



SEASON OF CREATION

September 12, 2021

The Intentional Goodness of Creation

GATHERING

As the service begins, pass a number of smaller bowls of soil around the congregation. Don't offer any commentary other than the invitation to pass the bowls around. Include enough bowls so that this part of the service does not become drawn out. Once everyone has had a chance to interact with the bowls, have them brought forward.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first Sunday of the Season of Creation. Today we focus on the earth and its soils

Soil may not be as visually striking as a green forest or appear as vital as fresh water, but plain-looking soil is a natural resource just as essential to sustaining life on Earth. Soil provides nutrients, water and minerals to plants and trees, stores carbon and is home to billions of insects, small animals, bacteria and many other micro-organisms. The multiple roles of soils often go unnoticed. Soils don't have a voice, and few people speak out for them. They are our silent ally in food production. The scriptures speak of soil cooperating with God in creation as God calls upon the earth to bring forth all forms of vegetation and animals. The scriptures further acknowledge humanity's intimate connection with earth as humans too are formed from the humus, from soil.

We have gathered recognising our place within this amazingly diverse and bountiful planet and we reflect on how we live as members of our planet's ecosystem. What does it mean for us as followers of Jesus who calls us to paths of justice and compassion? How do we use, or abuse, the resources and produce of the world and the impact that may have upon those who we share this planet with?

CALL TO WORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES

Pour the soil from the smaller bowls into the larger, central location.

We gather in thanksgiving for soil which works with God in the act of creation and which teams with life and sustains life. We give thanks for the fruit of the earth which nurtures and sustains us.

***We give thanks for soil which sustains and nurtures us.
We acknowledge we are intimately connected with soil and have a
responsibility to care for soil as the soil cares for us.***

***With the soil and with all creation we give praise
to God in whom the universe was born and
who is present in and through all creation.***

Aboriginal song sticks or a similar symbol of the First Peoples may be placed next to the large bowl.

We gather in acknowledgement of the (name of local People), the first inhabitants (or traditional owners/custodians) of this place who dwelt here and cared for it of old.

***We gather attentive to their wisdom of living in harmony with the land and
in commitment to the ongoing journey of reconciliation between indigenous
and non-indigenous Australians.***

The Christ Candle is lit.

We gather as a people of God looking to Christ, the divine Word and Wisdom in whom all things in heaven and on Earth have their being and in whom all things are reconciled.

***And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us,
we have seen his glory, the glory of a Father's only son.***

The Christ Candle is placed into the bowl of soil.

SONG *(You can copy, paste and download this song with Lyrics)*

All Things Bright and Beautiful

<https://vimeo.com/worshipwell/download/596329953/71d4c307de>

A CONVERSATION


Invite members of the congregation to reflect briefly on their thoughts and experience of soil. Are they gardeners who regularly get their hands in the soil or can they remember ever eating soil? Are any from a farming background? Invite members to share their thoughts with their neighbours

PRAYER

To you, God who sang the universe into being
And cradles all creation within yourself
God who became flesh, born as one of us
Offering yourself for creation's redemption
God who pours life and vision within our souls
And who is present in and through all creation

***To you O God
Be all praise and glory
Throughout earth
And in this place where we are gathered.***





Today we gather in celebration of soil. This complex part of our planet
which we walk over, grow our food from and yet so often take for granted
***We celebrate the microbes, vegetable matter, clay and rock particles
And give thanks for soil which is so vital for life.***

We come in lament and confession
For not only have we taken soil for granted
We have distanced ourselves from soil and covered it over
We've overused it and drained it of nutrients
And drained poisons upon it

***Forgive us our negligence and destructive practices Forgive us that
while soil sustains us, we often disregard soil.***

Guide us our God to paths of living
Which are attentive to the needs of all living creatures
And nurturing towards the planet.
Amen.

ASSURANCE

God has given us this earth to care for and delight in.
In Christ we can be made whole.
Christ offers us a new way forward.
Thanks be to God.

SONG

Morning Has Broken

<https://vimeo.com/worshipwell/download/561636940/398ceec9d6>

OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*A Uniting Church in Australia Prayer
'For The Sake Of The Planet'*

*Creator God,
breath and source of life,
in love you called the world into being
and in grace you made us and call us your children. We stand in awe of the
wonder of your creation:
its beauty and wildness;
complexity and power;
resilience and fragility.*

*God of life,
you call us to be participants in the web and
wellspring of life:
to be nurtured by the planet;
to be nurturing of the planet;
to cherish the world and all that lives.
But we have failed and creation groans under our weight.*

*God of grace,
forgive us in our brokenness:
when we have taken too much from the earth;
when we have not spoken out
against greed and destruction;
when we have allowed our most vulnerable neighbours to be harmed.
We seek courage and forgiveness to be made whole.*

*God of love,
we pray for those people, communities and nations already suffering the
devastating effects of climate change;
And we pray for the diversity of life on earth,
so much of it already threatened by our actions.*

*God of hope,
we pray for the world's leaders
Bless them with wisdom and creativity,
and a shared vision of hope for all creation.
May they find the determination
to take strong action against climate change,
and the political will to act together for the common good.*

*Creator God,
we pray for us all,
that we might restore our relationships with each other and work together to
heal the earth.
Renew us in your grace
for the sake of your creation. Amen.*





READINGS

Prov 1:20-33 Ps 19 James 3:1-12 Mk 8:27-38

REFLECTION

The Intentional Goodness of Creation

<https://vimeo.com/worshipwell/download/597052015/59ba103252>

SONG

Here I Am Lord

<https://vimeo.com/worshipwell/download/552167197/b5e11338d5>

BLESSING

We are blessed with the diversity and uniqueness of creation, the beauty and mystery of life

As you leave now and go out into this new day

May you know God's love and healing energy
to enable you to work and live in newness of life

For the glory of God's creation

Amen

***The peace of the earth be with you, the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too.***

Deep peace falling over you, God's peace growing in you.

And now, we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen

SONG Beautiful Things – Gungor

<https://vimeo.com/worshipwell/download/588140787/2d83e6d48a>

Some prayers have been adapted from the Uniting Justice Australia resources for World Environment Day 2015, 'Caring for the Planet's precious soils.'

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