



SUSTAINABLE SEPTEMBER 2021

Earth, Sea & Sky

The Waters of the Earth

A Service for Sustainable September – 12 September 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES

(A bowl of water can be prominently displayed. At the beginning of the service the worship leader can cup some water from the bowl in their hand, raise it up and then let it trickle back into the bowl)

For thousands of years the indigenous people have walked in this land, have harvested from its rivers, lakes and seas and have never defiled those waters.

We acknowledge the (.....) People of this place, who have dwelt here and who have cared for the land and its waters.

We are attentive to their wisdom in managing the waters without destruction,

in harvesting from their bounty of life without exploitation,

and we live in commitment to the ongoing journey of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

CALL TO WORSHIP

As many rivers merge together into the sea,
we have come together to worship our God, the fountain of living water.

As we worship God in spirit and in truth, let our hearts overflow with praise,
let us be cleansed by the waters of God's grace and forgiveness.

Let us be refreshed and restored by Jesus Christ
who promises us the waters of life through his resurrection.

SONG **Together in Song 94** 'Glory to God above'
 Together in Song 107 'Sing praise and thanksgiving'

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

With hearts welling up in praise for God the fountain of all goodness, let us adore the Lord.

God of the deep ocean and the tiny brook,
we praise you and adore you for the gift of water that sustains all life.

At this time of worship, we remember with thanksgiving
the manifold manifestations of your grace through the gift of water.

We remember the waters of Massah and Meribah
And we praise and thank you for you are the God of gracious provision.

We remember the healing waters of the pool of Siloam
And we praise and thank you for you are a God of ceaseless compassion.

We remember your baptism in the waters of the river Jordan
And we praise and thank you for you are a God of transformation.

Today we worship and adore you, God of provision, compassion and transformation.

Let this worship enable us to be responsible stewards of your provision, channels of your compassion and agents of your transformation.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, the very source of life, whose spirit hovered over waters at the time of creation;

God in Jesus Christ, who came as living waters to quench the thirsty;

God the Holy Spirit, who waters and brings forth the fruit; we come to your presence confessing our attitudes of greed, dominance and insensitivity towards your wonderful creation, and particularly towards water.

Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

We confess that we have been irresponsible in our use of water, wasting it to satisfy our comfortable lives.

In many places we have commodified and privatised water, a natural resource, denying people access to it.

In the name of development projects, water sources have been drained or polluted with industrial waste, causing risk to flora and fauna.

Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

We acknowledge the lack of cooperation between different authorities and organisations to manage water resources fairly.

We confess our failure, as faith communities, to address water justice and seek forgiveness for not speaking out for the thirsty and the dying in situations of drought.

Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

We confess to being silent spectators as many vulnerable communities walk miles every day in search of water for their families.

We come to your presence ashamed of our apathy and insincerity towards the abuse of water and other natural resources, asking you to inspire us to be challenged to conserve, preserve and use water prudently.

Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.





**God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave us living waters,
listen to all those who truly confess and grant us forgiveness so that
we act responsibly in our use of water,
become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water,
and gain wisdom in conserving and preserving water
so that rivers will roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples.
Amen.**

READINGS Proverbs 1: 20-33
 Mark 8: 27-38

REFLECTION

SONG **Together in Song** 547 'Be thou my vision'
 Together in Song 473 'Community of Christ'

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

You will need: a glass of clean water, a glass of salty water, a bottle of cool drink and an empty glass. You might like to play soft music in the background.

Let us pray for the whole universe.
(Hold up the glass of clean water.)

Lord let this glass of clean water remind us of the available sources of fresh drinking water.

Help us to protect the gift of water and utilise it with the spirit of sanctity and responsibility.

May our lives be so balanced that greed makes way for need and the tendency to waste makes way for a commitment to save.

Fountain of life, let there be water for our world.

(Hold up the glass of salty water.)

Let this glass of salty water remind us of the tears of those whose lives have been threatened by the excessive salination of their water resources.

Let those who contribute to the rising sea levels shed tears of repentance and learn

to lead a simple life so that others can 'simply live'.

Creator of new life, transform us so that we may be channels of life.

(Hold up a bottle of cool drink.)

God of justice, we pray for all those who are resisting multinational corporations and developmental processes which plunder our natural resources and threaten the livelihood of millions.

We pray for all organisations involved in the preservation of water, and with it, your gift of life. Help, guide and sustain them in their endeavours.

