



Daily Devotions for the

Season of Creation

Queensland Churches Environmental Network

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Queensland Churches Environmental Network

A Commission of Queensland Churches Together

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Foreword

The Season of Creation is celebrated by many Christian communities. It runs each year from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) until 4th October (Feast of St Francis of Assisi).

This book provides 34 daily devotions – one for each of the days of the Season of Creation. As well as this printed version, the same devotions are available through a free Smartphone App “Season of Creation” on both Apple and Android app stores.

The devotions are provided by volunteer contributors from a range of Christian denominations, various locations around Australia, and a broad range of ethnic backgrounds. The project has been administered by QCEN (Queensland Churches Environmental Network), a commission of Queensland Churches Together. Thanks to all those involved in the production of these devotions.

We very gratefully acknowledge funding from the National Council of Churches Australia’s Glenburnie Program, which supports the vision of a just, participatory and sustainable society. The grant has provided the administrative and technical resources needed to support the production of this book and the App.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our authors live and find joy. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past, present and future, who have much to teach us about caring for country. We commit to walk softly and gently on this land. Together with the Traditional Custodians, may we take our place in bringing healing and flourishing, which is a central calling of our Christian faith.

We pray that these devotions may enhance your contemplation of the beauty of God’s good creation, and our Christian calling to care for that creation.

The Editorial Steering Committee:-

*Neil Bergmann, Peter Branjerdporn,
Kumi Abeyesuriya, Jackie Fewtrell, and Peter Moore*
August 2024

Day 1

*Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.
(Gen 1:3) NRSVA*

Read **Genesis 1:1-5**

Reflect

In the beginning, cosmologists tell us, there was nothing but plasma - a condensed sea of matter and energy that 13.8 billion years ago erupted with an inflationary rush. A universe was born, and soon after the first light, the first stars - the cosmic dawn.

In every age humankind has been transfixed by the stars. Every culture on earth has looked up and asked "What's out there? Is that where we come from? What is the source of all this?"

Our shared wonder has provoked enduring curiosity and the imagination of the arts, religion and science. Our explorations have taught us that light makes life possible on earth. That the stuff of stars is also the stuff of our bodies. We've learned the light of a single candle can hold our most heartfelt prayers, or hold off the dark. And on our good days we remember we are also called to be light for each other - to be stewards of all that lights this fragile, cherished world.

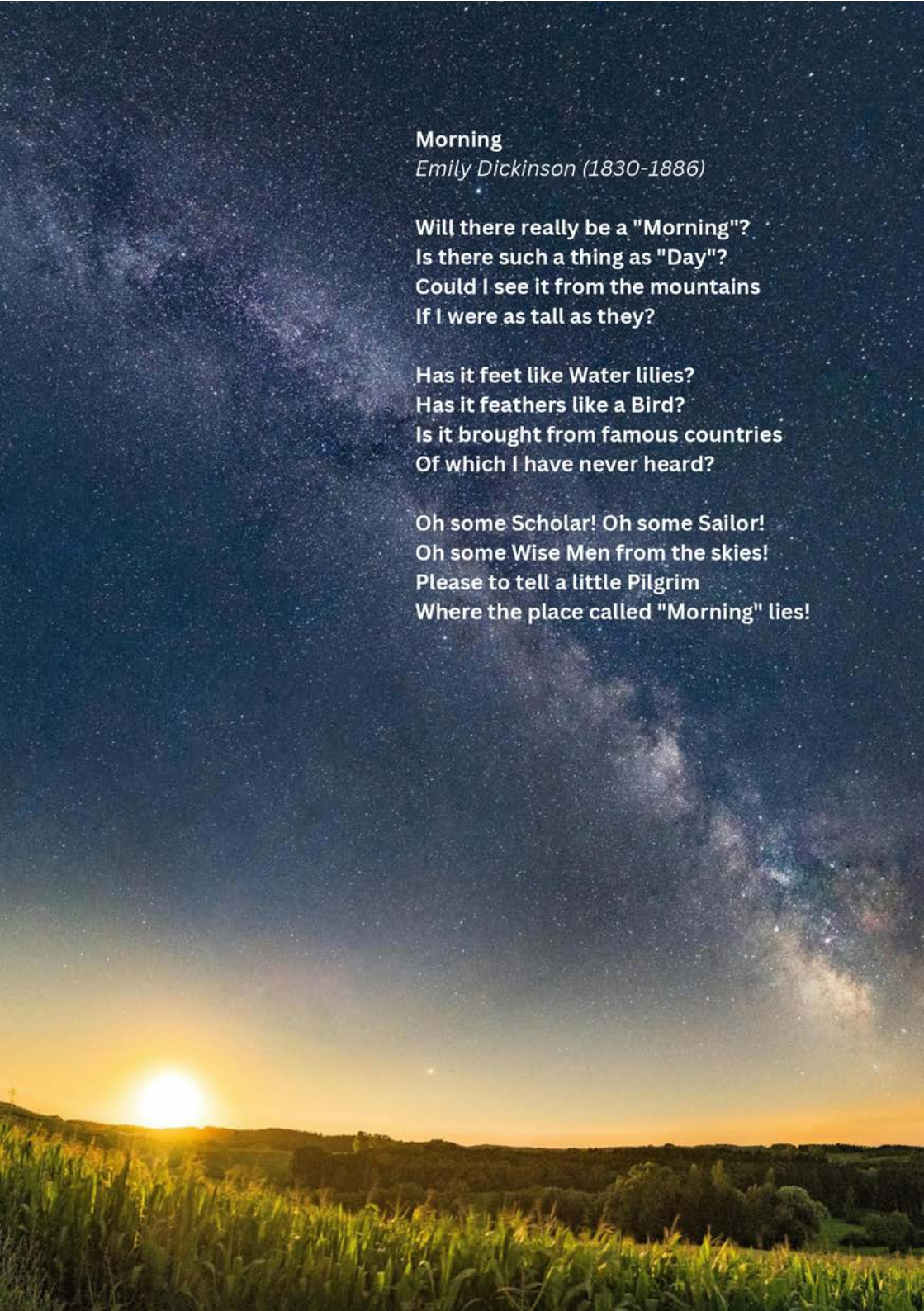
In the most beautiful of ways, it is the light of creation that animates, sustains, inspires and connects us. It moves us beyond ourselves, and closer to all that we hold sacred.

So, let there be light.

Pray

As we lift our gaze to the heavens we give thanks for the light that bathes our earth with life, and lights our dreams with hope. May the dawning of each new day call us afresh to the work of wonder: cherishing all that your light touches, tending to all that lights this world.
Amen.

The Rev'd Deborah Bird is Parish Priest of The Parishes of Maleny and Palmwoods in Queensland. She holds degrees in music, education and theology, and has particular interests in liturgy, community engagement and social justice.

The background of the page is a composite image. The top two-thirds show a dark night sky filled with stars, with the Milky Way galaxy visible as a bright, hazy band of light stretching diagonally from the upper left towards the lower right. The bottom third of the image shows a landscape at sunset. A bright sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over a field of tall corn plants in the foreground. The horizon line is dark, with some trees and hills visible in the distance.

Morning

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Will there really be a "Morning"?
Is there such a thing as "Day"?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?
Has it feathers like a Bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
Oh some Wise Men from the skies!
Please to tell a little Pilgrim
Where the place called "Morning" lies!

Day 2

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. (Ps 19:1) NRSVA

Read Psalm 19:1-14

Reflect

Our culture and western Christianity both have a very strong anthropocentric (human) focus. They also tend to approach the world as if it is a set of binaries. Binaries set us up to 'other' anything that is not 'us' or 'me'. As a result, we have come to think of nature as something that is separate from us. We also see nature as the benign backdrop against which the drama of our lives, and of our salvation are played out.

Instead of seeing the things of nature as 'other' St Francis of Assisi understood them to be kin, members of the same family, as beings with which we have a relationship. He preached to the birds as well as to people. He acknowledged their role in offering praise to God.

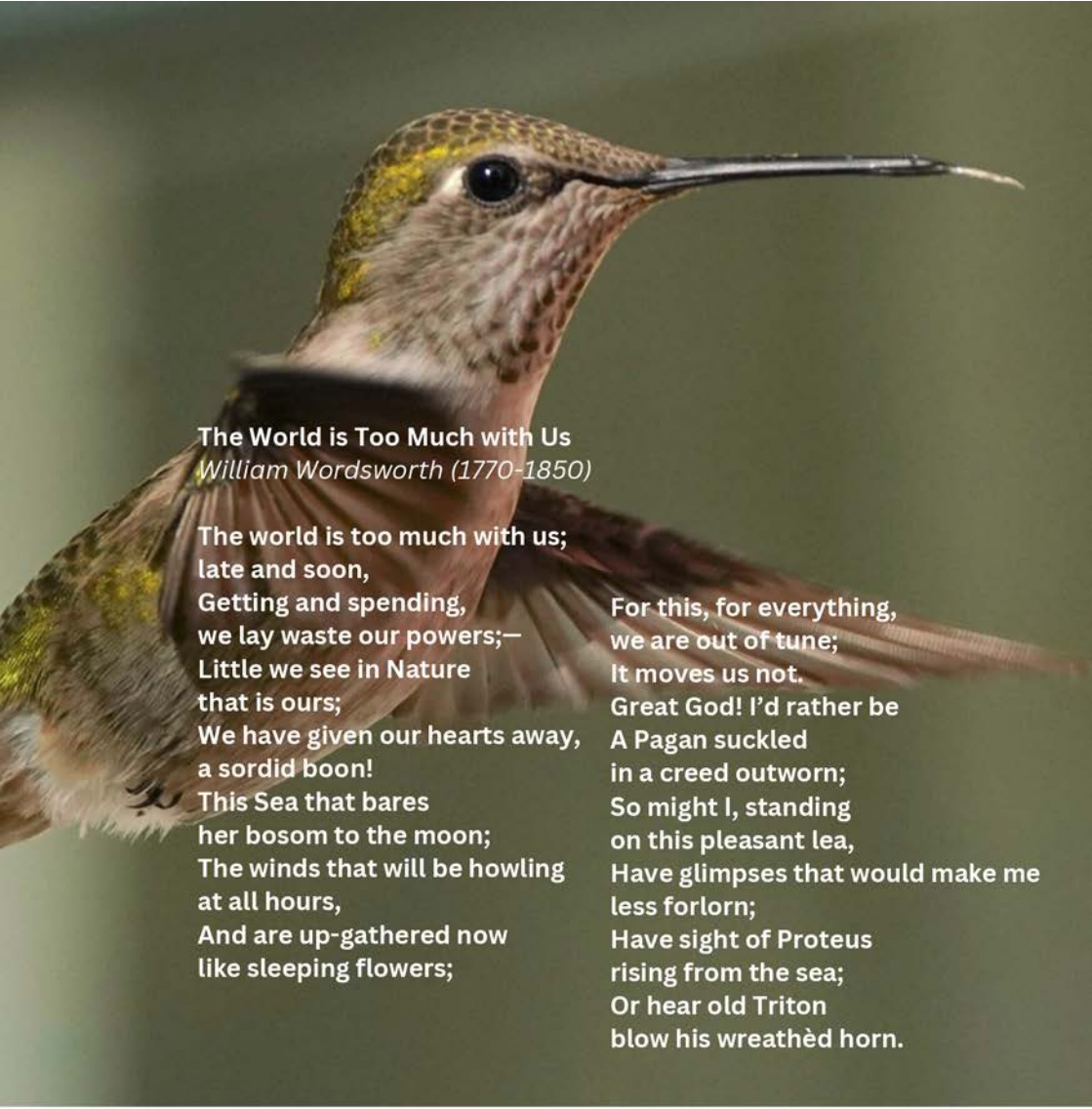
The writer of Psalm 19, many centuries before Francis, had developed the same understanding of nature that we see at work in Francis' life. The heavens and the earth proclaim God's goodness and

love. They are creatures of praise as much as we are. In worship we join with them.

The 'other' becomes one with us through our shared relationship in God, through our common acts of praise.

Pray

God, whose loving presence
transforms us,
We give thanks for the praise
that is offered by the creatures
With whom we share this
beautiful planet.
Give us the grace we need to
attend to their voices,
To hear the messages they offer
us on your behalf,
To join with them in praise,
And to honour them as members
of your family.
Amen.



The World is Too Much with Us
William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

The world is too much with us;
late and soon,
Getting and spending,
we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature
that is ours;
We have given our hearts away,
a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares
her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling
at all hours,
And are up-gathered now
like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything,
we are out of tune;
It moves us not.
Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled
in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing
on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me
less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus
rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton
blow his wreathèd horn.

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt is
Dean of St John's Anglican
Cathedral, Brisbane. Dr Catt holds
a Bachelor of Divinity and a PhD in
Evolutionary Microbiology. He also
serves on Anglican and Ecumenical
Social Justice Committees at a
Diocesan and national level.

Day 3 *O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you. (Ps 63:1a) NRSVA*

Read Psalm 63

Reflect

In Psalm 63 we join with David the psalmist in expressing our deepest desire for God our creator. “My soul is thirsting for you” he proclaims; a thirst that can only be quenched by God’s living water.

Sometimes it is easy to feel awe and wonder at God’s creation: the yellow-filled trousers on a bee’s legs, the exquisite colours and songs of our birds, the symbiotic relationship between a cocoa plant and its pollinator, the myriad of sparkling stars in the night sky or the first gasp of life of a newborn. It is in such moments we can begin to understand that everything is connected.

At other times, like in the psalm, we run the risk of feeling parched, weary and waterless as our common home becomes more degraded and destroyed, her biodiversity lost, our human family unloved, tossed aside or their suffering ignored. It is in such times that we must seek out in prayer our God in whom we take shelter and rest, so we can re-group

and go out joyfully singing!

The Psalmist personifies God in an image from nature that speaks to our hearts: God as a mother bird gathering her chick under her wings “I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings”. If we allow our hearts to connect with God’s creation we will feel called to live in right relationship with it and each other - to become stewards not exploiters of this wonderful gift.

Pray

God of all creation, you poured
out yourself with such love
For us and our world.
You sent your Son Jesus
To walk beside us,
To share with us our every
distress but also our joys.
In a world that seems to be
increasingly falling apart,
Yearning for peace and healing
We pray
Sing to our hearts,
Call us
To take shelter under your wing.
Draw near so we too can go out
singing with a joy that is yours
To work for a better world
Amen

Yearning for God
Rosemary Bugden

I yearn
I thirst
I hear you calling me
Singing me home.
Come my love
Out of the desert
Those parched, dry, lands.
Beneath your wings I take my rest,
I feel your warmth, the beating heart
Within your breast,
Within your breast,
Strong,
Constant,
Beside
Me

Rosie Bugden is married with three children and four grandchildren, and has a background in literature, geography and art studies. In response to Pope Francis' letter, *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home, 2015), she and her

husband, along with other parishioners, formed a Care for Creation group in their local Catholic parish to work for the conversion of hearts, and flowing from that to take action.

Day 4 *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. (Eccl 3:1) NRSVA*

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

Reflect

The 'wisdom writings' of the book of Ecclesiastes hold a particular poetic allure that has captivated artists, philosophers, and theologians for centuries. For me, the verses of Ecclesiastes 3:1-14, stand out as an incredible celebratory song, acknowledging God's constant involvement in the seasons of all life, not just human-centred ones.

Engaged in the urban agriculture ministry of *Baroona Farm* in Milton, Brisbane, I am constantly reminded of the divine tapestry woven through the cycles of the year. The farm is a living testament to Ecclesiastes, where the ceaseless patterns of growth, rest, and transformation mirror the passage of our own lives. There's a constant ebb and flow, a dance with creation that transcends mere tasks and delves into a deeper connection with the natural world.

