

SEASON OF CREATION

A HOME FOR ALL? RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD.



The Methodist Church
in Singapore

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - 1 SEPTEMBER TO 4 OCTOBER 2021

FOREWORD

By Bishop Dr Gordon Wong

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:22, NIV)

I am thankful to the editors of this Creation Care publication for inviting me to write a Foreword. I am very happy to do so, for at least three reasons.

Firstly, creation care is one important way in which we can Love God By Loving Our Neighbours. To care for creation is to show care for all neighbours who live on this globe.

Secondly, in many parts of the western world, Christianity has been misrepresented as being opposed to Creation Care and the warnings of climate change.

I hope that this devotional booklet will help clarify that Singapore Christians are not against, but firmly in favour of Creation Care. (Please refer to our section on The Sphere of Creation Care in our Methodist Social Principles: <https://www.methodist.org.sg/images/mcs/pdf/methodistsg-social-principles-2020.pdf>).

Thirdly, I am delighted to see how younger Methodists from all three Annual Conferences have come together to create this publication. This collaboration across our Annual Conferences is one example of the unity we have in Christ as ONE MCS.

I would like to express a special thank you to the members from CAC's Sengkang Methodist Church for initiating this important collaboration.

I hope that the prayerful reading and reflection on these articles will help every one of us do something towards fulfilling the role of humanity as stewards of God's creation.

Love God by Loving Our Neighbour
Love the Creator by Loving Creation

To God be the glory!



PREFACE

By Dennis Tan

The journey for this devotional guide started in July 2020 with a simple question: ***“Do you think this can be done?”***

It was a bad time to be starting something new. Churches and ministries were dealing with the nation’s gradual reopening, the Season of Creation was (and is still) new to our churches in Singapore, and we had under two months to get everything together by September.

Yet, we pushed ahead, imbued with a sense of urgency at the worsening state of the environmental crisis and the millions of lives it continues to affect. With much prayer and petition, we knew that this was a project that God wanted us to take up. Indeed, God’s grace and mercies never cease to amaze: within two months, a team of four writers was gathered and kind pastors gladly volunteered to help with the editorial and preface.

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. From 1 September to 4 October, we unite with the global Church to pray and protect God’s creation. While there are many resources in countries overseas about creation care, there is a dearth of resources for Christians in Singapore seeking to realign our lives with God’s mandate to care for His creation. Through this devotional, we hope to provide Christians in Singapore with a resource to celebrate the Season of Creation that is situated in our unique local context.

We also hope to educate readers about creation care and how to live it out. That is why the devotional is organised such each reflective weekend devotion is followed by five weekdays of shorter pointers that challenge readers to live out what they have learnt. We hope to impart the understanding that caring for creation involves conscious acts of repairing our broken relationship with the rest of creation – human and non-human alike – in all areas of our lives.

Lastly, we hope that this devotional can be a display of Methodist unity in caring for God’s world.

This year, God has grown our pool of writers significantly, with three pastors and nine laypeople from all three Conferences. As was the year before, the 2021 devotional is anchored by laypeople to show that caring for creation is the responsibility of all – to be responsible stewards of all creation and to address the environmental crisis.

This devotional will challenge your existing notions of what it means to create a home for all. It will compel you to reflect on what it looks like to live in a world that is inclusive, just, and full of peace and hope for the future.

Regardless of your position on environmental issues. Regardless of whether you have heard about the environmental disasters happening around the world. Take these challenges as a clarion call to unite with the global Church in living out our duty as responsible stewards of God’s creation. May we restore our relationship with creation that has been corrupted by sin. May we obey and love our Creator by loving His creation, today.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The theme this year is **"A Home For All? Renewing The Oikos Of God."**

Oikos (οἶκος) means "home" or "household". As we ponder and reflect using this devotional, may God open our eyes to see how the inter-connectedness of God's world.

The first week opens with a reflection question and a guided prayer for us to prepare our hearts for the entire Season of Creation.

It is followed by 3 days of explanation to each sub-theme (Oikoumene, Oikologia and Oikonomia), and a guided prayer.

Week 2 to 5 opens with a reading on the topic of the week on Sundays, followed by 5 days of action and/or reflection pointers on Mondays to Fridays. It then closes with a final reading on Saturday to end off the week.

The final week consists of a devotional reading on Sunday, and a guided prayer on Monday to end of this Season of Creation. As we pray in one heart, one soul, one mind and one strength with all the Christians in Singapore, lifting our prayers to the God who is sovereign, may we find hope in Him who holds the world in His hands.

Acknowledgements ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to thank our Bishop, Rev Dr Gordon Wong, for his support in writing the foreword for this devotional. We would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to Rev. Dr. Nathanael Goh for connecting us with the Communications team of the Methodist Church in Singapore, and for the great support that the MCS team has provided.

Last but not least, all glory to our heavenly Father who has made all these possible.

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. [Psalm 127:1]

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PHOTO CREDITS

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All devotional materials have been guided by Season of Creation. You may access more of their resources at <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

WEEK 7

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UNDERSTANDING OIKOS

1ST TO 4TH SEPTEMBER

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Understanding Oikos



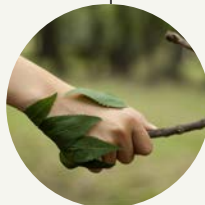
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Day 3, Friday
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DAY 1: PRAYER

On the first day, reflect on the relationship you have with God and the rest of the creation. Then, pray this prayer to start the season:

O loving Creator,

We thank you for the this wondrous world that you have created. We ask that we may love and care for it just as You do.

We thank you for the complex relationships that exist between everything You have created. We pray for the strength and conviction to restore the relationships that have been broken by sin.

We thank you for the heavy responsibility of stewarding Your creation. May You help us to be just, kind and faithful stewards of this world you have placed us in.

May you open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our minds to think. May you soften our hearts to feel, and convict our hands and feet, so that we will go forth and be Your ambassadors in this world.

Amen.

SEASON OF CREATION 2021
A HOME FOR ALL: RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD



DAY 2: OIKOUMENE

Contributor: Rev. Raymond Fong

Oikoumene is defined as the entire inhabited earth and in the ancient times, it also has particular reference to the realm of an empire, e.g., the Roman empire. The theological meaning is closely connected with the understanding of the people of Christ's church in the entire world. There is an ecumenical perspective to this term in that all Christian churches have a calling and duty to cooperate and collaborate. However, beyond a church-political context, it also refers to the essence of us being God's people, embracing His call to a unity of faith and mission.

As the entire people of God, we are set apart for the purposes of God to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20), be His salt and light (Matt 5:13-16), and agents of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20). As catalysts of His transformation, we are stewards of His creation (Gen 2:15). We are called to restore the shalom that God intends for whole of creation through loving care, active protection, responsible living and Sabbath-keeping. Let us do our part for the mission of God, as the entire people of God, for the glory of God.

PRAYER

Lord, I am so thankful for your redemptive love that makes it possible for me to be a part of your beloved people. Help me grasp anew this privilege and joy of being part of Your Church, the entire people of God. Renew me, O Lord, and empower me to be Your ambassador, a carrier of Your fragrance, a bridge to forge Your unity, a responsible steward to help all creation receive Your love and healing. May I live for You, surrendered to You and always bearing fruit for You. In Jesus' name. AMEN.

DAY 3: OIKOLOGIA

Contributor: Rev. Dr Andrew Peh

It is from the two Greek words οἶκος (house) and λογία (word) that we the English “ecology” which translates as “a word about the house”, or more aptly, a study of our habitat. The author of Proverbs encouraged his readers to look at the ants, Job is asked to marvel at the expanse of the Pleiades and the Orion and Jesus admonished His followers to consider the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields.

In many ways, our response to the ecological crisis is a corollary to the current coronavirus pandemic. Our muted and masked response is perhaps a prologue to darker times when we no longer can hear the songs of the birds, nor can see the wonder of God’s creation, nor will our children’s children be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature as God intended for us all. We have often reflected on humanity’s rebellion in the garden but as Sandra Richter noted, “rarely it seems do we as Christians reflect on the effects of humanity’s rebellion *on* the garden.” In our neglect and apathy as God’s stewards, we are complicit in what Joshtrum Kureethadam refers to as “oikos-cide”. May the following devotions move us out of our complacency, to a contrition of our apathy, into a deeper appreciation of the beauty, and the preservation of God’s wider creation.