God of justice strengthen those who seek to preserve your creation.

(Hold up the empty glass.)

Lord, we pray for all communities involved in issues of water justice.
Give us compassion to walk with those who lack the water of life.
Help us to empty ourselves of prejudice and fill us with a vision of solidarity
and fellowship so that we can work together in conserving the Gift of water.
God of justice give us your vision for justice.

Lord, we pray for the Church and its mission and vision.
Inspire us to work towards justice for all.
Transform our lives so that we may be channels of justice - not just in what
we preach, but in our daily practice.
Let your churches be role models within our communities in conserving
water and preserving life in all its fullness.
Bring churches together to work in unity so that justice will prevail and water
will be available for ours and future generations.
God of hope make us instruments of hope.

Let us pray together this contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer

**Our God, father and mother,
From whom and to whom all lives flow,
Your name is holy for you water every creature with life.
May your justice roll down like waters among us and throughout all
the world.
Give us water sufficient for our living,
and help us to share what we have with those who are dying of thirst.
Forgive us our insensitivity and irresponsibility, and our abuse of
creation.
And teach us to forgive one another.
Lead us not into the temptation of accumulation, greed and power,
and deliver us from our endless consumption.
For your word is like water cleansing us from evil,
your reign is righteousness flowing like an ever-flowing stream
dismantling the powers and principalities from generation to
generation,
from history to history, for ever and ever. Amen.**

SONG **Together in Song** 671 'Made in God's likeness'
 Together in Song 665 'Jesus Christ is waiting'

BLESSING

May God the Creator send rains on your land with water for life.
May Christ our Redeemer give you the living water of eternal life.
And may the Spirit of God quench your thirst with springs of life flowing up
from within.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ.
Amen.





BLESSING SONG

*The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you,
God's peace growing in you.*

Words: Guatemalan traditional
trans. Christine Carson

From **There is One Among Us: Shorter songs for worship.**
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*Prayers have been adapted from Anglican EcoCare, Diocese of Perth resources for
Sustainable September, 2018 (Week 2)*

Wisdom's Call

Proverbs 1: 20-33, Mark 8: 27-38

Sustainable September Reflection Week 2 - 12 September 2021

Rev Gordon Scantlebury

Wisdom calls, but will we heed her call?

A voice of wisdom in Australia over recent decades has been that of the wonderful cartoonist, Michael Leunig, whose simple drawings often project great insight. One of his notable cartoons showed a grey throng of people going about their business; working, competing, hassled, frantic, and with grim, determined faces. To one side though and highlighted with a touch of colour is a lone figure lying on the ground, arms embracing a single flower growing out of the pavement, and with a warm contented smile on her face.

And we smile at the image because it reminds us of what we already know: that deep human contentment is found not in all our striving and consumption, but rather in the simple, vulnerable and often natural things of life.

And 'Wisdom' herself is like that. Wisdom is so often simple and able to be grasped even by young children. Yet we get so easily caught up in our busy-ness, fears and self-interests. We know deep down that our human satisfaction is found in our sense of relationship. We intuitively know that real salvation comes in our connection and sense of purpose, - with God, the environment and each other.

Yet, we let 'the economy' be the driving purpose of our world rather than the well-being of its society. We let fear and border controls determine our national identity rather than a sense of openness and freedom. We look at what profit we can dig up, or cut down, or fish without considering the essential life and nurture that environment also would give back to us.

In short, we scoff at Wisdom's simple message of life to give in rather to the idolatry of our consumption and fears.

In this month of Sustainable September, we are reminded once more that the message of environmental sustainability is actually a simple one. We are interrelated and a part of this natural world in which we live. Yet we in our humanity are destroying this world. We realise that as we desecrate the world around us we not only lose the numbats and forests and coral reefs, but we also desecrate our own human well-being. We desecrate our own collective soul.

Jesus of Nazareth is one who lives and speaks the Wisdom of God. His living message is that our human salvation will not be found through our material consumption, oppressive power or the domination of the planet. Rather, the life that matters is found through our relationships, generosity,





justice, peace and compassion. Our salvation is embraced as we embrace our relationship with God, the earth and one another.

And here there is a twist. For as we pursue material security for the sake of ourselves alone, we lose our lives. But if we are prepared to give up that selfish pursuit to give space for others and the planet, we will actually receive the life that most matters.

Wisdom calls. Her message is already written within our hearts. Will you listen for her voice, follow it and find the life that is real?

Amen.