



The SEASON OF CREATION at St Anne's

This little booklet is offered to help you journey through the Season of Creation. Each week includes scripture, prayer, an invitation to wonder and a way to act. Together, they invite us to notice God in creation and respond to the climate crisis with hope and courage. We hope it is a helpful way for you to engage in the Season of Creation during the week. We begin with a poem chosen by our fab Eco Champion - Mary Rose Roe

God's Grandeur - Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs,
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Week 1. 6th-12th September - Creation

W God is the creator of everything, and God has made us creative too, inviting us to be co-creators who shape and tend what we have been given. We may not think of ourselves as creative, but creativity is not only about making art: whenever we grow a garden, prepare food, solve a problem or bring things together, we share in the work of creation.

Read: Genesis 2.7-8, adapted

Then the Lord God formed the human from the soil of the earth, and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there God placed the human whom God had formed.

Pray

Creator God, you formed us from the earth and filled us with your breath. Awaken our imagination, and help us use your gifts with love, creating and tending alongside you for the flourishing of all creation. Amen.

Wonder

Spend a few moments with a cup of tea. Consider everything God's creation has brought together within it: rain and sunlight, soil and growing leaves, water, energy and the work of many human hands. Perhaps it also contains milk from an animal, sugar from a plant, and a cup made from clay taken from the earth.

A cup of tea is more than the sum of these things. It refreshes a body, offers warmth and comfort, creates a pause and can become an act of welcome, friendship or love. What does this ordinary creation reveal about our dependence upon God, the earth and one another? Where else can you see God's gifts and your own creativity meeting in everyday life?

Act

Use something God has given you to create or tend something this week. You might prepare and share food, care for a plant, mend rather than

replace something, make a place more welcoming, solve a problem or create something beautiful. As you do it, consider how your choices affect the rest of creation, and let your creativity bring life, beauty or kindness to the world God has made.

Week 2. 13th-19th September - Community

W Community is the word for everything that makes us part of a place. It is the people among whom we live, the streets and buildings we share, and the life all around us that flourishes—or struggles. In Jesus, God did not love the world from a safe distance, but instead became part of a particular community, landscape and moment in history. We can look to Jesus to show us what it means to be part of a community; he shows us what it means to inhabit a place attentively: to know its people, share its life, notice those who are overlooked, and seek its flourishing.

Read: John 1.14, (The Message)

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.

Pray

God of every time and place,
in Jesus you made your home among us.
We thank you for those who shaped this community before us,
for all who share its life today, and for those who will come after us.
Help us to know our neighbours, notice those who are overlooked,
and serve this place with love. Amen.

Wonder

Explore your community through time. You might walk through Greenbank Cemetery, reading some of the names and noticing the lives remembered there. Or visit the Eastville Workhouse Memorial on Rosemary Green—the small green space a few minutes' walk north of St Anne's, beside the East Park estate. The tall slate standing stone

remembers more than 4,000 men, women and children who died in Eastville Workhouse and were buried there in unmarked graves. You can also do this wondering at home. Sit beside a window or spend some time in a familiar room. Who lived in this place before you? What changes might they have seen? Who may live here after you?

Spend some time remembering those who lived, worked and died in this community before us. Notice the life of the neighbourhood around you now, and think about those who will make their lives here in the future. In a changing climate, what might they inherit from us—and what kind of community and environment do we want to leave for them?

Act

Choose one small act of service to your local community this week with its future in mind. You might care for a shared space, learn more about a local issue, support a neighbour, join a community project or speak up about something affecting your area. Let it be an act of commitment to this particular place and to those who will inhabit it after us.

Week 3. 20th-26th September - Renewal

Water is one of God's most ordinary and extraordinary gifts: every living thing depends upon it, and it can transform what appears dry and lifeless. As climate change brings longer droughts, heavier rain and greater uncertainty, God calls us not simply to hope for renewal, but to take part in protecting and restoring the conditions in which life can flourish.

Read: Isaiah 35.1-2a, 6b-7a

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Pray

God of living water, you pour out life upon the earth
and bring renewal to dry and weary places.
Forgive us when we treat water as limitless
or use your gifts without care for others.
As the climate changes, renew our hearts as well as the earth.
Teach us to protect what gives life,
to restore what has been damaged,
and to work with you for the flourishing of creation. Amen.

Wonder

Choose one tiny part of creation to spend time with this week: perhaps a plant that seemed almost dead during the dry weather, or a small patch of garden, verge or green space that had turned brown. Return to the same spot each day and look closely. Notice what is changing: new growth, softened earth, returning insects or different colours. Notice, too, what became too dry and will not come back to life.
Let this small place become a window onto the wider world. What does its renewal—and its loss—tell you about the resilience and fragility of creation in a changing climate? Where can you glimpse God's renewing life, and where might God be calling us to act before more is lost?