PRAYER

*“Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm
Sunday’s cross.*

*The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap
their hands*

*The very stones themselves would shout
and sing*

*If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognise in Christ their Lord and King.*

*He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases
you please,*

And still to dust and ashes you return.

*But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.”*

Malcolm Guite, “Ash Wednesday”



DAY 4: OIKONOMIA

Contributor: Rev. R Prabhu

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to be His Stewards. Stewardship is the mark of servanthood. The Greek word "oikonomia" in the New Testament, means Stewardship. "oikos" means "household"; and "nemein" means "management and dispensation." When God created the whole universe, He put the man and the woman in charge of His creations under His Sovereign authority, basically to "Rule over" (Gen 1:28) and "to work it and take care of it." (Gen 2:15). We are to be responsible stewards of God in the whole inhabited world (*oikoumene*) which includes people and the environment (*oikologia*). It is amazing that God has entrusted His creations to mankind, to care, guard and contribute to the welfare of His creations "to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under... Christ" (Eph 1:10).

There are three main aspects of stewardship I want to highlight.

1. **We are stewards for the Proclamation of the Gospel. (Col 1:15)**

We have an apostolic calling to fulfil the plan of redemption. Apostle Paul rightly said "I was made a minister" "according to the stewardship from God" to preach the Gospel (Col 1:25). Gospel is a treasure entrusted into our hands (2 Cor 4:7). Though not worthy, God by His Grace, called us to be faithful stewards of the Gospel. Paul says that it is " the stewardship of God's grace which was given" to him (Col 1:25). As a steward of the Gospel, he is responsible to present the Gospel in its fullness. So "No dilutions" in the content of the Gospel and "No compromise" with the philosophies of the world.

2. **We are stewards of the Provisions of God, entrusted into our hands. (Gen 1:28)**

All the resources we have are God-given. The nature is one among them. There is a great need in the area of the conservation of nature,

proper management of natural and material resources. We need to guard against the abuse of them. We are accountable trustees of God-given resources. Integrity is expected from us.

3. **We are also stewards in the Positions God has placed us. (Matt 25:14-25)**

God has entrusted in our hands roles and responsibilities and also people to work with us. People are of great value. As stewards of God, we should not abuse the power and authority to crush the ones under our care. Biblical leadership is stewardship not dictatorship. People should grow, bloom and be productive under our leadership.

Let us not focus on the fringe benefits of the earthly value. Our Reward is God Himself and His Joy is of eternal value. "Well done... enter into the joy of your master." (Matt 25:23)

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for calling us to be your stewards. Help us to be faithful and fruitful stewards lifting your name up wherever we are and in whatever positions you have placed us. To God be the Glory!

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover

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Day 1

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Day 2

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Day 3

Birds in the sky Photo by moms clean air force

Day 4

Human and nature photo by Notre Dame University

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UNDERSTANDING OIKOS

WEEK 2

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A JUST HOME FOR ALL PEOPLE

5TH TO 11TH SEPTEMBER

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SEASON OF CREATION 2021
A HOME FOR ALL: RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD

DAY 1, SUNDAY

A JUST HOME FOR ALL PEOPLE

“I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.”

[Deuteronomy 32:3-4]

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses declares the attributes of God, His faithfulness, righteousness and justness. Our God is indeed a just God, but what does it really mean? How does it affect us?

When we say God is just, it means He does what is right and what is fair. Our God is a just God because He acts righteously in the way He treats creation. He is impartial in the way He judges (Col 3:25), is against mistreatment of His people (Zech 7:10) and will execute vengeance against those who do wrong (Rom 12:19).

However, when we look at the world that God has created, is it reflective of His just character? Indeed, it is not, ever since sin entered into the world. For example, looking at the Covid'19 Pandemic, we see richer countries stocking up and hoarding vaccines, enough to vaccinate their populations two to three over, when these could have been distributed to those in the poorer countries who scramble to find vaccines and already lack the resources to take care of their residents.



What are some of the injustices you see around you? Exploitation of migrant workers, human trafficking, discrimination, bullying, world hunger and poverty are just some. There are so many ways that injustice plays out in our world today, but for this season of Creation, let us consider a new and growing area of injustice - climate injustice.

Climate injustice refers to how climate change tends to negatively affect the underprivileged more. People who live in developing countries will be impacted the most though they contribute little to climate change. On the other hand, developed countries and the rich will not be too affected by climate change even though they are the largest drivers of the climate crisis, with higher per capita emissions, unnecessary wastage, and consuming resources way beyond what is needed. This is because developed countries have more resources to respond to the climate crisis compared to less developed countries.

Consider also how the rest of non-human creation is so unjustly exploited for the benefit of mankind in illegal wildlife trades, animal poaching, animal cruelty, deforestation and pollution. And what about our future generations? What kind of Earth will they be inhabiting if we choose to continue living the way we are without caring about the sustenance and home of future generations? (cont.)



In the midst of all of this, God sees and is present. Our God is a just God who will uphold justice because it is an indispensable part of who He is and because He loves his people and His creation.

How then does our God see the injustices that happen in our world today? What is His heart for those who are suffering from injustice? How are we as God's people to respond in a time like this?

May we as God's people choose not to turn a blind eye to the injustices and suffering of our fellow brothers and sisters. In this broken and unjust world we live in, let us as God's people consider how we can bring God's love to those who are suffering from injustice, and restore this Earth to what God had intended it to be - a just home for all who live in it.

DAY 2, MONDAY

THE LORD, MAKER OF ALL

READ: PSALM 146
PROVERBS 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

"Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

I will praise the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Do not put your trust in princes,

in human beings, who cannot save.

When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;

on that very day their plans come to nothing.

Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Lord their God.

He is the Maker of heaven and earth,

the sea, and everything in them—

he remains faithful forever.

He upholds the cause of the oppressed

and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free,

the Lord gives sight to the blind,

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,

the Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord watches over the foreigner

and sustains the fatherless and the widow,

but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

*The Lord reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord."*

[Psalm 146]

*"A good name is more desirable than great riches;
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*

Rich and poor have this in common:

The Lord is the Maker of them all."

[Proverbs 22:1-2]

*"Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity,
and the rod they wield in fury will be broken.*

*The generous will themselves be blessed,
for they share their food with the poor."*

[Proverbs 22:8-9]

"Do not exploit the poor because they are poor

*and do not crush the needy in court,
for the Lord will take up their case*

and will exact life for life."

[Proverbs 22:22-23]

Imagine your mother is going on a holiday and has twenty cats she needs you to take care of while she is away.

(cont.)

Not all the cats are the same - some look more adorable, while others have scars or injuries; some are more friendly, others prefer to be alone. As such, when taking care of them, you show favouritism to those that you find cuter and friendlier by giving them more food and care, while ignoring or mistreating the other cats. When your mother returns, wouldn't she be angry to find that some of her cats have been neglected because of your preferential treatment? She loves all of them and expects you to love them the same.



Similarly, Psalm 146:6 and Proverbs 22:2 reminds us that the Lord is the Maker of us all who live on this Earth. Psalm 146:7-9 further details the love and concern God has for the oppressed, the hungry, the prisoners, the blind, the foreigner, the orphans and the widows. When we recognize that all who live on earth are made by God, we are better able to see the injustices happening around the world and grow a heart of love for those that have been cast aside in society. How do you view the forgotten in society? Do you see that both you and them share the same Maker?

Reflections



1. Knowing that we are all created by God, how should we see and care for our fellow humans on earth?

2. What is God's heart for those who are suffering from injustice?



DAY 3, TUESDAY

REFLECTING GOD'S JUST CHARACTER
AS HIS PEOPLE

READ: ZECHARIAH 13:8-10,
JAMES 1:27, JOB 31:13-23

“And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: ‘This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’

[Zechariah 13:8-10]

‘Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.’

[James 1:27]

“If I have denied justice to any of my servants, whether male or female, when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me?

What will I answer when called to account?

Did not he who made me in the womb make them?

Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

(cont.)

