

**Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
Worship at home: Sunday 25 June 2023**

Service prepared by Mr Graham Hepburn

'Completeness'.

Welcome to this week's service at home. The theme today is 'Completeness.' Our call to worship today is Genesis 1, verse 31. 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.'

Listen, read, pray or sing along

We begin with the hymn 'Morning has broken,' (StF 136),

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NFVM45loJA&list=RD7NFVM45loJA&start_radio=1&rv=7NFVM45loJA&t=17

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for the springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dewfall, on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day

Eleanor Farjeon (1881 – 1965)

Our prayers today are taken from 'The Greatest Commandment,' the 2023 Methodist Prayer Handbook, Day 22. I have chosen Day 22, because

- 1) I am conducting this service at Chandler's Ford on 22 June
- 2) the relevance of the prayers to the theme of 'Completeness', as explained in the reflection.

Prayers of Praise

Wonderful and amazing God, your love for us is beyond our imagining. Made in your image to love you with every fibre of our being, we long for our

lives to honour you and all your creation in every hour of every day. Help us in living up to that hope and in reaching out with generosity and grace to those who have not yet responded to your love. **Amen**

*Rosemarie Clarke, Superintendent,
West Sussex (Coast and Downs) Circuit*

God of infinite love and grace,
You call us to love you with our whole being, heart, soul, mind and strength.
Inspired by our love for you,
Help us, by your Spirit, to love our neighbours far and near
All deeply precious to you.
Fill our hearts with your compassion;
Fill our souls with Christ's love;
Open our minds to consider the need of others before our own
And give us your strength to live out our calling.
So may your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven
To the glory of your name. **Amen**

*Andy Fyall, Deputy Chair,
Nottingham and Derby District*

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be Holy,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Bible Readings and Reflection

Simeí Moneteiro is a Brazilian poet and retired missionary who lives in Curitiba, Brazil. Beginning from her thoughts in some Bible reading notes I recently read, I want to share with you three pictures of completeness.

1. Completeness in creation

*'Hallelu Yah, Praise the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary;
Praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power;
Praise him for his surpassing greatness.
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
Praise him with the harp and lyre,
Praise him with timbrel and dancing,
Praise him with the strings and pipe,
Praise him with the clash of cymbals,
Praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Hallelu Yah, Praise the Lord.'* (Psalm 150)

In a recent 'Politics in the Pulpit' podcast, (for Sunday 4 June) Revd Dr Neil Thorogood, (a URC Minister in Bristol,) quoted the thought of Sir David Attenborough - that human beings have lost touch with how intimate our relationship is with the natural world. That we have just seen it as a bank of resources we can grab and take and use and trade.

Reading this psalm, we are invited to listen to a true symphony. Even if you are not a musician it is possible to understand the clear instructions! The theme is 'praise God's deeds and his surpassing greatness'.

This concert can happen in a sanctuary or in the cosmos. The entire universe can become a sacred place; all available instruments are in place; all kinds of sounds acceptable, including many different tonal colours, percussions and our voices.

The Guarani people, an indigenous community in the interior of South America, have a myth of creation which recalls an original song called 'the song of completeness.' It was sung in the beginning of creation and it continues resounding in the universe. According to the myth, if we forget the beautiful sounds and words we will lose our human identity. We are born in song, and we are called to sing that song to maintain our identity. God sings inside us with the breath of life, the Holy Spirit, which is able to make us sing a song of wholeness, a song of completeness!

Our opening hymn, Morning has broken, shares this vision of completeness too. Eleanor Farjoen gives us lovely images of the nature of creation, as she brings together the Bible story we have of the beginning of God's creation, the Garden of Eden, with the sunlight and the mornings which she, we, experienced tens of thousands of years later.

2. Completeness in Christ

'The Supremacy of the Son of God'

'The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' (Colossians 1 v 15-20)

This reading says more clearly than anywhere else in the Bible that things which have been disconnected and alienated from each other are recovered and reconciled in Christ. Jesus recreates the completeness of God's creation, which has been shattered by our human actions.

The prayers which follow this reflection, from Australia and New Zealand, and the thoughts of Simeu Moneteiro, remind us how First Nation people lived in harmony, completeness, with their land and with creation. They remind us how far we have moved away from that lifestyle, and how far we have to go back, to achieve full reconciliation with God's creation.

These words from Colossians tell us, there will always be room in God's fullness. This is the joy of reconciliation; God's pleasure to provide the reconciliation of Earth and heaven. Even when things on Earth do not seem reconciled, God's love

in Jesus Christ will continuously work in us and through us to build peace and reconciliation, to recreate the completeness which is God's plan for his creation.