This sacred text, for me, is a profound celebration of creation, intertwining seamlessly with the rhythms of our own human

existence unfolding in every season.

In the midst of *Baroona Farm's* many activities, from working the soil, planting out crops to harvesting produce, I find myself attuned to the sacred responsibility of co-creating with God's intricate design. Ecclesiastes beckons us to pause, to recognize the significance in each season, and to discern the divine in the very heartbeat of life.

This wisdom invites us to pause and observe in God's good creation all around us, that 'nothing is happening' in vain, for every moment is infused with the sacred pulse of creation.

Pray

As Jesus called his disciples to 'watch and pray' in the Garden of Gethsemane, pray that God might likewise still our hearts and minds, putting our trust in the author and creator of all life and its seasons.



from Scivias (Know the Ways)
Hildegard of Bingen (12th century)

I am the fiery life of the essence of God; I am the flame above the beauty in the fields; I shine in the waters; I burn in the sun, the moon, and the stars. And with the airy wind, I quicken all things vitally by an unseen, all-sustaining life. For the air lives in greenness and moistens; the sun also lives in its own fiery essence and its warmth is in the breeze. And I have the life of the fiery elements, and I am rational. Being immortal, I learn in all things. I am the life of the living; I am the life of the plants that are in the water. I am the life of the animals whose home is in the land. I am the Word of God, which embraces the heights of heaven and the depths of the earth. For wisdom, which is invisible, nevertheless makes herself manifest in all things.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon thy eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- *Concluding prayer, liturgy of Compline, The Book of Common Prayer, 1662*

The Rev'd Samuel Dow is Chaplain of St John's College within the University of Queensland and the Manager of Baroona Farm. He has a Bachelor of Horticultural Science, a Bachelor of Theology, and a Graduate Certificate of Professional Supervision. He worships at St John's Cathedral and has special interests in eco-theology, ecclesiology, and liturgy.

Day 5

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!”

(Gen 28:16) NRSVA

Read Genesis 28:10-19

Reflect

Some years ago, I spent an afternoon by Lake Wanaka in New Zealand. It was the very last light of a very cold winter day, with a gentle breeze coming in over the water. I had planned to go for a short walk before dinner. What I had not planned was the most transformative encounter of awe and wonder I’ve ever known.

I can’t say for sure when precisely it happened, but in an instant, it was as if I was suddenly experiencing the depth and beauty of life in an entirely new – yet wholly familiar – fashion.

The world around me did not change in any sudden, dramatic way to suddenly become worthy of this kind of reverence. It was largely the same as it had been five minutes beforehand. The change had been entirely on my end. Suddenly, I was seeing things as they actually were – as they always had been. Suddenly, I was paying real attention.

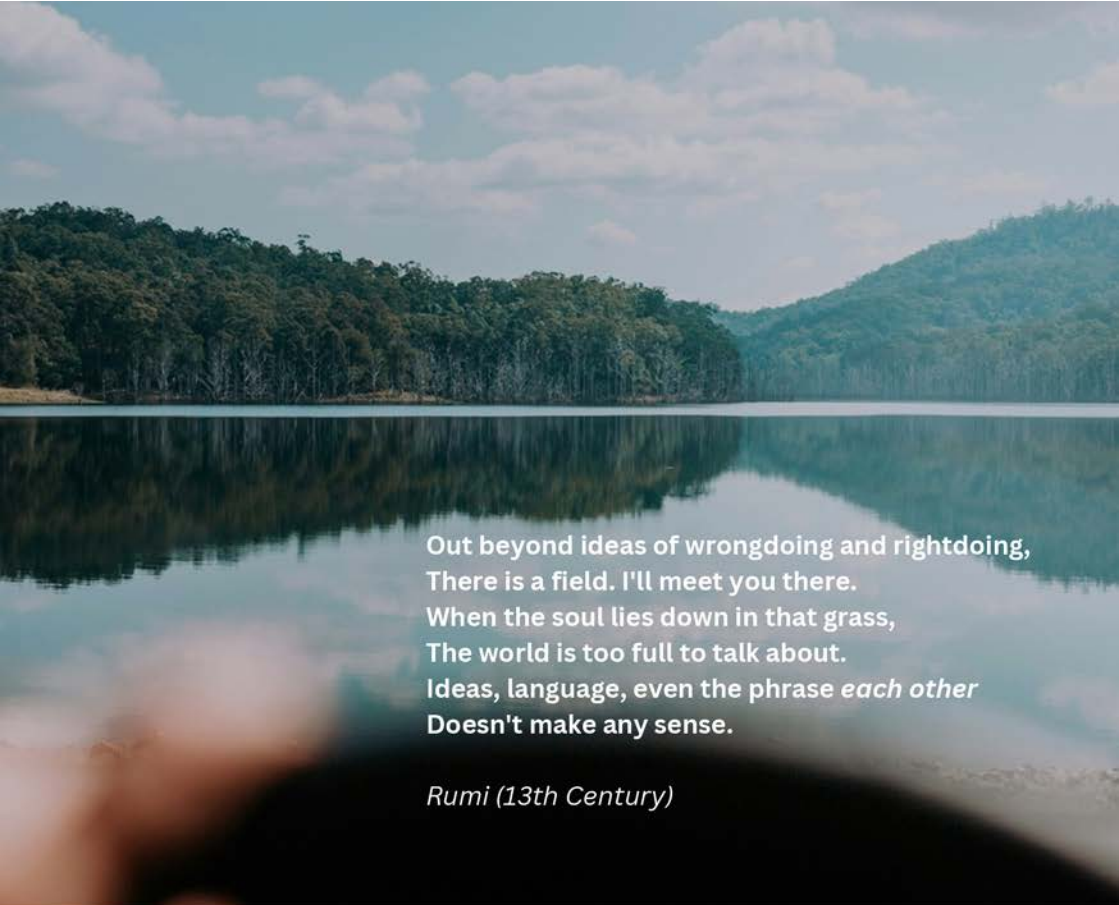
Jacob’s transcendent moment by

the roadside all those years ago is one of my favourite passages for the way it perfectly encapsulates these experiences.

How many times do we find ourselves wandering through a seemingly-monotonous life, busy with the usual dramas and agendas, only to be stopped in our tracks by a renewed awareness that the whole thing is completely enchanted?

In a moment, it is as if the scales fall from our eyes and we see the truth of things once again. These moments of cosmic reorientation are always waiting for us, I think. Even now. The question God asks, then, is a simple one. Are we ready to wake up again?

Dom Fay is the Faith and Spirituality Coordinator at Coomera Anglican College, and co-host of the “On the Way” podcast exploring the deeper mysteries of faith, meaning, and beauty, based at St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane.



Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
There is a field. I'll meet you there.
When the soul lies down in that grass,
The world is too full to talk about.
Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other*
Doesn't make any sense.

Rumi (13th Century)

Pray

Spirit of wonder,
Sometimes, without even
sensing it,
We stumble our way into the
fullness of life once again.
It is sometimes as simple as a
new day,
And sometimes as vast as a new
love -
Whatever the case,

It is as if the world is suddenly
alive once more,
And our souls have re-joined the
divine dance.
Let the world be re-enchanted
for us today,
And help us to re-enchant the
world for others,
So we can come to see
everything as a gift,
And know the joy of existence
itself.
Amen

Day 6 *People go out to their work and to their labour until the evening. (Ps 104:23) NRSVA*

Read **Psalm 104**

Reflect

A management coach drew a big circle on the whiteboard, and then a small cross in the centre, and another small cross way out near the edge of the circle. He pointed to the circle, "This is the universe!" and to the cross in the centre, "This is the centre of the universe!" then to the cross on the edge, "This is you! Notice the distance between you and the centre of the universe?" The message was: you are not the centre of the universe, so you can take yourself a bit less seriously.

The psalmist makes a similar point by placing, roughly in the centre of the psalm, just one verse about what humans get up to in the grand scheme of creation: "People go out to their work and to their labour until the evening." Is that it? In a poem that captures the grandeur of the whole creation and God's intimate involvement and gracious provision, we humans put our heads down and work. We risk missing everything if we get caught up in our self-important productivity and limitless economic growth.

Like all of creation, we delight and praise God by our very being. We are called to humility, and connection with our fellow creatures.

Pray

Creator God, wrapped in light as in a garment, we thank you for the splendour of creation and your generous provision for all our needs and the needs of our fellow creatures.

Lead us to recognise with gratitude that you are the source of all we need and all we have.

Give us wisdom and humility, and compassion for your created universe.

In your grace, remind us that you, and not us, are its centre.

Amen.

The Rev'd Melissa Conway is Assistant Priest at St Anne's, Highfields, Toowoomba.



I live my life in widening circles
Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

**I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
I may not ever complete the last one,
but I give myself to it.**

**I circle around God, that primordial tower.
I have been circling for thousands of years,
and I still don't know: am I a falcon,
a storm, or a great song?**

Day 7

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. (Rom 8:19) NRSVA

Read Romans 8:18-22

Reflect

I and some of my family have been blessed to be able to watch the turtles return to their special beach, Mon Repos near Bundaberg. This is the destination every year for the females who come to lay their eggs. These are the huge Loggerhead turtles. Their species is endangered. The mother makes her way, seemingly painfully, up the beach to a spot where she digs her nest. This is where she lays her eggs. The process takes some time. The look in the turtle's eye seems to be sadness and tiredness. It seems as if her whole being is groaning in this process of ensuring creation and the continuance of her kind. Once finished, the mother flaps sand onto the eggs and makes her way back to the water. When she reaches the water her movements are no longer labored, they are graceful as she swims back out to sea. The hatchlings some time later will make that same journey. It is a dangerous journey because of birds, but they must do it. They are quicker. They rush to the water where new predators await. But they must do it.

We too must wait, like the mother. Be patient. Do what we must do. Know that our freedom will come with Christ. Our natural place will be with Him. We will face the dangers and toils of a hostile world but we will come through. We are blessed by the grace of God who has given us the gift of Christ. There is our deeper water. There is our place.

Pray

God of all our dreaming, come take us in Your arms.
Lead us onward to the deeper parts of ourselves.
Bring us closer to the deeper heart of Your love,
Safe and calm through Jesus the Christ.
Amen

The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase is Co-chair of the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. Canon Boase is an Aboriginal of the Wakka Wakka Clan, and his special interest is reconciling Christianity with ancient Aboriginal Culture.



Stream Of Life

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day
runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth
in numberless blades of grass

and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth
and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life.

And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

Day 8

Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day. (1 Chr. 16:23) NRSVA

Read 1 Chronicles 16:23-30

Reflect

The reading calls us to join the cosmic chorus, inviting all nations to reflect on the majesty and beauty of God's creation within their unique contexts.

As an Indonesian, the sacred landscapes of Sabu Raijua in West Timor and the vibrant cultural tapestry of Bali resonate deeply within my soul as manifestations of God's wondrous artistry.

In the Rainbow Hill, Kelabba Maja (Sabu Raijua) with its timeless rock layers - one can't help but see the divine fingerprints in its formation. Each balanced stone stands as a testament to God's painted creation, a living parable of divine order within the vast universe. This natural wonder prompts us to reflect on the beauty and wonder of God's handiwork, cultivating awe and reverence for the sacred gift entrusted to humanity.

In the delicate petals of the Balinese flower, 'Sandat,' we find a fragrance that transcends time. Symbolizing

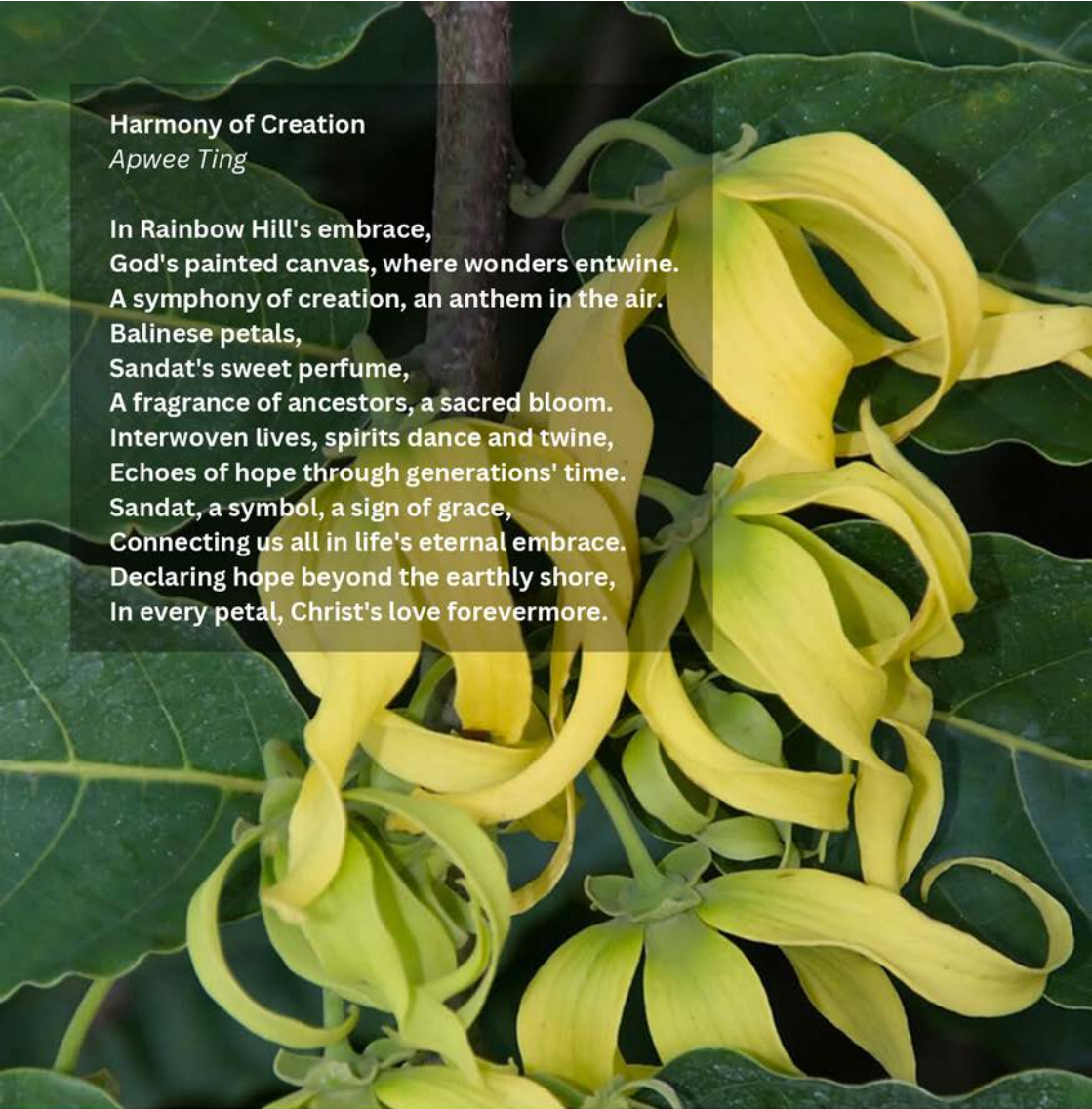
the blessings of ancestors, Sandat carries a profound spiritual significance in Balinese culture. It speaks of a deep connection between earthly existence and the spirit realm, emphasizing the interwoven nature of spiritual beings with humanity.

As a sign of hope, Sandat reminds us that our life and witness to the living Christ can extend beyond our earthly years.

May we, as part of this symphony of creation, join our voices with the earth and all nations, declaring, "God's salvation." Let our lives resound with the melody of salvation, echoing through the ages.

Pray

Gracious God, we come before You with hearts of thanksgiving and voices lifted in praise. May our songs resonate with joy as we declare Your wondrous works among the nations. Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice, for You reign supreme. Amen.