*“If I have denied the desires of the poor
or let the eyes of the widow grow weary,
if I have kept my bread to myself,
not sharing it with the fatherless—
but from my youth I reared them as a father would,
and from my birth I guided the widow—
if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing,
or the needy without garments,
and their hearts did not bless me
for warming them with the fleece from my sheep,
if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
knowing that I had influence in court,
then let my arm fall from the shoulder,
let it be broken off at the joint.
For I dreaded destruction from God,
and for fear of his splendor I could not do such
things.*

[Job 31:13-23]

Reflections

1. What are some injustices you see in the world today? Take some time to think about these issues and pen them down.
2. How can we as God’s people reflect his just character in the world we live in today?

DAY 4, WEDNESDAY

OPENING OUR EYES TO THE
INJUSTICES AROUND US

READ: LUKE 16:19-26

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

[Luke 16:19-26]

In Luke 16:19-26, Jesus described a rich man who feasted every day while, sitting just at his gate, laid Lazarus, a poor man covered with sores. Since Lazarus sat at the gate, the rich man would definitely have known about Lazarus’ existence. Yet, it is implied in the story that the rich man did not share his food with Lazarus as Lazarus’ desire for food remains unsatisfied (v21a). I would think that Singapore is very much like the rich man in this parable--secure in her mansion, having an abundance of food and living in relative luxury every day.

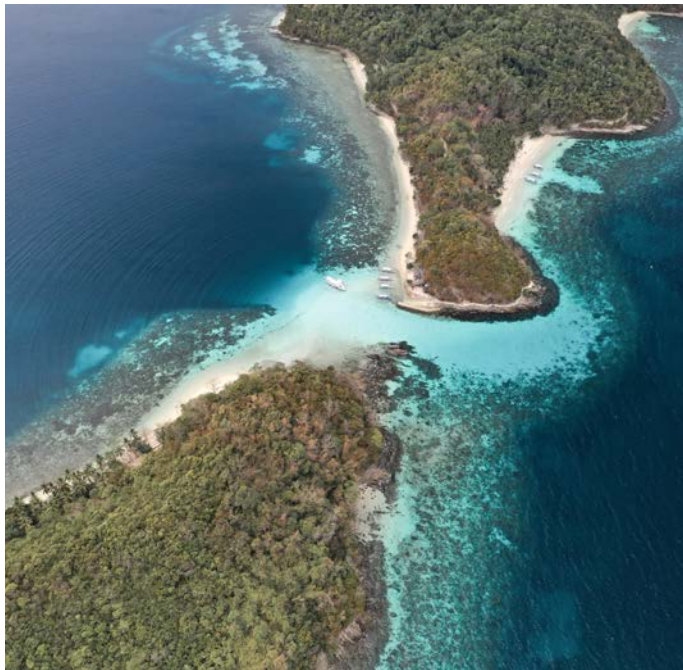
But have we also unconsciously become like the rich man in other ways--forgetting about the poor in our midst, ignoring the nations devastated by natural disasters, and living comfortably, worry-free while the Lazaruses around us suffer with sores just outside our gates? If we head down this path, we may also be heading towards Hades as Jesus warns here. We didn’t choose to be born in luxury just as others did not choose to be born in poverty. It is a blessing we have and God placed us here so that we can extend our love and care to the poor just at our gate with overflowing generosity.

1. Have we become too comfortable in Singapore and forgotten about the Lazaruses around us? Who are those around us that we can reach out to support --both within and outside of Singapore?
2. What are some things we are doing without care for the plight of others?

DAY 5, THURSDAY

PRAYING FOR THE WORLD'S INJUSTICE

In the annual Pacific Island Forum, leaders from the islands in the Pacific Ocean such as Australia and New Zealand and even small islands such as Fiji and Tuvalu gathered to discuss various issues including Australia's increasing emissions and her plans to go ahead with constructing new coal mines that would further exacerbate climate change. Many of the small islands that participated in the forum are only a few metres above sea level and would be significantly affected by rising sea levels, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion that would damage crops.



In the opening speech of the forum, Fiji's Prime Minister said, "I appeal to Australia to do everything possible to achieve a rapid transition from coal to energy sources that do not contribute to climate change," adding that coal posed an "existential threat" to Pacific countries. Yet, in the discussions during the forum, it was clear that Australia was unwilling to budge on their stance on coal, limiting warming to under 1.5°C and setting a plan for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, resulting in many of these island leaders feeling a sense of frustration and desperation.

"You are trying to save your economy, I am trying to save my people." PM of Tuvalu said to the PM of Australia.

"You are trying to save your economy, I am trying to save my people."

This is but one example of the injustices faced by small countries in the world. This issue often feels like it is beyond our power to change, and it is. However, in times like this, some of the only things we can do is to commit the situation to the Lord. Today, let us take some time to pray for the injustices we see in the world.

Pray



For God to open our eyes to see the injustices in this world and for compassion to care for them.

For God to stir a fire in our hearts to bring justice to the oppressed and the disadvantaged.



For us to have increased love towards the poor, taking action to alleviate their suffering.

For governments of developed countries to show consideration for developing countries and countries at greater risk to take action to help combat the climate crisis



DAY 6, FRIDAY

BEARERS OF GOD'S LOVE IN
AN UNJUST WORLD

READ: JAMES 2:14-17 & AMOS 6:1-7

'What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.'

[James 2:14-17]

*'Woe to you who are complacent in Zion,
and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria,
you notable men of the foremost nation,
to whom the people of Israel come!*

Go to Kalneh and look at it;

go from there to great Hamath,

and then go down to Gath in Philistia.

Are they better off than your two kingdoms?

Is their land larger than yours?

You put off the day of disaster

and bring near a reign of terror.

You lie on beds adorned with ivory

and lounge on your couches.

You lie on beds adorned with ivory

and lounge on your couches.

You dine on choice lambs

and fattened calves.

You strum away on your harps like David

and improvise on musical instruments.

[Amos 6:1-7]

In Amos 6, Zion, or Jerusalem, is the capital of the southern kingdom of Israel while Samaria is the capital of the northern kingdom. Kalneh, Hamath and Gath are kingdoms to the east, north and south of Israel that have been destroyed while Israel remains relatively untouched (v3-6). This caused the Israelites to become complacent and think that they would always live in comfort and security (v1). They assume that they will not be destroyed like the other nations. However, they did not know that their sins had piled up before God and their judgment was near when God would raise up the Assyrians against them to destroy them (v7, 14).

Do we as Singaporeans also have this same complacency when reading about the plight of other nations? Do we think we are safe from wars or natural disasters forever? Do we downplay a neighbour's cry for help just because their situation does not presently concern or affect us?

When we see a brother or sister in suffering, how do we respond? Do we respond in acts of love and compassion? Our faith must result in action. If we have faith without action, that faith, as written in James 2:17, is dead. Looking to the climate crisis, we know that it is one that will bring about various impacts on societies across the world, and those who are especially vulnerable to its impacts are those in the developing countries, the poor and marginalised. Already, we see a growing group of climate refugees, those who are losing their homes due to catastrophic flooding and loss of livelihoods brought by the changing climate. How are we as God's people responding to this suffering?

Let us not be passive observers, but instead bearers of God's love now that we are more aware of the impacts and injustices brought about by climate change and start taking action wherever God has placed us.

Reflections

1. How can we be God's hands and feet to carry out his work in a broken world such as this?
2. Are there changes we can make in our daily lifestyles to reduce our contribution towards climate change?
3. How can we better help and extend God's love to those who are already suffering the impacts of climate change?

DAY 7, SATURDAY

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”

[2 Corinthians 8:9-15]

The body of Christ stretches across geographical space. We are united in one Spirit under one head that is Christ. All who are saved by the grace of God are called children of God and are part of the temple of God in which His Spirit dwells (Eph 2:19-22). Though we belong to different churches in Singapore, we are all one in the spiritual body of Christ. Though we live in different parts of the globe, Christians in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Europe, America, China, Russia are all one in the body of Christ. Let us not allow earthly citizenship and national divides cloud the reality that we in fact share a common citizenship in heaven (Phil 3:20).

Yet, the reality is also that though we have one shared spiritual inheritance, our earthly living conditions can vary greatly between countries. Some are born in countries that are very developed and do not have to worry about food or personal safety. Others are born in countries that are frequently hit by natural disasters and often need to live day by day for sustenance with no savings to tap onto.

