

# 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – Morning Service

## Season of Creation

Jill Martin

### Call to Worship – Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore.

### StF 136 – Morning has broken

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| 1) Morning has broken like the first morning;<br>Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.<br>Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!<br>Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word! | 3) Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning<br>Born of the one light Eden saw play!<br>Praise with elation, praise every morning,<br>God's re-creation of the new day! |
| 2) Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,<br>Like the first dewfall on the first grass.<br>Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,<br>Sprung in completeness where his feet pass.     |   |

*Eleanor Farjeon    © Gervaise Farjeon    CCL No. 515642*

### Season of Creation Explanation

The Season of Creation runs annually from September 1st through to October 4th. The world's 2.2 billion Christians are invited to pray and care for creation during this time. The Season of Creation unites the global Christian family around one shared purpose. It also provides flexibility in celebrating prayer services and engaging in a variety of actions to care for creation.

### Opening Prayer<sup>1</sup>

Blessed are you, Creator of all to you be all praise and glory for ever as your dawn renews the face of the Earth bringing light and life to all creation bring hope to your people. May we rejoice in this day you have made open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to work for justice for all of creation, that the world may rejoice together and give you praise. **Amen**

### StF 449 – Lord of creation

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| 1) Lord of creation, to you be all praise!<br>Most mighty your working, most wondrous<br>your ways!<br>Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,<br>And yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.      | 4) Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;<br>I praise and adore you for all you impart,<br>Your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,<br>Your presence to shield me, whatever betide. |
| 2) Lord of all power, I give you my will,<br>In joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.<br>Your bondage is freedom; your service is song;<br>And, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.            | 5) Lord of all being, I give you my all;<br>If e'er I disown you, I stumble and fall;<br>But led in your service your word to obey,<br>I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.      |
| 3) Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,<br>Rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find;<br>What eye has not seen and what ear has not heard<br>Is taught by your Spirit and shines from your word. |  |

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## Season of Creation Prayer

Creator of all, from your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being. On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation. You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life. We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation. Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures round us and all creation. Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth. In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

### StF 727 – God in his love for us

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| 1) God in his love for us lent us this planet,<br>Gave it a purpose in time and in space:<br>Small as a spark from the fire of creation,<br>Cradle of life and the home of our race. | 3) Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;<br>Long has earth bowed to the terror of force;<br>Long have we wasted what others have need of,<br>Poisoned the fountain of life at its source. |
| 2) Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,<br>Life that sustains us in body and mind:<br>Plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,<br>Riches undreamed-of to fathom and find. | 4) Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,<br>Ours, as his stewards, to farm and defend.<br>From its pollution, misuse, and destruction,<br>Good Lord, deliver us, world without end!       |

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### Reading: John 1: 1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

### Reading: Exodus 3: 1-5

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.' When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' And Moses said, 'Here I am.' 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'

## Reflection<sup>2</sup>

In his Gospel John tells us that God and Jesus are one, were one from the beginning of Creation. Jesus is involved as Creator as well as Saviour, Healer and friend, compassionate and caring, always aware of humanity and creation. As Jesus calls us to follow him, to love as He loves, we are also called to love what He loves - all of Creation even the things which we struggle to like!

So, what does the story of the call of Moses teach us about God and Jesus? There are three messages in this story from Exodus

1. I have heard the cry of my people
2. I am sending you
3. You are on holy ground remove your sandals.

Have you heard the cries of God's people?

Disasters are becoming ever more frequent. Last year a 'rain bomb' fell on the city of Durban, six months of normal rainfall in two days. Homes and businesses were washed away, one family lost nine members. Some bodies have never been found. Families are still living in church halls. This year Cape Town has had the wettest winter for 47 years. We have entered the era of climate chaos. At the same time in East Africa they have had the driest rainy season for over 40 years - putting over 20million people at risk of severe hunger and starvation. The livestock have died, children are suffering from malnutrition and are too weak to walk to school. Across Europe wild fires have raged destroying homes and businesses, destroying the tourist income, leaving blackened areas which were once beauty spots. People fleeing from the fires leaving everything behind. The airlines and travel agencies continuing to take people for their holidays. Huge cruise ships which bring thousands of tourists into areas of historic significance, where it is difficult to stop and look, footfall destroying ancient monuments. Fires across Canada where the smoke reaches and pollutes the air in USA. Horrific fires in Hawaii.

In Africa there have been a number of inter-religious attacks such as the Massacre of forty people on Pentecost Sunday in Saint Francis Church, Nigeria. But underlying the inter-religious violence and terror, climate change is playing its part. The mostly Christian farmers and the nomadic Muslim herders used to live in symbiotic relationship. The farmers would harvest, and then the herdsmen would come with their cattle and eat the left overs and fertilise the fields with their dung. Supplies would be sold on both sides. But now the rains have failed and the herdsmen come south too early, they trample the crops, and the farmers and herdsmen have armed themselves, it has become part of the broader inter-religious violence. Climate Change is pushing migration and violence is growing. The people of God are crying - are you listening?

Do you know you are standing on Holy Ground?

In the words of Saint Francis 'we must hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'. Take off your sandals for the place where you are standing is Holy Ground - do we love the earth? Do we believe it was made by our Creator God and bears the finger prints of God? The story of Moses and the burning bush is a clear one for activists, we are in it for the long run. Our actions must be rooted in prayer and meditation, we must come in silence to listen to God on the mountain, refill our spiritual tanks, we must fall in love with the wonders of this beautiful creation. Learn to hear the great choir of God's creation.

*"There are no unscarred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places" - Wendell Berry*  
*Do we hear the cry of the Earth for creation is groaning, waiting on tiptoe for the children of God to be revealed* - Romans 8 19-22

Do you hear God calling you?

