

We have individually and as peoples amassed what we can for ourselves,

With little care for what effects it will have on our planet and

Without thinking of sharing with those who have nothing.

Redeemer God, we confess that we have not loved this world as you have.

We are sorry for the destruction we have caused, For the many of your beloved species that are no more because we wanted more,

For the many who battle to survive in squalid conditions while others live with luxury.

Sustainer God, we confess that we have not cared and provided for this plant as you do.

We take and do not replace, depleting the earth of precious resources;

We use and then dump, creating wastelands of junk where the poor must live.

We create chemicals for our own convenience that destroy the natural balance of life, upsetting the cycles that you have created.

We value our own lives and our own comfort but care nothing for the earth or other people who are suffering.

Merciful God, we come before you, Humbled by the parts we play in destroying your creation,

Hear the cries of the guilt and

See the willingness to change in our hearts.

Forgive us we pray.

Amen.

(Church Unity Commission Season of Creation Liturgy 2021)

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, the creator of all life and beauty, who blesses our journey.

We believe in Jesus Christ, who lived as a friend and savior to all he met as he traveled, and who ate and laughed, wept and celebrated with them in love.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who rides on the gentle breeze, who strengthens our bindings, and who offers hope eternal.

We believe in the church, which stands open to all travelers, and bears witness to the everlasting love of God.

(Shore to Shore USPG)

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Intercessory Prayers:

Loving God, even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she places her young near Your altar. You are attentive to all you have made.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, help us provide refuge to every animal and plant we live alongside. Help us be attentive to all you have made.

God, who listens to every living thing,

Help us listen as you do.

Loving God, when Jesus cried out and gave up his Spirit, the earth shook and the rocks split. You are known by the whole of creation which responds to you.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, help us hear and know you just as the earth and rocks do. Help us to learn from the way in which we see creation recognise your glory.

God, to whom all creation responds,

Help us respond to you.

Loving God, you are present in your creation
and seek to heal her wounds. You can be found
walking in the garden, mistaken for a gardener.
God, who is present with your creation,
Help us be present too.

Loving God, we often abandon your creation
and cause its wounds. Help us to follow in your
footsteps and learn to walk in the garden like you.
God, who is present with your creation,
Help us be present too.

Loving God, who hears every voice, knows each
cry of injustice, and is attentive to the suffering of
the earth: teach us to listen. Bring healing to our
lives, that we may protect the world and not prey
on it, that we may listen to the world you have
created and not close ourselves off from it. Reveal
to us the ways in which we have failed to hear your
voice in how we treat the earth.
God, who listens to every living thing,
Help us listen as you do.
Amen

(Rachel Mander, Season of Creation Resource 2022)

SENDING OUT

Creator God, giver of life, You sustain the earth
and direct the nations.
In this time of climate crisis grant us clarity to hear
the groaning of creation and the cries of the poor;
Challenge us to change our lifestyles;
Guide our leaders to take courageous action;
Enable your church to be a beacon of hope;
and foster within us a renewed vision of your
purposes for your world;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, by and for whom
all things were made.

Amen.

Blessing:

May God the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the
waters of creation and formed the world from
chaos, form you in the likeness of Christ and
renew the face of the earth.

(Dave Bookless, Climate Sunday)



WEEK 5

St Francis and Ubuntu

COLLECT

Eternal and life giving God

In diversity you enrich the unity of our existence.

**Help us to live in harmony with the difference
and uniqueness of other creatures.**

**Deepen within us an awareness of our own place within
creation**

that we may be caretakers of its variety and beauty.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

LITURGY

First Reading

Micah 6: 6-8

Psalm 104:24-34

Second Reading

Acts 4: 31-35

Gospel

Mark 10: 17-21

SERMON NOTES

Rev Nitano Muller

Introduction

ST FRANCIS AND UBUNTU

Christians are natural allies in the fight for eco-justice. St Francis of Assisi, is traditionally considered the patron saint of the environment. He was born and raised in a wealthy family in Assisi (Italy), but after a profound conversion experience, lived a life of intentional poverty and simplicity, in a context of unprecedented wealth, greed and corruption. This context led to oppression and a disregard of humanity and dignity.

Francis' identification with the poor gradually brought him to an understanding of his place as a "little brother" to all humanity and all creation. His famous "Canticle of the Creatures," reveals how integrally interconnected Francis felt to all elements of God's creation. He came to see God reflected in all of creation and therefore sought to maintain the integrity of all creation. This is the essence of Franciscan spirituality- with particular emphasis on the poor, vulnerable, and those least responsible for environmental degradation— Franciscan spirituality lends itself to a focus on environmental and climate justice.

