

## SEASON OF CREATION : CREATION TIME: CREATIONTIDE



Living Water  
Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water  
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

These **Revised Common Lectionary** resources Notes , Worship material, sermon suggestions and music suggestions are offered through [EcoCongregation Scotland](http://EcoCongregationScotland.org), as participation in the global churches observance of the Season, from 1st September to 4th October, and Sundays close or included.

Any questions, or for help with use: [chaplain@ecocongregationscotland.org](mailto:chaplain@ecocongregationscotland.org)

# WEEK 4

### Overview

**[Exodus 17]** Do we really want to live in 'Grumbletown'? ('Meribah') Exodus gives us an unlovely picture of people with genuine and reasonable grievances completely comparable to intrusive cost-of-living issues - how do we treat the leaders we ask to sort out environmental circumstances for which we need God's help, as well as wisdom? How do we empower them to grasp nettles and weather what may be initial knee-jerk responses?

**Psalm 78** suggests the resources of faith and Scripture should have something to offer - though only when devoutly recycled in daily use. What are we 'hiding from our children' which could inspire us to respond creatively and in partnership with the Earth and other people?

**Ezekiel 18** is a helpful reflection on the 'sour grapes' tendency of generations to blame each other: does your church reach out to young people in despair about the damage undeniably done by those who have been in charge of human societies in our lifetimes?

**Psalm 25 and Philippians 2** deal with the importance of humility in our change of course, whereas

**Matthew 21:23-32** shows us the unlovely yet tragically familiar spectacle of religious (and therefore political) leaders who know they've lost the argument, digging in in the hope of delay by means of procedure. Have no patience with such tactics: Jesus' sharp and crafty response is exemplary.

**Bookmarked links:**[Exodus 17:1-7](#)[Sermon suggestion](#)[Psalms 78:1-4, 12-16](#)[Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32](#)[Psalms 25:1-8](#)[Philippians 2:1-13](#)[Matthew 21:23-32](#)**Worship Material****Exodus 17:1-7**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

**ECS STAFF Exodus 17:1-7**

Returning from a church, my car coughed, and ground to a halt in the third lane of a 4-lane motorway with a fatally damaged engine. I engaged my hazard warning lights, but even as I rang the police and the AA, many motorists hooted, some gestured, as if their inconvenience were something I should attend to without further help. <https://vimeo.com/1186851719>

The grumbling of Moses' people is not without cause. But the 'solution' requires solidarity, wisdom, and outside help, rather than pointlessly selfish expressions of rage, which I encounter, not infrequently, when encouraging congregations to reflect on the causes and possible responses, not only to global crisis, but to the symptoms thereof that irritate us in the foreground.

Do we pray - do we ask God- before we lash out under pressure?

When this affects a whole community, then the best of our leaders - that is, those who listen, rather than just dictate - become more vulnerable to the desperation of hardship.

At what point does this kick in with our own churches and our politics?

How vulnerable are we to self-destructive attacks on our elected or appointed representatives? How ready are we instead to throw our support behind selfish, destructive voices who seem attractive because they offer solidarity with our rage at leaders who are struggling with circumstances beyond their control?

Do we prefer the ones who say "You've reason to grumble. Trust me instead!" We might recall Jesus' own testing in the desert: and the "reasonableness" of the solutions Satan offered him.

This story portrays an emergency well beyond a "cost-of-living crisis". The acute and absolute physical need for water is one that cannot be postponed, or fobbed off with fake wisdom and the platitudes of "gradually, eventually, sensibly".

The question is: does such instantaneous emergency call for the abandonment, or pausing of trajectories - like our net-zero, and the attempts at a just transition - which, given time and commitment, will indeed bring liberation. And yet for now, these require the acceptance of unpalatable realities. Such as the end of "new oil". The pausing of serious commitment leads to yet more time in the transitional wilderness.

'Exodus' is a journey to liberation, and yet in Scripture involves the 'extinction' of a generation who refuse to be in agreement with the demands of a life renewed as a nation. Without them, the people cannot even reach the 'Promised Land'.

