

**Rebuilding Hope and Confidence -
God's Creation**

Introduction

The story in Genesis tells us that when Creation was finished God saw that it was good. And it is good. The huge variety of creatures on the land and in the water – for these we should be shouting out our praise and thanks to God, yet again and again we take them for granted. Our sinful self-centredness looks at Creation simply as a resource which we can draw on without thought to meet our every need. Our response to God's giving us Creation is not thankful awe and wonder but greed.

The news tells us it is almost too late to repent of our greed and change our ways, but as Christians we must do that and lead the way for others.

This month in our prayers we reflect on God's boundless generosity in giving us this world and challenge ourselves again to make sacrifices before it is too late.

Hymn: Father, Lord of all creation

sung by St Martin's Voices

Father, Lord of all Creation,
Ground of Being, Life and Love;
height and depth beyond description
only life in you can prove:
you are mortal life's dependence:
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;
yours is every hour's existence,
sovereign Lord of time and space.

Jesus Christ, the Man for Others,
we, your people, make our prayer:
help us love as sisters, brothers,
all whose burdens we can share.
Where your name binds us together
you, Lord Christ, will surely be;
where no selfishness can sever
there your love the world may see.

Holy Spirit, rushing, burning
wind and flame of Pentecost,
fire our hearts afresh with yearning
to regain what we have lost.
May your love unite our action,
nevermore to speak alone:
God, in us abolish faction,
God, through us your love make known.

Stewart Cross (1928-1989)

Bible Reading: Psalm 8

O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
 to silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens,
 the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
 mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
 and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your
hands; you have put all things under their feet,
 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Reflection:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. *Psalm 24:1*

One of the most commonly requested hymns at weddings and funerals is 'All things Bright and Beautiful'. Most clergy and organists have to suppress an inner sigh when they hear this old favourite suggested. For those who take these services regularly it may feel overused, but it is so popular

because it chimes with people's understanding of God, and the world.

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.*

It affirms very simply that God did make the whole of creation as the bible stories say. Of course the hymn only focuses on the bright and the beautiful, so we must thank Monty Python for suggesting some additional verses to balance it out:

*All things dull and ugly, All creatures short and squat,
All things rude and nasty, The Lord God made the lot.*

It's easy to think of God as the creator of a beautiful flower, a starlit night, or a crashing waterfall, but God is the creator of all creation—the good, the bad and the ugly. This month we reflect on some of the ways in which the beauty and integrity of creation has been damaged by human action. Our starting point, however, must be that all life is good, be it meerkat or mosquito, wisteria or wasp, bluebell or bindweed. All life has value because all life comes from God. Bright and beautiful or dull and ugly—the Lord God made them all.

Prayers:

Creator God, you make all things
and weave them together in an intricate tapestry of life.
Teach us to respect the fragile balance of life and to care for
all the gifts of your creation.

Guide by your wisdom those who have power and authority, that, by the decisions they make, life may be cherished and a good and fruitful Earth may continue to show your glory and sing your praises.

Almighty God,

you have called us to tend and keep the garden of your creation.

Give us wisdom and reverence for all your plants and animals who share this planet with us and whose lives make possible our own.

Help us to remember that they too love the sweetness of life and join with us in giving you praise.

from the National Council of Churches (NCC) Earth Day Sunday 2001 resource packet.

God of Endless Mercy,

we have often been swallowed up by our greed and selfishness,

**desiring that which we do not have,
filling our lives with things that do not save us.**

We have often been swept away by the floods of our own making,

**polluting your creation,
neglecting to be faithful stewards of the earth.**

We have often attacked one another and led lives of violence,

**sending missiles instead of accepting refugees,
ignoring your commandments.**

Lord have mercy,
for we have sinned and fallen short of your glory.
Christ have mercy,
for we are broken and need your salvation.
Lord have mercy upon us and hear us
as we pray in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Closing Commission:

May we always walk gently upon the Earth,
in right relationship,
nurtured by your love,
open to the wind of the Spirit,
taking only what we need,
always open to the needs of others,
making choices that bring wellbeing,
living with generosity,
striving for justice,
honouring all with reverence,
reconciling and peacemaking,
mindful of those who will come after,
recognising our proper place
as part of your creation.
Grant us the strength and courage, Lord,
for such a radical transformation
into your Kingdom.
Amen.

from Christian Aid and Christian Ecology Link

Hymn: For the fruits of all creation

sung by St Martin's Voices

For the fruits of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done;
in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

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Thank you for joining in with Thursday Prayers.

Choral music: The Church of England St Martin in the Fields

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

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Background: Beate Bachmann on Pixabay

Readers: Ian Butterworth, Anne Murphy, Joy
Butterworth, Vivienne Stone, Christine
Faulkner, June Broome, Kirsten Rutherford

CCLI: 5097385

**Next Thursday Prayers will be on 14th October with
a Harvest theme.**