Harmony of Creation

Apwee Ting

In Rainbow Hill's embrace,
God's painted canvas, where wonders entwine.
A symphony of creation, an anthem in the air.
Balinese petals,
Sandat's sweet perfume,
A fragrance of ancestors, a sacred bloom.
Interwoven lives, spirits dance and twine,
Echoes of hope through generations' time.
Sandat, a symbol, a sign of grace,
Connecting us all in life's eternal embrace.
Declaring hope beyond the earthly shore,
In every petal, Christ's love forevermore.

Rev Dr Apwee Ting joined UnitingWorld in May 2023. In the role of International Partnerships Manager, Apwee nurtures connections between the Uniting Church in Australia and partner churches overseas, and facilitates theological and missional

dialogue within partnership networks. For the previous seven years, Apwee has worked for the Uniting Church Assembly, firstly as the National Director of Multi/Cross-cultural Ministry and then as a founding member of the Assembly Resourcing Unit.

Day 9

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:9) NIVUK

Read Psalm 8

Reflect

This psalm opens and closes with the same expression; “LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” This powerful bookend not only makes a bold declaration but also provides the lens or the focus of the psalm itself. The psalmist continues to detail the wonderful, beautiful, and powerful parts of creation.

What parts of creation help you see the fullness of God’s beauty?

When we take the time to look at creation and see all its wonders, we can see a glimpse of God’s beauty. Just like when we study a powerful piece of art, we see a hint of the capacity and skill of the artist who made it. But sometimes, we get distracted by the pollution or the infrastructure and are unable to notice the wonder and beauty of God.

What stops you from seeing the fullness of who God is?

The bookends in this psalm remind

us that sometimes we need encouragement to focus on God. As we give our attention to God, it can help us to turn our appreciation into praise for God. We can praise God with our attitudes, words, and actions.

How might you praise God today?

Pray

Magnificent Creator God, how wonderful is your handiwork?

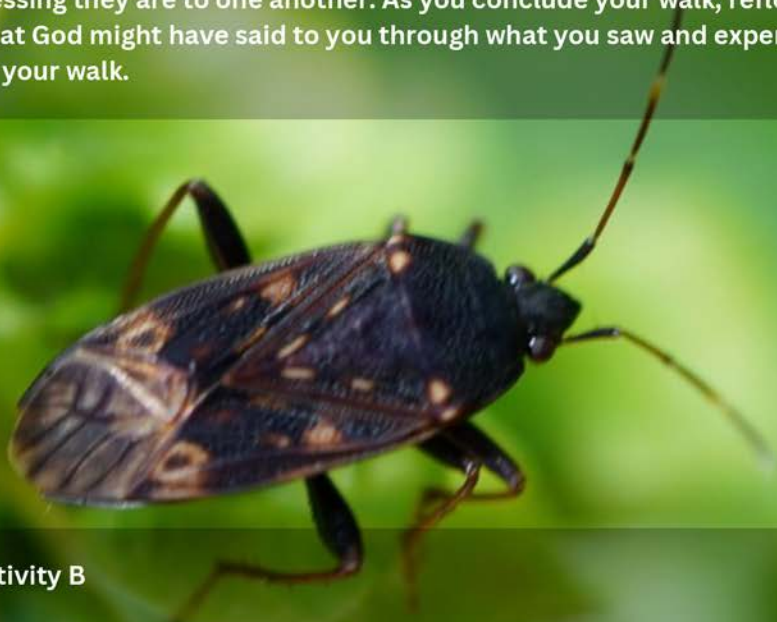
Open our eyes to see the depth of your beauty, open our minds to learn from your wisdom, open our hands to care for your creation.

We thank you for the beauty of all creation, and how interconnected we all are. Help us to express our sincere praise to you, through the work of our hands.

May we take great care of your beautiful gifts, to bring you honour and praise.
Amen

Activity A

Go for a walk nearby. As you walk, notice the different types of plants and trees, and consider what makes them beautiful. Notice the sky and think about how it is beautiful. While you walk, consider the animals, insects, birds, and plants. Think about how they share their life and the blessing they are to one another. As you conclude your walk, reflect on what God might have said to you through what you saw and experienced on your walk.



Activity B

Find a rock, it may be in your garden or in a local park. Hold that rock in your hand. With your eyes closed, take time to notice all the different aspects of the rock. While your eyes are shut, think about how this simple rock, which is not usually considered beautiful, shows something of God. It's not always the picturesque that reveals God's glory, but the important and helpful rocks can too. As you hold the rock you might want to say, "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

Rev Josie Neuendorff is a Uniting Church Minister serving in Chermside Kedron whose work

focuses on discipleship with people of all ages and stages of faith.

Day 10

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.
(Ps. 148:13) NRSVA

Read Psalm 148

Reflect

In the gentle whispers of the wind and the rustling leaves of the beautiful Redlands, we hear the echoes of Franciscan theology, a melody that harmonizes with the Creator's song of love. St. Francis, the troubadour of creation, beckons us to see the sacred in every sunbeam, every creature, in the very soil beneath our feet. In the heart of this theology lies a profound spirituality that invites us into a dance with the divine. Francis saw all creation as a divine masterpiece, a reflection of the Creator's love and wisdom, a sacrament revealing the otherwise invisible grace of the creator. In the intricate dance of sunsets and the delicate balance of ecosystems, Franciscans find a sacred script written by God's hand.

As we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, we are called to encounter God not only in the sanctuary of prayer but also in the cathedral of creation. The Franciscan spirit reveals the eternal, incarnate Word dwelling deep in all creation, bringing life and fostering divine

union. Let us, like St. Francis, embrace the theology of creation, allowing it to transform our spirits and deepen our connection to the Creator through the beauty that surrounds us.

Pray

A Prayer by St Francis

Jesus Christ, I offer you this new day because I believe in you, love you, hope all things in you, and thank you for your blessings.

I am sorry for having offended you and forgive everyone who has offended me.

Lord, leave in me peace and courage and your humble wisdom that I may serve others with joy, and be pleasing to you all day.

Amen

The Canticle of the Creatures

St Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and
the honour, and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they
belong, and no human is worthy to
mention Your name.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all
Your creatures, especially Sir
Brother Sun, Who is the day and
through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with
great splendour; and bears a
likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
Sister Moon and the stars, in
heaven You formed them clear and
precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
Brother Wind, and through the air,
cloudy and serene, and every kind
of weather, through whom You give
sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
Sister Water, who is very useful and
humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
Brother Fire, through whom You
light the night, and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
our Sister Mother Earth, who
sustains and governs us, and who
produces various fruit with
coloured flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
those who give pardon for Your
love, and bear infirmity and
tribulation. Blessed are those who
endure in peace for by You, Most
High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through
our Sister Bodily Death, from whom
no one living can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will
find in Your most holy will, for the
second death shall do them no
harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give
Him thanks and serve Him with
great humility.

*Originally trained as a journalist, **Daniel Hobbs** has worked for two decades in politics and government, public policy, media, strategy and the NFP sector. He is a Professed*

Tertiary of the Society of St Francis and an ordained priest in the Anglican Church of Australia having served in the Diocese of Brisbane.

Day 11

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

(Is. 58:10) NRSVA

Read Isaiah 58:7-10

Pray

Reflect

When I care for the earth, I care for the beautiful gift from God that radiates his love and wisdom, but integral ecology is so much more than that. By caring for the earth, I'm caring for those impacted by the climate crisis, pollution and unjust distribution of resources. I'm loving the younger generation and the children to come; my children! Our children! I weep for the injustice of what we are doing. Constantly I question whether I'm doing enough to own 'integrity' but if I work towards the 'light' and question current assumptions, I find my connection to the Lord grows. I 'call' and feel him 'here'. Isaiah 58 leads me to action and connection; connection to the Lord, to communities, to creation.

Emma Beach is the Executive Officer for the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, and the Justice, Ecology & Peace Project Officer – Inclusion, of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Aboriginal Blessing

Brooke Prentis

May our footsteps, on these ancient lands, remind us of creation and connectedness, in our search for truth.

May the Gum Tree, from its roots to its branches, remind us to dig deep and reach high, in our action for justice.

May the Eagle, who soars in the sky, remind us of the power, in our call for love.

May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars, remind us of God's timing in our faith in hope.

May the Holy three, Creator Spirit, Lord God, Jesus, remind us of community.

So with grace, mercy and peace go in truth, justice, love and hope.

God's Grandeur

Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ (1844-1889)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

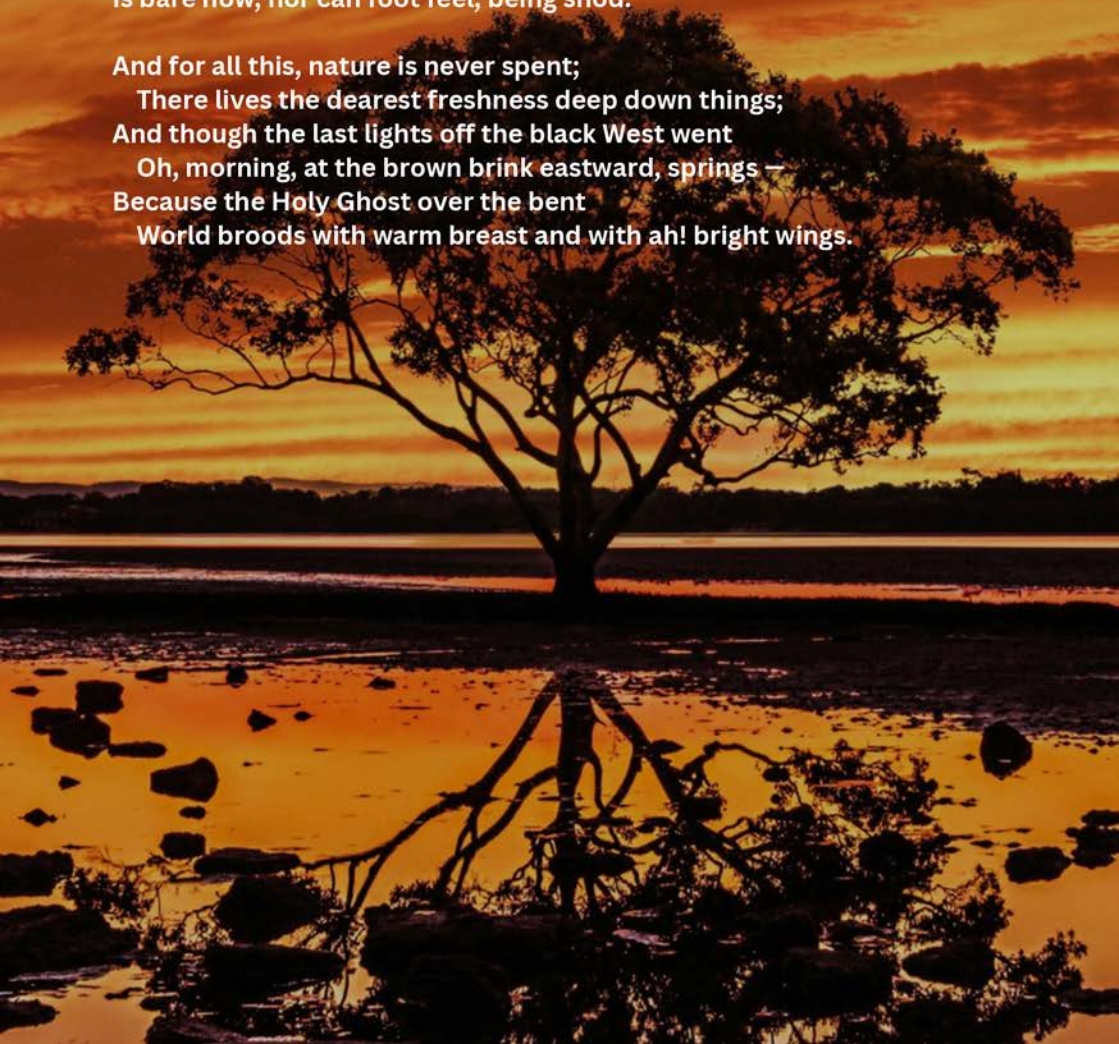
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



Day 12

See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them. (Rev. 21:3) NRSVA

Read Revelation 21:1-4

Reflect

I sit on the balcony of my dwelling place, my home, on my Country, Wakka Wakka Country. I look across rolling green hills of “cattle country”. This will always be the place of the bunya pines and the native grasslands. This is God’s dwelling place. Wiradjuri, Noongar, Yuggera, Boonwurrung, lutruwita, Kurna, Larrakia, Anangu, these lands now called Australia – all God’s dwelling place. Country is all lands, waters, sky, trees, plants, animals, birds, fish, rocks, mountains, and all peoples.

I am in God’s dwelling place, just as you are, wherever you are. On my balcony, I listen deeply to the sounds of lorikeets, croaking of frogs, buzzing of a native blue banded bee. The serenity is disturbed by the lawn mower of my next door neighbour, and I am reminded, today, in my local government area there are 39 species of fauna and 8 species of flora that are critically endangered or threatened.

The New Heaven and the New Earth is not some distant time in the future... it is now. As God wipes my tears from racism and injustice today, I pray that we work together to protect our world, our planet, our earth – there is only one. As the Elders say, “Care for Country, and Country will care for you.”

Pray

Great Creator Spirit, we cry out to you in prayer. May the destruction of Country be turned into the protection and restoration of Country – your precious creation. May we love all our neighbours - our land neighbour, water neighbour, sky neighbour, tree neighbour, plant neighbour, animal neighbour, bird neighbour, fish neighbour, rock neighbour, mountain neighbour – our earth neighbour. May we see the urgent need for action and as we take action, may you wipe our tears from death, mourning, crying, and pain, and may our tears be turned to tears of life, joy, rest, and release. Amen.

Together

Brooke Prentis

Surrounded by the Divine,
Bunya Pine and green hills

Old

New

Surrounded by much colour,
Butterfly and Bottlebrush

Peace

Serenity

Surrounded by dwelling place,
Sunrise, house, and balcony

Life

Rest

The rooster's crowing disrupts.
The lawn mower's whirr disturbs.