Could they just have changed their minds?

Our own time is far more urgent. And the scope for destructive grumbling looks likely to grow, since, following projections of the United Nations Climate organisation [IPCC] we can count on several generations more before the aggravation of climate shows any sign of turning a corner. 40 further years of the status quo, pausing or diluting the current rapid expansion of renewable energy, would be objectively deadly to neighbours, fellow creatures, our children and grandchildren.

This Exodus story, in which "there was no water for the people to drink" speaks to global experience today, where change is brutal and sudden. We need all parts of every generation living to come together in a creative response. And to do so right now, rather than in some unspecified time when other reviews and reorganisations have taken their course.

What, for your own generation, would equate to the Hebrews' nostalgic dreams of slavery? What tempts people like you, or your friends to pull out, go back, give up? Who or what portrays environmental prayer, commitment and action as pointless and futile?

Do you really need something as extraordinary as water from a rock? Maybe it's there in front of you. Maybe even more, the delightful and encouraging implications of taking our faith seriously as a resource for survival and for resilience.

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### **Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16**

Hear my teaching, O my people; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will declare the mysteries of ancient times. That which we have heard and known, and what our forefathers have told us, we will not hide from their children. We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, and the wonderful works he has done. He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He split open the sea and let them pass through; he made the waters stand up like walls. He led them with a cloud by day, and all the night through with a glow of fire. He split the hard rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as from the great deep. He brought streams out of the cliff, and the waters gushed out like rivers.

### **ECS STAFF Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16**

The quite absurd accusation of trivial novelty is a common one when we're working towards the environmental enrichment of Christian faith: as if the sea, sky and the soil had been invented this century; as if an awareness of the personalities and voices of Creation, and of their value in their own right, rather than as means to an end had been imposed on Scripture. Not least the partnership and solidarity of the elements in the liberation from slavery. This personal environmental aspect, belongs alongside that profound insight of the major prophets, that injustice causes environmental harm. And all of it encompasses both ancient and contemporary relevance.

Here in the Psalms, an inspired singer from perhaps three thousand years ago looks back - to God's environmental action for the freedom and survival of God's people. And they also look forward, concerned that future generations should not remain ignorant of God's involvement in our survival, even in what might seem harsh and hostile habitats.

As a Christian community today, the resources of scripture, praise and tradition are powerful and immediately available. Climate Crisis - seen as Creation's outcry against injustice - drives us further in, giving us all the more reason to value and discern guidance in this heritage, rather than abandon it: no more than we should abandon a life-raft in a storm!

We still have to add, though, the need for honesty and openness - that however we have heard and received and rejoiced in such stories and treasures and wisdom and encouragement, it will have been via human interpretation. We receive Scripture thanks to the well-meaning and conscientious employment of an expected idiom.

Of course, the climate crisis cannot but transform that, even as electric lighting and amplification have transformed the experience of our worship.

Just as, in times gone by, female saints were “corrected” to male, and indeed, the Greek word for ‘human’ was meticulously rendered as ‘man’ despite available and specific vocabulary for men and women, so too, the widespread Biblical acknowledgement of the value and the personalities of Creation as a participant and agent of God’s works has, for a couple of centuries, been downplayed. Because that’s what we thought we had to do.

The benefit of the Sabbath and the Jubilee to wildlife as well as human life has been rendered all but invisible, let alone the all-embracing scope of the Great Commission of the Risen Christ in Matthew 28 and Mark 16: ‘Good News to all Creation’.

So make the most of that “ever old and ever new” divine gift of Scripture and of the legends and tales of our own culture, but as you do so, pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in your presentation and interpretation. Remember, you are part of the story, all the more as those who tell it. And so, too, is suffering, enslaved Creation; looking to God’s children (cf Romans 8) for liberation.

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#### **Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32**

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

#### **ECS STAFF Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32**

It’s one of the most frequently vigorous protests by environmental campaigners, when media outlets concentrate, for instance, on the cost of living or motoring, ignoring the cost to the Earth of the continuing dependence on fossil fuels, that to do so shows a callous

disregard for the welfare of subsequent generations. Or for the 'heritage' of a healthy planet "for our grandchildren".

