



BALLARAT CENTRAL UNITING CHURCH

SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2021

SEPARATION, SUSTAINABILITY, SELF-ACTION.

SEASONS OF CREATION 3 SKY

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

INTROIT

1. Heaven and earth, and sea and air,
All their Maker's praise declare;
Wake, my soul, awake and sing:
Now thy grateful praises bring.

4. Lord, great wonders workest thou!
To thy sway all creatures bow;
Write thou deeply in my heart
What I am, and what thou art.

Words: Joachim Neander (1650-1680) Tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

GREETING

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Through sun and shadow,
God's love will remain.
Through torrent and thunder,
God's love will remain.
Through fog and flurries,
God's love will remain.
Through breeze and bluster,
God's love will remain

Through cloudless and clear,
God's love will remain.
Through rain and rainbow,
God's love will remain.
Through all that life brings,
God's love will remain.
Come, let us worship God.

OPENING PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Jeremiah was a prophet who lived a long time ago.
A prophet is someone who reminds people to live according to God's ways.
Jeremiah lived during a dangerous and hard time, and tried to help people stay faithful in the midst of all these difficulties.

Jeremiah, what do you see?

Jeremiah: I see lands made barren and dry, I see the heavens made dark.

One: Jeremiah, why has this happened?

Jeremiah: God's people have forgotten who they are.

One: Jeremiah, what do you see?

**Jeremiah: I see mountains quaking,
I see empty skies with no birds anywhere,
I see ruins where there once were cities.**

One: Jeremiah, why has this happened?

**Jeremiah: God's people have forgotten who they are,
And now it is time for them to remember.**

One: Jeremiah reminded people long ago of what they had forgotten. Jeremiah's words remind us of what we forget.

**Response: When lands turn barren,
when skies are empty of wings,
when cities become ruins:
we have forgotten that we are God's people. (Silence for reflection)**

Response: It is time for us to remember. Amen.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION Based on Philippians 2:15–16

One: Many years after Jeremiah, Paul – a follower of Jesus – tried to help people remember. Paul, what are you writing?

Paul: A letter to God's people.

One: Paul, what do you say to them?

Paul: I tell them to hold fast to God's word of life, that they might shine like bright stars in the sky.

Response: We will hold fast to God's word of life.

We will remember that we are God's people.

One: And may you each shine like a bright star in the sky.

HYMN TiS 186 Stars and planets flung in orbit

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
galaxies that swirl through space,
powers hid within the atom,
cells that form an infant's face:
these, O God, in silence praise you;
by your wisdom they are made.

Skies adorned with sunset splendour,
silent peaks in calm repose,
golden fields awaiting harvest,
foaming surf and fragrant rose:
earth, its bounty clothed with beauty,
echoes all creation's praise.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,
beast and fish and swarming insect,
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:
these, your creatures, join in chorus,
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,
born of dust but touched by grace,
torn apart by tongue and colour,
yet a single, striving race:
we, in whom you trace your image,
add our words to nature's song.

Gracious God, we bring before you
gifts of human life alone,
truth that throbs through song and story,
visions caught in paint and stone:
these, O God, we gladly offer,
gifts to praise the Giver's name.

Christ, the Word before creation
as creation's final goal,
once you came for earth's redemption;
by your Spirit make earth whole:
then, O God, the new creation
will your praise for ever sing.

Words: 1991 by the Hymn Society

SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS & NOTICES

EARLY WORD Seeking the stars Bron James & John Schulz

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Reader: Your word O Lord is a lamp to our feet

All: **A light to our path**

READINGS

Jeremiah 4:23–28 “Look to the Sky”

Reader: Prophets are people whose ears and hearts are so open to God that they know what God wants them to say to God's people. A long, long time ago, when people had been hurting each other and creation for a long time, and dishonouring the gifts God had given them, God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, and Jeremiah spoke to God's people.

If Jeremiah were speaking today, what would he have said? Let us pay attention – our actions have consequences.

Jeremiah: I looked on the earth and saw a waste. Precious land ravaged for oil, rivers becoming toxic with chemicals. I looked to the heavens: instead of light and clouds, planes, and clouds of pollution.