In 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Paul is urging the believers to excel in the grace of giving. This is so that the Christians who are presently living in abundance can help those who are living in want so that everyone has enough to meet their daily needs. Of course, Paul is not saying that we give until we ourselves become hard pressed (v13), but if we have enough, we ought to give according to what we have (v12). How can we say we love others when we see people in need but hold on tightly to our abundance? In fact, Paul suggests that the reason why some people have an abundance at the present time is so that they can supply to those who lack at the present time. Then if the time comes where the tables are turned, those who once lacked can then supply to those who will lack in the future (v14). The goal here is equality (v14b). Paul does not want any believer to be hard pressed while others spectate and live a luxurious life. Aren't we all part of the body of Christ? When one part suffers, doesn't the whole body suffer with it?

(Cont.)



Image: An affluent neighbourhood next to a run down town in Brazil

As it is written, “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little” (v15). God wants everyone to have sufficient resources for our daily needs. As residents of relatively wealthy Singapore, how are we using our resources? Are we excelling in the grace of giving? Or are we living in luxury while other Christians in neighbouring countries are suffering? Instead of helping others, some of us are using our abundance to buy more than we require. We throw away perfectly usable items just because we can and buy more clothes to add to our already extensive collection just because we want to. This leaves us with fewer resources to share with others.

Let us, instead, aim to live a less wasteful lifestyle through habits such as not buying things that you do not really need and reusing whatever you can instead of throwing them away. In this way, you would have more resources available to give to others who are having life more difficult than you—especially those within the body of Christ (Gal 6:10). John Wesley puts it succinctly when he urges us to save as much as we can so that we are able to give as much as we can. Then, those around us who lack will no longer lack and we can make earth a more just home for all.

EARN ALL YOU CAN, SAVE ALL YOU
CAN, AND GIVE ALL YOU CAN
- JOHN WESLEY (THE USE OF MONEY)

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WEEK 2

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A JUST HOME
FOR ALL PEOPLE

WEEK 3

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WISDOM FROM OUR HOME PLANET

12TH TO 18TH SEPTEMBER

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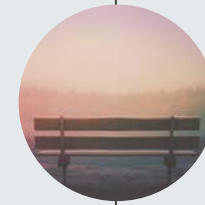
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and Theologians



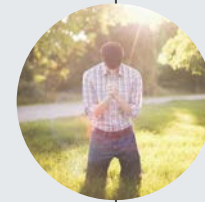
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SEASON OF CREATION 2021
A HOME FOR ALL: RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD

DAY 1, SUNDAY

Our Schoolmasters and Theologians

READ: MATTHEW 6:25-34 (ESV)

“Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

DO YOU RECALL THE LAST
TIME YOU ATTENDED TO
AND OBSERVED THE BIRDS
OF THE AIR AND THE
FLOWERS OF THE FIELD?



Over circuit-breaker last year, I got to do just that. I had the opportunity of staring out of my window a lot more, thus cultivating a sustained interaction with and attention to a pretty tall yellow flame tree outside. And not just with the tree, but so also with the abundance of wildlife that it sustained, including a pair of black-naped oriole parents—I had the privilege of witnessing them raising their young over the period of February to June. Now the black-naped oriole (Google it!) is a rather common bird species in Singapore, but it was certainly remarkable to watch them closely over an extended period of time.

In entering our journey this week on gleaning wisdom from our home planet, we turn to the words of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel. In speaking to his disciples on how to live well and wisely within the world (and a world full of worry, at that!), Jesus draws attention to the natural world, most notably, the birds of the air and the wildflowers (and grass) of the field. Interestingly, the words Jesus uses to look (at the birds) and consider (the wildflowers) are strong verbs, referring to careful and deliberate study. This suggests that we are to study diligently, with the view of learning from the larger natural world of God’s creation!

PAUSE & REFLECT

What does it look like for you to study the sparrows (or, oriole?) and consider the wildflowers?

Jesus not only draws attention to but draws upon the wisdom inherent within creation to reveal to his disciples the message and reality of his Kingdom. Our ‘reading’ of the book of creation calls us to see and encounter the One who provides for and cares for his creation, as well as connects us to our interdependence in and within the web of life. (Cont.)

As part of the community of creation, we are no less dependent on the Creator for life. The created order sings and teaches us what it means to depend upon God for life and sustenance, and more, for his generous provision.

"Both the birds of the air and the flowers of the field have become our schoolmasters and theologians."

Both the birds of the air and the flowers of the field have become, in the words of Martin Luther, our schoolmasters and theologians.

May we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear the wise song of creation that bears testimony to the reality of our good God.



DAY 2, MONDAY

Hearing God in Nature

READ: ROMANS 1:20

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

From today's passage we see that God's character and attributes can be seen from the natural world. It is an encouragement for us that our God is not silent or distant but yearns to show Himself and speak to us, so much so that in the end we will not be able to excuse our ignorance of God on His silence or absence.

One of the reasons why we cannot hear God is because we do not set aside time and attention to hear Him. So today let us set aside time to hear God speaking to us through His creation.

Start the day with a walk in a park or nature reserve near you. Before you start, take a couple of minutes just to still your heart and focus on God. Keep both feet flat on the ground and breathe evenly. If you find your mind wandering, focus on the image of a Cross in your mind.

After some time of silence, say a short prayer to God to invite Him to speak to you during your walk. Your prayer can be something like this:

"Dear Father. I know you yearn to speak to me through creation and the world around me. I open my heart to listen to anything you wish to speak to me. Speak to me during this walk. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen."

After praying, you can start your walk. Try not to rush it and just walk at a comfortable pace. Do avoid getting distracted by your phone or electronic devices and just enjoy God's creation around you. Keep in mind any impressions, words or phrases that the Holy Spirit prompts in your mind during the walk and take time to jot it down when you finish your walk.

This can be the start of your conversation with God!

DAY 3, TUESDAY

Generous Grateful Living

READ: PSALM 147:7-9

“Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre!
He covers the heavens with clouds;
he prepares rain for the earth;
he makes grass grow on the hills.
He gives to the beasts their food,
and to the young ravens that cry.”

I hope you managed to take a walk yesterday, with space to attempt identifying some species of trees and birds in your neighbourhood. Today we continue our conversation with God in reflecting upon his generosity, and our dependence upon Him for life. Indeed, the Psalmist proclaims that God’s provision extends to all creation!

In grateful response to our generous God, how can we learn to live more generously towards those around us?

SOME PRACTICES WE CAN ADOPT

#1. One practice we can adopt is to learn new worship songs that incorporate earth-keeping themes in them, in attending with gratitude to creation around us. Take the time to praise God, like the Psalmist, alongside the rest of the created community.

#2. Another practice could be to look for opportunities to be grateful for God’s gifts, even in the seemingly small and mundane things.

For example, recall your last meal. Take stock of all the ingredients that made up the meal, and the labour (farmers, processors, cooks..etc.) that went into producing it! Thank God for the blessing of these gifts and graces.

DAY 4, WEDNESDAY

Embracing our Creatureliness

READ: JOB 38:4-7

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

On what were its footings set,

or who laid its cornerstone—

while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?”

In our meditation for today, we are reminded of our finiteness and ‘creatureliness’ before God, when we reflect on the Lord’s address to Job (Job 38-41). Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann remarks that, ‘True creatureliness, like birds and lilies, trusts the abundance of the Father. But we imagine we know better in our wisdom and in our intelligence. We spend ourselves in the futility of trying to take the place of the life-guaranteeing God.’

Yet, there is freedom in recognizing that we are not gods, but creatures, part of the created community. This further challenges and also nuances the view of our superiority within the network of ecological relationships, and helps us see that we are very much embedded within our ecosystems. We do not exist in isolation, and as creatures, very much have limits, as well as are ultimately dependent upon God for our existence.

Practicing the Sabbath—in pausing, resting and ceasing from work—helps remind us of these limits, and ultimate dependence upon God.

How will you embrace your creatureliness today?



DAY 5, THURSDAY

On Bended Knees

READ: HOSEA 4:1–3
(NRSV)

“Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel; for the Lord has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air; even the fish of the sea are perishing.”

Earlier this week, we looked at Jesus’ direction to attend to the birds and flowers, with a larger view of God’s generous provision for his creation. This was a reframing of how we see the world: not from worry, but out of God’s generosity. In this way, the created order provokes us to reflect upon how we are choosing to live wise lives.