We're now certainly looking, as a minimum, at several generations' worth of rapid change in the seasons Scotland's farmers and tourist industries rely on, as well as far more frequent extremes of wind, and wetter, warmer winters. People in coastal communities will be keeping a wary eye on storm surges on top of around 90cm of sea-level rise by the time those born today might hope to be drawing their pension. [ Scottish Government figures <https://marine.gov.scot/sma/assessment/coastal-erosion-and-flood-risk-management>

So "sour taste" is, for the immediately foreseeable future, locked in, though Ezekiel's principle of judgement by cause and effect, which he uses here - primarily - to challenge despair, still has much to teach us, even within one lifetime. Particularly as the youth of today become the grandparents of tomorrow. Every generation has the choice of committed hope, or despair, irrespective of what they inherit.

"You'll die of old age, but we'll die of climate change" - is one of the grimmer and more popular banner slogans you'll see in protests by youth movements such as Fridays for Future.

And yet, In amongst the 'unfairness' a given generation might either feel or own up to, we need to hear God's all-embracing concern: "Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine."

The speed of change and the urgency of action - as well as the value of a change of heart and life - mean that all generations are engaged and affected by the challenges of our day. And change of heart and life, whether out of love for posterity or as an enrichment of our own faith action, remain a valid response to God's love and solidarity.

All are called together to embrace justice at all levels. Whatever the level of your burden and responsibility, and whatever the particular circumstances of your location, no one is exempt or 'off the hook', but neither is anyone excused from care and consideration for fellow creatures - including human ones!

Finally: there is what feels like a similarity between the increasingly strong and urgent warnings from the UK climate Change Committee and the IPCC ( United Nations climate body)and God's address to Ezekiel. God does not 'cry wolf' : warnings ignored do indeed lead to disaster, and what matters is the practicalities of current and future action, rather than getting bogged down in what might have been.

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**[Psalm 25:1-8](#)**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me. Let none who look to you be put to shame; let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes. Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long. Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore he teaches sinners in his way. He guides the humble in doing right and teaches his way to the lowly.

### **ECS STAFF:Psalm 25:1-8**

The painfully emotional honesty of the Psalmist - perhaps especially as a leader of worship, rather than a solitary pray-er - here offers support for all, especially those with a "past" as well as those who find themselves vulnerable to the intimidation and humiliation which has alarmingly grown, as part of public life, in the last couple of years. Churches are sadly not immune.

This is the stuff that drives us over the edge. In Psalm 25, though, the anguished prayer of the Psalmist stops short of the enemies' destruction. The frustration of "schemes". and the survival of the supplicant is sufficient. For that, we too can still pray with love, wisdom and integrity. Yes, it's OK to include the toppling of injustice from their throne in Christian prayer. And there's scope for friendship after, as we unite to face common threats.

The churches of the UK, together, can take joyful pride in continuing mature and responsible revisiting of our historic links with slavery, and acknowledgment of where we've played a less than creditable part in the fossil fuel story. Openness and honesty help us to be wary of the strategies of those who delayed the abolition of slavery, and the light that shines on any delay of Just Transition.

We all know, or should be aware, that there are certainly churches where preachers tone down the sharpness of truth in their message for fear of members of the congregation who could mobilise deeply harmful and hurtful narratives.

One might think of the difficulty of speaking lovingly and honestly of the harm done by a local industry, be it armaments or fossil fuels, when those whose livelihoods are tied to that harm do hold power in the community.

And yet, with courage and goodwill, such antagonisms need not tear us apart. A friend who is a lifelong campaigner for nuclear disarmament ministered effectively within close proximity of a nuclear submarine base.

In the meantime, our society remains in flux. Opinions and attitudes which deny and denigrate the urgent truths we all need to hear and act upon - these have stolen the clothes of lively but civilised discourse. This cannot be good news.