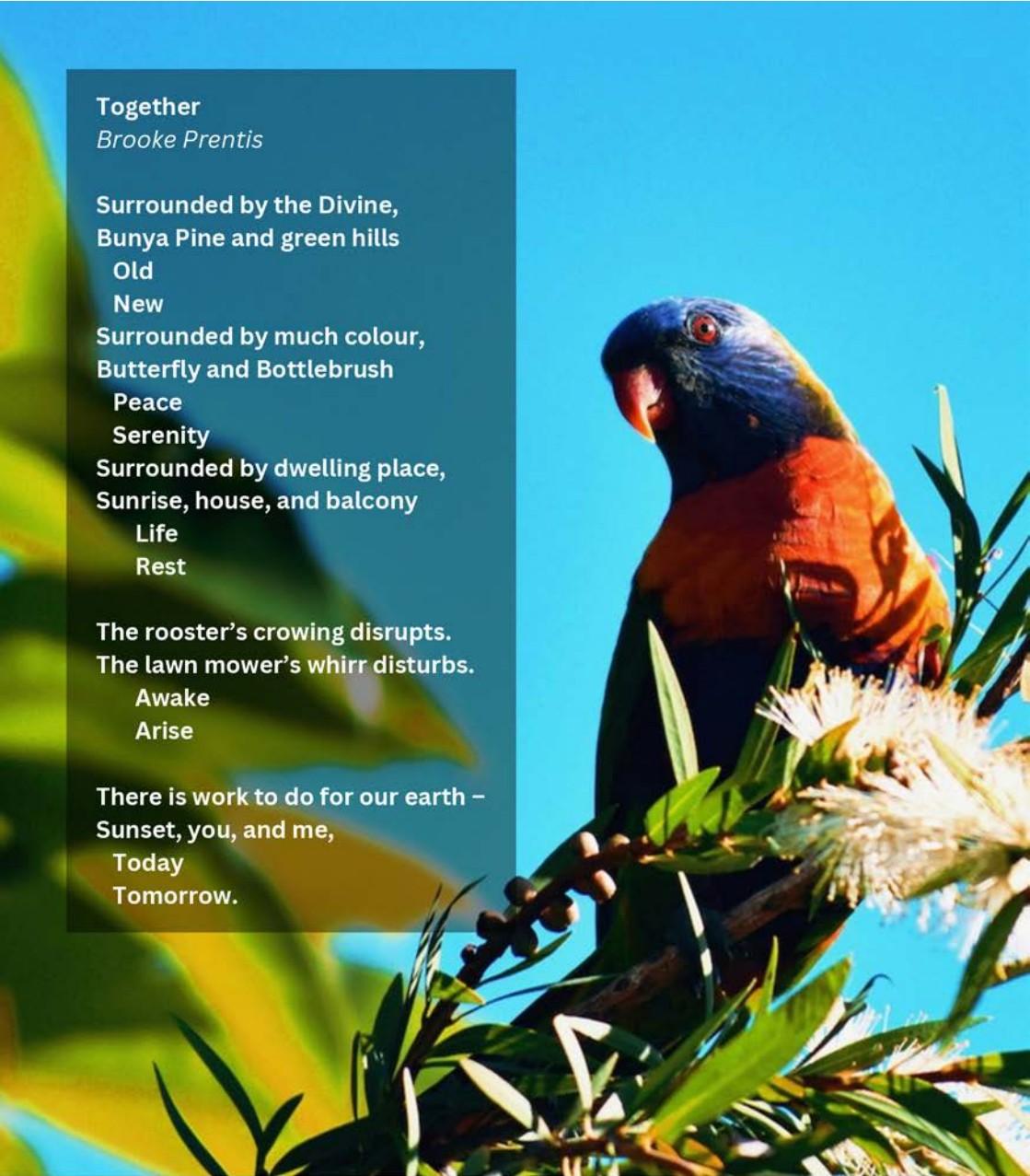
Awake

Arise

There is work to do for our earth –
Sunset, you, and me,

Today

Tomorrow.



*Brooke Prentis is an Aboriginal
Christian Leader, Wakka Wakka
Woman, Cultural and Education
Consultant.*

Day 13

On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Rev 22:2) NRSVA

Read Revelation 22:1-5

environment in which trees grow and bloom, and for all of God's creation.

Reflect

When I was a young Aboriginal student in my first year of high school at Cairns State High, our class was given the task to write an essay about the importance of trees. I asked my father if he would help. My father actually wrote the whole essay for me. He wrote about how trees are the lungs of the earth. He portrayed their enormous beauty in two big words: A Kaleidoscope bewilderment. I had never seen these two big words before, and I had no idea what these two big words meant.

After I handed in my essay, I know that my teacher knew that I had not written this essay. But my teacher was really impressed by its substance. I did confess that it was my father who wrote this essay for me. Thankfully, I did get a good grade for it. But these two big words have remained in my memory all these years. From these two big words I developed a very deep appreciation for trees and the

The Bible uses very big words too. Words like: Reconciliation. Salvation. Eternity. Predestination. Redemption. Justice. Holiness. Each of these big words have deep meaning. For the past 2000 years humanity has been trying to understand how these big words should be applied and demonstrated by all humanity in everyday life. But, if there is one word that can summarise all these big words that come from the Bible, that one word would be LOVE.

I will always remember the love of my father when I recall those two big words. I still try to interpret the world and see God's creation through them. My Heavenly Father who also gave all humanity so many big words to ponder, study and apply from His Word, I continue to dig deep into the meaning of these big words from the Scriptures as I try every day to understand His plan for all creation and for all humanity. And I continue to try to see the whole of creation through the eyes of my Heavenly Father.

Pray

Creator of all things, we stand before You with reverence and gratitude for every species of trees You created and gifted to all humankind as our ancient and steadfast relatives. They are the guardians of the Earth, the providers of shelter, sustenance, and wisdom. We pray for Your guidance, wisdom, and strength to empower us to protect and honour these sacred beings, to ensure their existence for generations to come. May we learn from their resilience, rooted deep in Mother Earth's soil, yet reaching for the sky in search of the nourishing sun. As we breathe in the clean and pure air they provide, may we be reminded of the interconnections of all life. Help us to remember the teachings of the trees: patience, endurance, respect, and the importance of community. Be our guide and compass as we learn to live in harmony with the forests and the land they cover. May our actions be a reflection of Your love and respect for these gentle giants, and may we be the stewards they need in these difficult times. In Jesus name, we offer our gratitude and ask for Your guidance. Amen.



Crux Fidelis (Faithful Cross)
Michael Hodgetts

**Holy cross that saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.
Lovely timber, lovely iron,
Lovely burden that they bear!**

***Pastor Ray Minniecon** is a husband, parent, and grandparent. He is a descendant of the Kabi Kabi nation, the Gureng Gureng nation of South-East Queensland, and the South Sea Islander people with deep connections to Ambrym Island, Vanuatu. Ray is a leader, pastor, educator, community facilitator and Bible teacher. With his wife Sharon, Ray leads the Scarred Tree Indigenous Ministries at St John's Anglican Church, Glebe. Ray received the Archbishop of Canterbury's Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation in 2022.*

Day 14

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (Gen 2:15) NRSVA

Read Genesis 2:4-15

Reflect

In the Genesis narrative, we read of humanity's unique role in God's creation. God acts, and forms humankind from the dust but also reveals the divine intention for humankind to till and tend creation – and so from the very beginning a partnership between humankind and their Creator is established in the stewardship of creation.


The invitation to "till" signifies active engagement, a priority to cultivate and contribute to the care and flourishing of creation. "Tending" involves nurturing, an act of love and guardianship over God's handiwork.

This collaboration suggests a profound connection between the Creator and creation, with humankind serving as co-caretakers. It implies that stewardship is to be a shared responsibility, requiring interaction with each other in the care of the environment. As stewards, all of humanity are entrusted with managing the balance of taking and giving,

consuming and preserving. In considering our ecological footprint, we are reminded again to be intentional about being co-caretakers. As we partake in preserving the beauty and diversity of creation, we understand God's heart a little more. It challenges us to prioritise environmental care as a divine mandate to till and tend the creation we have been entrusted with.

Pray

Heavenly Father. We come before you in gratitude for the sacred partnership revealed in tilling and tending. Help us to be actively engaged in the care and flourishing of creation. Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege. Grant us wisdom to be conscientious stewards, cultivating your creation with love and responsibility. Guide us in cherishing the beauty of your handiwork. May our hands work in accordance with your divine design, respecting all you have created. May our actions reflect the reverence we hold for all you have placed in our care. Amen.



In Eden's embrace, God's breath weaves the tale,
Humankind, clay-formed, the Creator's partnership unveiled.
Naming creatures with purpose, a dance in grace,
Humankind, God's co-caretakers in this sacred space.

Together they till and care for nature's grand art,
A symphony of creation, a union of heart.
God's handiwork nurtured, with gentle care,
A covenant binding, a journey to share.

God's favoured, entrusted to tend and preserve,
Guardians of Eden, where life's rhythms converge.
Looking after the environment, a duty profound,
In God's creation, our reverence is found.

Margaret Coombridge

Margaret Coombridge (Envoy) is
the VIC/TAS Recovery Coordinator
for The Salvation Army Emergency
Services, The Salvation Army
Australia Territory.

Day 15

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
(Matt. 11:28) NRSVA*

Read Matthew 11.28-30

Reflect

The call of Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 is needed, I believe, now more than ever. Are we not exhausted by the demands of our increasingly busy lives; by the chaotic world around us, spiralling deeper into war, chaos, and violence; and by the seemingly intractable and 'wicked' problem that is climate change?

We can as individuals 'come to Jesus' and in him truly find 'rest' and 'learn from him,' understanding that Jesus' 'yoke' is not a promise of a life freed from toil and struggle and work but a promise of God being with us every step of the difficult path that lies ahead.

But we can also bring our endangered world, which is after all, God's first gift to us, back to Jesus. To learn from him is to live with a deep understanding of 'sabbath' and 'shalom.' It is to find rest and peace for the planet in all our actions, moving our mental imagery from that of 'Mother Earth' nurturing us to this fragile earth as a *vulnerable*

baby needing our best care each and every day. All done in the company of God who loves all!

Pray

In times of weakness and hour of need,
yours is the strength by which we carry on,
the shoulder we rest our head upon.

When our load is heavy and too much to bear,
yours are the arms stretched out to help us,
the grace that we depend on.
In times of weakness and hour of need,
your voice is heard,
'Come... find rest.'

This is grace divine,
the path we tread to wholeness of body and spirit,
the path that leads to you,
and for which we offer our offering of praise.
Amen.

John Birch
www.faithandworship.com



Rest

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed death
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

*The Rev'd Shane Hubner is Priest-
in-Charge of Christ Church, St Lucia
and a member of Angligreen.*

Day 16

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt. 6:34) NIVUK

Read **Matthew 6:25-34**

Reflect

This passage has been quoted to me as an excuse to ignore climate change. “Do not worry about tomorrow.”

When read individualistically, this passage is nonsense. Many of the birds of the air are now extinct. Millions of humans have died of malnourishment and exposure, including people of faith who sought God’s kingdom.

But Jesus is addressing the crowd, not individuals. This is a communal challenge. When an entire community seeks to follow God’s rules (love God, neighbour, self, do for others), when communities are run justly, instead of to benefit the already rich, we move towards a world where all people are fed and clothed. How could it be any different? If all people refrain from storing up treasure on Earth, but instead give to all who ask of them, what would the world look like? Or even our local communities?

Reading the passage in context, all we need to do as a community is, be merciful, peacemakers, give to the needy, pray, forgive debts, share instead of save our money, serve God not money, and then we won’t need to worry about what we will eat or wear, or even climate change.

Pray

“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

“Yes,” we reply now, with certainty.

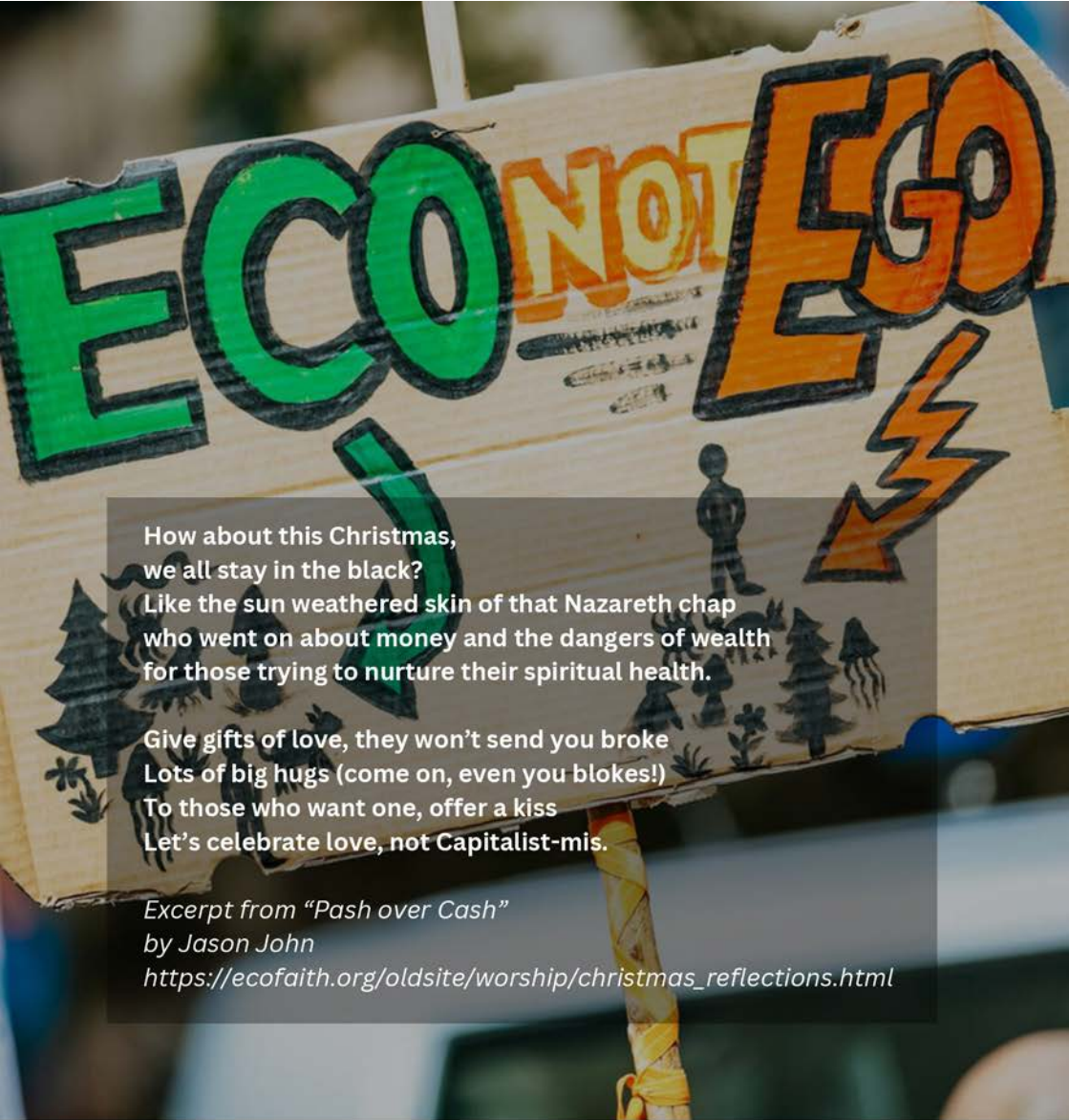
Those of us with money can indeed.

Can we all add a single hour, or a year, or a decade?

Yes.

I know how.

Increase my faith.



How about this Christmas,
we all stay in the black?

Like the sun weathered skin of that Nazareth chap
who went on about money and the dangers of wealth
for those trying to nurture their spiritual health.

Give gifts of love, they won't send you broke
Lots of big hugs (come on, even you blokes!)
To those who want one, offer a kiss
Let's celebrate love, not Capitalist-mis.

Excerpt from "Pash over Cash"
by Jason John

https://ecofaith.org/oldsite/worship/christmas_reflections.html

Jason John is a Uniting Church deacon, currently serving as a forest chaplain. He is also the landcare coordinator in the Bellingen Shire. He lives in the forest near Bellingen with his family

of humans, goats, and other animals. He co-leads an outdoor ecofaith community, writes for a very small audience, and performs poetry for a slightly larger one once a year or so.

Day 17

*It was majestic in beauty, with its spreading boughs,
for its roots went down to abundant waters.
(Ezek. 31:7) NIVUK*

Read Ezekiel 31:5-9

Reflect

My father was a talented woodworker. One of his trademarks was using scrap pieces of wood to recreate the silhouette of a tree of that species - like the river red gum in the photo. The trees that he created each have their own character and in some way bring the blocks of wood to life.

The first times that God speaks to Adam and Eve, he gives them 'every tree that has fruit with seed in it' (Genesis 1:29) and then warns them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16). Jesus' life on earth ends on a wooden cross. Trees play a supporting role in Jesus' ministry - from Zacchaeus using a sycamore tree as a ladder to see Jesus pass by, to using the characteristics of a fig tree in parables.

The tree in this text from Ezekiel is an allegory for a powerful nation, but the language used makes it easy to picture this tree, like my Dad's woodworking brought his model

trees to being. It reminds us of the things trees bring us every day - shelter and shade, habitats for birds and animals, and beauty.

