

**Sunday 27th June –  
Fourth Sunday After Trinity**  
Led by Sue Nelms, LLM



**Opening Words**

We stand before the throne of God  
with countless crowds  
from every nation and race, tribe and language.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
thanksgiving and honour, power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

*cf Revelation 7.9,12*

**Gathering Prayer**

Be with us, Spirit of God;  
**nothing can separate us from your love.**

Breathe on us, breath of God;  
**fill us with your saving power.**

Speak in us, wisdom of God;  
**bring strength, healing and peace.**

*Silence is kept*

The Lord is here.  
**His Spirit is with us.**

**Hymn – All things bright and beautiful**

Refrain: All things bright and  
beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

1. Each little flower that opens,  
Each little bird that sings,  
He made their glowing color,  
He made their tiny wings.  
(Refrain)

2. The cold wind in the winter,  
The pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them every one.  
(Refrain)

3. He gave us eyes to see them,  
And lips that we might tell,  
How great is God Almighty,  
Who has made all things well.  
(Refrain)

## **Meditation**

Take up a comfortable posture. Close your eyes.

And first, we begin to centre ourselves.

Focus on your breathing.

Notice your breathing in... and breathing out.

Do not try and control it, but just focus on this breathing. In and out.

If you get distracted, do not worry.

But just bring your attention back.

Notice breathing in and out. In and out.

Mark of Mission: Treasure

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew  
the life of the earth.

Genesis 2.20-21

<sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field  
and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he  
would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that  
was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of  
the air, and to every animal of the field.

## **Confession**

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,  
which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.

We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

*cf Romans 8.22,23*

God our Father, we are sorry  
for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly,  
and acted ungratefully.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy:  
**forgive us and help us.**

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest,  
but sometimes forget that you have given them to us.  
Father, in your mercy:  
**forgive us and help us.**

We belong to a people who are full and satisfied,  
but ignore the cry of the hungry.  
Father, in your mercy:  
**forgive us and help us.**

We are thoughtless,  
and do not care enough for the world you have made.  
Father, in your mercy:  
**forgive us and help us.**

We store up goods for ourselves alone,  
as if there were no God and no heaven.  
Father, in your mercy:  
**forgive us and help us.**

Almighty God,  
who in Jesus Christ has given us  
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,  
forgive us our sins,  
open our eyes to God's truth,  
strengthen us to do God's will  
and give us the joy of his kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Readings by Ann Griffiths**

### **Colossians 1.15-20**

<sup>15</sup> Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup> for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,

things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

### **Mark 4.25-41**

<sup>25</sup> For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'

<sup>26</sup> He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, <sup>27</sup> and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. <sup>29</sup> But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

<sup>30</sup> He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

<sup>33</sup> With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; <sup>34</sup> he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.

<sup>37</sup> A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a

dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’ <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’

## **Reflection by Rev David Newton**

We continue with our series on the 5 Marks of Mission. And – slightly out of order (to tie in with some local outdoor services) – we turn our attention today to the 5<sup>th</sup> mark – To ‘Treasure’ the earth. Or in full ‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.’ Quite a jargon-laid mouthful.

With this mark we turn to the faddy, to the trendy. Most people outside of the church will not be concerned with proclaiming Jesus Christ, but increasingly they are concerned about caring for the earth.

Which, for some Christians, makes it an automatically suspicious activity. I was on a conference call the other day as part of a team presenting the work of the ‘Diocesan Environmental Task Group’ and was rather blindsided by the remarks of one person who suggested that a focus on caring for creation might undermine our hope of the ‘new heavens and new earth’.

But the Gospel tells us that God came amongst us, took on flesh, and so makes matter, matter. It tells us that God did not come to get us out of this world, but to bring the kingdom of God into it, and so we pray each day ‘your kingdom come, on earth as in heaven’. The Gospel tells us – as Colossians puts it and as the story of the calming of the storm shows us – that all things are created through Christ and hold together in him; that God’s Spirit is infused in and through all creation.

As opposed to some philosophical flight from the real material earthy stuff of life, Christianity (and indeed Judaism) celebrates and finds God’s Spirit in the stuff of the earth.

And so, to care for creation, is not some adjunct to the Gospel. It is central to it. It is central to it because in creation we find God’s Spirit. It is central to it because our message of Good News will be found

inauthentic and hypocritical unless we take caring for the earth seriously. It is central because it is intimately tied up with justice and mercy, for the poor and for future generations.

All this though probably sounds rather banal, old hat even.

So let me push on to say something I have been thinking and learning in recent times, and it is something I think the church can gift to the world in our common cause.

Let me put in the form of a question. Do we 'care for creation' out of love or fear?

For there is clearly huge fear in our day. So-called 'Climate Anxiety' is rife. Apocalyptic claims are easy to find.

The situation *is* serious. A casual glance at anything that comes out of the IPCC shows us that! Yet acting from a place of fear is never the answer – it leads to forgetting the journey and thinking only about the destination, and so we end up sacrificing some for the so-called 'greater good' of others.

In our global common cause, the task of the church is to call us to care for creation – to fight climate change and the collapse of biodiversity – with love, not fear.

And perhaps the clearest expression of 'love' for the natural world is found in that attitude called 'wonder'.

I have always loved a big vista, straddling a ridge in the Lake District looking out on the valleys below. But recently I have been brought back to wonder at the small, at the flora and fauna, and not just the more abstract and general 'landscape'.