However, what happens when we fail to choose wisely? What happens when our over-consumption leads to carelessness and selfishness against neighbour and the rest of the Earth community? We are destroying the very fabric of creation itself.

How thus can we respond, and begin to shift in our posture and way of living and being?

Today we can begin on our knees, offering a prayer of confession, in reorienting and repenting for our complicity in unwise choices. Take some time to offer your prayer of penitence and lament.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

“Creator God, you formed us from the dust of the earth and placed us in a garden. Remind us of our place as your creatures at home in your creation. Forgive us when we forget our connection to the earth, and our dependence upon the goodness of your world. Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

(Cont.)

Our Saviour Christ, you were born into this world, and made your earthly home in Nazareth. Help us to know and love the people and places where you have set us. Forgive us when we fail to care for our homes, our communities, and your creation. Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Spirit of God, you desire to grow in us your fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Forgive us when our roots are so shallow, and our hearts so restless, that our lives fail to bear fruit. Enable us to find our home in you, and in the places to which you call us. Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

*Holy Spirit, make us determined
to reshape the way we live.
Restore all that is good,
restore all that is good,
help us change our hearts
so we show the care we should.*

*Alex Fergusson & Tim Fergusson,
At Your Bidding (You Saw That It Was Good)*

DAY 6, FRIDAY

Loving God's creatures

READ: PSALMS 104:
24-25

How many are your works, Lord!

In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond
number—

living things both large and small.”

Today we are reminded of creatures big and small. It is amazing how human beings, despite being physically smaller and weaker than many of God's creatures, have the honor of being the pinnacle of God's creation, being made just a little lower than God's own angels (Psalm 8: 5).

However, as we reflected upon throughout the week (especially yesterday!), humanity has seen itself as the master of creation rather than being one of the created beings.



This can be seen in cases of cruel mistreatment of animals in examples of pet cruelty. Or, in the hunting animals towards extinction and unsustainable fishing in the oceans.

We are also reminded that as beings created in God's image, He has placed us as stewards rather than rulers over His creation. Further, while we have to account for our stewardship before the Lord one day, our cruelty and exploitation on God's creation have immediate repercussions on us and our children before that.

TAKING ACTION

Here are a few ways in which you can respond:

- #1.** Consider volunteering in one of the many animal shelters in Singapore to care for pets who have been abused and abandoned. (Cont.)

Some examples of them are

- Mutts and Mittens
(<http://www.muttsnmittens.com>)
- Cat Welfare Society
(<https://www.catwelfare.org>)
- Save our Street Dogs (SOSD)
(<https://sosd.org.sg>)

#2. In continuation with your prayer of repentance yesterday, consider your consumption habits—especially what you eat, the clothes you wear, and what you typically shop for. Are there wiser choices that you can commit to (for example, buying more locally sourced food, eating less meat, committing to low waste grocery shopping, Bring Your Own Bag, buying 2nd hand clothes...etc)?

#3. Find out more about sustainable seafood at WWF Singapore (<https://www.wwf.sg>) and download to sustainable seafood guide to better inform your seafood shopping choices.

DAY 7, SATURDAY

*Learning from Nature:
Christ & the Salmon*

READ: PSALM 19 (ESV)

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his
handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out through all the
earth,

and their words to the end of the
world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom
leaving his chamber,

and, like a strong man, runs its
course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its
heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them is your servant
warned;
in keeping them there is great
reward.

Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden
faults.

Keep back your servant also from
presumptuous sins;

let them not have dominion over me!

(Cont.)

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

*“The heavens declare the
glory of God; the skies
proclaim the work of his
hands. Day after day they
pour forth speech; night
after night they reveal
knowledge. They have no
speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from
them. Yet their voice goes
out into all the earth, their
words to the ends of the
world.” [Psalm 19:1-4a]*

When reading this passage, one can imagine the Psalmist who, gazing at the vast night sky full of stars, proclaims his wonder and amazement of the glory of God. Nature needs no exposition, explanation or embellishment, but its beauty is one that transcends cultures and ethnicities. And while taking it all in, the Psalmist hears what creation conveys.



Reading a book about shepherds in the Middle East, I learnt that most of their knowledge, while passed down generations, comes from nature around them. Medicinal or poisonous plants, dangerous pitfalls or reviving oases.

These shepherds, like their forefathers, see nature not only as their provider but also their teacher. However, most of us are so divorced from the natural world, either merely seeing as a resource to be used for our own whims or not having the patience to slow down and observe creation's teaching.

A brightly colored flower attracts bees, providing the bee with nutrition through its nectar while at the same time, relying on the bee to propagate its pollen and ensure its progeny. This is a reminder that the world is not just a zero-sum game where one's gain necessarily means another's loss. It reminds us to be generous with our help, especially to the poor, in confidence that the Lord will meet our needs as well as seen in Proverbs 19:17 *“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.”*

When we take time to slow down and observe creation, we see that it is characterized by order. From the well-tessellated scales of fishes to the arrangement of seeds in a strawberry, to the growth rings of a tree trunk. (cont.)

The knowledge of a God who values order that He imprints it throughout creation is a reassurance in a world of seeming randomness and chaos, with lives abruptly disrupted by epidemics and minds worried about wars and natural disasters in distant shores. It is a reminder that he is enthroned over the tumultuous flood of our daily lives (Ps 29:10) and it is through his orderly hand that all things are held together (Col 1:17).

During the Circuit Breaker I watched a documentary on salmon. Salmon make long journeys of up to 2,000 miles in order to spawn at the same location they are born. Male salmon usually die after spawning, with female salmon surviving just long enough to guard their nest for a week or two before succumbing to the strain of the journey upstream, the pinnacle achievement of their lives being giving life to their young.



When looking at other animals such as lions, rabbits and even hamsters that will sometimes eat their young to survive or just to assert dominance, the salmon seems to contradict this natural instinct by exchanging their own lives to ensure the survival of their young. It is a vivid reminder of God through His Son Jesus Christ going through a difficult 2-year ministry that amounted to Him dying on the Cross. While it might seem foolishness to most, the act of Jesus' sacrificial love brought us new life through which we are reconciled with God (1 Cor 1:18).

This is just one of the many lessons that we can learn from creation, just as John Wesley has discovered that by “acquainting and familiarizing ourselves with the works of nature, we become as it were a member of her family, a participant in her felicities; but while we remain ignorant, we are like strangers and sojourners in a foreign land, unknowing and unknown.”

John Wesley

A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, 1:viii.



Through meditating on God's creation, we are drawn back to Scripture to discover the wonder of the Creator who is the beginning of all wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), echoing the Psalms who returns to the Law, describing the Law as perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant and pure (Psalms 19:7-9). And even as we dwell on this, may we proclaim through our lives and words worship to the Lord of all Creation, and may we echo with the Psalmist:

“May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

[Psalms 19:14]

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WEEK 3

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WISDOM FROM
OUR HOME
PLANET

WEEK 4

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PEACEMAKING AS HOME- BUILDING

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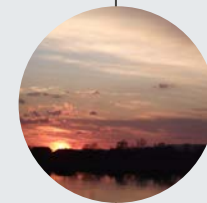
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SEASON OF CREATION 2021
A HOME FOR ALL: RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD

DAY 1, SUNDAY

SEEK SHALOM

Peace-making is a term that is commonly heard in our war-torn, fractured world. Will the UN be able to keep peace in the Gaza Strip? Will US-China tensions improve? Will our ravaged environment ever find rest? We tend to define peace as the absence of war.

But in the Bible, there is a lovely Hebrew word that captures a much richer, more life-giving notion of peace; one that does not just describe the absence of war and conflict, but the presence of a rich, integrated wholeness that God intends for all of His creation. This word is *shalom*, defined by theologian Cornelius Plantinga as *“the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfilment, and delight.”*



Adam and Eve experienced *shalom* in the garden of Eden. Here, they were able to commune with God intimately without shame and fear. They enjoyed the beauty and provision of His creation, and delighted in the company of one another, reflecting God’s own nature in *shalom* relationships.

This interconnected web of *shalom* was shattered when Adam and Eve rebelled against God. We see the effects of their rebellion – for example, war in the world, war within ourselves, war between our fellow human beings.