Reader: Let us pay attention – our actions have consequences.

Jeremiah: I looked on the mountains: disasters and quaking, the earth shaking like a sick child. I looked at the air empty of birds, the land empty of creatures, the waters empty of swimmers – no life at all.

Reader: Let us pay attention – our actions have consequences.

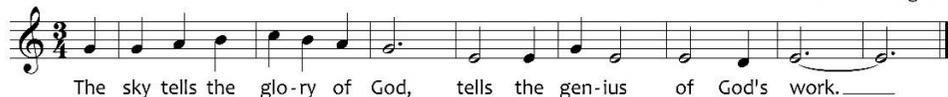
Jeremiah:- I looked at the fruitful land. Forests and fields turned to desert. Nothing can grow in soil drained of nutrients or covered with cement. I looked at the cities. People killing each other, destroying, rioting, human hurt and anger unleashed, mirrored by God's hurt and anger. Listen! God is speaking to you...

Reader: Let us pay attention – our actions have consequences.

Jeremiah: This is not the end. Look to the sky, there will be mourning and darkness. I am still with you, and I will not relent or turn back. Look to the sky and see what you have done. Look to the sky and ask forgiveness for the pain and hurt you've brought to creation. Look to the sky and remember God's constant and generous love. Look to the sky and remember the beauty and wonder of creation. Look to the sky and change your ways.

Psalm 19

Howard Hughes



Response: *The sky tells the glory of God, tells the genius of God's work.*

The sky tells the glory of God,
tells the genius of God's work.
Day carries the news to day,
night brings the message to the night, **Response**

without a word, without a sound,
without a voice being heard,
and yet their message fills the world,
their news reaches its rim. **Response**

There God has pitched a tent
for the sun to rest and rise renewed
like a bridegroom rising from bed,
an athlete eager to run a race. **Response**

It springs from the edge of the earth,
runs a course across the sky
to win the race at heaven's end.
Nothing on earth escaped its heat. **Response**

Philippians 2: 14-18 (NRSV)

¹⁴Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you **shine like stars in the world**. ¹⁶It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— ¹⁸and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Mark 15: 33-39 (NRSV) The Death of Jesus

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land^[a] until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At 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?"^[b] ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And 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." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he^[a] breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"^[b]

Reader: Lord, may your Word live in us.

All: And bear much fruit to your glory.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Separation, Sustainability, Self-action

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

HYMN

God You spin the whirling planets
Fill the seas and spread the plain
Mold the mountains fashion blossoms
Call forth sunshine wind and rain
We created in your image
Would a true reflection be
Of Your justice grace and mercy
And the truth that makes us free

You have called us to be faithful
In our life and ministry
We respond in grateful worship
Joined in one community
When we blur Your gracious image
Focus us and make us whole
Healed and strengthened as Your people
We move onward toward Your goal

God Your will is still creating
Calling us to life made new
Now reveal to us fresh vistas
Where there's work to dare and do
Keep us clear of all distortion
Fashion us with loving care
Thus new creatures in Your image
We'll proclaim Christ everywhere

Words: Jan Parker Huber (1978-)

OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (Followed by the Lord's Prayer)

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!

SENDING FORTH OF GOD'S PEOPLE

WORD OF MISSION & BLESSING

HYMN TiS 678 God gives us a future

God gives us a future, daring us to go
into dreams and dangers on a path unknown.
We will face tomorrow in the Spirit's power,
We will let God change us, for the new life starts now.

We must leave behind us sins of yesterday,
for God's new beginning is a better way.
God gives hope, and insight, and the strength we lack.
God gives hope, and insight, and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us how to read the signs,
How to meet the challenge of our troubled times.
Love us into action, stir us into prayer,
till we choose God's life, and find our future there.

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Worship Leader: Social Justice Group; Early Word: Bron James & John Schulz; Elder: Mary Hollick; Reader: Alice & Andrew Haley; Prayer: Mary Hollick; Music: Coad family; IT & Sound: Ben Daniel

Prayers are adapted from Seasons of the Spirit and Uniting in Worship II.

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