Both Franciscan spirituality and the ubuntu worldview compels us to recognize our interconnectedness with the natural world, as well as how sinful acts have contributed to current ecological crises and how future actions can either contribute to fulfilling God's vision or thwart it.



Christians are natural allies in the fight for eco-justice.

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This passage includes one of the most timeless questions that has been asked and pondered upon by human beings throughout history: "What does God want?". (Micah 6: 6-8)

Micah 6:6-8

This passage includes one of the most timeless questions that has been asked and pondered upon by human beings throughout history: "What does God want?". In the eighth century BCE, the Prophet Micah asked a similar question,

and the response given remains at the heart of right relationship with God, with fellow human beings and with all other communities of life on the planet we inhabit (Bostrom et al 2012:98).

In verses 1-8, the poet describes the experience of a long-suffering



God wants us to do justice (vs.8)- to be a voice for the oppressed, the unprotected, widows, foreigners, the disabled, the elderly, minority groups, animals and ecosystems, and every creature treated as less than God's creation.

The imagery used in this Psalm suggests that God created the world with order and purpose and anyone or anything that acts against that purpose essentially tries to undo the good creation God established (Loane 1990: 69).

God who remains faithful to an unfaithful people for whom the Prophet makes intercession. The passage consists of a series of speeches that implore rather than accuse, despite initial sentiment of justified divine frustration directed towards a people chosen by God (Deut.7:7)- a people entrusted with the Torah who have transgressed and, in a sense, broken the heart of God (Micah 1-3) (Bostrom et al 2012: 98)

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God wants us to love kindness. The Hebrew word "hesed" means God's loving-kindness (Bostrom et al 2012:98). We respond to God's love by sharing it with those around us. We are to walk humbly with God: listening for God's voice wherever God may be heard - including out in nature. Justice, kindness, and the humble walk of faith with our God carries us beyond the confines of personal piety into a life-giving, reciprocal relationship with God, and with God's other children and with God's creation.

Psalm 104:24-34

This Psalm speaks to the sovereignty and power of God as Creator. It follows a similar structure to the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and draws from its theological ideas evident in its description of God's mastery over the creatures of the earth (Loane 1990: 69).

Mention is made of the great mystical creature, Leviathan, "sporting in the deep". This image

of God playing with the great sea monster offers comfort for all those who feel the world around them is chaotic and unruly; it assures them that God is ultimately in control even though they may feel out of control.

The imagery used in this Psalm suggests that God created the world with order and purpose and anyone or anything that acts against that purpose essentially tries to undo the good creation God established (Loane 1990: 69). Thus, the final petition of Psalm 104 is not really a prayer against particular people, but against the forces of evil with which people sometimes cooperate against the wishes of the Creator.

Acts 4: 31-35

In this passage we encounter the power of the Holy Spirit in the early church. The Jesus movement was growing in leaps and bounds because the love shared and common life amongst the early christians fascinated and attracted many. Luke describes the generosity amongst the believers and specifically mentions that those who could, sold their land and possessions and donated the proceeds to the Apostles for distribution amongst those who needed it (vs. 34-35).

This, however, was not unique to the early christians (Winn 1960: 49). There were other first century groups who practiced a community of goods, but they did this to secure membership. The sharing of wealth in the early church was different because private property was not formally done away with. They gave what was their own. The sharing was also voluntary, not forced. It was, therefore, not a condition to

join the church. The sharing was a natural result and outward sign of what the Holy Spirit was doing amongst them (Winn 1960:50).

In this passage we see the deeply rooted appreciation and practice of justice in the formative years of the faith. Justice being defined most basically involves making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by upholding both goodness and impartiality and ensures the equal and fair treatment of all. Not out of obligation or force, but out of a spirit of goodness and generosity. This is what James, in his epistle, argues is at the center of our faith (James 1:27).

Mark 10: 17-21

The story of the wealthy man, described to varying degrees, occurs in all three of the synoptic gospels (English 1992: 176). The acquisition of material wealth, of money, has and continues to be one of the main aspirations of people throughout the ages. It offers us a sense of security and worth in life. The disciples of Jesus however are told to find their security in Jesus and his way of life. Mark describes in great detail the actions of the man who runs and kneels (vs 17) in pursuit of answers to the burning questions he has. Mark tells us that the rich man engages with Jesus in one of the most profound conversations recorded in the gospels.