It can't be Christianity if it's based on loving our neighbours less than ourselves, excludes the interests of the refugee, or if it makes sure the stranger is unwelcome, so it's good to note how mainstream churches have spoken out about the abuse of the cross <https://jpit.uk/responding-to-christian-nationalism> which perversely often goes with climate denial too.

In day-to-day life, I've noticed too, how "trolls" pounce with ridicule whenever the brutal narratives of billionaire-led popular media are challenged, especially about the urgency of just transition and climate action. Such intimidation obscures truth.

It's into a similar 'hostile environment' that this writer prays to a God, presumed merciful. Prays for and alongside those imperfect faithful people who try to do their best, working towards the hope and the faith that God can bolster the conviction and courage we might pray to enjoy.

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### **Philippians 2:1-13**

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

### **ECS STAFF: Philippians 2:1-13**

"taking the form of a slave ...."

In an online conversation with churches in the USA, someone said "we don't use the word slavery, even if it comes up in the Bible, as it's offensive".

Well, slavery certainly is offensive, even if it was a widely accepted aspect of life in the world of New Testament times. And the poetry of this letter relies on extreme contrasts which lose their power if we water down the intoxicating contrast between God and a slave, or even between a human being with full rights and freedom, and one deprived, by enslavement, of such graces.

The worship of "all", perhaps the worship from all Creation - in every level of that unified and interactive Creation - is justified only for one whose love and dedication encompasses the whole spectrum of dignity and poverty.

Worship is justified for one who, as in an Iona prayer of some years ago "knows by experience what life is like:" rather than tyrannically and disconnectedly demanding mindless obedience. The glory of God is in the health of Creation and the dignity of God's people. The more of one, the more of the other.

Be wary, then, of the corrosive tendency to limit our love for Creation or any other, for fear that such love might amount to the worship proper to God. Rather, delight, that, in our admiration of the greatness of a mountain, that admiration is passed on to God who created that mountain.

And "fear and trembling" is appropriate when we act with love, faith and courage, because, thus qualified, we act for God.

Whether for nations, cultures or individuals, by the example of Christ, selfishness is revealed as over-rated. Like any lie. It's a haemorrhage in the circulation of goodness. And the life of our planet as a whole is endangered by the outworking of what is now nothing other than consciously damaging injustice. The age of innocent pollution is past.

But so too, to the extent that you might read this passage as the knee-jerk opposite, is bleak and empty selflessness.

Simply giving up rather than cherishing your place, your contribution, and your reliance on grace. Don't hide from the scary truth.. We're not without interests of our own, but the message here is that our own and only true interests lie in the common good.

Christ's way of letting go, to let life thrive, is already and explicitly the Way Creation Works "in heaven and on Earth and under the Earth". This is expressed in the survival and the thriving not of the strongest, but of the community and the ecosystem whose members are rewarded in finding their place and purpose to the greatest benefit of all.

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#### **Matthew 21:23-32**

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

### **ECS STAFF: Matthew 21:23-32**

A Gospel background to this conflict between Jesus and "the chief priests and elders of the people" might be found in John's Gospel, (11:50) where, a little before the Palm Sunday episode (which our Matthew reading follows), the "current" High Priest Caiaphas has ex-officio issued a prophecy/proclamation that "it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed".

If we can contain an obvious rush to a triumphalist Christian irony that 'Christ did die... for us' we should remember that by the time of the final writing of John's Gospel in the late first century, the Jewish nation had, to all intents and purposes, been destroyed in its previous form, following the Roman Empire's brutal sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

The preparedness of those in many cultures for the often fruitless sacrifice of others in the pursuit of supposed security, should be depressingly familiar to this day.

Expedient twistings of principle 'for the greater good' are without exception morally dubious, undermining the integrity -and authority- of any and every institution which is thus 'protected'.

Beauty sacrificed on the wager of prosperity is lost, whether or not the aim is achieved. And one of our most significant current controversies concerns the on-off resolve of successive UK governments and differing political parties, to halt or to continue fresh exploitation of fossil fuels in the North Sea.

