



THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Ballarat Central Uniting Church

Sunday 20th September 2026 @ 10 a.m.

Season of Creation 3



Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

“Wilderness/Outback Sunday”
WILDERNESS: Place of Testing!

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

INTROIT: TiS 746 – The heavens shall declare!
The heavens shall declare the glory of his name,
all creation bows at the coming of the King;
every eye shall see, every heart will know,
every knee shall bow, every tongue confess:
holy, holy, holy is the Lord;
see the coming of the King; holy is the Lord.

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GREETING

Leader: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all,

All: *and also with you.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Wilderness calls to us: Arid lands and frozen tundra, give us ground on which to stand.

We welcome the wilds to stretch our horizons even as they draw us inward: Sun-bleached sands and jungled canopies, open us to breath-blowing Spirit around and within.

We seek your gifts, Wilderness/Outback. Spur us to your hopes in God.

Salmon and monarchs, carry us to the waters of faith's birth and the future land of new life.

OPENING PRAYER

REMEMBERING

We remember the wilderness God created, the wild places on Earth, the worlds of wonder and mystery, and the distant dreamings of the Outback.

We remember the wild worlds and hiding places of our childhood, where we felt the mystery of caves and wild creatures in the mountains.

We remember and rejoice. Thank you, God, for Wilderness, the wild places that stir us with wonder.

Adapted from seasonofcreation.com

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

We are God's good creatures. We come from the wild and share in a web of creation that is nurtured by grace. No matter how ideas might reach, God's love reaches further.

God loves, supports, and holds us in the family of all wild things. Thanks be to God.

HYMN: TiS 135 – All things bright and beautiful!

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful – the Lord God made them all.*

The wildflowers in their beauty, the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers, and friendly birds that call,

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful – the Lord God made them all.*

The cold wind in the winter, the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden – he made them every one.

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful – the Lord God made them all.*
The many-coloured corals, the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert, on farms, or roaming free,

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful – the Lord God made them all.*
He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty who has made all things well.

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful – the Lord God made them all.*

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SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS & NOTICES

SPECIAL TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

- *KUCA in the manse lounge after the special time with the children.*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Leader: "Your Word O Lord is a lamp to our feet".

ALL: "A light to our path."

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Joel 1:8–10, 17–20 (NRSVUE)

⁸ Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord.

The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord.

¹⁰ The fields are devastated, the ground mourns, for the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil fails.

¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods; the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined because the grain has withered.

¹⁸ How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are perishing.

¹⁹ To you, O Lord, I cry, for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field.

²⁰ Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

PSALM 18:6-19

Text: NRSVUE; Response: Isaac Everett



**Response: God, you are my strength, my rock, my fortress and deliverer.
God, you are my rock, my shield, the horn of my salvation.**

In my distress I called upon the Lord;
to my God I cried for help.
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.

Response

Then the earth reeled and rocked;
the foundations also of the mountains trembled
and reeled because he was angry.
Smoke went up from his nostrils
and devouring fire from his mouth;
glowing coals flamed forth from him.

Response

He bowed the heavens and came down;
thick darkness was under his feet.
He rode on a cherub and flew;
he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness his covering around him,
his canopy thick clouds dark with water.

Response

Out of the brightness before him
there broke through his clouds
hailstones and coals of fire.
The Lord also thundered in the heavens,
and the Most High uttered his voice.
And he sent out his arrows and scattered them;
he flashed forth lightnings and routed them.

Then the channels of the sea were seen,
and the foundations of the world were laid bare
at your rebuke, O Lord,
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

Response

He reached down from on high; he took me;
he drew me out of mighty waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy
and from those who hated me,
for they were too mighty for me.
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
but the Lord was my support.
He brought me out into a broad place;
he delivered me because he delighted in me.

Response

Romans 8:18–27 (NRSVUE) Future Glory

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Matthew 3:13—4:2 (NRSVUE)

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a

voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Testing of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil.

² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished.

Leader: Lord, may your Word live in us!

All: And bear much fruit to your glory!

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD: WILDERNESS/OUTBACK: Place of Testing!

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERING

(Your offerings for the mission and ministry of God through Ballarat Central Uniting will be gratefully received during the hymn. Please remain seated until the last verse)

HYMN: TiS 591 – Forty Days and Forty Nights!

Forty days and forty nights you were fasting in the wild,
forty days and forty nights tempted, and yet undefiled:

let us your endurance share and from earthly greed abstain,
with you watching unto prayer, with you strong to suffer pain.

And if Satan on us press flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness, grant we may not faint or fail.
Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear, ever constant by your side,
that with you we may appear at the eternal Eastertide.

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION *(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

HYMN: Hosanna! Music No. 1134 – Friends in high places!

I was in need and I needed a friend,
I was alone and I needed a hand;
I was going down but someone rescued me.
*My God cares too much to say,
His mercies are new everyday;
I get down to pray and then help is on its way.*

I walk by faith and not by sight,
when things go wrong, it'll be alright;
'cause someone greater is watching over me.
*My God cares too much to say,
His mercies are new everyday;
I get down to pray and then help is on its way.*

Now, in faith I believe I've got everything I need;
I walk by faith and not by what I see.
I've got friends in high places, I've got someone I can call;
I've got someone watching over me.

I walk by faith and not by sight,
when things go wrong, it'll be alright;
'cause someone greater is watching over me.
*My God cares too much to say,
His mercies are new everyday;
I get down to pray and then help is on its way. (x2)*

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WORD OF MISSION & BLESSING

DISMISSAL SONG: TiS 775 – You shall go out with joy!
You shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace,
and the mountains and the hills shall break forth in singing.
There'll be shouts of joy, and the trees of the field
shall clap, shall clap their hands.
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands
and you'll go out with joy.

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Worship Leaders – Rev Lauleti Tu'inauvai; **Elder** – Carol Gannon;
Readers – Karen Coad, Graeme Sutton, Tofila Fifita; **Prayer** – Karen Coad;
BCUC Choir, Music & Choir Director – Helen Duggan; **Pianist** – Graeme Sutton;
Flautist – Karen Coad, Charlotte Withers; **Bass Guitarist** – Steve Holoyda;
IT, Video & Audio – Ben Daniel; **Welcome** – Jan Tozer, Miriam Peck;
Door Stewards – Lyn & Ron Fleming; **Morning Tea** – Jan Dimond, Shirley Vanderbom, Larry Griffin, Mary Hollick.

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www.youtube.com/c/BallaratCentralUnitingChurch

For more information, visit our website – ***bcuc.org.au*** and
Church Facebook Page – ***Ballarat Central Uniting Church Facebook.***