

**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service, 31 October 2021**

'Our precious and precarious world'



Gathering music

George Oldroyd, Le Prie-Dieu (A Meditation)
Hubert Parry, Elegy

Welcome

Gathering words

Come and celebrate our common home
We gather with the family of humanity.

We join with the whole of creation inspired by those who have gone before
and the prophet voices of today
**We dare to praise and pray for another possible world.
To the glory of God.**

Hymn For the beauty of the earth

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies :
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light :

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight :

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild :

For each perfect gift and sign
of your love so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven :

Opening prayer

Sustaining God
as, at great cost and with great urgency,
the leaders of our species
and those with concern for their common home
will gather in Glasgow,
we ask for your welcoming, affirming, active presence.

Give a dawning vision of your offer of healing
greater than the blocked horizon of what it might cost.

Argue and wrestle with the powers and principalities
of expediency and despair.

Open every human ear to the voices of the Earth, and of sisters, brothers, siblings
who already suffer sharply.

Save us from the despair of complacency
and the toxic temptation
when the visitors have departed
to embrace 'business as usual'
for that 'normal' has gone.

And our only future
will be in wakefulness
trust,
hope,

yes, joy
as we live out your love for the Earth we are part of
through your Word made Flesh
Jesus, our Friend. Amen.

'Joy in Enough' Confession

Our climate is changing, and we are changing it. We confess our carbon footprints, our failure to consider the consequences of our actions, our slowness to react. We are sorry for all the times we knew the right thing to do but chose convenience.

Your earth is exploited, and we are complicit in its exploitation. Species are lost, soil erodes, fish stocks decline, resources dwindle. We confess that many of us have taken too much, and not considered the needs of future generations.

The poor are left behind, even in this age of plenty. Human rights are pushed aside for profit. Wealth accumulates for the rich while the poorest still do not have what they need. We confess our apathy to injustice, and our haste in judging others.

This is not who you made us to be. We have not been good caretakers of your garden Earth. We have not loved our neighbours. Forgive us, creator God.

Forgive us. Renew us. Inspire us.

And in your strength, God, we declare:

Enough climate change: help us to take responsibility. Give us the wisdom to live appropriately, the urgency to act, and the courage to make changes. Give us the voice to call for change from our leaders, and the perseverance to keep asking.

Enough inequality: nobody should be left behind. You care for the poor, and we want to follow your example. Make your church a living example of equity and inclusion, and a powerful advocate for justice and sharing.

We thank you for your kindness and your mercy. We look to your promise of restoration, and we move forward. Give us the strength to speak and to act - not out of guilt or duty, for we are forgiven, and we are loved. Instead, we speak and act out of joy:

joy in the living hope of knowing you
joy in serving each other
joy in the beauty and diversity of creation, your gift to us
joy in your provision and your care – joy in enough

In your name we pray, Amen

Hymn The peace of the earth be with you

The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too ;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you ;
God's peace growing in you.

The Sharing of God's peace

Because we are God's people,
We will care for each other.

Because we are part of God's creation,
We will care for the earth.

Because we are loved by God
We will share God's love with everyone.

Scripture Reading Ruth 1:1-18

Once upon a time—it was back in the days when judges led Israel—there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah left home to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The man's name was Elimelech; his wife's name was Naomi; his sons were named Mahlon and Kilion—all Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They all went to the country of Moab and settled there.

Elimelech died and Naomi was left, she and her two sons. The sons took Moabite wives; the name of the first was Orpah, the second Ruth. They lived there in Moab for the next ten years. But then the two brothers, Mahlon and Kilion, died. Now the woman was left without either her young men or her husband.

One day she got herself together, she and her two daughters-in-law, to leave the country of Moab and set out for home; she had heard that GOD had been pleased to visit his people and give them food. And so she started out from the place she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law with her, on the road back to the land of Judah.

After a short while on the road, Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, "Go back. Go home and live with your mothers. And may GOD treat you as graciously as you treated your deceased husbands and me. May GOD give each of you a new home and a new husband!" She kissed them and they cried openly.

They said, "No, we're going on with you to your people."

But Naomi was firm: "Go back, my dear daughters. Why would you come with me? Do you suppose I still have sons in my womb who can become your future husbands? Go back, dear daughters—on your way, please! I'm too old to get a husband. Why, even if I said, 'There's still hope!' and this very night got a man and had sons, can you imagine being satisfied to wait until they were grown? Would you wait that long to get married again? No, dear daughters; this is a bitter pill for me to swallow—more bitter for me than for you. GOD has dealt me a hard blow." Again they cried openly. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye; but Ruth embraced her and held on.

Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is going back home to live with her own people and gods; go with her."

But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you; don't make me go home. Where you go, I go; and where you live, I'll live. Your people are my people, your God is my god;

where you die, I'll die, and that's where I'll be buried, so help me GOD—not even death itself is going to come between us!”

When Naomi saw that Ruth had her heart set on going with her, she gave in. And so the two of them travelled on together to Bethlehem.

Hymn A wake-up call (verses 1-3)

The world is made by your creative hand.
You made us stewards of sky, and sea, and land.
And yet with carelessness or cruel design
we've wrought so much destruction over time.

We've caused the trees to burn, the seas to rise,
dispersed our carbon clouds throughout the skies,
plundered the earth for all that we could gain
and treated warning voices with disdain.

We took the greens, and blues, and vibrant reds,
and made them turn to black and greys instead.
We took the forests and abundant seas,
and then misused their riches as we pleased.

Reflection

Hymn A wake-up call (verses 4-6)

Forgive us now for every sin and shame.
For we should know we are the ones to blame.
Forgive us for the damage we have caused
by taking little heed of nature's laws.

For earth was given in trust to everyone,
to pass to generations yet to come.
So call us once again to work with you,
to give this fragile earth the care it's due.

And sound for us again a wake-up call –
that each of us should learn to give our all
to care for this, your world, in all we do,
and ever give abundant thanks to you.

Dedication of Offerings

Prayers of the (Young) People

Hymn Touch the earth lightly

Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care :
gift of great wonder,

ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger,
who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster
clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive !

Let there be greening,
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden,
hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living,
God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ re-connect us,
using us gently and making us one.

Blessing

May God bless us with wonder at creation's glory.
May God bless us with fury at creation's spoiling.
May God bless us with courage at this critical hour.
and may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
rest upon us and on all creation,
this day and for the future to come.

And may all God's people sing:

AMEN!

Sending music

Dietrich Buxtehude, Prelude in D Minor, BuxWV 140

Worship Leaders: Rosie Magee and Jane Brown

Reader: Helen Hammond

Musician: Alasdair Grant

Images: Cover image by Oscar Marcham. Additional images in the service taken from the Together Trust/eco-congregations exhibition, 'Our precious and precarious world.'

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Opening prayer: adapted from A Prayer for COP26 by Rev David Coleman, Eco Congregations, Scotland.

Scripture Reading from the International Children's Bible.

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