But did you know that even in the midst of this war, we are called to seek *shalom*? Not just to avoid conflict, but to press in and seek the life-giving, glorious reconciliation that God intends between himself and all of his human and non-human creation.

This is what our passage today tells us. Jeremiah 29:4-7 is a prophecy to the Israelites for their time in exile. In that time, Israel would no longer have land, an identity, a place to worship God, or a home to call their own. They would be living in enemy territory, and yet, this is what the Lord tells them to do.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

[Jeremiah 29:4-7]

The word welfare in verse 7 is *shalom*. God asks the Israelites to actively search out the *shalom* of the very people who would ransack their land and cause them to lose everything they had. It seems illogical, counter-intuitive, yet... God tells them to do so: “for in its *shalom* you will find your *shalom*” (v. 7).

We too are called to do the same. In our time of exile, as we wait for Christ to come to make all things new (Revelations 21:5), we are called to be peace-makers who will seek God’s justice, wholeness and well-being in our broken communities and in our groaning land. As we do so, God’s promise remains: “seek the *shalom* of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its *shalom* you will find your *shalom*” (v.7).

DAY 2, MONDAY

GOD'S COVENANT OF PEACE

READ GENESIS 9:8-17 (ESV).

“Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

For us to live in peace with one another and the earth, we first need to understand how God extended peace to us. This takes us back to Genesis. While God created a world that was good, sin led to broken relationships between God, people and nature. In Genesis 6, we read that in response to the wickedness in the world, God sent a flood.

BOW IN THE CLOUD



While this catastrophic flood wiped out most of creation, note what happens right after. God establishes His covenant of peace with mankind and every living creature: Never again will He send a flood to destroy the earth (Gen 9:11).

This covenant is accompanied by a sign: a “bow in the cloud” (Gen 9:13). The Hebrew translation for ‘bow’ is qeshet, referring to a bow that is typically used for war or hunting (Gen 27:3, Josh 24:12). The rainbow, then, is a picture of God hanging up his bow, laying down his weapon, and withholding His wrath from humanity. Notice also how a rainbow points up, heavenwards. The bow - representing the wrath of God that we deserve - is directed towards Jesus, the one who took our place and was punished for our sins. Because of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross, we can now live in peace with our Creator.

The bow - representing the wrath of God that we deserve - is directed towards Jesus, the one who took our place and was punished for our sins.

So the next time you see a rainbow, take a moment to pause. Marvel at God’s creation! Thank Him for His covenant of peace, extended to us that we can have peace with God, in ourselves, and with others.

DAY 3, TUESDAY

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

READ JOHN 14:25-27, 16:33.

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

[John 14:25-27]

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

[John 16:33]

Reading the news and looking at the world around us, it's easy to feel anxious and pessimistic about the current state of affairs. We hear of new COVID-19 outbreaks, rampant civil unrest in parts of the world, more frequent and severe heat waves due to climate change, and the list goes on. The world we live in certainly does not look like a peaceful home.

Before Jesus went to the cross, He warned His disciples that they would face troubles in the world. Yet, they were not left on their own. Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit – a source of peace unlike anything the world can offer. As believers in Christ, we too have this gift of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with us, and Jesus has overcome the world, even if it might not look like that sometimes. Hence, in the midst of difficult times and calamities, we do not need to be afraid. For our peace is not found in the stability of the world around us, but in God and God alone.

WHAT ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT TODAY?

Bring these worries before God and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill your hearts with peace. Try praying a breath prayer, an ancient form of prayer. It involves meditating on Scripture while taking slow, deep breaths. As you inhale, meditate on the words: “Peace of Christ,” and as you exhale: “guard my heart and mind.” Spend some time dwelling in this peace which surpasses all understanding.

DAY 4, WEDNESDAY

DO NOT MURDER

READ MATTHEW 5:21-24, LUKE 11:4

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

[Matthew 5:21-24]

*“Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation.”*

[Luke 11:4]

(Cont.)

The past two days we considered the source of our peace. It is only through being reconciled to God and receiving His peace through the Holy Spirit that we can also live in harmony with others.

In Matthew 5:21-24, Jesus offers a radical vision of what it means to love and live in harmony with others. Like the crowd Jesus was addressing, we might be familiar with the commandment “Do not murder” and think that we have not committed this sin. Yet, Jesus challenges that idea, teaching that “anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement” (Matt 5:22). Our relationship with others also affects our relationship with God. He calls us to reconcile with others before offering any gift to Him. Clearly, God desires for us to live in peace with others.



Is there someone you are harbouring anger towards? Or is there someone you have unknowingly hurt? Ask God to search your heart. Based on what and who God has revealed to you, reach out to them and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

DAY 5, THURSDAY

FLOURISHING IN AND THROUGH THE HOME

READ PROVERBS 31:10-31.

A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

*Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.*

*She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.*

*She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.*

*She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.*

*She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.*

*She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a
vineyard.*

*She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.*

*She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.*

*In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.*

*She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.*

*When it snows, she has no fear for her
household;*

for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

She makes coverings for her bed;

she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

*Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the
elders of the land.*

*She makes linen garments and sells
them,*

*and supplies the merchants with
sashes.*

*She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.*

*She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her
tongue.*

*She watches over the affairs of her
household*

and does not eat the bread of idleness.

*Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:*

*“Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all.”*

*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is
fleeting;*

*but a woman who fears the Lord is to
be praised.*

*Honor her for all that her hands have
done,*

*and let her works bring her praise at
the city gate.*

Proverbs 31 is a lovely vision of what shalom looks like in the home. It portrays what an ideal wife would do in her home to bring about flourishing relationships, faith, justice and peace – not just in her own family, but to the poor, in the land and to the economy.

WHAT WOULD SHALOM LOOK LIKE IN *YOUR* HOME?



Is there any family member that you need to seek reconciliation with? Take initiative and be a peace-maker.

What are some ways that your family habits can reflect more of God's beauty and care for His creation? E.g. create a tech-free zone or time-slot in the house? Discuss ways to reduce waste?

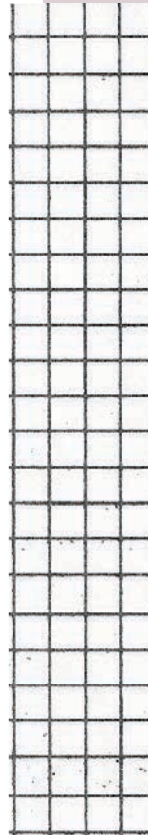


Is there anything you can do with your family to bring shalom to your neighbourhood, e.g. cook a meal for your neighbour? Rally your neighbours to start composting?

DAY 6, FRIDAY

PARTNERS IN RECONCILIATION

READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20.



The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

The Greek root word for 'make peace' (v. 20) *eirene*, and has a similar meaning to the Hebrew word *shalom*. Both connote the idea of wholeness, of bringing broken things back into right relationship.

What has Christ reconciled? Paul tells us: ALL THINGS. "All things" would include the whole of God's created universe – people, communities, the land that they live on, the various institutions that they work in, etc. Thus, as partners with Christ in His work of reconciliation, our peace-making efforts must spill into all these areas in an integrated way.

What does it mean to be a peace-maker in God's world? In what ways can we partner with Christ to bring different parts of his broken world back to right relationship? For some of us, it's as simple as re-thinking what and how we consume. Do we really need more stuff? Could we pay a bit more for ethically-sourced food? For others, God might be calling you to scientific research in the ecological arena. Or perhaps He is giving you entrepreneurial ideas and skills that can impact people, planet and profit.

Spend some time in quietness, asking God to search your heart. Repent if necessary. Dream, if necessary, remembering Jesus' words to all of us:

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called sons of God"

[Matthew 5:9]

DAY 7, SATURDAY

HOME, TRULY

READ REVELATION 21:1-5, 22:1-5.

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth”, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

[Revelation 21:1-5]

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

[Revelation 22:1-5]

What is home to you? It could be the physical space that you go back to each day, the country you are from or even the planet that we live on. Or perhaps home is any place where you feel like you can be yourself and experience security and comfort. For me, the realisation of what home was came when I felt like it was taken away from me. Two years ago, I spent a semester abroad in a small town located in the Hudson Valley. I distinctly remember one evening eating dinner alone. Having been there for a few months and with the onset of winter, I felt a deep sense of homesickness. I missed the warmth of a piping hot bowl of ban mian (noodle soup), the warmth of the 30 degrees weather, and most importantly, the warmth of being with family and friends.

