

Worship Sunday 4th October led by Caroline and Lydia Barratt

Welcome to A celebration of wonder, where all ages together can give thanks for the wonders of God's creation.

Opening prayers

A Who teaches bees to fly?

B Who tells seeds to grow into a tree?

C Who whispers to the clouds where to rain?

D Who sets the beat in each heart?

A Who polishes the stars that they shine?

B Who puts the sunsets into autumn leaves?

C Who teaches children to grow?

D Who puts questions into human minds?

There is a pattern in the world: a muddle of holy fingerprints smeared over that which God holds close; an untidy jumble of thumb mark smudges from the divine hand, revealing what God holds as absolutely wonderful. Let us open our eyes in the world and recognise and hold onto those things we discover that God is holding.

A The one who gives life to wonder.

B The one who gives space to awe.

C The one who stirs in us a sense of excitement of adventure.

D The one who sows glory into the everyday

Beyond us and within us, there is an urge to celebrate life. We want to use words not yet invented; we want to shout about the wonders of this world; we want to proclaim hallelujah from deep within us. Yet often we find only silence to respond to the great mysteries and wonders of life. Hear our silences and our hallelujahs as we find you in every wonder, and find every wonder held by you. Father God, thank you for our beautiful world. Help us to look after the world well and to act in ways which bless all our friends and neighbours – both near and far. Amen.

Climate change explained.

The poet John Donne, who lived over 400 years ago, begins one of his poems with these words: 'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is

a piece of the continent, a part of the main.’ Perhaps these words can help us understand the importance of community and living well together. Imagine two islands... Charlie lives on a big island where he enjoys all the abundant resources around him like trees, water, and coal. He has used coal, oil and gas as fuel and energy to run his heater, watch TV, use his computer, his car, and other appliances that make his life so comfortable. He has also cut down trees in order to use the wood for paper. Some distance away from Charlie, Carla lives on a smaller island. She has fewer resources than Charlie and works hard to grow crops of food. As Charlie burns coal for fuel, uses gas and oil for energy, cuts down trees for paper, and eats a diet rich in red meat, all of this has an effect on the Earth’s atmosphere around him. Carbon dioxide and other gases are released into the air. But these gases hold in heat, causing the climate to get warmer, not just where Charlie lives but across the whole world. This acts like a greenhouse without fans. The world is heating up, and this means that glaciers and ice sheets in the Arctic and Antarctic start melting quickly. Water from the melting ice falls into the oceans and causes the sea level to rise. For Charlie, the sea rising is an inconvenience and he has to build some flood defences from his abundant resources – but for Carla the consequences are different. The sea rises near Carla’s island, so much so that she is losing her land on which she grows crops, and therefore she gets poorer and poorer. Eventually the sea level rises so much that her home, her land, her fields are completely flooded. She can’t grow any crops and her house is washed away. She has no money to build flood defences to protect her home and her livelihood. Everything that happens here affects things in other places. The opening line of John Donne’s poem reminds us that none of us live in isolation [no person is an island]. We share our everyday lives with other people, and our actions and choices often have an impact on them and the world around us. We are part of a community: at school, in our home, in our town, in our country, in our world. Our two islands are only imaginary places, but the tale tells us something about our world today. I wonder if you recognise the problem that our story describes.

In the Bible there are many stories about prophets – people who rose up and spoke out about things that were wrong, and who spoke about how people could show God’s love in action. The prophets spoke about God’s love for all humankind and for the world. Christians today still read the words of the prophets to help them understand how they should live their

lives, and the importance of speaking up for justice and good actions. The prophet Micah said:

Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Prayers for Others

We pray for people living with the effects of climate change. For the sake of those facing rising temperatures, drought and water shortages, For all those facing unpredictable weather, disrupted seasons and failed crops, For the poor, the vulnerable, and the refugee For the sake of us all, Creator God, in your mercy, recreate our hearts that we might partner with you to renew this damaged world

Father, we pray for you to raise up a generation of leaders with the courage to take responsibility for our changing climate, and the part we have played in it. We intercede for our politicians and leaders. Move them to act in the best interests of all nations today, and all peoples in the future, in order to avoid catastrophic changes. God, we ask for a generation of leaders who will be willing to act justly so that those who have contributed so little to the problems we are facing, and have fewer resources with which to face it, are not left to shoulder our burden. We ask You to fill the hearts of all who lead rich nations. Give them your mercy and compassion on poor countries already suffering the effects of a changing climate. Just as they have been moved to cancel debt in the past, encourage them also to release funds so that poor communities can adapt to the effects of climate change, and develop cleanly. And inspire us, Mighty God, to amend our lives for the sake of your Earth, your climate, your people. Lord, in your mercy, lead our leaders and us to truth and transformation. Amen

What can we do?

Climate change is such a huge problem, that it can leave us feeling a bit helpless. But the changes that you make, really do have an impact. Things like turning the lights off when you leave a room, recycling, watching your carbon footprint, by cycling or walking instead of driving, all these things have a positive effect on the planet. As part of my role as Green Champion for the Northampton Methodist District, I have created a set of Eco club resources that educate Christians on the climate crisis and gives you ideas of things that you can do in your own lives to reduce your impact, you can find these on the Northampton District Facebook page or the website.

Closing prayer

Loving God

Bless those who open our eyes to the problems we have created: pollution, in our atmosphere, plastic scattered in our ocean and animals on the verge of extinction. Please Lord, give us the strength to change and to make good choices. Amen

