



TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)

Daily reflections

Weekly focus

- Week 1 - God made a good world, which still belongs to him and praises him
- Week 2 - God loves and cares for his world
- Week 3 - Our mandate and manual for caring for creation
- Week 4 - Listening and learning from nature
- Week 5 - Jesus: redeemer, hope, and healer of all things.

Call to worship together

Are you among those who believe in God who creates all things, renews all things, and celebrates all things?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, God become flesh and blood, who lived and breathed and spoke among us, who taught us in the Sermon on the Mount to live non-violently, who suffered and died on a cross for all human beings and for all creation?

Are you among those who believe in Jesus, the risen Christ, who is at the heart of creation reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation, and filling the universe?

Are you among those who believe in the Holy Spirit who renews life in creation, groans in unity with a suffering creation, and waits, working with us, for the rebirth of creation?

Are you among those who believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation?

This is our faith; let's worship together the God of the universe, who loves it with endless faithfulness and will one day renew all things when Jesus returns to reign his Kingdom here on earth. Halleluiah!

Sunday 1 Sept

Come bow the knee with me – in awe that God spoke and with his breath came life. That today, God is still breathing life and hope into the dead and weary, and sustaining all He has made.

Come sing with me, join the heavens, the great sea creatures, lightning and hail as we lift our voice as one and praise God together with all creation.

Monday 2 September

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

"Through him (Jesus) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." John 1:3

Tuesday 3 September

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."
Genesis 1:31

Wednesday 4 September

"To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it."
Deuteronomy 10:14

Thursday 5 September

"You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you." Nehemiah 9:6

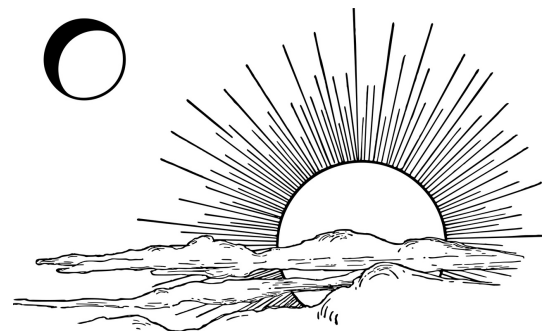
"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine."
Psalm 50:9-11

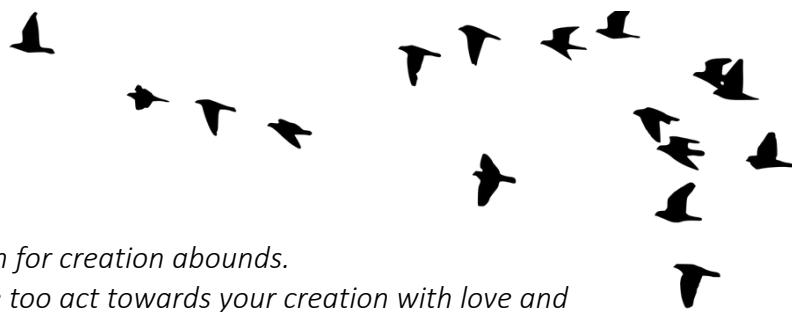
Friday 6 September

"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 display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."
Psalm 19:1-4 (see also Psalm 97:6)

Saturday 7 September

"Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds."
Psalm 148:1-10





Sunday 8 September

Heavenly Father, your love and compassion for creation abounds.

As you shape us into your likeness, may we too act towards your creation with love and compassion.

We are sorry for the times when we have not acted in a manner consistent with your ways – when we have neglected and harmed your world. We particularly grieve the mistreatment of animals, destruction of habitats and loss of species, the pollution of air, water and land, and mountains of waste that we have collectively and individually contributed towards. Please forgive us and help us to live in right relationship with all of creation as we bear your image.