No reputable economist has supported the claimed benefits to household energy bills of such a move, and the Church of Scotland in 2025 joined the URC, the Catholic Church, the Methodists and many more, in the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation movement, which, with compelling scientific support, points out how new oil -as well as a postponed transition -does have real victims, both human and otherwise, who can't be kept out of sight, out of mind. Our own people, ecosystems, industries and landscapes included.

One could reasonably ask why that hasn't stopped some from courting popularity in supporting what they know to be dubious, because the support of the people is valued more than truth. And as Jesus also suggests, to the peril of those who evade such truth.

Hypocrisy is not redeemed by being “in the best possible cause”. Energy security is not guaranteed by renewed investment in what urgently needs to end. Nor can short-term economics or offers of jobs in new fossil fuel exploration excuse what no greater authority than the UN Secretary General called such “moral and economic madness” <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21228.doc.htm> .

This principle is dramatised by Matthew in the discussions between the religious leaders and Jesus, which significantly take place after Jesus’ “triumphal entry” to Jerusalem.

Once Jesus is transformed by such popular support, to a potential threat to their authority, they hastily to pull rank as those with an “official” authority already undermined by John’s popular appeal. Of course, they meticulously discount any evidence for John’s divine calling, but dare not say it.

Jesus’s skilfully vicious use of the parable that follows exposes the moral hollowness of his opponents.

Can we, and should we, lovingly, be just as ready to speak plainly and strongly in pursuit of the truth that sets free?

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## SERMON SUGGESTION

# “Save the Planet - BUT!”

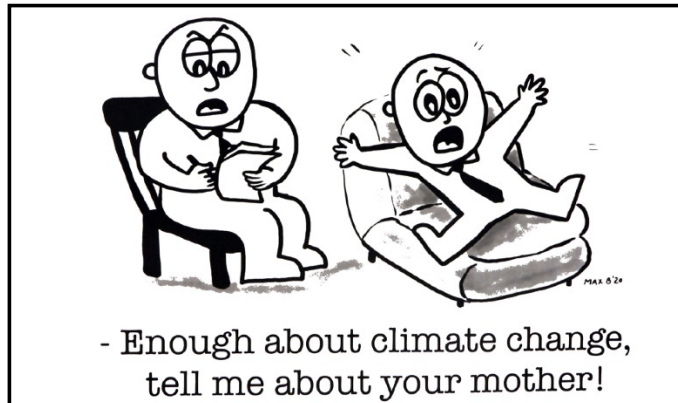


Image: cartoon displayed in the Blue Zone at COP26, Glasgow  
**Exodus 16 (and Matthew 21)**

The sharp taste of Ezekiel's sour grapes is the most quotable of his many urgent calls for change of heart and mind in response to real dangers.

What does it take for us to hear his message of "Turn, then, and live!"?

Much energy generated in Scotland *is* already renewable. Batteries which were science fiction years ago are widely installed to make transition work. Every simplistic myth of why transition couldn't happen is exposed as ill-informed.

Yet we're looking at several generations' worth of rapid change in the seasons Scotland's farmers and tourist industries rely on, as well as more frequent extremes of heat, wind, and wetter winters.

The last thing any community guided by love can honestly say right now, is that "everything is going to be all right". Ezekiel heard from God that to be silent is to be complicit. Do we hear that too?

But who's to blame? Who's stuffed themselves with the sour grapes of oil and AI? It gets ever harder to say "it wasnae' me."

We can learn from what moved folks on in the past - like confronting "respectable citizens" with the misery of slavery - even and because their economy was based on it.

"Yes of course we should save the planet, ***but***"... rings pretty hollow as we board that plane, pollutingly, to fly, when an electric train could get us there.

Christianity, built round Christ first crucified then risen, is about realistic hope "beyond too late", rather than crossing fingers, closing eyes and hoping for the best.

Whoever enjoyed those grapes, the 'sour taste' is, for the immediately foreseeable future, locked in. Ours are those teeth painfully on edge, which is why Ezekiel's concept of judgement and mercy by cause and effect, still has much to teach us.