Pray

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the beauty of creation. As we look around us, we thank you for the trees that you have blessed us with - those that provide shade on a hot summer day; those that people, birds and animals alike use as shelter from the rain and wind; those that provide food and nourishment; and those that are significant to us because of the way they look or where they are. Help us to be good stewards of the trees that are the lungs of the planet. Amen.

The Stringy-Bark Tree

by Henry Lawson (1867-1922)

There's the whitebox and pine on the ridges afar,
Where the iron-bark, blue-gum, and peppermint are;
There is many another, but dearest to me,
And the king of them all was the stringy-bark tree.

Then of stringy-bark slabs were the walls of the hut,
And from stringy-bark saplings the rafters were cut;
And the roof that long sheltered my brothers and me
Was of broad sheets of bark from the stringy-bark tree.

And when sawn-timber homes were built out in the West,
Then for walls and for ceilings its wood was the best;
And for shingles and palings to last while men be,
There was nothing on earth like the stringy-bark tree.

Far up the long gullies the timber-trucks went,
Over tracks that seemed hopeless, by bark hut and tent;
And the gaunt timber-finder, who rode at his ease,
Led them on to a gully of stringy-bark trees.

Now still from the ridges, by ways that are dark,
Come the shingles and palings they call stringy-bark;
Though you ride through long gullies a twelve months you'll see
But the old whitened stumps of the stringy-bark tree.

Steve Loffler is a member of St Paul's Lutheran Church in Box Hill, Victoria, and is a member of the Lutheran Earthcare Australia and New Zealand committee. He has over 25 years of experience in R&D,

policy and government programs across many streams of sustainability from climate change to papermaking. He likes walking, especially on a tree lined path.

Day 18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1) NIVUK

Read John 1:1-5

Reflect

It has long been noted that both Genesis and John begin with the same three words – “In the beginning...”. God spoke his creating Word, and life as we know it commenced. Then in John 1, that Word became flesh in Jesus, the Christ of God. In other words, it is at this point that creation and new creation meet. It is here that meaning and purpose take shape. There are of course various dimensions to that, but several points should be noted.

Humans may have a special role to play in creation, but it is fundamental that we are part of creation, not above it. Ours is primarily a caring role, caring for life and the wonders of God’s creation. Who has not, at various times, paused in sheer wonder at the magnitude and beauty of that creation!

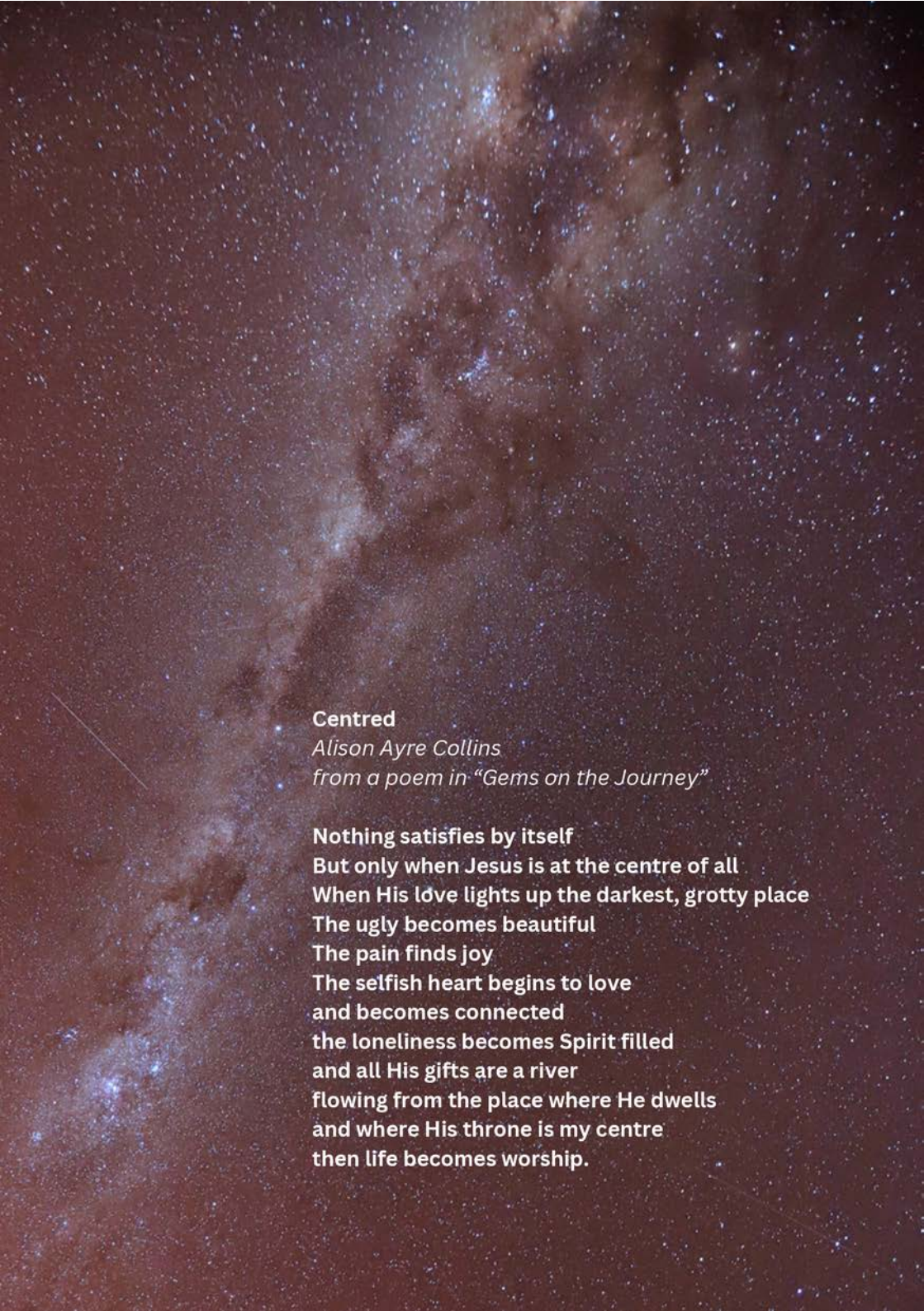
But God’s Word became one of us in Jesus, and we can connect with God in a wonderful new way. After all, as

Alison Ayre Collins has written, it is not in the partial perceptions, but when we are listening for God’s Word in a holistic sense, and our life is centred there, that “life becomes worship”.

Pray

God of grace, thank you that you care for your whole creation, and that you call us to do the same. Help us, on our journey through life, to know not only that you listen to us, but even more, to listen for your Word spoken through Jesus. Through your Spirit in us, may we be faithful to your Call to us. Help us to care with integrity, as Jesus cared. Amen.

Rev Dr Clive W Ayre is a Minister of the Word, Uniting Church in Australia. He is a founding member of the Queensland Christian Environmental Network, and author of "Earth, Faith and Mission: The Theology and Practice of Earthcare".



Centred

Alison Ayre Collins

from a poem in "Gems on the Journey"

**Nothing satisfies by itself
But only when Jesus is at the centre of all
When His love lights up the darkest, grotty place
The ugly becomes beautiful
The pain finds joy
The selfish heart begins to love
and becomes connected
the loneliness becomes Spirit filled
and all His gifts are a river
flowing from the place where He dwells
and where His throne is my centre
then life becomes worship.**

Day 19

Then he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath.'

(Mark 2: 27) NRSVA

Read Mark 2:23-28

Reflect

Jesus in our reading is pushing back on a system that was the dominant culture of his day. There were those within his community who tried to fight with Jesus picking grain on what their community had always observed as a day of rest. Now, I imagine Jesus and his followers meandering through fields, joking, laughing, talking, dreaming, enjoying their day of rest together as they pick heads of grain. However, the pharisee's saw their actions as 'work' and a direct violation of the law of the Sabbath. If Jesus and his disciples were laughing, talking, resting, dreaming as they walked – were they still resting? What does rest look like for you?

In essence, rest is resistance to the dominant culture that asks us to do more, have more, extend ourselves more, be more. Rest is God's invitation into recreation and renewal. To resist the urge to achieve or earn or strive. Instead, we are asked to be present to what is right now with full acceptance. Nothing else needed. No task list to complete, no standard to raise yourself up to,

no acquisition to obtain. You – are – enough. So rest. Rest in the unconditional acceptance and loving kindness of God who is your biggest cheerleader.

Pray

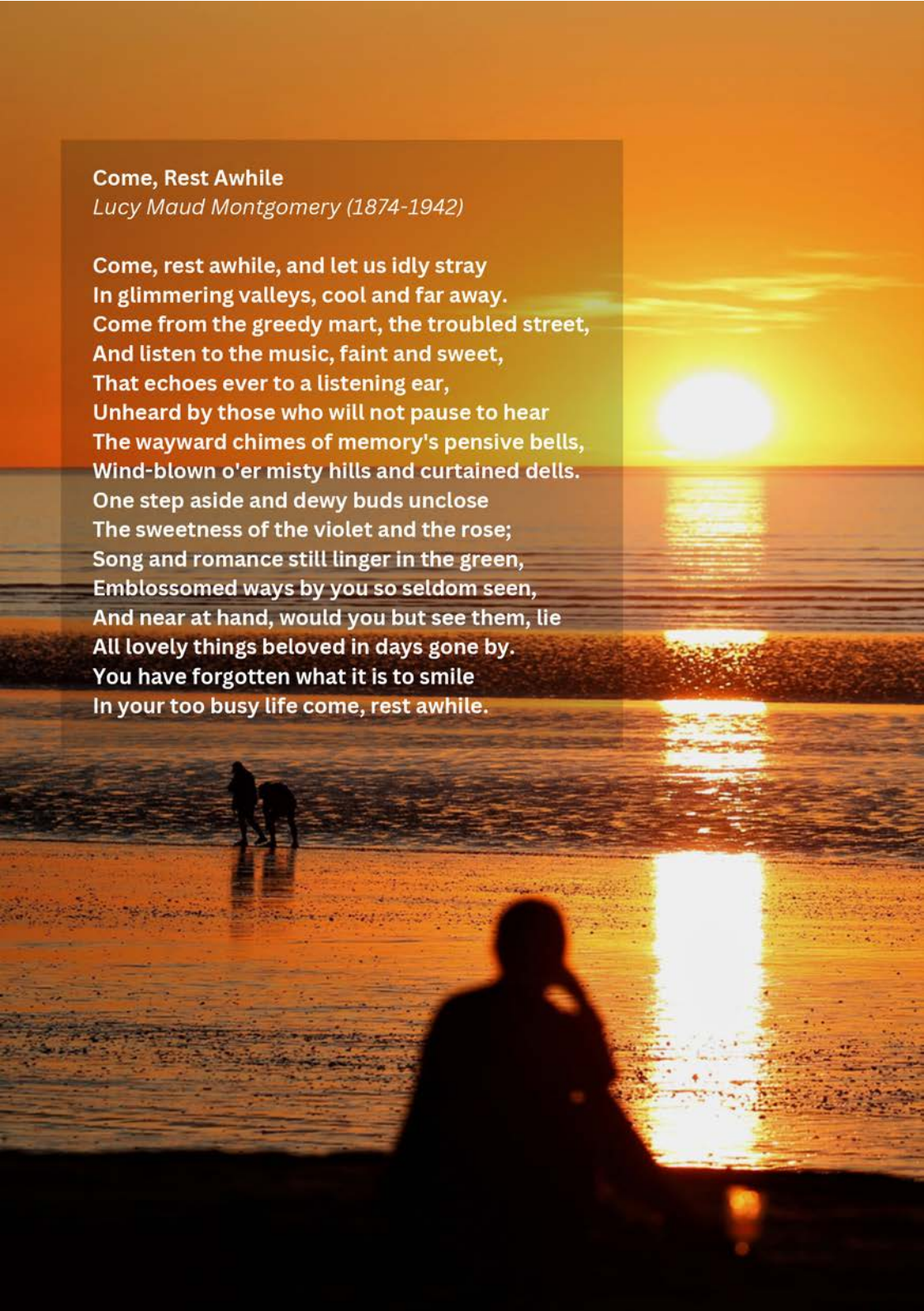
Loving God, In a world where people are overwhelmed and burdened by life, help us to learn the spiritual artistry of rest and renewal. May we see rest as a resistance to the oppressive forces that would seek to keep us enslaved to dominant culture. May we see our bodies as vehicles of divine liberation and renewal. And, as we learn to sit with ourselves and each other in rest, may we begin to dream of a new creation where liberation is reclaimed not for each person, but for the whole of Creation. Amen.

Rev Melanie Wheeley is a Chaplain at Wesley Mission Queensland. Mel has a deep love of diversity in all its forms, social justice alongside spiritual and faith formation. Mel's favourite place to be in nature is amongst the waves of Greenmount Beach, Gold Coast.

Come, Rest Awhile

Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942)

Come, rest awhile, and let us idly stray
In glimmering valleys, cool and far away.
Come from the greedy mart, the troubled street,
And listen to the music, faint and sweet,
That echoes ever to a listening ear,
Unheard by those who will not pause to hear
The wayward chimes of memory's pensive bells,
Wind-blown o'er misty hills and curtained dells.
One step aside and dewy buds uncloset
The sweetness of the violet and the rose;
Song and romance still linger in the green,
Emblossomed ways by you so seldom seen,
And near at hand, would you but see them, lie
All lovely things beloved in days gone by.
You have forgotten what it is to smile
In your too busy life come, rest awhile.



Day 20

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:14) NIVUK

*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
(Psalm 33:6) NIVUK*

Read John 1:14 & Psalm 33:6

Reflect

The Word becoming flesh is not just a story about humanity. In the Incarnation, the star-breather became stardust, inhabiting atoms and compounds, the building blocks of life. The Holy One shared this temporal experience with all of creation, borrowing elements that had been used by countless lifeforms before Christ's birth, and that continue to find new form today.