“Why do you call me good? No-one is good except God alone” (vs18) English (1992: 177) argues that Jesus may be correcting the man or asking something much deeper: “Do you know that what you are ascribing to me belongs to God? Do you know how near the truth you are?” Marks gospel wants

to help readers understand Jesus’ true identity and he constructs his writings to help achieve this.

“How difficult it is for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God” (10:23) The rich man was told to give away all his wealth - a radical demand followed by very few, such as St. Francis of Assisi. St. Clement, the African theologian, used this text in the second century when he addressed the wealthy in Alexandria and argued that Jesus was referring to those who put their trust in their wealth. Clement would not take the words of Jesus literally and considered that the man was told not to throw his possessions but to change his ideas about riches so as to not be attached to them (Suggit 2002: 68). If the man was to find the child-like discipleship set out in verses 13-16, then he would lessen and hopefully eradicate his dependence on his material wealth. Jesus, in this passage, makes it clear that wealth can be a serious impediment to the living of a full life, since the desire for wealth so easily takes precedence over following the example of Jesus to “die to self” and place the needs of others before our own (Lk 9:23, Lk 10:24).

Sermon notes

The four texts are an invitation and a clarion call to return to basics. Micah’s exhortation to his people about what it is he believes God requires of them is clear: to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. Our task is to level the playing fields of inequality, to play our part in making the world a better place for all who call it home and to build and maintain a relationship with God our Creator. The Psalm returns us to the basic fact that God is the source of all

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we may still ask ourselves if our common life and fellowship as Christians is real if it does not affect the things we own and possess.

We cannot preach about St. Francis without also preaching about his radical commitment to justice in its holistic sense.

it would be appropriate to call Francis the patron saint of environmental justice.

our task is to call our congregations back to basics.

creation and goodness, and our dependence is on God alone. This profound truth is declared by the Psalmist most poetically using a rhythm that would be familiar to anyone who knows the creation narratives. Anything that disrupts, challenges, undermines, or robs God's creation of its intrinsic goodness and worth sins against the Creator.

Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, explicitly outlines for us the common life shared by the early Christians. The genuine generosity and concern of the church for each other was powerful and impactful that it left an indelible mark on the history of the church catholic. The economic order of the day has changed dramatically since the first century, but we may still ask ourselves if our common life and fellowship as Christians is real if it does not affect the things we own and possess. Once again, a call to return to the basic principle of Christian charity and generosity.

We cannot preach about St. Francis without also preaching about his radical commitment to justice in its holistic sense.

Francis spent a large part of his life in the wilderness with animals, but he spent the second half of his life in towns and villages living with and among the poor and vulnerable communities of 13th century Assisi. His commitment was not to just heal and restore the integrity of the environment, but to do the same advocacy work for humanity. In that sense, it would be appropriate to call Francis the patron saint of environmental justice.

The environmental community has long used St. Francis to inform their conservation work. The current

challenges facing the world: poverty, unemployment, climate change, food insecurity, pollution, seismic blasting off the coast of our shores by oil companies demands our commitment to eradicating these challenges. But there are also important issues that also go beyond the traditional understanding of "environmentalism" such as gender-based violence, racism, classism, xenophobia, and homophobia that also play a role in environmental tragedies because they are varying forms of segregation and separation and go against the spirit of Franciscan and ubuntu theology.

The world in which we live is often described as ego-centric and individualistic. A society that thrives on (to use social media lingo) "likes" and "follows" and "comments". A world that no longer values the environment or the outdoors because the world is at our fingertips. A society where relationships under the slightest strain are severed and replaced almost immediately with a new one. Where many only care about themselves and their advancement in the world. Apathy is the order of the day because we are only concerned about issues that affect us personally and directly. Our recent experience of the global COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to realize our dependence on one another.

As a preacher, at the conclusion of the Season of Creation, our task is to call our congregations back to basics.

Francis' life exhibited a commitment to heal the injustices of his time. After his mystical experience in his early twenties, in which he is believed to have had a series

of visions in which Jesus Christ spoke to him saying: “Francis, go and repair my church which is falling completely into ruin” (Ramon 1994: 6). This was the beginning of a revolutionary ministry that would turn thirteenth century Europe and indeed the global church on its head. He radically lived gospel values of caring for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. Francis himself lived a life of extreme poverty despite coming from and having access to excessive wealth. He believed God was to be seen, lived, and experienced in all creatures and people.

