

Season of Creation



Surfcoast Parish

September

Week 1

Acknowledgement of Country

To begin let me acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land. In Belmont where I am preparing this service. I honour the Waddawurrung as custodians of this Country, for their continuing connection to the land and waters, and thank them for protecting this coastline and its ecosystems since time immemorial. I am grateful for their patience and hospitality towards us and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and to the First Nations communities across the land we now call Australia.

Call to Worship by Michael Ramaidama

Creator God,

We come before you as a small piece of your vast creation.

We come in awe at the beauty and wonder of our planet,
and we feel its pain.

Let the embers of our burning bushland

Rekindle the flame of Pentecost

Shine your light in us that we may strive for a greener future.

Let the dryness of the land in seasons of drought

Remind us to thirst for your leadership

Holy Spirit, lead us towards the well of hope
for a sustainable planet.

Let the waters of our flooded plains and rivers

Drench our hearts with your mercy

Living Water fill us with mercy for your suffering creation.

Let the roaring of raging winds and cyclones

help us hear the cry of Mother Earth

Jesus, give us your peace to calm our storm,
and peace to strengthen our calling.

Let the rise in sea levels

raise our concern and love towards our neighbour

Risen Christ, resource us with your love for the world.

Creator God, we are your people,

called and purposed to be good stewards of our planet.

Bless this day. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

Song - Creation -

We're making a garden; we're working the ground;
In land that's bombed and torn,
Your love soaks through the soil; new life can yet be born.

All welcome to the building; all invited to the fruit.
On Earth, God's planned a garden;
Every hand that's gripped a sword, can make a ploughshare too.

Come, join the work;
God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Hands in the same dirt; enemies are one body now.

Come sing new words; God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Lay down your swords;
The wars you've learned are over now.
God's turned our weapons into ploughs.

Our hands won't be idle; our hearts won't grow cold.
In the barren ground before us,
We can see a garden; we can see a home.

Though drought is around us, though fires will come,
We've tasted the harvest;
Our God has drawn us close; your love has made us One.

Come, join the work; God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Hands in the same dirt; Enemies are one body now.

Come sing new words; God's bringing life; God's bringing life.
Lay down your swords;
The wars you've learned are over now.
God's turned our weapons into ploughs.
New life will come from death somehow.

by Mikali Anagnostis and performed by Mikali, Emma Sproul, Hannah Buckley and Gabby Cadenhead and filmed by Sybil Mendonca of Leichhardt Uniting Church.

A reading from the book of Genesis:

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Genesis 2:4-15

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Worship the Lord in holy splendour; tremble before him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, “The Lord is king!

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity.”

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord;
for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth.
**He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples
with his truth.**

Psalm 96:9-13

Sermon

The video message is a collaboration between Dr Mick Pope and Brooke Prentis.

Dr Mick Pope is a lecturer in meteorology, Professor of Environmental Mission at Missional University, and a member of the Centre for Research in Religion and Social Policy at the University of Divinity. He is co-author of “A climate of hope: Church and mission in a warming world,” and author of “A climate of justice: Loving your neighbour in a warming world”.

Brooke Prentis is an Aboriginal Christian Leader, a descendant of the Waka Waka peoples, who has lived most of her life on Gubbi Gubbi nation and now resides on Gadigal lands of the Eora Nation. Brooke is the CEO of Common Grace and believes you cannot separate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice from creation and climate justice.

Today Mick and Brooke collaborated in Season of Creation - as male and female, as non-Indigenous and Aboriginal persons, and Christians passionate about Creation & Climate Justice. They come together to help us reflect on the year 2021, “A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God”, and action for Creation & Climate justice.

Prayer

A Prayer for Healing Country is written by Aunty Dr Doseena Fergie. It brings three generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people together - Aunty Doseena, her daughter Safina, and Safina's eldest daughter Arieta, set to a moving soundtrack by Stu Fergie of Oka Music, Aunty Doseena's son.

God of Mercy and Grace - in your quest to bring about justice, you understand what it is like to persevere in an unjust society when you suffered and died on the Cross. Have mercy on us.