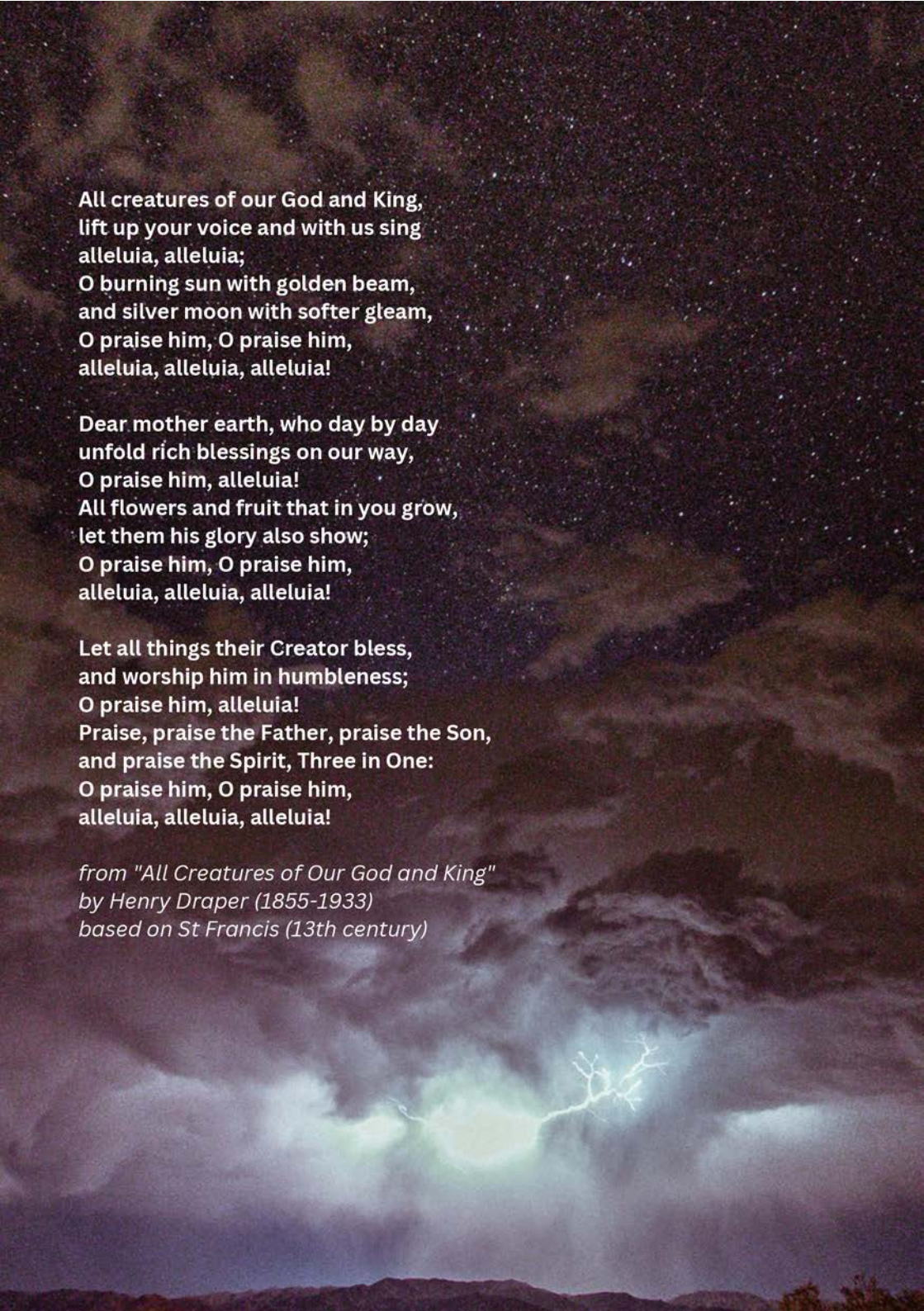
In incomprehensible humility, God chose symbiosis. Christ, the Author of Life, received life's nourishment from the air, water, soil, plants, animals and bacteria around him. Adorned in the organic and making Home amongst us, the Almighty affirmed the hallowed nature of all that comprises our earth.

Immanuel! "God with Us" is not just a gift to humanity, but a shared joy for all the earth. Together, we continue to be God's very good creation, indwelt and participating in the revealing of God's glory.

Pray

Lord, I thank you for the wonder of your shared Life with us – the whole of your creation. Your humility and vulnerability remind us that this whole organic Life is hallowed. You in us and us in you. Today, we seek to recognise your presence in creation around us. Please give us eyes to see, ears to hear, spirit to recognise you, Immanuel.

Melanie-Anne Holland has been an officer in The Salvation Army for 22 years, serving along the east coast of Australia in a variety of leadership roles, including faith communities, homelessness services, youthwork, family and domestic violence supports, modern slavery and human trafficking response and environmental advocacy. Holding degrees in both environmental science and theology, Melanie is passionate about the way Christian spirituality informs care for the earth – personally and in community. She is a tree-planter, bird-watcher, snorkeller and koala advocate.



All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing
alleluia, alleluia;

O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfold rich blessings on our way,
O praise him, alleluia!
All flowers and fruit that in you grow,
let them his glory also show;
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;
O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

from "All Creatures of Our God and King"
by Henry Draper (1855-1933)
based on St Francis (13th century)

Day 21

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (Gen. 1:31) NIVUK

Read Genesis 1:26-31

Reflect

(1:26) In Hebrew, image literally means shadow.

The verse uses plural words of 'us' and 'our'.

We are made in the shadow of the triune God.

Humans have emotion, intellect and will; such nature God has also.

To "rule over" creation is to have authority and control over it. God has ultimate rule and he exercises his authority with loving care.

God delegated some of his authority in ruling over the Earth to humans. He expects us to shadow his protection and nurture of creation. As we do we mustn't be wasteful and careless.

(1:28) We are to subdue the earth in tending and caring for it, working to keep it productive.

(1:29) In the beginning, God gave seed bearing plants and trees that have fruit with a seed in it for humans to eat. We are made from the earth and are nourished by it.

(1:31) Before humans were created, creation was good, after it was very good.

In Hebrew, evening means obscuration and morning means discernible. Evening causes chaos. Morning causes order. From chaos to order.

The sixth day. The number six means imperfection. On day 7 of rest creation become perfect.

Pray

Creator God, you built the whole world and everything in it. When you created man and woman, you knew it was very good. When you created me, you made me in your own image. Be with me today so that everyone I come into contact with sees my attitude, actions, and character in such a way that reflects glory on you who created me. Amen.

Lisa Rohrlach lives in Port Augusta, South Australia, and works at the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden. She is a member of the Lutheran Earth Care Australia and New Zealand committee.

A close-up photograph of two hands, palms up, holding a small green plant with dark soil. The background is a blurred green field. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Affirmation

by Hannah More Kohaus

**I am stronger than my fears
I am wiser than my years
I am gladder than my tears
For I am God's image**

**I am better than my deeds
I am holier than my creeds
I am wealthier than my needs
For I am God's image**

**God whose image thus I bear
And whose likeness I shall share
All God's glory will declare
For I am God's image**

Day 22

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5) NIVUK

Read John 15:1-8

Reflect

The way of Jesus is the way of love, grace and hope. It is possible to attend church, have sound doctrines and look quite the part and not be genuinely and effectively living with the loving power of Christ flowing through our lives. Like the branches described in this passage, drawing water and nutrients from the vine, the life of the faith is found in the constant flow of Christ's love and grace as we open ourselves to receive it. The question is – how do we receive it? How do we ensure its constant flow?

Brother Lawrence suggested in his Book “Practicing the Presence of God” that he felt as close to God in the kitchen doing dishes as he did at vespers. He was constantly in intimate awareness and surrender to God. He didn't need to strive – it just came as he opened himself up to it.

Whenever I visit a rainforest, I am amazed and reminded of God's perfect power and beauty as the ecosystem works gently and naturally to complement and nourish. In the same way, we can lean into God's love

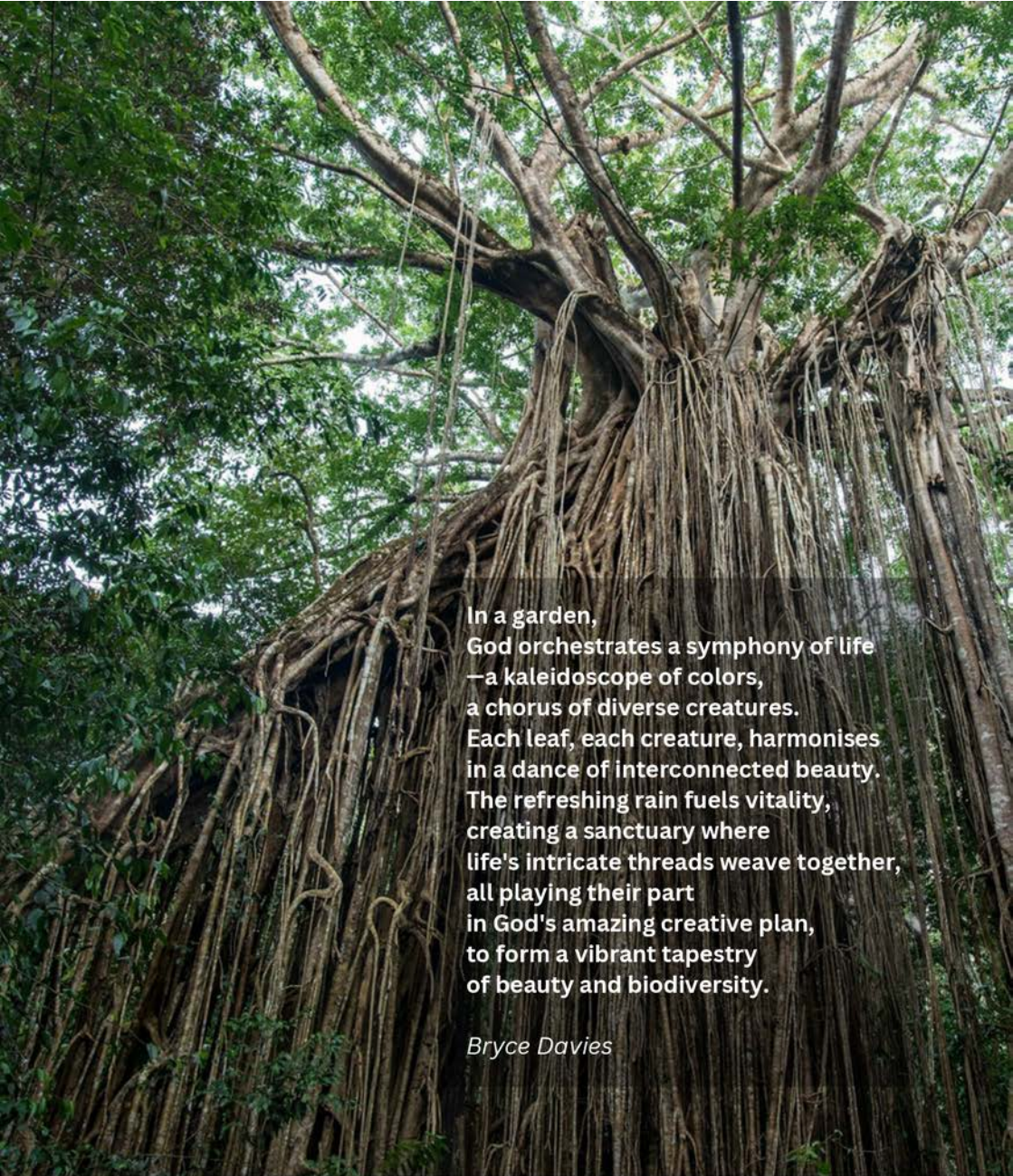
and see the fruits of the spirit spring forth in our lives.

Pray

Loving Creator God, help us in our worry and striving to live more simply and confidently in your spirit. Humble us enough to be aware of the pride, worry and fear that can distract us from the flow of your love and presence in our ordinary lives. May we see your beauty and purposes in even the smallest and seemingly most insignificant moments of our day; in the exchange of a smile, in the pleasure of sharing a cup of tea or the simple pleasure of serving others in your name and for your glory.

Just as the massive fig trees and towering oaks display your glory in an Australian rainforest, may we be reminded of the humble moss and fungi that also have a place and are important and wonderful too. Every person and every moment is important to the flow of the love of Christ in this world.

Amen



In a garden,
God orchestrates a symphony of life
—a kaleidoscope of colors,
a chorus of diverse creatures.
Each leaf, each creature, harmonises
in a dance of interconnected beauty.
The refreshing rain fuels vitality,
creating a sanctuary where
life's intricate threads weave together,
all playing their part
in God's amazing creative plan,
to form a vibrant tapestry
of beauty and biodiversity.

Bryce Davies

Major Bryce Davies is a Salvation Army officer in Queensland who has over 30 years of experience in community work within the Salvos.

Bryce hosts the *Stories of Hope* podcast that captures the thoughts and stories of everyday people who triumph over adversity.

Day 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
(Ps. 23:1) NRSV

Read Psalm 23

Reflect

Wiradjuri Language

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

**Rev. Canon A/Prof (Hon) Glenn
Loughrey MA Wiradjuri**

1 The Lord (dyiraamalang -law-giver) is my shepherd (waluma rra – guardian), I (ngadhu) shall not want (ngindi – want).

2 He makes (yanghabayarra – sends) me lie down (wirra–bunma-rra – makes me rest rest, extends) in green (gabar-gabay – grassy) pastures (gunhigal – plain, valley); he leads me beside (ngurr -close against) still waters (galing-gural – deep & still);

3 he restores (bagaray-bang- comforted, healthy, comfortable) my soul (dhulubang – spirit, soul).* He leads me in right (maram -bul – right or correct or good) paths (murru - road or track) for his name’s sake (yindyamaarra – to respect, honour).

4 Even though I walk (gugangugamilanha – walk with a bent back) through the darkest (nguru-murdin -dark, very dark) valley

(gulgan – a little hole or pit),* I fear no evil (nguru – evil, shade, shadow); for you are with me; your (boomerang) and your staff (spear)— they comfort me.

5 You prepare (marra make) a table (daiman – a place of plenty) before (gulgandarra – time and place) me in the presence (migany – face to face) of my enemies (madhu – those who intend to fight); you anoint (wimanha – rub) my head (balang – head) with oil (ganha-rra – smoke comes down); my cup (gugi – shallow basin) overflows (marrum - overflowing).

6 Surely* (ngamagilal – it is so!) goodness (dhulu-ny – rightness) and mercy*(Marrun-bang - that which is sweet and good) shall follow (gubaymanha – wish to be one with) me all the days (breaths) of my life (murun – breath), and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.*

Pray

Law-giver, Guardian, Lord,
Shepherd, Rest-Giver, Comforter,
Healer, Guide, Overflowing
Provider, I rejoice in your care.
Amen



Wiradjuri Language

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

Rev. Canon A/Prof (Hon) Glenn Loughrey MA Wiradjuri©

1 The law-giver is my guardian, I shall not want for all I need.

2 The law-giver sends me to rest on the grassy plain; they lead me to be on the banks of the waters which are deep and still;

3 He (They) comforts and heals my spirit and guides me onto the right track honouring his (their) gifted place in community.

4 Even when I walk bent over with troubles through the very dark pit, I am not afraid of the shadow over me; for you do not leave me alone; your boomerang and spear make me comfortable.

5 You make a place of plenty for me in the full view of those who are against me; you bring the smoke of ceremony down upon my head; my gulaman is always overflowing.

6 It is so that rightness and all things sweet and good shall wish to be one with me through all my breaths and I surely I will be on country while ever I have breath.

The Rev'd Canon A/Prof (Hon) Glenn Loughrey is a priest, artist and author and has a special interest in indigenous issues. He is a Wiradjuri man. In August 2021, he was appointed a canon of St Paul's

Cathedral Melbourne and became the artist-in-residence. In this role, he has produced artwork for two new windows showing how the Cathedral sits on the land of the original indigenous people.

Day 24

*He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.
(Eph. 2:17) NIVUK*

Read Ephesians 2:14-19

Reflect

How we behave in this world is very much shaped by how we understand ourselves with respect to the world.

For a long time, human beings have tended to regard ourselves as in some way separate and superior to the planet, and we have behaved accordingly.

But there is a thread of teaching through the bible which calls us to a very different understanding. It begins with the creation stories as we read of humans made from the stuff of Earth itself, and recurs again and again.

While written with particular reference to the nature of unity in the church, Paul's announcement that we are all members of the household of God speaks also to our place within the planet's community.

The Greek word for "household" also forms the basis for our word "ecology." Earth is a household made up of interconnected and interdependent creatures. As Christians we affirm this household was called

into being by God and reconciled to God through Christ (Colossians 1:20).