Act

Isaiah's vision of water breaking out in the wilderness comes from a world that knew dry land intimately. Jerusalem lies about 25 miles from the River Jordan, beyond the arid hills of the Judean wilderness. Today, that same river and valley reveal how water can become a matter not only of life, but of environmental destruction, political power and justice.
Spend some time finding out what has happened to the River Jordan and how access to water differs between Israeli settlements and Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley. When you next shop for fruit and vegetables, check where they were grown. If you find produce from Israel—perhaps an avocado—investigate where and how it was grown and the water used to produce it. What might God be asking you to notice, question or change?

Week 4. 27th September - 3rd October - Justice

Wharvest celebrates the abundance of God's creation, but it also reveals God's justice: the earth's gifts are not intended for a privileged few, but for all. As climate change makes harvests less reliable and food more expensive, those with the least suffer first—even here, healthy and sustainably produced food is too often beyond the reach of people on low incomes. Caring for creation cannot be reduced to ethical shopping choices available mainly to those who can afford them: a sustainable food system must also be a just one.

Read: Leviticus 19.9–10, adapted

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap right to the edges of your field or gather everything that falls. You shall leave something for those who are poor and for the migrant: I am the Lord your God.

Gleaning was not optional kindness. God's law limited what landowners could claim for themselves and protected the right of people without land, wealth or security to share in the harvest. God's justice required more than generosity: it required the food system itself to work differently.

Pray

God of seedtime and harvest,
the earth and all its fruits belong to you.
Forgive us when we hoard your gifts,
waste what others need, or build systems in which good food
is available only to those who can afford it.
Be close to all whose food and livelihoods
are threatened by our changing climate.
Give us courage not only to share what we have,
but to challenge the injustice that leaves others hungry.
Teach us to seek a harvest in which everyone has enough
and all creation can flourish. Amen.

Wonder

Visit a supermarket or food shop and spend a few minutes looking without immediately buying. Notice the extraordinary abundance: food from different soils, climates and communities gathered under one roof. Look at where it has come from, how it is packaged and promoted, and the difference in price between the cheapest products and those labelled organic, local, sustainable or fairly traded. If you cannot visit a shop, use an online supermarket or look closely at a recent receipt and some of the food in your home.

Who has freedom to choose what they eat? Who grew, harvested and transported this food? Who carries the environmental cost of producing it? Where are the “edges of the field” in our modern food system—and who is permitted to glean there? What does God see when God looks at these shelves? What would this abundance look like if it were ordered according to God’s justice?

Act

Giving food to someone who needs it is good and necessary—but God’s justice demands more than charity. The gleaning laws changed the rules governing land, ownership and harvest so that people who were poor or displaced had a right to food.

Find a campaign seeking to change the rules of our food system: perhaps for universal free school meals, adequate benefits and wages, fair treatment of food producers, or government action to make healthy and sustainable food affordable to everyone. Write to your MP, sign and share a campaign, or join others taking public action. Begin with prayer, asking God to show you where change is needed and to give you courage to seek it.

Week 5. 4th - 11th October - Kinship

W God did not create a collection of separate and self-sufficient beings, but a community of life in which everything exists through relationship. St Francis spoke of Brother Sun, Sister Moon and Sister Water because he understood that humanity belongs within creation, not above or apart from it. We depend upon the rest of creation even as we are called to care for it: the garden tends the gardener.

Read: Colossians 1.16-17, 20, adapted

For in Christ all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. God's work of creation and salvation embraces "all things." Salvation is not an escape from the material world, but the reconciliation and healing of the whole creation in Christ. No person, community or creature exists for itself or can truthfully say, "I have no need of you."

Pray

Christ, in whom all things hold together, free us from the illusion that we can live for ourselves alone. Forgive us when we treat the earth, its creatures or other people only as resources for our own use. Teach us to recognise our kin, to honour those whom the world treats as least, and to receive with gratitude all that sustains our lives. Draw us into your work of reconciliation, until the whole creation shares in the freedom and flourishing of your kingdom. Amen.

Wonder

Choose one living being to spend time with: perhaps a tree, bird, insect, worm, houseplant, another person or even yourself. Look closely and begin tracing the relationships that make its life possible: sunlight, rain, air, soil, food, shelter, other species and the care and labour of other people. What does this life depend upon, and what might depend upon it? Keep following the connections until it becomes impossible to imagine it as an

isolated individual. Where can you glimpse God within this web of gift and dependence? How might recognising this creature—or yourself—as part of your kin change the way you live?