While being overseas gave me greater clarity of what “home” meant to me, I realised that this was still a rather narrow perspective. The Bible gives us a much greater and grander picture of where our home truly is. As Christians, we are invited into God’s kingdom. While we presently live in this world, Jesus makes it very clear that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Rather, our citizenship lies in heaven - that is where we belong (Philippians 3:20). This earth is only a temporary home as we eagerly await our true home (Hebrews 13:14).

**WHAT DOES
OUR HOME IN
HEAVEN LOOK
LIKE?**



Revelation gives us a beautiful picture. Our eternal home is one where God dwells among us (Rev 21:3). There will be no barrier between us and God. We can experience the shalom that Adam and Eve had before the fall of man. (cont.)

The Garden of Eden will also be restored, where the river of the water of life will be “as clear as crystal” and the tree of life will yield fruit every month (Rev 22:1-2). This picture stands in stark contrast to the polluted waters that we may be familiar with, or the deforestation and droughts that are becoming more prevalent in our world today. Furthermore, there will no longer be any curse - on the animals, the land and on humans (Rev 22:3, Gen 1:14-19). Creation and Creator will live in harmony.

What does this promise of our eternal home mean for our peace-making and home-building efforts? Does this mean that we no longer need to care about the physical world around us? A quick look at the Lord’s Prayer shows us that the answer to this is no. Jesus taught us to pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). We are invited to be a part of ushering God’s kingdom here on earth, to be peace to a broken world, and to offer a glimpse of what heaven looks like to those who have yet to know Him. Let us, then, be peacemakers in the various places that God has placed us in -our families, social circles, schools, workplaces and ecosystems. At the same time, just as I longed to be reunited with my loved ones while overseas, let us also eagerly anticipate arriving at our eternal home and meeting our Creator.

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PEACEMAKING AS HOME- BUILDING

WEEK 5

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PRAYING FOR OUR HOME PLANET & ITS PEOPLE

26TH SEPTEMBER TO 2ND OCTOBER

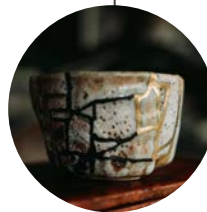
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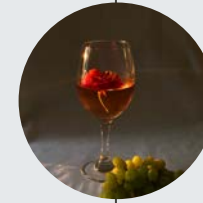
Day 1, Sunday
Adoring the Creator
of Our Home Planet
and Its People



Day 2, Monday
Confessing our Brokenness



Day 3, Tuesday
Restoring the Broken



Day 4, Wednesday
Less is More



Day 5, Thursday
Where Are The
Changemakers?



Day 6, Friday
Just as Christ would
have done



Day 7, Saturday
Thanksgiving with Hope

SEASON OF CREATION 2021
A HOME FOR ALL: RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD

DAY 1, SUNDAY

Adoring the Creator of Our Home Planet and Its People

STORY-SHAPED PRAYER



“I had always felt life first as a story: and if there is a story there is a story-teller.

- G. K. Chesterton,
Orthodoxy

To live meaningfully, I must learn to relate the story of my life to the overarching story of the Story-Teller. The Bible outlines an epic story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. The story gives meaning to life. And the story informs prayer.

As we pray for our home planet and its people this week, may our journey be shaped by the story:



CREATION

Admiring the goodness of creation, may we **adore** the Creator (Day 1).



FALL

Recognising our brokenness, may we **confess** our exploitation of our home planet and its people (Day 2).



REDEMPTION

Trusting in Christ the Redeemer and empowered by the Holy Spirit, may we **intercede** for our home planet and its people through supplication and action, living lives that reveal the Kingdom of God (Days 3-6).



CONSUMMATION

Looking forward with hope, may we express **thanksgiving** (Day 7).

ADMIRE THE CREATION, ADORE THE CREATOR

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Genesis 1:31

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Genesis 2:15

Amidst the brokenness of the world in which we live, it is easy to forget where our story begins. Before we can truly address the brokenness, we must take time to appreciate the beauty.

As an artistic overflow of love, the Triune God has created a good creation. He has given humans a special beauty (His image) and a special duty (to care for our home planet).

Reflect:

Spend some time admiring God’s good creation, including both our home planet and its people. In *The Good and Beautiful God*, James Bryan Smith suggests, “Think of God as a great artist and yourself as the art student, paying close attention to the detail of the artwork.” Let your admiration of the creation overflow into adoration of the Creator.

Pray:

Read and pray through Psalm 104. Thank God for the diversity of His good creation.

DAY 2, MONDAY

Confessing our Brokenness

READ: Genesis 3:17,
James 5:16

"Cursed is the ground because of you."
Genesis 3:17

"Confess your sins to each other".
James 5:16

We have rebelled against God, leading to broken relationships. Each of us has failed to love God, to love people, and to care for our home planet. Through our overconsumption and neglect, we have exploited the earth, contributing to environmental crises such as climate change – a crisis that disproportionately impacts poorer communities.

Even as we seek to be part of the solution, we must recognise that we are part of the problem.

Reflect:

Am I aware of my role in the climate crisis and other environmental crises?

Pray:

Father, we are sorry for taking your good creation for granted. We are sorry for exploiting other people and for exploiting the earth. We confess that our addiction to consumerism is damaging the earth. Please forgive us. Please help us to love You and to love our fellow humans by caring for Your earth. Help us to be a prophetic voice against exploitation in all its forms. Help us to live prophetic lifestyles that model the way of Christ, embracing servanthood and love.



DAY 3, TUESDAY

Restoring the Broken

READ: Hosea 6:1

"Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds."
Hosea 6:1



There is an ancient Japanese practice known as **Kintsugi**, which is literally the joining of broken ceramics with gold and metaphorically the art of embracing imperfections. This age-old custom of repairing cracked pottery with real gold not only fixes but increases the value of the piece significantly. This often goes against our instinctive reaction to a broken object – which is to replace it, especially when the process of acquiring the replacement is easier than mending the original. But in the Kingdom of God, we are in the business of restoration. (cont.)

DAY 4, WEDNESDAY

Less is More

READ: Colossians 3:2

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Colossians 3:2

Perhaps it's the elaborate marketing ploys that promote a hedonistic lifestyle, or our need for social approval, or just our intrinsic human motivations that point us toward a materialistic lifestyle. Either way, there's no denying that we want our time here on earth to be filled with goodness.

More often than not, we interpret goodness in the form of earthly blessings. These blessings – we hope – will be in the form of a car, a huge salary bonus, or more clothes. In this pursuit of more, we might find ourselves being indulgent.

Why does this matter?

Fixing broken objects with gold is much more of a hassle than acquiring a replacement. However, a simple re-evaluation of our instincts can make a great difference to our world.

By observing a 'use and throw' culture, we end up contributing a larger amount of waste. In a world that is driven by the instantaneous replacement of broken people and objects, let us choose instead to adopt Christ's instinct of restoration.

Reflect:

Am I choosing to restore rather than replace the things that are broken?

Pray:

Father, we thank you that you mend our brokenness instead of casting us away. Your first instinct is to repair the areas in our lives that are broken and you continue to do so through your love for us. We pray, Lord, that you give us the attitude of restoration for our planet and its people.

It matters because owning a car contributes to a higher carbon footprint, as does flying in business class rather than economy, and likewise when purchasing unsustainable fast fashion clothing.

By choosing to deny indulgence, we can play a part in reducing the destructive impact on our planet. Let us pray that we would turn away from the parts of our lives that indulge, and instead live more simply and with gratitude.

Reflect:

Are there areas in my life where I find myself overly indulgent?

Pray:

Father, you are the one from whom all blessings flow. Let us remember that we are blessed beyond measure. You have showered us with your grace and your mercies are new every day. We pray, Lord, that you will give us the wisdom to practice simplicity and the strength to resist the temptations of the world.

DAY 5, THURSDAY

Where Are The Changemakers?