To bring in the words of our first hymn again, Eleanor Farjoen writes of someone walking in the garden, 'Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, Sprung in completeness where his feet pass'. Did she mean God, walking in the garden of Eden in the evening? Did she mean the risen Christ, walking in the garden when Mary Magdalene mistook him for the gardener? Both interpretations open up avenues of thought for us. But in either event, it was still completeness, where his feet pass.

3. Completeness in the Holy Trinity.

We are now in the post-Pentecost season of the Church Year. We have celebrated the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God, at Christmas and Easter. We celebrate the love of God the Father and creator throughout the year in hymns and prayers. We have recently remembered again how God achieved post-resurrection completeness by sending the Holy Spirit, a strong force, a quiet correcting voice, a transforming power (and much more besides those points) to the early church disciples and through them, to us today. There is a completeness in God the Father, God in Jesus Christ the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. A completeness which enables us to see our proper place in God's creation.

Simeí Monteiro writes, 'Like my indigenous ancestors I am longing for a real fullness of life in the midst of my human life; a time when human beings and creation are held together in the breath of God. I believe God is calling us to be agents of reconciliation for such a time as this. A time when Jesus Christ will be all in all!'

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our next hymn is 'Born in Song,' (StF 21)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VLLghU0_5I

Born in song!

God's people have always been singing.

Born in song!

Hearts and voices raised.

So today we worship together;

God alone is worthy to be praised.

Praise to God!

For he is the one who has made us.

Praise to God!

We his image bear.

Heaven and earth are full of his glory;

let creation praise him everywhere.

Christ is King!

He left all the glory of heaven.

Christ is King!

Born to share in our pain;

crucified, for sinners atoning,

risen, exalted, soon to come again.

Sing the song!

God's Spirit is poured out among us.

Sing the song!

He has made us anew.

Every member part of the Body;

given his power, his will to seek and do.

Tell the world!

All power to Jesus is given.

Tell the world!

He is with us always.

Spread the word, that all may receive him;

every tongue confess and sing his praise.

Then the end!

Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory.

Then the end

of all earthly days.

Yet above the song will continue;

all his people still shall sing his praise.

Brian Hoare (born 1935)

Intercessory prayer

God, ancient of days, we give thanks for the First Nations people who have cared for the land and waters of their countries for millennia, and for the diversity of nations, cultures, languages and customs that enrich the life of our land now called Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia. God,

ancient of days, we pray for the work of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in growing First Nations ministry, theology and the whole Uniting Church to deepen our walking together with First Nations people and a commitment to supporting Voice, Treaty, Truth for First Nations people in Australia. We pray for the will to address climate change urgently, learning from the wisdom of First Nations people about caring for our country. **Amen**

(Sharon Hollis, President, Uniting Church in Australia, Assembly)

We pray as we move into a new era of being the Church in the world, that our distinctiveness as Methodists may be experienced and recognised as a generous, positive, *ka ora* theology of life - reflecting Jesus' own mission statement: 'I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly.' (John 10:10). **Amen**

(Andrew Doubleday, President, Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa)

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

We dedicate our weekly offering, praying for those who will prayerfully decide how it is spent within our Circuit and beyond.

Gracious God, accept these gifts, our money, and all our offerings, and with them our lives, to be used in mission and service through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our final hymn is 'In the wonder of creation', (StF 110)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwA_q6Bjs

In the wonder of creation,
when all nature shares one song,
showing God's imagination,
all may see his love goes on.
Through the Holy Story spoken,
of God's people called as one,
gathered, exiled, saved and broken,
this we learn: His love goes on.

In the Christ who died to save us;
in God's risen, living Son;
through the Spirit, whom he gave us;
this we know: His love goes on.
In the telling of the Gospel, Matthew,
Mark and Luke and John
join the Church in testifying
through the years, his love goes on.

From the perfect days of gladness
when the sun has brightly shone,
to the slog of working madness,
all the while his love goes on.
Through the times of harsh temptation,
seeking strength but finding none,
in our human desperation,
mercy comes: his love goes on.

In the joys of celebration,
of new birth or victory won,
in the deep peace of salvation,
tell the world his love goes on!
Through the dark days of depression,
when all sign of faith is gone,
hope may find no fresh expression,
but we trust his love goes on.

Through the hopes of our tomorrows,
and the things we've left undone -
future joys and present sorrows -
through all time, his love goes on.
In our Kingdom-shaped endeavour,
when God's glorious work is done,
to the promise of forever,
God is here: his love goes on.

Andrew T Murphy (b1981)

Sending and blessing

Lord God, send us out to see your creation as it is,
and as it should be.
Lord God, send us out to see ourselves and all
people, as they are, and as we should be.
Lord God, send us out to share your vision of
completeness, for all of your creation. **Amen.**

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