Act

Kinship cannot be practised alone. Find people who are already working for the flourishing of creation and ask how you can join them. You might complete the Creation Care survey and encourage someone else to take part, help St Anne's work towards its Eco Church Silver Award, or join a campaign led by people and communities most affected by environmental injustice.

Listen particularly to those whom wealth and power push aside. The Gospel unsettles those of us protected by comfort, while placing people who have been made poor at the centre of God's concern. Make a commitment that will continue beyond the Season of Creation, remembering that the kingdom of God is not something we can build alone: we receive it and seek it together, within the whole community of creation.

So what's next?

We hope you've found this a helpful way to engage in the Season of Creation. Although this particular way of engaging with creation and the climate crisis has come to an end; the need to read, pray, wonder and act has not. If you feel that God might be calling you to continue to engage with this subject the next couple of pages have some suggestions of how you might do that. The first one is a way for us to respond to God together in church. Please do read the suggestion and see if it might be something that would be a helpful way of drawing together the threads of all that God has given you in the Season of Creation.



As this Season of Creation ends, spend some time looking back over the five themes: Creation, Community, Renewal, Justice and Kinship.

What has God helped you to notice?

What might God now be stirring within you?

Let your response to God take whatever form feels right. It might be an outpouring of words, a prayer, a promise, a question, a poem or a picture. It may express gratitude, grief, anger, repentance, hope or something you do not yet understand. If you cannot find any words or images, sit prayerfully with a blank piece of paper and place that in an envelope.

Seal your response in an envelope and bring it to the 10am service on Sunday 11 October. You will be invited to place it in the basket during the offertory, as part of our shared offering to God and our response to the flourishing and suffering of creation.

All the envelopes will be prayed over. No envelope will be opened unless you explicitly ask us to do so.

- If you would like your response returned to you, write **PLEASE RETURN** and your name on the envelope.
- If you would like it to be read, write **PLEASE READ** on the envelope, adding your name if you would like a reply.
- All other envelopes will be prayed over, kept safely for a little while, and then burned unopened when Hazelnut next lights a fire in the church garden.

You are also encouraged to talk with others about anything this season has helped you notice, feel or question, and about how we might respond together. Please share with Mary-Rose or with Emma any thoughts or ideas you think we should consider.

Caring for creation as a Church Community. Here are a couple of ways that you can engage in how we are responding to the climate emergency as a church.

St Anne's has recently signed up to Creation Care, a simple online tool that helps individuals and households understand their environmental impact and discover practical ways to care for God's creation. We're encouraging members of the congregation to take part. As well as helping you reflect on your own footprint, the anonymous information gathered will help us identify where we can focus our efforts as we continue our Eco Church journey.



Taking part only takes a few minutes. To find out more and sign up, visit **creationcare.org.uk**. Together, we can take small steps that make a real difference.



Working towards Eco Church Silver

Eco Church is an A Rocha UK award scheme which helps churches make caring for

creation a practical part of their life and faith. It looks at five areas: worship and teaching, buildings and energy, land and nature, community and global engagement, and the lifestyles we encourage.

St Anne's has already achieved a Bronze Eco Church Award and we are now working towards Silver. This means building on what we already do and taking further practical steps across each of these areas. Everyone can play a part — through ideas, action, prayer and changes in our everyday lives. Please speak to Mary Rose if you would like to know more or get involved.

Services during the Season of Creation at St Anne's

Sunday 6th September

10am Eucharist - Christ, Creation and Creativity

We will worship right in the middle of the Art Trail, with the artists' stalls set up around us in church. We'll be celebrating God as Creator, the wonder of creation and the gift of human creativity

8pm Taize for Creation

A quiet, contemplative end to our opening weekend, with Taizé music, prayer, silence and space to rest in the presence of God and the wonder of creation.

Sunday 13th September

10am Eucharist

Carla's farewell service at which she will be preaching. The service will be followed by a Bring and Share lunch and the opportunity to thank her and pray for her as she heads off on her next adventure with God.



Sunday 20th September

10am Eucharist

Season of Creation Eucharist focussing on the theme of living water.

Sunday 27th September

10am Harvest Festival & Community Communion

We are inviting people to bring either home grown or shop bought harvest gifts this year. Fresh or tinned (but please make sure it's in date). Everything we collect will be donated to the Sisters of the Church Loaves and Fishes project.

Sunday 4 October

10am Eucharist

Bringing the Season of Creation to a close by celebrating St Francis