This Land weeps in sorrow. It is filled with sadness and grief because of the atrocities of the past and present. Have mercy on us. We yearn for conciliation and peace in this place. To yarn and listen deeply to each other with Care and Compassion.

God of Truth - you are pure and true - we worship you for who you

are. There is no one like you - for you shine in the darkness.

Enable all the peoples of this Country to desire, listen and understand the True History of this Land. For only then can we walk this journey together.

Jesus, you are the tree of life. Help us to be your instruments of Truth, by the Power of your Holy Spirit. We pray for discernment and wisdom to impart your Truth. Deliver us from devastation and bring about Healing to Country and our communities.

Our Healer - may all Creation, the birds, animals, fish, trees, plants, rocks, mountains, waters, and peoples be healed to flourishing.

Strengthen us, lead us, inspire us into action, ignited by our faith in you Lord Jesus. Help us not to lose Hope. For it is only through justice, forgiveness and Love can there be Healing and Peace.

Amen.

A Prayer for the Pacific is written and read by Soonalote (Lote) Tomane. Lote is Samoan and grew up in Samoa coming to Australia with her family at the age of 12, and thus has a rooted appreciation for the social and climate justice in the Pacific. Lote is an attendee and council member of the Indooroopilly Uniting Church (IUC) in Brisbane. Lote also volunteers for the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Group at IUC, and acts as a youth and young adults leader.

Dear Lord, God of Love and all Creation, thank you for the gift of today. Thank you for the countless blessings you pour into our lives each and every day. Thank you for the land in which I reside on, and for the people who have cared for it since time immemorial.

Dear Lord, you raised me in the gem of your creation - the beautiful Pacific, my home, and for that I am so grateful. Thank you for the amazing diversity of people and cultures living on the islands of the Pacific. You gave us these lands, seas and resources as a gift - a source of identity and sustenance.

Dear Lord, we have not been righteous stewards of your creation, and your world is weeping, now more than ever. Please forgive us.

I pray for my home, my Pacific brothers and sisters, who are the most vulnerable to climate change, despite our minimal impact on

the damage being created. I pray for everyone suffering the devastating effects of climate change, especially those who have lost their land and livelihoods.

I also pray for our leaders, both in the Pacific and globally to come together, to listen to one another, and make the right choices for a sustainable and safe future for everyone.

Dear Lord, I also pray for awareness, and for people to hear the plight of my people and make a positive and active change.

Help us to reconnect to the land and live in harmony with your creation. Help us to stand in solidarity, and work together, so that future Pacific generations will have a home. This I pray in the Holy name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, **Amen.**

A Prayer of Confession for Our Common Home written and read by Dr Byron Smith. Byron is an ecological ethicist helping churches join the dots between caring for our common home and Christian discipleship. He has a PhD in theological ethics and also works in pastoral ministry at an Anglican church in Paddington, NSW.

Creator of the cosmos, you have filled this good Earth with complex wonders, abundant beauty, resilient interdependencies, and you invite us to share this abode with all your guests: with bandicoots and banksias, bacteria and blue whales, and the billions of beings like us.

But we have abused your divine hospitality. We've made a right mess of the place. We have kicked out other residents and falsely claimed ownership for ourselves.

We grieve the coral bleached white, the forests burned black, the dwindling glaciers, the silenced birdsong, the oceans emptying of fish and filling with plastic. Forgive us our habitual greed, our stunted empathy, our careful ignorance. Forgive our complicity in systems built on lies, that extract too much and funnel wealth into the pockets of too few.

Fill our lungs with your fresh wind, your Holy Breath, your life-giving Spirit, that we may sing songs of resistance, renewal, revolution, and that we may walk together in the true and living way of Jesus so that in you, all may find a home. **Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

All 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.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

Benediction - Brooke Prentis

Creator God,

May we see,

Your love in each others hearts,
Your joy in the Golden Wattle,
Your peace in the morning sunrise,
Your patience in the mighty mountain,
Your kindness in the Quokka,
Your goodness in the Rainbow Lorikeet,
Your faith in the ancient Grasstree,
Your gentleness in the Leafy Sea Dragon,
Your self-control in the dry desert plains.

Now with the fruits of the spirit, and all of creation,
Go in truth, justice, love, and hope. Amen

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