Monday 9 September

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight."
Luke 12:6 (see also Matthew 10:29)

Tuesday 10 September

"The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.... The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made."
Psalm 145:9, 13

Wednesday 11 September

"And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you...I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you - the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you - every living creature on earth."
Genesis 6:19; 9:9-10

Saturday 14 September

"Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God." Psalm 84:3



Thursday 12 September

"You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.... The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing." Psalm 65:9-13

Friday 13 September

"He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate-bringing forth food from the earth." Psalm 104:10-14

Sunday 15 September

Lord, you have entrusted your world to us. Please help us not to abuse that trust. You have given us a manual, the Bible, to help us thrive alongside all creation, and have set before us the widespread harm when we don't live in right relationship with you. Help us to live rightly for our own sake and for the sake of the whole of creation.



Monday 16 September

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Genesis 2:15

"The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to mankind." Psalm 115:16

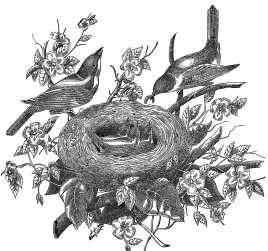
"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe." Hebrews 1:1-2

Tuesday 17 September

"If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?" Deuteronomy 20:19

Wednesday 18 September

If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young.
⁷ You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life."
Deuteronomy 22:6-7



Thursday 19 September

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:9-1

"Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief."
Exodus 23:12 (see also Deuteronomy 5:14)

Friday 20 September

"If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."
Leviticus 26:3-4

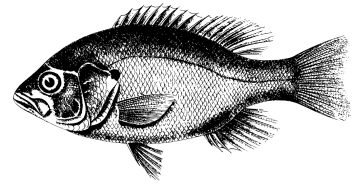
Saturday 21 September

"How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished.... It will be made a wasteland, parched and desolate before me; the whole land will be laid waste because there is no one who cares." Jeremiah 12: 4, 11

"There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying."
Hosea 4:1-3

Sunday 22 September

Father help us to slow down enough to notice the world around us - to see that even in its brokenness it speaks truths about you and your kingdom. Give us the humility to seek your voice in both the small and commonplace things, as well as in the awe and majesty of the great things. Teach us to read both the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature, and to encounter you afresh there.*



Monday 23 September

"Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." Job 12:7-10

Tuesday 24 September

"Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse." Romans 1:20

Wednesday 25 September

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?" Matthew 6:25-30



Thursday 26 September

"Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord." Jeremiah 8:6-7

Friday 27 September

"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers." Psalm 1: 1-3

"He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."" Matthew 13:21-32

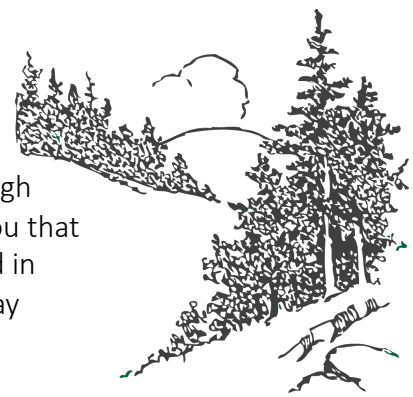
Saturday 28 September

"The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength." Psalm 23:1-3a, NLT

* From the writing of St. Augustine of Hippo

Sunday 29 September

We thank you Father that the healing and reconciliation Jesus won through his life, death and resurrection is good news for all creation. We thank you that this work of redemption has begun now in the lives of your followers and in your Kingdom here on earth. We look forward with anticipation to the day when all things will be made right - help us to live each day in the light of this hope, with a joy and peace that surpasses all understanding.



Monday 30 September

"...And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.".
Genesis 9:12-13

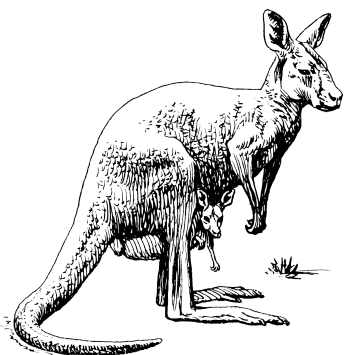
"In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety." Hosea 2:18

Tuesday 1 September

"He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." Acts 3:21

Wednesday 2 October

"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." Colossians 1:20



Saturday 5 October

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse" Revelation 21:2a; 22:1-3a

Thursday 3 October

"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." Romans 8:19-22

Friday 4 October

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6-9



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Daily Reflections
Companion Questions

Week 1 - God made a good world, which still belongs to him and praises him

Week 2 - God loves and cares for his world

Week 3 - Our mandate and manual for caring for creation

Week 4 - Listening and learning from nature

Week 5 - Jesus: redeemer, hope, and healer of all things.