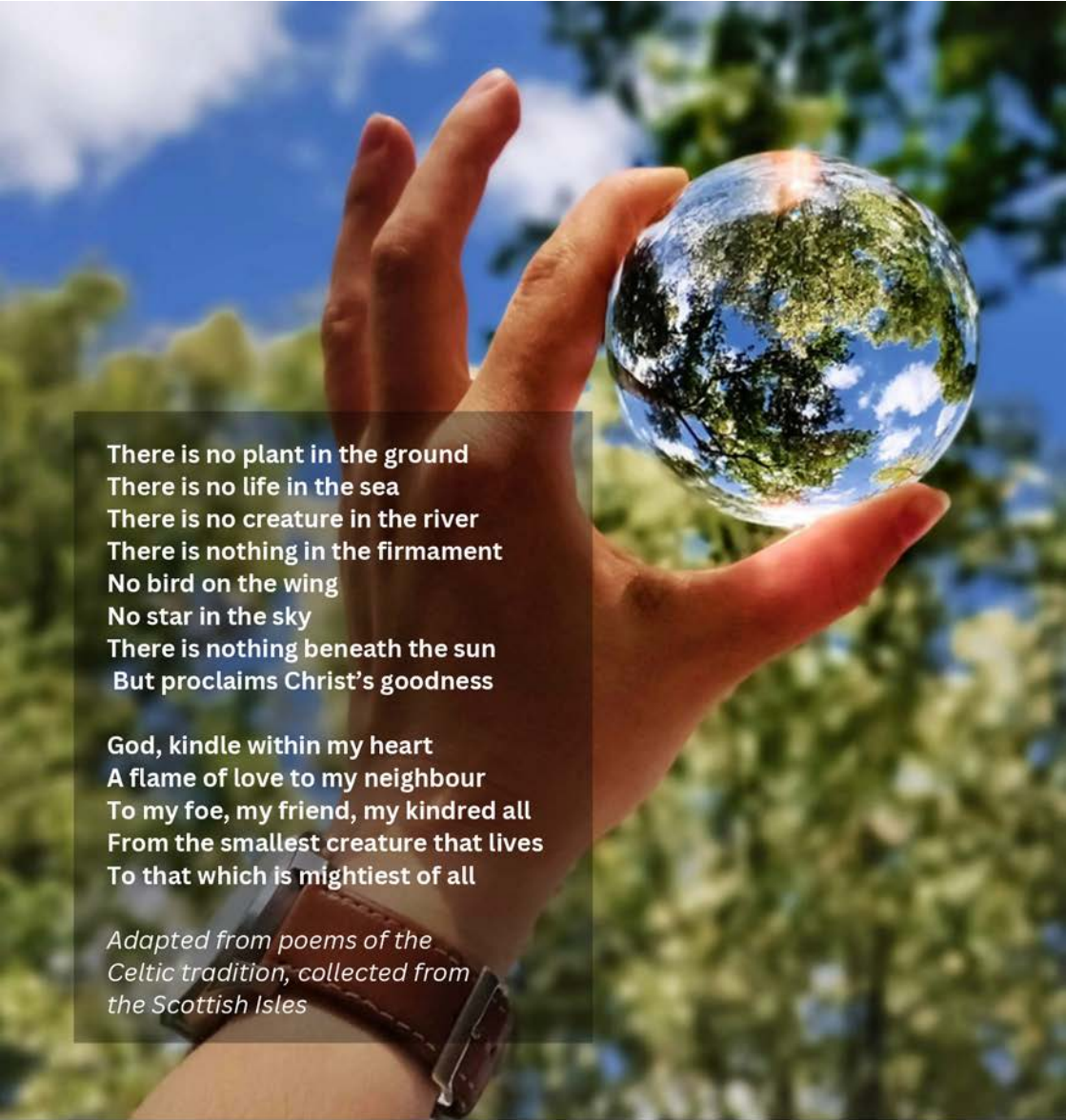
As members of this household, we share a responsibility to all the creatures of Earth who are, after all, our kin. As followers of Jesus, we share a vocation of caring for our planet and working for its healing.

Pray

Gracious God, you are the hope of all the Earth, the one who called all creation into being, who overcame all barriers that divide and who unites all things in the household of your gracious love.

Be with us and grant us grace that we might live gently with this planetary household of which we are part and be faithful as we seek to follow Jesus and share with him in caring for this world, in its fulness, for which he died and rose again.

Amen

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a clear glass sphere. The sphere perfectly reflects the surrounding environment: lush green trees and a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The hand is positioned in the foreground, with the fingers gently cradling the sphere. The background is a soft-focus view of the same natural scene, creating a sense of depth and connection between the hand and the world it holds.

There is no plant in the ground
There is no life in the sea
There is no creature in the river
There is nothing in the firmament
No bird on the wing
No star in the sky
There is nothing beneath the sun
But proclaims Christ's goodness

God, kindle within my heart
A flame of love to my neighbour
To my foe, my friend, my kindred all
From the smallest creature that lives
To that which is mightiest of all

*Adapted from poems of the
Celtic tradition, collected from
the Scottish Isles*

Rev Dr Paul Chalson is a Uniting Church minister who has served in Tasmania, Victoria and currently Canberra. He has a deep passion about the intersection of faith and care of creation, and a background in both ecological activism and leading nature based

spiritual events. He has a doctorate from Charles Sturt University concerning the latter. Paul is married to Betty, and they have two adult children. As well as being a minister he's a musician, cyclist and bushwalker.

Day 25

*I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.
(Gen. 9:13) NIVUK*

Read **Genesis 9:8-17**

Reflect

Flooding is one of the costliest extreme weather events in Australia, with \$21.3 billion in claims costs since 1970. But dollar values don't capture the devastating emotional impacts of flooding. Why does God let such catastrophes happen to us? And why did God once send a flood to destroy everything - bar an ark of a select few?

We are told that the big flood wasn't a wanton act of destruction, but a cleansing action to restore the goodness of His creation.

Indeed, floods are naturally occurring and have positive environmental purposes. They transport nutrients and improve soil quality. They replenish underground aquifers and wetland ecosystems. And they support wildlife; a mass breeding event occurred in 2016 when thousands of water birds flocked to the NSW Macquarie Marshes after flooding filled their habitat for the first time in years.

We often forget that we live within nature, as part of God's creation.

Daily choices and human built systems impact the earth. After flooding in 2019, there were concerns for the Great Barrier Reef because of the agricultural pesticides, industrial chemicals and other contamination in the floodwater entering the ocean.

God's rainbow was a sign he would never again destroy the earth – but are we reciprocating this promise? Do the places we live and the choices we make enable the earth to flourish?

Pray

God,
In the bustle of daily life, I forget where I am. I forget what this earth used to look like, how it used to function as You designed it. I think that I am but one small cog, and that my actions have no real impact. But you teach us that we are the stewards of Your incredible world, and that it's my duty to live in a way that cares for your creation. You sent a flood to purge the earth, but promised to never destroy again. Help me in my stewardship such that Your creation never needs cleansing again.
Amen.



When Severn's Sweeping Flood Had Overthrown
By William Wordsworth

When Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown
St. Mary's Church, the preacher then would cry:
"Thus, Christian people, God his might hath shown
That ye to him your love may testify;
Haste, and rebuild the pile." But not a stone
Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though piety
In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its claim
In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice;
Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice!
Oh! in the past if cause there was for shame,
Let not our times halt in their better choice.

Alana Mosely is an environmental engineer and young mother, raised in the Catholic faith. Her education in the Franciscan tradition in her senior school years influenced her desire to pursue a career that made an impact for the planet.

Whilst she specialises in floodplain management in her workplace, she brings her broader environmental knowledge to her parish in pursuing their Laudato Si Action Plan in South East Queensland.

Day 26

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (John 1:4) NIVUK

Read John 1:1-5

Pray

Reflect

Through the Word came light, and through the Word came matter, and through the Word came life itself. Life that is itself a gift. Everything we perceive through our five senses is a gift. Jesus asks us to give this gift back to Him so He can enrich it. St Francis of Assisi once wrote, "It is in giving of ourselves that we receive." It is only through giving of ourselves to Him that we have life, the life that is the light of all mankind.

This is the light and life that is not just in human beings, but in every living thing on this planet Earth. We were tasked with subduing the Earth, and given dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and everything else on the land.

Before we can exercise this dominion over the Earth, we must start by looking at ourselves and changing wasteful habits into patterns of sustainability. In this way, we steward what God gifted to our ancestors so we can pass it on to our children.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift You gave us, and for the home You made for us. Thank You for giving us dominion over Your Creation. Help us to live sustainably, and to fully understand that it is in the giving of ourselves that we receive. May this Earth remain as beautiful for our children as it was for our ancestors. Amen.

Virginia Sultana is an avid reader and has been writing stories since she was nine years old, and Proclaiming the Word at Mass since she was thirteen. Baptised Catholic as a baby, she grew up going to church with her parents (though she would often fall asleep during Sunday morning Masses) and her faith grew as part of her. She studied Biomedical Science at the Australian Catholic University. After an experience in Lourdes as part of a Pilgrimage for World Youth Day 2023, Virginia understands now more than ever the power of healing testimony -- when God heals you, not of something you want healed, but of something you never knew you needed to be healed -- especially since it happened to her.

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That's good!

from The Creation
by James Weldon Johnson (1871 -1938)



Day 27

*The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters...
The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare, and in his temple all say,
“Glory!” (Ps. 29:3,9) NRSVA*

Read **Psalm 29: 3, 9**

Reflect

Psalm 29 is one of the oldest passages of scripture in the Bible. And like many of the oldest parts of the Bible, it draws a strong connection between God and weather. The sound of thunder is the very voice of God. The torrential rain and violent winds of a great storm are events of divine speech. God’s glory is displayed in and as the fluxes of weather.

For many folks today, especially those of us who live urbanized lives, weather is mostly a background phenomenon and does not factor much into our spiritual lives. There are certainly problematic ways of relating God and weather, for instance, thinking that any particular weather event is directly willed by God as a reward or a punishment. Are there better ways of relating God and weather?

Perhaps a place to start is to realize how immersed we actually are in the weather world. Literally everything

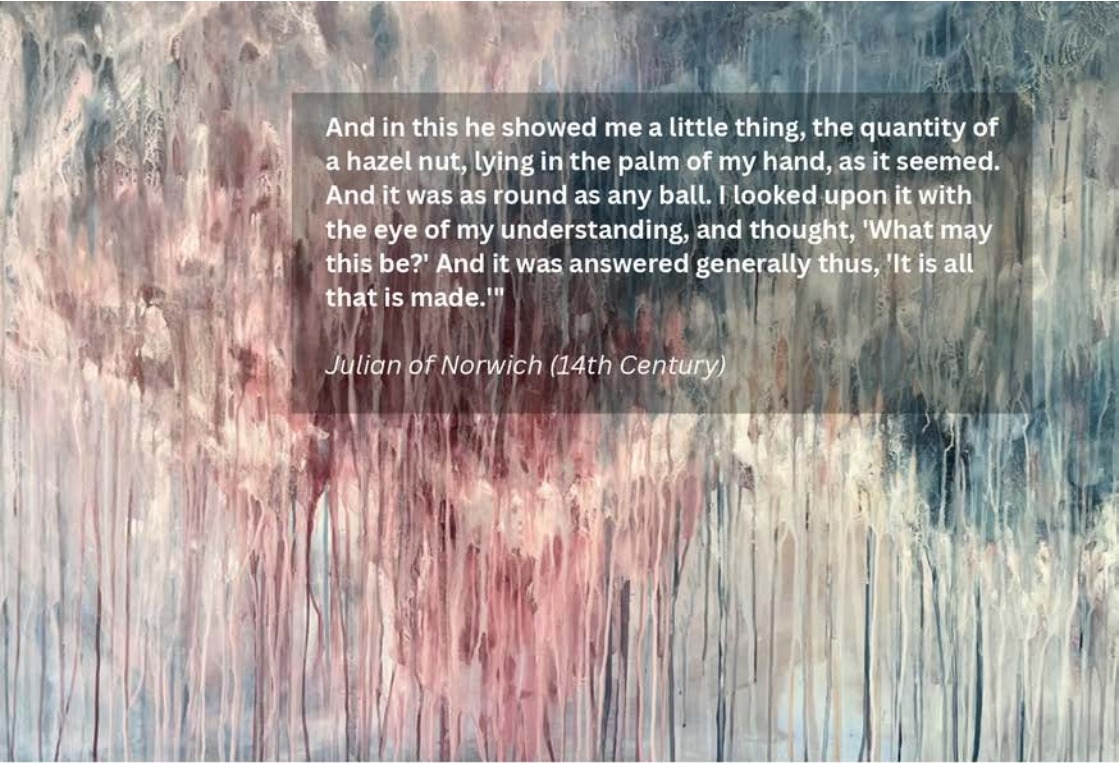
we do—literally everything everything does—is a process of combining wind, rain, sunshine, and earth in order to be. In weather we live, and move, and have our being.

No wonder ancient Israel heard in it the very voice of God.

Pray

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall. You sustain all living creatures with Your goodness, and in Your grace, You provide rain for the earth. We call upon You in our time of need, asking for Your mercy and compassion.

Look favourably upon Your people, O Lord, and send us abundant rain to nourish the land. Bless the work of our hands and grant us prosperity. May the earth yield its fruit abundantly, and may Your blessings overflow.



And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazel nut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, 'What may this be?' And it was answered generally thus, 'It is all that is made.'"

Julian of Norwich (14th Century)

We acknowledge Your sovereignty over all creation, and we humbly ask for Your help. Strengthen us in faith and grant us hope as we wait for Your answer to our prayers. Let Your kindness and love be our guide, and may Your presence bring comfort and peace to our hearts.

We thank You, O Lord, for Your goodness and provision. Hear our prayer, O God, and send us rain in due season. For You are the source of all blessings, and Your mercy endures forever. Amen.

from Traditional Jewish Musaf Amidah Prayer

Peter Kline is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at St Francis Theological College, which is part of the University of Divinity. Peter's teaching areas include eco-theology, and his research interests are currently mysticism, psychoanalysis, and art.

Day 28

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (Col. 1:15) NRSVA

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Reflect

I love that this passage attempts to capture the vastness of the divine nature of Christ, firstborn of all creation. One of my favourite places to be, and somewhere I feel incredibly connected to this 'image of the invisible God', is when I am beside saltwater.

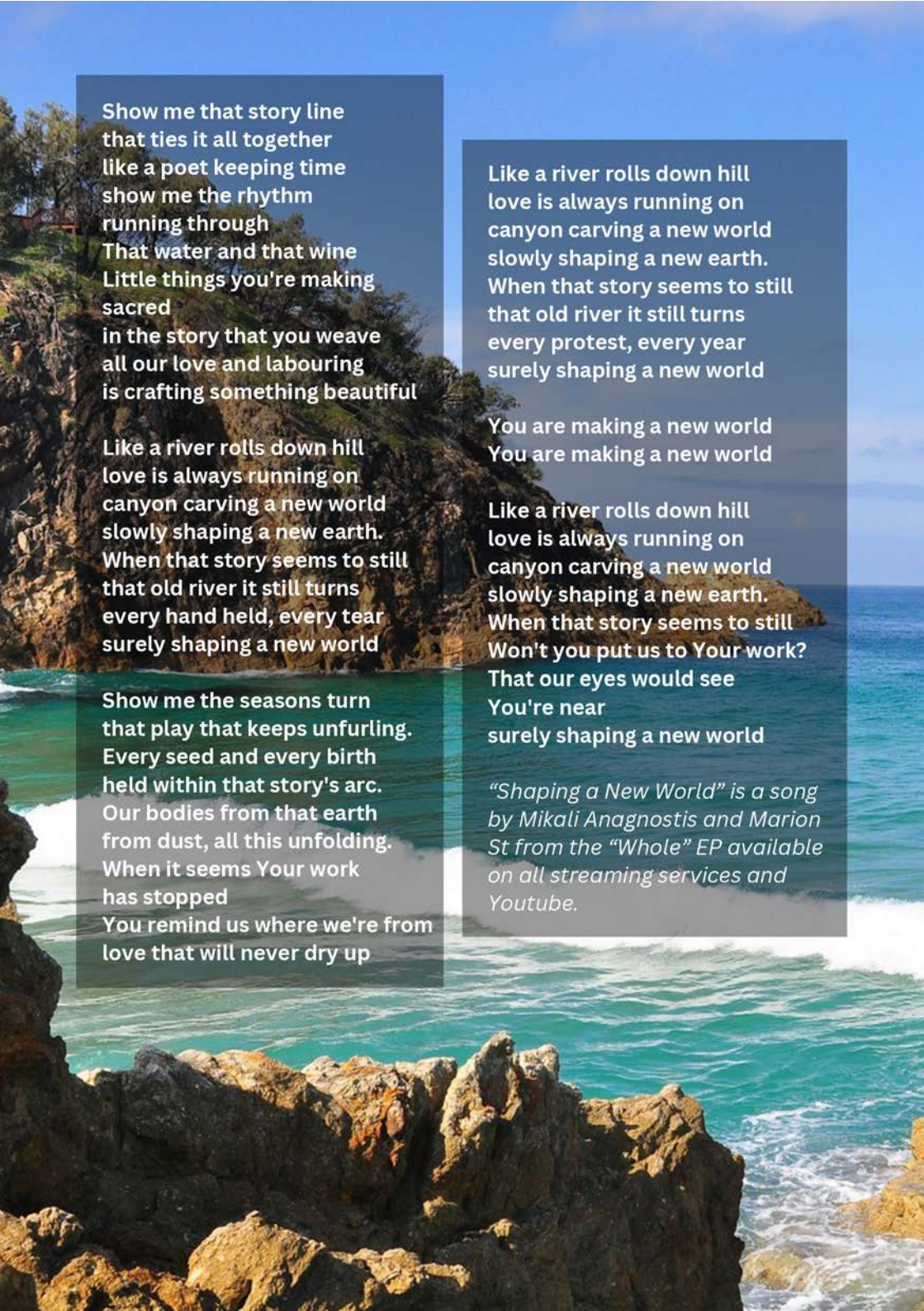
Recently I went on retreat to Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), and when the tide was high I swam in a cove on the mainland side- blue water, white sand, in the shade of a gumtree in which a koala and her joey were sleeping. Ridiculously picturesque, iconically Australian, with the presence of God in creation all around me.