Particularly as the youth of today become the grandparents of tomorrow. Slipping into that role of the ones called to pass on identity and wisdom. To make decisions for their posterity.

Both Ezekiel's sour grapes proverb, and Jesus' clash with the nervous hypocrites of his own community raise questions about how generations work together for the common good.

So that we need to hear God's all-embracing concern:

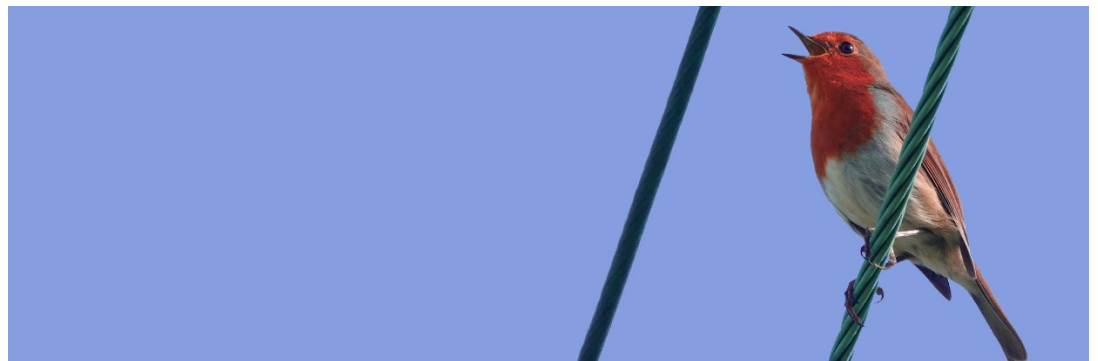
"Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine."

It's no trivial proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. As it takes all available generations, or at least contact with them, to make a healthy church. The weakness of the proverb is that it says nothing about how it takes children to sustain the village. Young people are not an "asset;" they're either fully part of things or not, and like other generations too, will both give and receive guidance. The rebellions of toddlers are fairly early contained. But its at the borderlands of our generations that sparks can fly and knees can jerk. And those burdened with responsibility can drill, or dig in.

So Yes. it's all about hope.....

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## WORSHIP MATERIAL



### Call to worship -responses

`Our Guiding God your Word so strongly gives the lead  
**Your Word made flesh and heard in righteous living**

Our Patient God, your faithfulness is urgent  
**Love expressed through justice cannot wait**

Our God of Green and Growing; all authority is yours  
**the God of human life - alive in all**

# OR

## **Gathering prayer**

Dear God, of all our past;  
God in city wildernesses, lonely homes;  
God for our children, as for us;  
God praised through lips and dance and branches  
God honoured in the silence which affirms  
You have drawn us together, here and now  
to discover who, with you, we can be  
as in prayer and praise,  
hearts unshackled,  
we are fed with what sustains.

## **Confession “So what?”**

Dear God, All-Provider, who so graciously showered  
the freedom, grace and chances  
which ancestors so certainly misused;

So what?

***[Short silence]***

What have we done with their legacy  
be that of justice or or harm?

What have we made of the blessings  
that each day fall from heaven?  
and blossom, with beauty and food  
from your Earth?

We said: “So what?”

***[Short silence]***

What have we done with each chance to do different?

Have we just grumbled, when blessings sustain?

What have we done when you showed us our neighbours  
losing their homelands, to drought and to flood?

Where have we looked when you showed us what follows  
not 'natural', but caused, when we burn and deny?

We said, and passed it as wisdom: "So what?!"

***[Short silence]***

What have we made of the Christ who insisted  
that love for ourselves and our neighbour are one?

We add nails to the Cross; and say: "So what!?"  
We raise it high and look away.  
Thank God, dear God, you're not like that yourself!

Dear God, you have patience to shrug off the grumbling  
to attend to real grievances  
to offer your Way;  
Grace, and forgiveness through Christ .