When we hear God calling us, we often respond like Moses - who am I that I should lead the people out of Egypt? My actions are far too small and the problem is far too big to make any difference. Your 'small' actions do matter. They matter because they are like small drops of water feeding into a stream, joining a river, flowing into the sea. Transformational change doesn't take place when individuals change but when networked individuals change.

Get involved with other people, other organisations, be part of a movement. Change cannot happen fast enough with individual actions, we have to push companies and churches to divert their money from fossil fuels, we have to stop new oil and gas projects. When we realise the giant boulder of climate action isn't sitting at the bottom of an impossibly steep hill with only a few hands to push it up, but rather is already at the top and already rolling down the hill with millions pushing it in the right direction, that gives us hope. It isn't going fast enough yet, but for each new hand that joins, it will go a little faster. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says "Every action matters...Every choice matters."

Listen to the cry of God's people, know that you are standing on sacred ground, know that God is calling you to act. May your small actions flow into the mighty river of justice and together we will move mountains.

### **StF 106 – God whose almighty word**

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| 1) God whose almighty word<br>Chaos and darkness heard,<br>And took their flight,<br>Hear us, we humbly pray,<br>And where the gospel day<br>Sheds not its glorious ray,<br>Let there be light! | 3) Spirit of truth and love,<br>Life-giving, holy Dove,<br>Speed forth your flight;<br>Move on the waters' face,<br>Bearing the lamp of grace,<br>And in earth's darkest place<br>Let there be light! |
| 2) Christ, you have come to bring<br>On your redeeming wing<br>Healing and sight,<br>Health to the sick in mind,<br>Sight to the inly blind,<br>O to all humankind<br>Let there be light!       | 4) Blessed and holy Three,<br>Glorious Trinity,<br>Wisdom, Love, Might,<br>Boundless as ocean's tide<br>Rolling in fullest pride,<br>Through the world far and wide<br>Let there be light!            |

*John Marriott*

### **Litany of Repentance<sup>3</sup>**

God of light, life and love. God of land, and sea, and sky, who called creation into existence and wove it into a rich tapestry, a fine mat, a web of life. Your Spirit hovered over the face of primordial waters, and was breathed into humankind after You made us equally in Your image. Your word was made flesh and embodied Your divine love as it took root and bore flesh in us, restoring our relationship with You. Yet we have not honoured this relationship with You and the rest of Your Creation. We have disrespected the web of life. We have devalued the fine ecological mat that You wove with so much love. We have uprooted Your tree of life and sold it as logs. We have forgotten that we sweat and cry saltwater and have polluted Your oceans and rivers.... Oceans that cry for justice and rivers that call to righteousness. Instead of everything that has breath praising You, all creation groans in pain as trees and phytoplankton choke on carbon etched for our desire for more and our care for less. All around we see the consequences of our ecological sin as we extract and exploit, as we defile and pillage our sister and brother creation; heatwaves and wildfires, bitter winters, droughts and floods, rising sea levels and rising ocean temperatures, more extreme cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes. Yet we are blind. Creation roars in pain yet we are deaf. You call us to Christ, to speak truth to power and peace to this planet, our common home, yet we are silent. God of hope and healing, may your Rivers of Righteousness wash away our apathy, our greed and selfishness and reveal the deep relationships You created for us with all creation. Nourish us with the water of life that restores, turning deserts of despair into oases of hope. May the waves of Your embrace transform us back into guardians of Your creation, may the currents of Your justice carry us to your lagoon of peace where all creation may enjoy life in abundance. We pray in the name of the one who came so that the whole cosmos may have everlasting life, Jesus the Christ. **Amen**

## Prayer of Repentance<sup>4</sup>

In God there is forgiveness. Loving and all seeing God, forgive us when we have failed to support one another and to be what we claim to be. Forgive us where we have failed to serve you; and where our thoughts and actions have been contrary to yours we ask your pardon. God forgives us be at peace. [Silence....] Rejoice and be glad, for Christ is resurrection, reconciliation for all the human race and for the whole of creation. **Amen**

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

## StF 693 – Beauty for brokenness

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| 1) Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,<br>Lord, in Your suffering world, this is our prayer.<br>Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,<br>Sunrise to sunset Your kingdom increase.                   | 3) Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,<br>Cities for sanctuary freedoms to share.<br>Peace to the killing fields, scorched earth<br>to green,<br>Christ for the bitterness, His cross for the pain. |
| 2) Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,<br>Work for all people, trade for their skills.<br>Land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,<br>Voices to plead the cause of those who can't<br>speak | 4) Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,<br>Plundered and poisoned, our future,<br>our dreams.<br>Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed,<br>Make us content with the things that we need.  |
| <i>Ch) God of the poor, friend of the weak,<br/>Give us compassion we pray,<br/>Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain,<br/>Come change our love from a spark to a flame.</i>                           | 5) Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame<br>Until Your justice burns brightly again;<br>Until the nations learn of Your ways,<br>Seek Your salvation and bring You their praise.                    |

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## Blessing<sup>5</sup>

May we be blessed to open our hearts to receive “the living waters of God’s justice and peace” within us  
May we be blessed to share the “living waters of God’s justice and peace” with our suffering brothers and sisters and all creatures around us. May we be blessed to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the “living waters of God’s justice and peace” may become a mighty river all over the Earth. And may God bless us on this journey, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

<sup>1</sup> adapted from Lancelot Andrews 1626

<sup>2</sup> Taken from words of Rev. Canon Rachel Mash

<sup>3</sup> Rev James Shri Bhagwan, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

<sup>5</sup> Fr Joshtrom Kureerhadam, Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development