

Call to worship:

Praise God from the heavens!

Praise Him from the skies above!

Praise God, angels and all the hosts of heaven!

Praise Him, sun and moon, and shining stars!

Praise God, all creatures great and small,

Praise Him, animals and birds, reptiles and fish!

Praise God, kings of the earth and people everywhere,

Praise Him, men and women, young and old!

Let all the earth bring praise to the Lord,
at whose word creation came into being.

We gather to praise and worship our God!

ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING,

1 All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam:
*O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

2 Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
Ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice;
Ye lights of evening, find a voice:
O praise him, O praise him,

3 Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Thou fire, so masterful and bright,
That givest us both warmth and light:
O praise him, O praise him,

4 Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfoldest blessings on our way,
O praise him, alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
Let them his glory also show:
O praise him, O praise him,

5 All ye that are of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye, alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God, and on him cast your care:
O praise him, O praise him,

6 And thou, most kind and gentle death,
Waiting to hush our latest breath,
O praise him, alleluia!
Thou leadest home the child of God,
And Christ our Lord the way has trod:
O praise him, O praise him,

7 Let all things their creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness;
O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One:
O praise him, O praise him,

William Henry Draper (1855-1933) alt.
based on Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Prayer of Adoration (Psalm 8 reworked by Jim Cotter)

Creator God, Source of all life,

how gloriously does your name resound, echoing to the bounds of the universe!

The morning stars sing for joy, and the youngest child cries your name.

The weak in the world shame the strong, and silence the proud and the rebellious.

Creator God, Source of all life,

how gloriously does your name resound, echoing to the bounds of the universe!

When I look at the heavens, even the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars majestic in their courses – the eagle riding the air, the dolphin ploughing the sea, the gazelle leaping the wind, the sheep grazing the fells - who are we human beings that you keep us in mind, children, women, and men that you care so much for us?

Creator God, Source of all life,

how gloriously does your name resound, echoing to the bounds of the universe!

Yet still you bring us to life, creating us after your image, stewards of the planet you give as our home.

How awesome a task you entrust to our hands.

How fragile and beautiful is the good earth.

Creator God, Source of all life,

how gloriously does your name resound, echoing to the bounds of the universe!

Through Desert Places: A Version of Psalms 1-50, Cairns Publications
© Jim Cotter, 1989

Prayer of Confession:

O Lord our God, how majestic is your name!

Yet we confess that we have maligned and misinterpreted You placing ourselves above all creation, commandeering the helm that we might control and use for our own comfort and convenience.

Forgive us we pray and restore us to our senses, that we might see and sense and know and love all that is, and all that can be.

May our reverence for You be manifest in our reverence for all of life.

May our wakeful listening penetrate the depths of the sea and reach towards the heights of heaven.

May our bold tenderness overcome our ignorance and enable wise action.

For this life is a wonder.

You have gifted us with all we need – beauty and bounty, word and wisdom, courage and companionship.

May we enjoy and employ these gifts as befits those made in Your image.

May all that we make and do mirror Your light and Your love.

May Your Being be known and sung throughout the world with joy and thanksgiving.

Adapted from Carla A. Grosch-Miller, *Psalms Redux*, Canterbury Press

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FROM THE HIGHEST OF HEIGHTS TO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA, (*Indescribable*)

1 From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea,
creation's revealing your majesty.

From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring,
every creature unique in the song that it sings,
all exclaiming:

*Indescribable, uncontainable, you placed the stars in the sky and you know them
by name.*

You are amazing, God.

*All powerful, untameable, awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim;
You are amazing, God.*

2 Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow?
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night?
None can fathom.

*Indescribable, uncontainable, you placed the stars in the sky and you know them
by name.*

You are amazing, God.

*Incomparable, unchangeable, you see the depths of my heart and you love me
the same;*

You are amazing, God.

Laura Story and Jesse Reeves

Words and Music: © 2004 worshippingtogether.com Songs / Sixsteps Music / Gleaning Publishing.

Matthew 19:16-22: The Rich Young Man

16 Then someone came to him and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' 17 And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.'

¹⁸He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹Honour your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' ²⁰The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these; what do I still lack?' ²¹Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' ²²When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Romans 13: 8-10: Love for One Another

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Reflection: Creation Time (1st September – 4th October) offers us here in the Nene Valley Circuit, alongside the world's 2.2 billion Christians, the opportunity to explore our relationship with our Creator God. It also invites us to into developing new and better ways of living with all creation with whom we share this our common home.

Psalm 8 is a psalm of praise, not a psalm of power, and Jim Cotter's poetic reworking and rewording helpfully replaces damaging dominion language (It's ours to do with as we wish) with that of stewardship: How awesome is it that we are entrusted with such gifts!

As we glorify our Creator God, as the Source of all life we are not only being called into a cosmic relationship, one that extends to the bounds of the universe, but we are also being called to acknowledge that our discipleship is ever-entwined with the well-being of all things.

A few years ago now Andrew and I would cosy up on our sofa on a Sunday evening to watch the BBC programme 'The Mekong River with Sue Perkins.' Over the weeks that followed we (along with Sue) journeyed along East Asia's greatest river, over 3,000 miles, exploring the landscape and lives of an estimated 65million people that the Mekong sustained through fishing, aquaculture and irrigation.

Yet this mighty river was being affected not only by changes in the global climate but also the demand for a greener energy supply, by supplying the water needed for a number of hydropower plants – what saddened me most was that this harnessed power wasn't to be used in the local context, but sold to other countries whose demand for power filled lives, were making the Mekong residents and its landscape powerless.

