



Methodist Women in Britain

Living in Tune with our Planet

An MWiB Eco-service

Call to Worship

Psalm 24: 1 "The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it."
Let us praise the Lord!

Hymn *Singing the Faith 27* Jesu, tawa pano

Welcome

Welcome to the MWiB Eco-service. The theme 'Living in tune with our planet' was inspired by the title of a book by Latin American theologian Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. We shall see pictures and hear stories of people at home and abroad who are responding to God's call to care for planet earth, helping to mitigate the effects that changing climate is having on some of the world's poorest communities.

Hymn *Singing the Faith 57* Let all the world in every corner sing

Prayers of adoration and thanksgiving

Lord of Life we come before you now to give you our thanks and praise.

Generous Creator, we look in amazement at the earth, our planet and home.
From the beauty of snow-capped mountains to the vastness of the oceans,
from the largest trees of the Amazon to the smallest flower,
the wide diversity of creatures from tiny insects to the largest mammals,
from plankton in the seas to the huge whale sharks;
all speak of your abundant love and creative power.

Generous Creator, Lord of Life: ***we praise and adore you***

Loving God, we gaze at the night sky with wonder in our eyes
as we consider the vastness of the universe and our place within it.
Yet through your son Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
we know that you care for each and every part of your creation,
and that in your great mercy and love offer to us the gift of Life everlasting.

Christ, Redeemer and Lord of Life: ***we praise and adore you***

Spirit of God, moving over the waters of creation and ever present with us now,
motivating, guiding and stirring us to action,
comforting, blessing and offering peace which is beyond our understanding.

Holy Spirit, Creator, Redeemer and Lord of Life: ***we praise and adore you. Amen***

Story 1 Reaching isolated communities along the Amazon

- Reading** Psalm 8
- Story 2** The Great Green Wall of Africa
- Hymn** *Singing the Faith* 727 God in his love for us lent us this planet

Prayer of Confession

Lord, we confess that across the nations we have not always been good stewards of your creation, enjoying life in the present time without considering the implications for future generations.

Lord, forgive us and help us to know and do your will

Lord, we look around the world and see the damage caused to rainforests, rivers and habitats, often simply for financial gain, leading to irreversible damage and possible extinction of rare species of plants and animals.

Lord, forgive us and help us to know and do your will

Lord, we are aware of the increasing effects of pollution and climate change upon the poorest of the world's communities: plastic waste which pollutes both land and sea, droughts leading to crop failures and loss of livelihood, and floods which devastate homes and families.

Lord, forgive us and help us to know and do your will

Lord, forgive us for taking your creation for granted, for failing to be good stewards and misusing your great gift of life on earth. Help us to consider those who are affected most by the choices we make. Help us to love and serve one another as you have loved us.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer *(Please pray in the version and language you prefer)*

- Story 3** Challenges in Ethiopia
- Hymn** *Singing the Faith* 611 Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you
- Story 4** Fiji Partnership 2019–2020
- Reading** Isaiah 40: 25–31
- Story 5** Going for Gold – Romsey Methodist Church
- Reading** Matthew 14: 22–33

Reflection

In Psalm 8 David expresses his praise, amazement and wonder not only at the created world but also that God in love for us has entrusted its care and stewardship to humankind.

Many years ago Louis Armstrong's song 'What a wonderful World' expressed the feeling of awe and wonder at the beauty of creation, human relationships, and the constantly expanding knowledge of the human race. More recently the amazing television series 'Planet Earth' and 'The Blue Planet' have opened our eyes as never before to the wonders and diversity of God's creation and life on earth. Sadly, however, we are failing in the stewardship entrusted to us by our Creator.

Since the industrial revolution the pollution of land and sea with waste material has been causing destruction of the wealth of bio-diversity on the planet. Increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere caused by human activity have risen to unprecedented levels which, coupled with massive deforestation reducing the earth's ability to absorb the gases, has caused the temperature

of land and sea to rise significantly. Melting icecaps, rising sea levels, increased storm systems, floods and droughts are just a few of the devastating effects of this global warming.

Unfortunately, as we have heard in our stories from across the world, those who contribute least to the pollution of our planet and its atmosphere are the ones least able to cope with the increasing consequences of that pollution.

However, all is not lost.

Isaiah's message to God's people is as true today as it was when it was written:

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no-one can fathom."

We may be failing in our stewardship of God's creation but we are never alone; in the words of John Wesley: *"The best of all is, God is with us"*.

God has blessed this generation with astounding scientific knowledge, technology and understanding. We understand the problems and risks to our planet and we are learning lessons and finding solutions.

We have the ability to change our attitudes and way of life, to decrease pollution and destruction.

We have the ability to lobby MPs, to protest and voice our concerns.

We have the ability to increase the ways in which we use our skills and resources to help our needy brothers and sisters at home and overseas.

We live in very challenging times. Powerful leaders of one or two nations have failed to agree that climate change and pollution are major issues for the world.

As Christians we are reminded in the passage from Matthew's Gospel that we need to have courage and, above all, faith, believing without doubt in our hearts and minds that seemingly impossible things can and will happen. We pray earnestly that UN leaders attending the COP 26 Conference on Climate Change in 2021 will pull together and agree to make the necessary changes in policy to protect God's planet, our home now and for future generations to come.

Through prayer and faithful service change can and must happen.

Hymn

Singing the Faith 729 Touch the Earth Lightly

Prayers of intercession

Gracious God you have loved us since the beginning of time, hear us now as we offer to you our prayers of concern and intercession.

We pray for the work of your Church across the world, especially those who serve as Mission Partners, supporting and caring within diverse communities.

Lord hear us: ***Lord graciously hear us***

We pray for all those who have been made vulnerable by the effects of climate change, those whose homes are threatened by flooding, those whose crops are reduced or fail because of drought. We pray for those who are forced to leave their homes and become 'climate refugees'. Help us to consider what we can do as individuals and as communities to make a difference.

Lord hear us: ***Lord graciously hear us***

We pray for future generations, that they may learn from our environmental irresponsibility and learn to be good stewards living simply and in harmony with your creation.

Lord hear us: ***Lord graciously hear us***

Lord, we pray for the leaders of all nations, for wisdom that they will acknowledge the issues facing the future of our environment and its effect on the poorest communities,

that through debate and policy they will bring an end to the exploitation of the earth's resources and be bold in setting out strategies to meet the United Nations goals that have been set.

Lord hear us: ***Lord graciously hear us***

Lord, we pray for ourselves, that our hearts and minds may be stirred, that we might live as responsible stewards protecting and respecting this gift of creation you have placed in our hands. Help us to play our part individually and as church communities to 'live in tune with our planet'.

Lord hear us: ***Lord graciously hear us***

Gracious Lord we offer these prayers and all the unspoken prayers in our hearts in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Hymn *Singing the Faith* 51 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father

Blessing

"The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make His face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace."

(Numbers 6: 24–26)

This service material was originally written by Sandra Goodwin for the 2021 Easter Offering Service, but was withdrawn when the 2020 service was postponed because of coronavirus. Instead, Sandra offered the service as an extra resource for MWiB, and we thank her for her generosity.

The theme of climate change ties in with this year's Methodist Prayer Handbook The Earth is the Lord's, and with the theme of the postponed World Federation Day – 'Just Living: Being Faithful with God's Resources' – now taking place on Saturday 23rd October 2021 at Chippenham Central Methodist Church (further details to be confirmed).

*Information about MWiB events, activities and campaigns can be found on our website: www.mwib.org.uk
To join our mailing list, email contact details to: admin@mwib.org.uk*