

Sunday 18th September 2022

Morning Worship at 10:45 am

SKY SUNDAY

Introit: Come, Let Us Sing Unto the Lord (Psalm 98)

From the Genevan Psalter (1551), arr. Christoph Daltz (2009)

Come, let us sing unto the Lord,
New songs of praise with sweet accord;
For wonders great by him are done;
His hand and arm have vict'ry won.

All lands to God lift up your voice;
Sing praise to him, with shouts rejoice;
With voice of joy and loud acclaim,
Let all unite and praise his name.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Welcome!

We worship this Sunday with the skies. We celebrate with the clouds, the winds, the dusk and the dawn. We listen to the sounds of sky proclaiming God's presence. We stand in awe before the vast reaches of space above us and thank God for the fragile piece of stardust we call Earth.

Lighting the Christ Candle

In the name of the Creator, who colours the sky,
the name of Christ, who died under dark skies,
and the name of the Spirit, the wind in the sky. Amen.

Holy! Holy! Holy!
Sky is filled with God's presence.

Christ, we come into your presence today,
to worship in this sanctuary called Earth,

Holy! Holy! Holy!
Earth is filled with your presence.

Acknowledgement of country

Before we begin this worship service, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet – the Ngunnawal and Ngambri People. I would also like to pay my respects to the Elders, both past and present, and to the Elders of other Aboriginal communities. This is the place where God has been together with the first people for a long time. It is upon their ancestral lands that the Wesley Uniting Church is built and where we worship.

Life of the church (Announcements)

Song TiS 179:Praise with joy the world's creator

J. Bell / G. Maule 1949-1958
Wild Goose Publications

Praise with joy the world's Creator
God of justice, love and peace
source and end of human knowledge
force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory
power to rescue and release.

Praise the Son who feeds the hungry
frees the captive, finds the lost
heals the sick, upsets religion
fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us
liberating truth from pride
forging bonds where race or gender
age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure
foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit
one God in community
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
shown Christ's vibrant unity.

Call to worship

We invite the skies to worship with us:
**the subtle orange skies at dawn
and the bold red skies at sunset.**

We join the heavens in praising God:
**proclaiming God's glory across the globe
and hailing God's name with the evening stars.**

We join with the atmosphere in worship:
**the air, the moisture, the oxygen,
the wind and all the expressions of God's Spirit.**

We call the clouds to celebrate with storms:
**to carry the life giving drops of rain,
that give hope and healing to Earth.**

We invite the winds to join our petitions:
**to carry our prayers to God above
and breathe our hopes to Christ in person.**

We celebrate the song of the skies!

Opening prayers

We hear voices crying out in the wilderness, O God.
The earth cries out for healing.
The creatures cry out for the restoration of their habitat.
The trees and the fields cry out for water.
The land cries out for nourishment,
the oceans cry out for balance,
the sky cry out for clean air,
and we cry out for wisdom, O God.
Meet us in this place
that we may walk alongside you
on the winding path
toward your renewed creation.
Amen.

Prayer of confession

God of the sky,
we seek your grace.
Too often we have been silent,
in the face of injustice,
profiteering, and greed.
In our silence,

we are accomplices to the destruction
unfolding in your creation.
By our patterns of consumption,
we have contributed to the breaking of ecosystems.
Through our investments,
we seek the quick profit
at the expense of the earth.
Forgive us for our complicity.
Engage our creative minds
to start now in building a just,
sustainable economy that honours your creation.
Amen.

Words of affirmation

We can start now in seeking justice
in all the ways we engage with Earth and Sky.
Though it may feel like a journey through the vastness of sky,
just as God was present with the people of Israel in exile
and with Jesus amid temptation,
God, too, is with us. We are not alone.
The Spirit is calling us to begin healing the world this day.
Amen.

The Peace

Song TiS 187: Let all creation dance

Let all creation dance
in energies sublime,
as order turns with chance,
unfolding space and time,
for nature's art
in glory grows,
and newly shows
God's mind and heart.

God's breath each force unfurls,
igniting from a spark
expanding starry swirls,
with whirlpools dense and dark,
though moon and sun
seem mindless things,
each orbit sings:
"Your will be done."

Our own amazing earth,
with sunlight, cloud, and storms,
and life's abundant growth
in lovely shapes and forms
is made for praise,
a fragile whole,
and from its soul
heaven's music plays.

Lift heart and soul and voice:
in Christ all praises meet,
and nature shall rejoice
as all is made complete.
In hope be strong,
all life befriend,
and kindly tend
creation's song.