Week 1 - God made a good world, which still belongs to him and praises him

- Q1 How does knowing that God created the world and it belongs to him, impact how we think about and treat the world?
- Q2 We are told that when God saw what he had made he thought it was 'very good'. What are some good things God has made that we can thank him for?
- Q3 What do the mountains, stars, seas, forests, animals and plants tell us about God's nature and character?
- Q4 What does it tell us about God when we read that he knows every bird in the mountains, and how does this make you feel? (Psalm 50:9-11)
- Q5 How do you think the sun, moon, shining stars, great sea creatures, ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds, mountains and hills, fruit trees, wild animals, cattle, small creatures and flying birds praise God? (Psalm 148:1-10)

Week 2 - God loves and cares for his world

- Q1 What are some of the words used to describe God's feelings towards the world he has made?
- Q2 How are these feelings followed up by action?
- Q3 When God flooded the earth, he saved not only Noah and his family but also two of every species of animal. What does his covenant following the flood tell us about God's commitment and faithfulness to all he has made?
- Q4 The common sparrow is mentioned numerous times to illustrate God's love, even for the humblest of tiny birds. How does this help us to appreciate God's love for us?
- Q5 How might our attitude and behavior towards animals and nature need to change if we want to align our hearts with God's heart, and grow more like him?

Week 3 - Our mandate and manual for caring for creation

- Q1 What was the first instruction or job given to people in Genesis? Do you think this has ever been revoked?
- Q2 We read in the Psalms that God has given the earth to mankind, we also read that Jesus is the heir of all things. How might this responsibility to look after Christ's inheritance impact on the way we care for the world?
- Q3 What *environmental sustainability* and *social justice* principles can you see in these verses relating to the treatment of crops, animals and plants?
- Q4 What instructions are given regarding birds, oxen, donkeys and trees? What does this tell us about God?
- Q5 What difference is there in the world around us when we are in right-relationship with God compared to when we are not following God's ways?

Week 4 - Listening and learning from nature

- Q1 When you read that animals, birds and even fish can teach us things about God and faith how does this change your view of science, and the study of the natural world?
- Q2 From these verses what are some of the things we can learn from animals and plants? What can looking at the birds and the flowers in the field teach us?
- Q3 Nature speaks to more than our intellect. From Psalm 23 verses 1-3a what benefits can we experience from spending time outdoors?
- Q4 In what ways are both the Kingdom of heaven and those who delight in God's word like trees?
- Q5 What practical steps might you be able to take to learn about God from nature, and experience his blessings from spending time in nature?

Week 5 - Jesus: redeemer, hope, and healer of all things.

- Q1 We read that God's covenants in the Old Testament and also Jesus' work of restoration on the cross include "everything" and "all things". All of the frustrations, bondage, decay, and broken relationships that followed the fall in Genesis are to be reversed, How does this broaden your understanding of the "good news" of the gospel?
- Q2 Isaiah speaks of wolves, lambs, leopards, cows and bears. What elements of continuity and difference does this suggest between the world today and when Jesus returns?
- Q3 In what ways do we see and experience creation groaning? Why is it groaning and when will its groaning end?
- Q4 The book of Revelation tells us that when Jesus returns, the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven - described as a beautiful city with gates, walls, streets, a river, and a tree of life, with fruit and leaves. How does this inform your view of eternity?
- Q5 How does this vision of eternity change our view of cities, the place of nature in them, and how we plan and manage the places we live today?