Kids are extraordinary at this. A few weeks ago, we were rushing out of the door, herding the kids to the car, when they got distracted by a worm! We watched it as it burrowed underground. It pulsated in this rhythmic dance, pushing soil through its body. I forgot about rushing and was left in wonder.

Again, dropping the kids at Playgroup the other day, Toby excitedly pointed out caterpillar eggs on a runner bean leaf. I'd never seen them before. These neat rows of eggs all nestled together, evoked wonder.

Or again, on a walk the other, the kids stopped me to look at a snail. It had just been raining, and once we stopped, we saw more and more. We counted 50 in about 10 metres along a hedge!

Some of you will know of Rick Nelm's recent artwork. Much of this, if I read it well, is designed to evoke wonder. In the face of biodiversity collapse, he paints of the abundance of the rain forest, the coral reef, or even Bourn Brook.

So before we do anything, we need to stop, and re-ignite the 'wonder' that seems built in to little kids. And through such wonder we find love. And love, so we are told, drives out fear.

So may we care for creation out of wonder, out of love, and may we do so in such a way that we draw all people away from fear, in our common cause to care for this earth. Amen.

### **Affirmation of faith**

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Though he was divine,  
he did not cling to equality with God,  
but made himself nothing.  
Taking the form of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He humbled himself  
and was obedient to death,  
even the death of the cross.  
Therefore God has raised him on high,  
and given him the name above every name:  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bow,  
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen

## **Prayers of Intercession led by Fiona Whelan**

Dear Lord,

We give you thanks and praise for the many wonders of the world we see all around us. The miracles of nature you've created. As life continues to open up and return to normal may we remember what a precious gift our world is and treat it with respect and not squander it's precious resources. As we face many challenges and changes in our own local environment with the need for provision of houses and the proposed new methods of transportation, let us cherish the resources we have. May we recognise the beauty of our local habitat and seek to balance the need for some change with the preservation of your beautiful world.

Lord of all faithfulness, **hear our prayer**

We give you thanks and pray this morning for all those who do so much to keep us going in these difficult times, using the many gifts you have given us all. For the doctors and nurses, the scientists, the care givers and the care enablers, so many of whom work unseen but without whom life would be so different. We give you thanks for all those acts of kindness shown to us during these difficult times. From the neighbours arriving with a bag of flour or bottle of hand sanitiser or some shopping or medication, to the community groups set up to help meet the needs of many, from those employed to those volunteering their time, we give our heartfelt thanks and praise.

Lord of all faithfulness, **hear our prayer**

Lord, we give you thanks and praise for the love you show us in so many ways. For the gifts of healing and forgiveness shown to the woman in the Gospel this morning and shown to all of us each and every day. We pray this morning for the healing of pain of all who suffer in body and spirit. We pray especially for the pain of those affected by the historic forced adoptions. Through the grace of Your love may these parents find some sense of forgiveness and peace. Let us take a moment of silence as we pray for all those we know are hurting in any way at the moment.

*Silence is kept*

Lord of all faithfulness, **hear our prayer**

Lord, we give you thanks and praise for the communities of prayer and worship we have in the Lordsbridge team. As our churches open up again help us to find ways to encourage our congregations to feel safe to return and ways to encourage new people to join us. Lord of all faithfulness let us hear the call of the Holy Spirit and seek new ways to bring your love to our communities. May we be creative in our approach as we open our hearts and minds to find ways to share our community and encourage and welcome others to join us.

Let us take a moment of silence as we pray for your guidance .

*Silence is kept*

Lord of all faithfulness, **hear our prayer**

Lord, we give you thanks and praise as we face the challenges of the new week ahead of us. May we reflect your loving kindness and forgiveness. May we find ways to heal hurt and pain around us. May we love one another as you love us.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **Collect**

God of all energy and life

Give us such a love for all your creation  
that we may delight in it with our eyes,

Nurture it with our hands

And enrich it with our love

For our world is not our world, but yours. **Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.  
 Give us today our daily bread.  
 Forgive us our sins  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For the kingdom, the power,  
 and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

**Anthem: Touch the Earth Lightly by David Ogden**  
 Sung by St Martin's Voices

<p>           1. Touch the earth lightly,            use the earth gently,            nourish the life of the world            in our care:            gift of great wonder,            ours to surrender,            trust for the children            tomorrow will bear.         </p>	<p>           2. We who endanger,            who create hunger,            agents of death for            all creatures that live,            we who would foster            clouds of disaster -            God of our planet,            forestall and forgive!         </p>
<p>           3. Let there be greening,            birth from the burning,            water that blesses            and air that is sweet,            health in God's garden,            hope in God's children,            regeneration that peace            will complete.         </p>	<p>           4. God of all living,            God of all loving,            God of the seedling,            the snow and the sun,            teach us, deflect us,            Christ reconnect us,            using us gently,            and making us one.         </p>

## **Conclusion**

**Maker of all, we are your children,  
the creatures of your kindness,  
the bearers of your image.**

**This day, we will walk by your light,  
follow your son,  
and live by your Spirit.**

**For this is the day that the Lord has made;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

From where we are to where you want us,  
**Jesus, now lead on.**

From the familiarity of what we know to the wonder of what you will  
reveal.

**Jesus, now lead on.**

To transform the fabric of this world until it resembles the shape of  
your kingdom.

**Jesus, now lead on.**

May Christ's warm welcome shine from our hearts.

**And Christ's own peace prevail through this and every day,  
'till greater life shall call. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ.**