READ: Psalm 24:1

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"

Psalm 24:1

The Grand Designer created this world and etched beauty into the fabrics of the earth. As stewards of God's creation, we hold the responsibility to preserve its beauty by caring for it and its people (all of us!). Future generations will either write about our exemplary works in combating climate change or about the works we did not do. The course of history will be shaped by the very decisions we make in the present – you and I hold the power to make both immediate and long-lasting changes to our earth. So let us pray to be changemakers and for other changemakers to arise from our own families, our friends, our church, and our country.



Reflect:



What would it take for me to be a changemaker?
What practices do I have to change in order to create a better future for the next generation?

Pray:

Father, everything in this world belongs to you. All of creation sings your praises. We pray, Lord, that you would raise up leaders who strive to make a positive difference in this world by caring for your creation. Grant us your wisdom and discernment as we live as changemakers.

DAY 6, FRIDAY

Just as Christ would have done

READ: Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Matthew 25:40

One of the General Rules of the Methodist Church is "doing good". Specifically it describes how we as Methodists ought to act toward each another, stating:

"To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison."

(Cont.)

Scripture reveals to us that Christ loved the poor, stood on the side of the oppressed, fed the hungry, and healed the sick. Many of the poorest around the world are surviving on rain-fed agriculture and subsistence farming. Many of the poorest around the world are surviving on rain-fed agriculture and subsistence farming.

Since the well-being of the earth directly impacts the poor, we are entrusted with the responsibility to care for the environment in ways that meet their needs. When we are attentive to our use of creation, we are also attentive to the needs of the poor.



Workers at a rice paddy in Ubud

Reflect:

Am I living with indifference to the poor?

Pray:

Father I know that it pleases you to see the outpouring of care for the poor. You have entrusted us with a position of privilege so that we can extend more grace to those in need. I pray, Lord, that you would break our hearts for what breaks yours. May we follow the example Christ has set for us and love our neighbours as ourselves.

DAY 7, SATURDAY

Thanksgiving with Hope

**READ: Romans 8:22-25,
Revelation 22:20**

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

Romans 8:22-25

“Come, Lord Jesus.”

Revelation 22:20

STORY-SHAPED HOPE

The story is not yet over. We live in a time of tension. Through Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have tasted redemption. Nevertheless, we still experience brokenness. We long for the consummation of Christ’s return. (cont.)

Bible scholar Richard Bauckham highlights the importance of distinguishing proximate hopes from our ultimate hope of Christ's return. Our proximate hopes – such as our hope to avoid dangerous climate change – represent a reflection of our ultimate hope, but they are tempered by the constraints of a broken world.

The fulfilment of proximate hopes may inspire thanksgiving. The failure of proximate hopes may provoke disappointment.

Nevertheless, even in the face of disappointment, we can always thank God for our ultimate hope. Christ will return. God will make all things new.

THANKSGIVING

This week we have admired the good creation and adored the Creator. We have confessed our role in the brokenness we see in the world around us. We have interceded for our home planet and its people, seeking to live lives that reveal the Kingdom of God, trusting in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Looking forward to Christ's return, we now focus on thanksgiving.

“Be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:15-17



Reflect:

As I review this past week, what would I like to thank God for today? As I look forward to the future, what do I hope for?

Pray:

Lord, open my eyes to your myriad blessings. Teach me to cultivate gratitude. At all times and in all places, strengthen me to overflow with thanksgiving, faith, hope, and love.



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PRAYING FOR OUR HOME PLANET & ITS PEOPLE



WEEK 6

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A HOME AND A HOPE FOR FUTURE

3RD TO 4TH OCTOBER

CONTENT PAGE



Day 1, Sunday
Finding Hope for the
Future



Day 2, Monday
A Prayer for our
Common Home

*'He will wipe every
tear from their eyes.
There will be no more
death' or mourning or
crying or pain, for the
old order of things has
passed away.*

Revelations 21:4



DAY 1, SUNDAY

READ HEBREWS 1:1-4, 2:5-12.

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

[Hebrews 1:1-4]

It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified:

"What is mankind that you are mindful of them,

*a son of man that you care for him?
You made them a little lower than the angels;*

*you crowned them with glory and honour
and put everything under their feet."*

In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters;

in the assembly I will sing your praises."

[Hebrews 2:5-12]



“Planes sampling air above the amazon find the rainforest is releasing more carbon than it stores.”

“New decade, new empty promises for nature.”

“The climate crisis can't be stopped.”

When we read of such news, it's difficult not to experience feelings of sadness, anger, and despair. It can seem at times that environmental problems are impossible to solve.

Ecological and environmental systems are global in scale and extremely complex, with no silver bullet solution. The desire for money and power is deeply embedded in the consciousness of society. Pitting individual action against the deception and greed of giant corporations seems foolish and hopeless – like David going up against Goliath.

But like David, we can find hope in God. Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God speaks of a future hope that is guaranteed and certain. We read at the end of Revelation of the renewing of all creation, that there will be “no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev 21:4); that Eden will be restored and the tree of life will heal the nations (Rev 22:2).

We can have this hope only because Jesus is the Lord of all creation.



In 1 Hebrews 1:1-4 and 2:5-12, we read that He is the one “through whom also he made the universe” (1:2). Jesus is the one who sustains all things “by his powerful word” (1:3). By his saving death and resurrection, he is “now crowned with glory and honour” (2:9), reconciling to himself all things, whether in earth or in heaven. He is the one “for whom and through everything exists” (2:10).

Even if we see only glimpses and signs of hope amidst the suffering in the world today, we can still take heart in our prayer: “Your kingdom come”. There will be a day when God's kingdom comes in all its glory and splendour. There will be a day when there will be no violence, no sickness, no destruction – and all the earth shall live in peace with one another (Isa 11:6-10).

However, having hope does not mean that we passively wait. As our prayer continues, we ask our Father that “[His] will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Instead, it gives us the motivation to live today in the light of that future truth. We are to be active agents of God’s will on earth in bringing peace, love and healing to our land.

As believers, we have been “crowned... with glory and honour”, and God has “put everything under [our feet]” (Heb 2:7-8). When God created the earth, He made humans in his image and placed us in a position of leadership within creation, commanding us to reflect His loving purposes as His stewards. Despite our repeated failures, it seems that the Church has once again been given leadership within creation. This is both a deep and humbling mystery, and a great privilege and responsibility.



“
**(His) will be done on
earth as it is in heaven.**

Will you take on that responsibility? Over the past few weeks, you have been challenged to rethink the way that we live and relate to the world around us. In a fallen world with broken systems, living as God’s steward is not easy. You may have been pushed to make certain changes that may have made you uncomfortable, wanting to give up. But in Jesus, we have hope to continue in this work of restoring our relationships with all of creation. We have a hope to unite as one Church to lead in the restoration and stewardship of our common home. We can look ahead, knowing that we have a home and a hope for the future.

DAY 2, MONDAY

A PRAYER FOR COMMON HOME



As a fitting end to these 34 days, let us join Christians around the world in praying the Season of Creation 2021 Prayer. As we lift our prayers up to God, may we remember that He is Lord over all, forever and ever.

Creator of All, We are grateful that from your communion of love you created our planet to be a home for all. By your Holy Wisdom you made the Earth to bring forth a diversity of living beings that filled the soil, water and air. Each part of creation praises you in their being, and cares for one another from our place in the web of life.

With the Psalmist, we sing your praise that in your house “even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.” We remember that you call human beings to keep your garden in ways that honour the dignity of each creature and conserve their place in the abundance of life on Earth.

But we know that our will to power pushes the planet beyond her limits. Our consumption is out of harmony and rhythm with Earth’s capacity to heal herself. Habitats are left barren or lost. Species are lost and systems fail.

Where reefs and burrows, mountaintops and ocean deeps once teemed with life and relationships, wet and dry deserts lie empty, as if uncreated. Human families are displaced by insecurity and conflict, migrating in search of peace. Animals flee fires, deforestation and famine, wandering in search of a new place to find a home to lay their young and live.

As this season comes to an end, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism. Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home. In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all.

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

Amen.

PHOTO CREDITS

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Day 2

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WEEK 6

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A HOME AND A
HOPE FOR FUTURE

This devotional is published by the Methodist Church in Singapore for the Season of Creation 2021. If you have any queries, feedback, or would like to contribute to ministries for creation care, please contact the project team at dennis.tan.wei.jie@gmail.com or michelle@skmc.org.sg.



**The Methodist Church
in Singapore**