

Climate Sunday

## **Call to Worship**

### **STF 82 How Great thou art**

### **Prayers of Praise, thanksgiving, and confession**

#### **Puppet stories**

My name is Charlie the chimp and I live in a forest, well not a proper forest. I used to live in a real forest and spent my day playing and swinging in the tree tops, it was so much fun. I played with my cousins and other chimps. But then one day there was this strange noise it was really loud and quite scary. There was this big machine eating the trees! Suddenly I felt sleepy and I don't remember anything else. When I woke up I was in a sort of box and there was more noise but I couldn't see where I was. Eventually the box was opened, and I found myself in this new forest, much smaller than my old one which is why I don't think it is a proper forest. I have new friends to play with but I miss the old forest so much.

My name is Dug the Pug I love to go for really long walks with my human Fred, all the way to the park where I'd meet my mates Rex and Rover. Boy did we have some fun chasing anything the humans would throw for us. It seemed to keep them entertained too. I say did as those long walks don't happen so often now. Quite often its raining really heavily, Fred said it was raining cats and dogs, but I think he must have been seeing things. Anyway, when it rains we don't go for a walk I get put out in the garden, not sure why. And then other times when it isn't raining, he puts me in the car and drives me to the park, he says the pavements are too hot! The park isn't so much fun when its hot, Fred complains about the heat and he hardly has any hair! I do miss those long walks with Fred.

#### **Reading Psalm 104 vv 10-25**

He makes springs pour water into the ravines;  
it flows between the mountains.

They give water to all the beasts of the field;  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

The birds of the sky nest by the waters;  
they sing among the branches.

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;  
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

He makes grass grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to cultivate -  
bringing forth food from the earth:  
wine that gladdens human hearts,  
oil to make their faces shine,

and bread that sustains their hearts.  
The trees of the Lord are well watered,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.  
There the birds make their nests;  
the stork has its home in the junipers.  
The high mountains belong to the wild goats;  
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.

He made the moon to mark the seasons,  
and the sun knows when to go down.  
You bring darkness, it becomes night,  
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.  
The lions roar for their prey  
and seek their food from God.  
The sun rises, and they steal away;  
they return and lie down in their dens.  
Then people go out to their work,  
to their labour until evening.

How many are your works, Lord!  
In wisdom you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
teeming with creatures beyond number -  
living things both large and small.

### **STF 727 God in his love for us gave us this planet**

#### **Reading Mark 4 vv1-10 & 13-20**

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.

Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke

the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

## Reflection

Our readings from Psalm 104 and Mark 4 vary in many ways: their purpose, their setting, and when they were written, are all noticeably different. But they also have a lot in common.

Both passages demonstrate an intimate knowledge of creation.

The psalmist describes the beauty of creation, declaring, ‘O Lord, what a variety of things you have made!

In wisdom you have made them all.’ The author understood how creation works. They knew where the birds nest, and where the mountain goats live, the great skill of a lion as it hunts its prey, and the vast array of creatures living in the water.

They knew creation intimately: they must have spent time observing and learning how all things fit together, and they were inspired to worship as a result! In verse 31 of the psalm, just after the part we’ve heard this morning, it says God rejoices in his creation. The beauty and variety of all he’s made brings God joy!

Similarly, in our New Testament passage from Mark, Jesus demonstrates his own detailed understanding

of creation. He describes the issues that can hinder the growth of crops: he knows how drought can cause plants to wither, or how rocky ground prevents the development of roots. Even though he was a carpenter by trade, he knew the importance of nutritious soil for a bountiful harvest. Jesus has an intimate knowledge of the workings of creation. This shouldn’t be a surprise to us; the Bible tells us how all things were created for Jesus and by Jesus. In him, all things hold together: he’s Lord of all creation. It’s not a surprise that Jesus considers it important to observe the creation around us.

But Jesus shows us something else too. He teaches us that not only does he have an intimate relationship with creation, but that also we can learn about our heavenly Father through it. Whether it’s through the relentlessness of weeds, the character of birds or the power of a mustard seed, time and again, Jesus points to the Father and the way he works through creation.

We live in a busy world and often fail to take time to observe creation, but as the writer of Proverbs advises, ‘Go to the ant... consider its ways.’ From the psalms to the gospels, we see the ways creation can reveal more of God’s character and inspire us to worship, and we see how God delights and finds joy in all he’s made!

But when we look at the world today, we can see the many ways that we’ve damaged this beautiful gift God has given us. The ways that we live and work and consume have pushed creation to breaking point.

Whether it’s plastic pollution littering seas and the poorest communities, or species going extinct at record rates, or the climate crisis making droughts, floods and storms more frequent and severe, we’ve misused and damaged this beautiful gift of God. We’re feeling some of the effects in the UK, but the impacts are hitting people in poverty the hardest. It’s hard to grasp what that really means: it’s big and abstract.

Around the world, millions of people are being pushed back into poverty because of climate change. In 2016, world hunger started to increase for the first time in a decade and has continued to increase every year since. And that’s because of climate change and conflict, with climate change exacerbating the risk of conflict. The science is clear: the climate crisis is being caused by us, especially us in developed nations, and the impacts are accelerating. We are running out of time to prevent the worst effects. We have to act fast and change the way we live, and governments have to be much more ambitious. But right now, we have a unique window of opportunity. How the government chooses to rebuild after the pandemic will shape our economy, climate and society in the decades to come. This is a crucial moment.

In the Bible Jesus tells us the most important commandments are to love God, and to love our neighbours. Tackling the climate crisis is vital to both of these – honouring God by protecting his creation and loving our global neighbours who are hit first and worst by what is now a climate emergency.

So how do we respond? Well, looking back the Methodist church has a history of standing up to injustice. Way back in the late 1700's John Wesley who is regarded as the founder of Methodism, stood against slavery when it was deeply unfashionable to do so. Wesley also authorized women to preach in the early days of Methodism. And we as the modern Methodist Church have ordaining women as Ministers since 1974. When things are not fair we call them out and look to put them right.

The Climate emergency is one such things. Now is the time to act to make a difference before it is too late. Now you may think your small efforts at home can't make much difference. But when we add all our small differences together, it counts. When we work together as a church community to support one another to make changes it makes a bigger difference. After the next hymn there will be an opportunity to share your ideas for living in a more environmentally friendly way at home which could well help us be more so at church too. We are registered with the Eco church scheme but the pandemic kinda slowed things down. Maryan is the lead on Eco Church and she is currently in Spain. But when she gets back it would be good for a couple of folk, even the youngsters to work with her to help us progress as an Eco Church and possibly a bronze award.

So let us together stand up against the injustice of Climate change and poverty, lets do it!

**STF 693 Beauty for Brokenness – a hymn of intercession.**

**Eco Church and Sharing of Ideas**

**STF 729 Touch the earth lightly**

**Closing prayer**

**Grace**