So, like our rich young man, we are confronted with a question: what must we let go of, what possession must we 'sell' to be able to come to the aid those who are poor?

This is not wholly about monetary wealth either, although we must recognise that compared to the vast majority of the human population we are indeed 'rich.' Our richness comes also from our availability of choice (and also our waste), and more tragically our capability to destroy, even to the point extinction.

Paul writes to remind the churches in Rome that they, and us today, are commanded to love their neighbour, and this leads us into another question: who, in our modern and global society, is my neighbour?

Our neighbours are the people who live downstream of our waste. Our neighbours are those who are impacted by climate change because of our choices of energy or investment income. Our neighbours are the generations to come who will have to live with the long-term effects that our various governments make, or not make on behalf of us today. Our neighbours are also the many living creatures who make up the web of life on which we all depend, along with their natural environments which God called us to safeguard, for these spaces are also sacred spaces, after all did God not call it all "Good."

I find it hard not to think of our Children and Youth Assembly 3Generate when I hear Jim Cotter's paraphrase that "The weak in the world shame the strong" Here are young adults and children, some as young as 8, engaging with the Methodist Church in its connexional decision making processes.

Last year not only did they call on local churches to become more Eco-friendly, *(and within our district we have an number of Eco-Congregation advocates, so if you are interested in becoming one, or want to be kept informed about social and environmental issues, please let me know)* they also wanted the church to challenge people in power about climate change, poverty and world peace. These young voices reminding us that if we don't heed the voice of God in our basic commandment "To love our neighbour as ourselves", then we—people and land—will face collective destruction.

Our involvement in issues of justice, including our engagement with a Greener Gospel is not new or a fad, it is woven into our Methodist DNA. In his 1785 sermon "The New Creation" John Wesley explored humanity's role within the created order writing of love as 'spiritual respiration'; highlighting the relational aspect that our love for God was best seen when reflected through the love of neighbour.

As we begin to journey through this period of Creation Time may we recognise the need for urgent action in establishing justice and equity for people and all of life, may this time move us beyond amazement at the natural world, onto and into the work of protecting it, and may we as individuals and as worshipping communities consciously seek to live in harmony with God, with one another and the natural world as we search for ways to heal the damage done by our own self-centred misbehaviour.

Or maybe to better summarise let us
"Do all the good we can, By all the means we can,
In all the ways we can, In all the places we can,
At all the times we can,
To all the people (and all creation) we can,
As long as ever we can."
Amen

For further reflection:

- In what ways does your way of living reflect gratitude for Earth?
- What words/actions express your awe and wonder of creation? What words/actions should we use to confess our abuse of creation?
- What new or renewed focus have you gained from our readings and reflection as we begin to mark Creation Time?

- What actions are you feeling challenged to take (or renew) so that you might enhance your care for God's creation?

O LORD, MY GOD, (How Great Thou Art)

- 1 O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed :
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :
how great thou art, how great thou art !
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :
how great thou art, how great thou art !*
- 2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees ;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze :
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :
- 3 And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin :
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :
- 4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home — what joy shall fill my heart ;
then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim : my God, how great thou art :
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :

Stuart K. Hine (1899–1989)

vv. 1, 2, 4 based on *O store Gud* 1885 by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859–1940)

Prayer of Intercession:

Our prayer of intercession asks us to commit ourselves to The Fair Trade Covenant: (inspired by the Covenant Prayer of John Wesley)

Sisters and brothers, let us make a covenant with each other and with God to strive for fairness and for justice in everything we do, and wherever Christ leads us.

To take up this covenant means that we are content that Christ directs us and that Christ alone is our reward.

Christ calls us to fairness and justice in many different ways.

Some ways are easy and require little effort or personal sacrifice, but others are difficult and will mean us having to change what we buy and where we shop, and to go without ourselves.

Some ways will bring us praise from those around us and win us admiration, but others will bring criticism and make us unpopular.

Some ways we will find interesting and absorbing and will play to our natural strengths, but others we will find tedious and a chore.

In some of these ways we may please both Christ and ourselves, in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

Yet we know that we have the power to be able to act in all these ways because Christ inspires and strengthens us, and because we know that he has no hands or feet on earth but ours.

If justice is to be done, it is we who are called to do it.

Therefore, let us make this covenant with God our own, giving ourselves anew and relying on His promises and grace.

And so we pray:

Loving Lord, since you have called us through Christ to share in this covenant, we will take on this duty with joy.

For whatever we do for the least of our sisters and brothers, we do it for you.

We are no longer our own, but yours.

I am no longer my own but yours.

Call me and open my eyes to the injustice around me, the unfairness around me and the poverty around me;

Call me to dare to change my lifestyle, my habits and my outlook for you.

Call me to strive for fairness and justice in everything I do, not just in words, but in actions; not just locally, but globally.

Let me change myself for you, and so change the world for you.

I freely and wholeheartedly commit myself to this duty, knowing that in everything you will give me your inspiration, strength and grace.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.

So be it.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven.

Amen.

TAKE MY LIFE, AND LET IT BE

1 Take my life, and let it be
 consecrated, Lord, to thee ;

take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

- 2 Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love ;
take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.
- 3 Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King ;
take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.
- 4 Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold ;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.
- 5 Take my will, and make it thine ;
it shall be no longer mine ;
take my heart — it is thine own ;
it shall be thy royal throne.
- 6 Take my love ; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store ;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879)

Blessing

**May the goodness of the Creator,
the grace of the Saviour,
and the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and within us
this day and all our days to come.
Amen**

Please be assured that we are still here if you need anything at all during this time.

The circuit staff can be contacted by calling Rev Lesley on 01933 312778 or Rev Kim Shorley
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