THE PEOPLE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Scriptures:

Old Testament: Jeremiah 4.23-28 'When the heavens mourn'
Jeremiah sees Earth return to chaos and the skies respond with
mourning.

23 I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void;
and to the heavens, and they had no light.

24 I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking,
and all the hills moved to and fro.

25 I looked, and lo, there was no one at all,
and all the birds of the air had fled.

26 I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert,
and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce
anger.

27 For thus says the Lord: The whole land shall be a desolation;
yet I will not make a full end.

28 Because of this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above
grow black; for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented
nor will I turn back.

Psalm: Psalm 19.1-6‘ Good News from sky’

The Psalmist declares that the sky announces God’s presence on
Earth,
and that space proclaims the work of God’s hands.

1 The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

2 Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

4 yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

5 which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.

Epistle: Philippians 2.9-13 'Jesus is now the Cosmic Christ'
Jesus Christ, after being humbled in death, is exalted above every name.

9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
12 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;
13 for it is God who is at work in you,
enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Gospel: Mark 15.33-39 'Three hours of darkness'
When Jesus hangs on the cross, the sky turns black in sympathy.

33 When it was noon, darkness came over
the whole land until three in the afternoon.
34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means,
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
35 When some of the bystanders heard it,
they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."
36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine,
put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink,
saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."
37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.
38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him,
saw that in this way he breathed his last,
he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Anthem I Give to You a New Commandment

Peter Nardone (2004, words from John 13:34-35 and Liber Usualis)

I give to you a new commandment,
a new commandment I give to you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.

Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est.
Congregavist nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus et in ipso iucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.*

Amen.

*Where charity and love are, there God is.
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.
Let us exult, and in Him be joyful.
Let us fear and let us love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love each other (and Him).

Contemporary Message: As we look to the sky

THE PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

Song TiS 178: Praise the God who changes places

Praise the God who changes places,
leaves the lofty seat,
welcomes us with warm embraces,
stoops to wash our feet.

*Friends, be strong!
Hold your heads high!
Freedom is our song!
Alleluia!*

Praise the rabbi, speaking, doing
all that God intends,
dying, rising, faith, renewing,
calling us his friends.

Refrain

Praise the Breath of Love, whose freedom
spreads our waking wings,
lifting every blight and burden
till the spirit sings:

Refrain

Praise, until we join the singing
far beyond our sight,
with the Ending-and-Beginning,
dancing in the light.

Refrain

*Words: Brian Wren Music: William Rowan
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Offering

Prayers of the People

God of all Creation,
we come to you in praise and thanksgiving
for the beauty of your creation.

God, give us strength for the journey.

We come bearing burdens
that weigh heavy on our hearts
and make our bodies weary.

God, give us strength for the journey.

We ask your for healing presence
with all who are ill,
and pray that your creation
provides healing and sustenance.

God, give us strength for the journey.

We call for your wisdom
to grace leaders of government,
that they may prioritise care
for the most vulnerable people and places in your world.

God, give us strength for the journey.

We reach for your courage
as we seek new ways of living
that nurture and honour your creation.

God, give us strength for the journey.

We ask you to hear the prayers of our hearts,
both those spoken aloud and those we hold close.

Provide space for people to pray silently or aloud.

After each spoken prayer, repeat the response,

“God, give us strength for the journey.”

We give you thanks
for the present of your Spirit
in all times and places.

God, give us strength for the journey.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

THE SENDING OUT OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Extinguishing Christ Candle

Song TiS 672 (Westminster Abbey): Lord of earth and all creation

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Harper Collins Publishers*

Lord of earth and all creation
let your love possess our land
wealth, and freedom, far horizons
mountain, forest, shining sand:
may we share in faith and friendship
Gifts unmeasured from your hand.

People of the ancient Dreamtime
they who found this country first
ask with those, the later comers
will our dream be blessed or cursed?
Grant us, Lord, new birth, new living
hope for which our children thirst.

Lord, life-giving healing Spirit
on our hurts your mercy shower
lead us by your inward dwelling
guiding, guarding, every hour.
Bless and keep our land Australia:
in your will her peace and power.

Commissioning and Blessing

Go out in joy;
letting yourselves be led into a whole and complete life.
As we look to the sky,
enable us to see the wonder of what is beyond our reach.
Listen to the hills and mountains bursting with song,
Notice the great trees of the forest joining in the procession,
exuberant with applause.
No more thistles and thorns, but stately eucalyptus,
Great and lasting evidence of the wonders of God.
Amen.

Postlude

Liturgist: Rev Karyn Burchell-Thomas

Preacher: Rev Gareth Thomas-Burchell

With thanks to our musicians, readers, Flowers, A/V and steward
teams

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