By examining our own tradition's teachings on the environment and engaging in dialogue with congregations about our role in causing harm to – or protecting the integrity of – creation, we are lending our voices to the environmental justice movement. We are moving ourselves and others into a new consciousness about how to live in unity and harmony with the earth and one another.

At a congregational level, nothing will change unless there are people working to make it happen. Environmental issues should always be on the agenda of our church councils, championed by dedicated members who have a passion for eco-justice. Other practical examples include formulating a policy on conserving energy, conducting energy audits of our church buildings and other properties, converting to clean energy where possible, starting compost and garden projects, encouraging education and environmental awareness, and advocating for better climate policy through movements such as SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities Environmental

Institute), Green Anglicans and others.

At a personal level, we could encourage our people to begin practically in their homes, because that is where charity (and indeed justice) begins: Support local entrepreneurs, reduce the use of single-use plastics, by investing in solar power, participating in local food gardens, and feeding schemes.

Above all, St. Francis Day beckons a return to basics- promoting the concept of simple living, which allows us to practice a life of ongoing conversion and provides lifelong opportunities to live in right relationship with our world.

This year, let's celebrate Francis' legacy and become an instrument of peace and work for eco-justice: “Where there is despair let's sow hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.” (from the prayer attributed to St Francis).

Francis himself lived a life of extreme poverty despite coming from and having access to excessive wealth.

At a congregational level, nothing will change unless there are people working to make it happen.

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LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR WEEK FIVE

GATHERING

Creator God,
maker of heaven and earth,
We acknowledge our failure
to live responsibly as part of your creation.
We have taken what we want,
without considering the consequences;
we have wasted and discarded,
without thought for the future.
Open our hearts and minds to the signs of our
times, to the groaning of creation, so that we may
turn from our greed and lack of vision and see a
world being made anew in Jesus Christ our Lord

(Climate Sunday 2021)

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of faith

We are not alone
We live in God's world
We believe in God who has created and is creating
Who works in others and us through the Spirit
We trust in the Creator
We are called to celebrate God's presence
To live with respect in creation
To love and serve others
To seek justice and to resist injustice
To seek out models for hope and peace
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us
We are not alone

Amen

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of intercession

With Saint Francis of Assisi, patron of ecologists,
let us bring before the Lord our requests for all of
us gathered here, for the Church and for the whole
world:

We pray for the Church: that she may be a beacon
of hope throughout the world, reminding us all of
our responsibility to care for and protect God's
precious gift of creation.
Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the world, our common home: that
through God's grace we may hear its cry for the
damage done and be moved to protect it for future
generations to enjoy.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for those people who are already facing
droughts, floods and storms: that God may grant
them strength and hope for the future as they work
to adapt to the changing climate.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for our parish and our local community:
that through the grace of God we may hear the
urgent cry of the earth and of the poor and be
inspired to respond at this crucial time.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Conclusion to intercessions:

Let us bring before the Lord the prayers that lie in
each of our hearts as we listen to the cry of the
earth and the cry of the poor. [Pause]

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

God, source of all goodness, we call you Creator;
you have made our wonderful world out of nothing
and constantly keep it alive. Help us to be full of
care and grateful for our home received from you
as a gift. May we work to keep this, our common
home, filled with peace and justice.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(CAFOD resource for Climate Sunday)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Goodness is stronger than evil. Love is stronger
than hate. Light is stronger than darkness. Life is
stronger than death. Victory is ours through Him
who loved us.

(Desmond Tutu)

CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE

Lord's Prayer:

We pray our common prayer that Christ taught us.

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your beloved community of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another,
forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever.

Amen.

*(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia
Mihinare o Aotearoa. This version of the Lord's prayer was
influenced by Maori theologians)*

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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 listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation.

(adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)



Green Anglicans
Anglican Church of
Southern Africa
Environmental Network
www.greenanglicans.org



**SEASON OF
CREATION**

www.seasonofcreation.org

Sending Out

Disturb us, O Lord
when we are too well-pleased with ourselves
when our dreams have come true
because we dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord
when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord
to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas
where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our
hopes and invited the brave to follow.

Amen

(Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu)

adapted from a prayer Sir Francis Drake

Mash, R
Season of Creation 7
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Environmental Network
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