***[Short silence]***

Remake and repurpose your grumbling people  
Do send manna and quails  
to delight and to feed us  
Forgiven, invited, by Christ, thus to pray:

**[Lord's Prayer /Our Father]**

**Thanksgiving / Gratitude**

Let's give thanks.

Thank-you, God, our Caregiver  
for the things we shouldn't have to think hard about;  
for light and sun, for air and water;

for whatever food last passed our lips  
and these folks around us, [online with us]  
with whom we pray.

Thank-you God our Sustainer  
for what we've taken for granted;  
for those who work out of sight, that we can rest;  
pollinators and microbes who do their part  
in the next meal we look forward to  
for all the fellow creatures, human and otherwise  
whose labours, unseen, are so real.

Thank-you God, you Beauty!  
for everything beyond mere monetary value  
for the wildflowers who, over centuries  
have directed minds and hearts to you;  
for the trees and the birds:  
Christ's partners in mission!

Thank-you, in words, and beyond. AMEN

## **Prayers of Concern**

*Choose or omit paragraphs according to whatever helps.*

***Choose subjects appropriate for the day; informed by local, world, and congregational events including prayer led, where appropriate:***

*-For the non-human world  
-For justice in human societies  
-For the unity of the Church, both locally and globally  
in response to the crisis of nature & climate  
-For our own encouragement and resilience.  
-Acknowledging the 'communion of saints' (the church through time and space)  
and the 'communion of creation' (the praise of all who have breath)*

Creator and Sustainer of all that's real:  
seen and unseen, by us,  
though all are known by you;

We are bold to pray

that you may teach us first  
to see your hand in all your works  
and then your likeness in all your children;  
and then again, to trust beyond our seeing;  
and trust in the added value of your grace.

Thus empowered and committed:  
we pray for peace;  
for an end to conflicts  
-even those deemed 'just'-  
where Creation is always the first casualty.

We bring to you  
the terror -which might not yet have hit us-  
of what it means for extinctions to "run"  
a thousand times the "natural" rate

We bring to you  
the rural, coastal and marginalised human communities, who will face  
hardship  
caused by others,  
first and then,  
for generations yet.

We bring to you the generations  
of societies who have relied on fossil fuels;  
their exploration, exploitation;  
asking and looking for transition with justice  
from that age which soon must end.

We come to you amidst the fellowships of your church  
that they may heed your commission  
of Good News for all Creation  
and rise with you  
to be a beacon of resilience  
speaking without fear the truth in love  
through all we know that lies ahead

And more.

Creator and Sustainer of all that's real:  
seen and unseen, by us:  
praying thus for world and church,  
We are ourselves embraced;  
the small and local

the thresholds and anniversaries;  
the things which only prayer can help;  
which can't be spoken loud.  
yet still are heard, respected as we pray.

## **Closing**

When our wells have run dry  
**you befriend us with water**

We doubt our own value  
**Yet you disagree**

When we're scared to be vulnerable  
**You lead from the cross**

When we're trapped in denial  
**You speak through Earth and Sky**

Thus enfolded and equipped for lives of love and justice  
may God, Father Son and Spirit [God, Beloved. Wild Wind]  
bless us through all that lies ahead, to the End of the Age AMEN

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## **MUSIC: 5 Suggestions**

1) **We warmly commend** the short Creation section, **153-165** in the supplementary '**God Welcomes All**',

2) **We suggest great caution** with what may be thought of as specific 'creation' hymns written in the late twentieth century without knowledge of the crisis of nature and climate.

Simply for a hymn to **mention** creation or fellow creatures may not help deepen our spiritual understanding for this time of crisis. Look for relatedness to the Earth and fellow creatures as co-worshippers with God's people.

3) **Iain Mclarty and Trinity College** created a resource of music recommendations : "Songs for Sunday"

4) **CH4**

-for Exodus 17:1-7 **167 ( again)**

-for Philippians 2:1-13 **680, 706, 622 (good generally for this week)**

**238, 243, 244 198, 501** also raise good points for justice and praise.

5) New words - coming soon!