Wise First Nations friends remind me that in Christ "all things in heaven and on earth were created" and this means that Christ was present to their ancestors in Country, long before the first Western missionaries arrived with stories of a baby born to a young woman in the Middle East. I feel deep gratitude as I remember that 'through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things' ... not just particular people, or the institution of the church, but Country as well.

Pray

Holy God, we are astounded at the depth and magnitude of your love for each of us and for all creation. We delight in the wonders of the world around us, where we see not only the works of your hands, but we see Christ, present and connected to us as firstborn of creation. We give you all our thanks today that you were pleased to reconcile to yourself all things. In the name of our brother Christ we pray. Amen.

Pastor Erin Mawhinney is a fourth generation Australian of English heritage, a Queenslander - born in the tropics, currently living on Yuggera Country (Brisbane) and pastor of West End Uniting Church.



Show me that story line
that ties it all together
like a poet keeping time
show me the rhythm
running through
That water and that wine
Little things you're making
sacred
in the story that you weave
all our love and labouring
is crafting something beautiful

Like a river rolls down hill
love is always running on
canyon carving a new world
slowly shaping a new earth.
When that story seems to still
that old river it still turns
every hand held, every tear
surely shaping a new world

Show me the seasons turn
that play that keeps unfurling.
Every seed and every birth
held within that story's arc.
Our bodies from that earth
from dust, all this unfolding.
When it seems Your work
has stopped
You remind us where we're from
love that will never dry up

Like a river rolls down hill
love is always running on
canyon carving a new world
slowly shaping a new earth.
When that story seems to still
that old river it still turns
every protest, every year
surely shaping a new world

You are making a new world
You are making a new world

Like a river rolls down hill
love is always running on
canyon carving a new world
slowly shaping a new earth.
When that story seems to still
Won't you put us to Your work?
That our eyes would see
You're near
surely shaping a new world

*"Shaping a New World" is a song
by Mikali Anagnostis and Marion
St from the "Whole" EP available
on all streaming services and
Youtube.*

Day 29

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. (Gen 3:23) NIVUK

Read Genesis 3:17-24

Reflect

They call me, cursed one!
Yet all races, may trace
their origins to me,
Eve the one ancestor!


But, I am remembered,
As the one who ventured
to taste the fruit,
Not to gain, but to liberate
one's eyes,
Still, they call me the source of, all
straining and pain,
They say Adamah my companion, is a
victim of the temptress,
Yet...

It was only the beginning of my story,
our story with the Creator,
Returning to Eve's hubris manner as a
creatress,
Her story is
Co-creating,
the origins of all humanity,
Let us return to her story,
She is Eve,
She is Mother of all Livings!

Pray

Mother God,
creator,
redeemer,
and nurturer of all things,
be with us
in our walk
on the earth
until,
once again,
we can walk with you
in the eternal garden.
Amen.

Rev Tau'alofa Anga'aelangi is a deacon in the NSW/ACT Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia. She is currently serving as tertiary chaplain at Charles Sturt University in Port Macquarie. She loves a good book at the beach and spending time with family and friends.



A Daughter of Eve

by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

A fool I was to sleep at noon,
And wake when night is chilly
Beneath the comfortless cold moon;
A fool to pluck my rose too soon,
A fool to snap my lily.

My garden-plot I have not kept;
Faded and all-forsaken,
I weep as I have never wept:
Oh it was summer when I slept,
It's winter now I waken.

Talk what you please of future spring
And sun-warm'd sweet to-morrow:—
Stripp'd bare of hope and everything,
No more to laugh, no more to sing,
I sit alone with sorrow.

Day 30

Your statutes, Lord, stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days. (Ps 93:5) NIVUK

Read Psalm 93

Reflect

Psalm 93 speaks of the authority and power of God and how it is experienced in the solidarity and durability of the material world. There is turmoil in the created order, but God is mightier than those forces, forces governed by statutes that remain firm.

I love watching thunderstorms, seeing the power in the updraft in the thunderhead; the lightning and the thundering sounds giving witness to the power and energy in the storm. I thank God that we have been given the capacity to understand, at least to some extent, the complex mechanisms involved. We call them the laws of nature. Science helps us to understand and warns us of the danger in ignoring the rules of nature.

In 2023 the world experienced global heatwaves, widespread bushfires and extensive floods in the Northern summer and extreme weather events in the Southern summer of 2023-4. Science calls for a rapid transition away from fossil fuels to renewable sources. We know what is needed and my prayer is that our leaders, industry,

communities, and individuals will accept responsibility for our human contribution to these weather changes and make the necessary changes in our lifestyle to reduce our contribution.

Pray

God of love,
we praise you for the
magnificence of creation. We
marvel at both its grandeur and
the intricacies of its smallest
microscopic life forms. As we
reflect on the creation, help us
to take in its true significance.
This is your work in which you
have invested deeply of
yourself. It is the costly
outpouring of your creativity.
So, we ask you to instill in us a
proper reverence for all that you
have made - a genuine respect
for all environments and all
creatures. Lord, we are in awe of
the formidable power of nature,
but, in these times, may we also
come to comprehend its
complex fragility.
Amen.

Rev Prebendary Mark Geldard



God's Grandeur

by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

**And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.**

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Father Peter Moore is the Chair of Angligrreen, a member of the Queensland Churches Environmental Network (QCEN) and the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC); a retired priest who served in North Queensland,

Argentina, Uruguay, Bathurst and the Brisbane Diocese; Chaplain to local RSL and RAAFA; and, worships at the Anglican Parish of Logan. He has a Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Divinity and a Theology Diploma.

Day 31

*The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble.
(Joel 3:16) NIVUK*

Read Joel 3:16-18

Reflect

The whole of the book of Joel is a prophetic call to look at what is going wrong with the world and to take action. The prophet's message is that God is already speaking through creation, if only the people would notice. In the time of Joel, the environmental destruction was through a locust plague and a drought. In our time, it is our own unsustainable lifestyles that are causing the damage. We (individuals, communities, congregations, governments) know in our heads that action needs to be taken, but in our hearts we are not yet ready to give up the seductive comforts of consumerism.

The prophet also has another message. God is watching over us, and it is never too late to repent and turn back to God. As Christians facing an environmental crisis, we should remain hopeful because it is not human science and technology that we trust, it is not the wisdom and conviction of governments that we trust, but rather our trust is in God whose power alone sustains the whole creation every second of every day.

Pray

Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all creation, give us eyes to see the glory of the universe around us, give us ears to hear the groans of a hurting world, and give us hearts to love the glorious and to care for the suffering. Amen.

Dr Neil Bergmann is a retired lecturer in Computer Engineering living in Brisbane. He is the chair of Lutheran Earth Care Australia & New Zealand. He represents the Lutheran church on the Queensland Churches Environmental Network (QCEN), and also on the National Council of Churches Australia (NCCA)'s Ecological Taskforce.

Creation groans,
but that's not my doing.

The heavens thunder,
but that's just normal.

The earth shakes,
it seems to do that a lot these days.

Floods ravage,
I'm glad that's not here.

I listen for the LORD,
but God never seems to speak.

by Neil Bergmann



Day 32

But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord.

(Lev. 25: 4) NIVUK

Read Leviticus 25:1-7

Reflect

We understand the Sabbath as a time for us to rest from our day-to-day work and pay attention to the sacred. Australians earn long service leave entitlements after a lengthy period of employment, and academics get sabbatical leave every 7 or so years to spend on expanding their horizons. We need this time for restoration and renewal as we work harder and longer in a culture that values increasing productivity. This relentless pursuit of productivity, by definition, drives us to squeeze more outputs from the resources we have, pushing us closer to the limits that keep our planet safe and wonderful for its current inhabitants.

Today's passage again reminds us that we are not separate from the earth and all creation. Humanity's oneness with the earth is apparent from the earliest Genesis story when God formed Adam from the dust. Our future depends on allowing our over-exploited planet to 'rest', and for the land itself to observe a sabbath to the Lord.

We are called to rest and be renewed in Christ so that we may, in obedience, care for the planet and all who inhabit it.

Pray

Holy One, we come to you seeking a sacred moment of quietness, deeply thankful for your wonderful creation and its bountiful gifts. We pray for guidance, courage and wisdom to know and do our part so the land may observe a sabbath of restoration and all creation may sing for generations to come. Amen

Dr Kumi Abey Suriya is a member of the Chermside Kedron Community Church in Brisbane. She is a sustainability researcher and is one of the representatives of the Uniting Church on the Queensland Churches Environmental Network (QCEN).



We scarcely notice how far we've pushed you
Through our frenetic pursuit of wealth.
You rebuke us with fire, flood, cyclone and drought,
Increasing ferocity until at last we attend.
We stand now, at a crossroads, reflecting on our misdeeds,
Wondering how we might begin to make amends.
May we find wisdom and courage to change our ways,
Give you respite from our constant taking,
Return to harmony God intended, while we still can.

Day 33

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. (Luke 1:52) NRSVA

Read Luke 1:46-55

Reflect

This Magnificat insight turns upside down what our world considers to be normal and right. The God of the Magnificat pulls down the mighty and sends the rich away empty. The God whom Mary proclaims seeks to change the circumstances of those who are made poor and hungry, those who are made powerless and treated unjustly.

Pope Francis speaks of the inseparable connection between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Wherever people are rendered poor and powerless, the rest of creation is also treated this way. Where those who are poor cry out to God, the earth also cries out.

Our Magnificat prayer calls us to stand with God against all forms of exploitation. We are called to act as God acts. We are called to turn upside down the norms of our world so that all exploitation ends and fullness of life is possible for all of creation.

Pray

Gracious God
Help us to sing Mary's song
Help us to magnify you as she does
Help us proclaim you as creator
And love and protect all you have created.
Gracious God
Help us hear the cry of the earth
Help us hear you in that cry
Help us act as you act
And seek the end to exploitation
in all its forms.
Gracious God
Help us to witness to your dream
Help us to let go the norms of
this world
Help us incarnate you in our
world today
And work for the repair of all
your creation
Amen



O Holy Spirit, making life alive,
Moving in all things,
root of all created being,
You wash the cosmos clean,
You root out hate and corruption,
You bring forth harmony and melody,
You comfort and console,
You make jubilation sound.
O Holy Spirit, come to us,
kindle our hearts
And set us on fire with your love.

*Based on the Visions of Hildegard
of Bingen (12th century)*

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Toowoomba for Climate Action, and
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Council.*

Day 34

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. (Ps. 24:1) NIVUK

Read Psalm 24:1-6

Reflect

My people are from the beautiful island of Saibai in the Torres Strait Islands.

Because my people's spirituality lies in the sea, sky and land, we have an intrinsic connection to them. We belong to creation. God's creation is, therefore, fundamental to our entire wellbeing.

God is leading the Church to a turning point in its history and the full partnership of Indigenous peoples is essential if we are to leave a lasting legacy for all of our children and grandchildren. This "turning point" includes how we address damage to the climate. Indigenous peoples know how to care for creation – we have been doing so for millennia.

There are 17 inhabited islands in the Torres Strait and seven of these, including my island of Saibai, are inundated with water due to rising sea levels. Because of damage to the climate, we are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain clean fresh drinking water, materials for shelter, and livable land.

Coastline erosion is destroying gardens of traditional cultural foods. Our ceremonial and burial sites are being destroyed by rising sea levels. Our livelihoods are also being significantly affected, which is very distressing for my people.

As Christians, we believe that "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Psalm 24.1)." By respecting God's good creation and being thankful for it, we respect God and show gratitude towards the Creator.

The Church is very active when it comes to this globally significant matter because we understand that Indigenous peoples know how to care for God's creation and want to see the climate re-balanced. Churches are important agents of change because we care about the whole person, including their physical, spiritual, emotional, social and cultural wellbeing.

In order to rebalance the climate, we must invest in more clean energy. As "the Sunshine State", Queensland has a particular abundance of sun for solar energy – we are truly blessed by this advantage. Let's work together to create safe, healthy, habitable and sustainable communities – both on the mainland and on our islands.

Sunrise On The Coast

by Banjo Patterson

Grey dawn on the sand-hills, the night wind has drifted
All night from the rollers a scent of the sea;
With the dawn the grey fog his battalions has lifted,
At the call of the morning they scatter and flee.

Like mariners calling the roll of their number
The sea-fowl put out to the infinite deep.
And far overhead, sinking softly to slumber,
Worn out by their watching the stars fall asleep.

To eastward, where rests the broad dome of the skies on
The sea-line, stirs softly the curtain of night;
And far from behind the enshrouded horizon
Comes the voice of a God saying "Let there be light."

And lo, there is light! Evanescent and tender,
It glows ruby-red where 'twas now ashen-grey;
And purple and scarlet and gold in its splendour,
Behold, 'tis that marvel, the birth of a day!

Pray

Leave me alone with God as much
as may be. As the tide draws the
waters close in upon the shore,
make me an island, set apart,
alone with you, God, holy to you.
Then with the turning of the tide
prepare me to carry your
presence to the busy world
beyond, the world that rushes in
on me till the waters come again
and fold me back to you.

*St Aidan of Lindisfarne,
7th Century*

Aunty Dr Rose Elu is an Executive Member of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC); a member of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC); and, a family support counsellor with Relationships Australia. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Political Science from the University of Queensland, a PhD in Customary Law from the University of Hawaii, a Diploma in Counselling and further post graduate studies in Theology from St Francis College. Aunty Dr Rose was the 2021 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year.

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Daily Devotions for the

Season of Creation

*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.*
(Ps 19:1-2 NIVUK)

The Season of Creation is celebrated by many Christian communities. It runs each year from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) until 4th October (Feast of St Francis of Assisi).

This book provides 34 daily devotions – one for each of the days of the Season of Creation written by Australian authors. As well as this printed version, the same devotions are available through a free Smartphone App “Season of Creation” on both Apple and Android app stores.

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