

Season of Creation

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Dear People of God

It gives me great joy to commend "Season of Creation" to you. It provides valuable resources to help us grow in appreciation of the wonders of the world which we inhabit, and the mysteries of abundant life we share with all God's creations. This resource has been developed by an inter-diocesan task team, and approved by the Provincial Liturgical Committee. My prayer is that this resource may enhance our worship of God, deepen our comprehension of God as Creator, and broaden our understanding of our calling to be faithful stewards of creation. In this way, I hope that we will be encouraged to work to overcome the threats to our planet that come through human selfishness, and be strengthened in our commitment to care for the whole intricate web of life of which we are a part, for, as the Psalmist says, 'The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it' (Ps 24:1).

**Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town.
June 2008**

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Climate change is real, and it is happening now.

In large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, this is a reality. The poor, the vulnerable and the hungry are exposed to the harsh edge of climate change every day of their lives. The melting of the snows on the peak of Kilimanjaro is a warning of the changes taking place in Africa. Across this beautiful but vulnerable continent, people are already feeling the change in the weather. But rain or drought, the result is the same: more hunger and more misery for millions of people living on the margins of global society.

In the past 10 years, 2.6 billion people have suffered from natural disasters. That is more than a third of the global population - most of them in the developing world. The human impact is obvious, but what is not so apparent is the extent to which climatic events can undo the developmental gains put in place over decades. Droughts and floods destroy lives, but they also destroy schools, economies and opportunity. It is time to stop this cycle of destruction."

(Archbishop Emeritus Tutu, April 2008)*

This resource material for a 'Season of Creation' has been developed by a team of passionate people, in order to help the Anglican Church rise to the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation. Our prayer is that as we explore our faith from a Creation perspective, we will be inspired to cherish and protect our world. Our thanks go to all those who have made the dream of this resource book a reality.

- The liturgical team: Rev. Keith Griffiths, Rev. Sue Britton, Rev. Joseph Humbles, Rev. Bruce Jenneker, Rev. Andrew Warmback and the members of the Provincial Liturgical Team.
- The team who put together the background papers: Bishop Geoff Davies, Kate Davies, John Green, Rachel Mash, Shaun Cozett.
- Those who have edited the material: Bishop Christopher Gregorowski, Lezaun Overmeyer.
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Use of the book:

The introduction to the book contains some general instructions on the use of the Eucharistic material, together with Eucharistic prayers and a lectionary for the season. Thereafter there are six sections covering the themes of Biodiversity, Land, Water, Climate Change, Need not Greed and Stewardship.

Each section contains the following:

- Eucharistic liturgy,
- Background information: to assist with the preparation of sermons and prayers
- A fact sheet: To be copied for distribution via the pew leaflet or small groups
- Small group study material.

Finally there is an appendix with further resource materials.

May our Creator God use this book to challenge and uplift us.

Rev Rachel Mash: Resource co-ordinator.

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USING THE LITURGICAL MATERIAL

APB	Liturgical Text	Commentary
GATHERING RITE		
#1	Greeting	
	Welcome	The Presiding Minister has opportunity to welcome the congregation and to give any notices regarding the service of the day.
	Approach Sentence	This is a sentence of scripture that helps to locate the theme of the service, usually taken from one of the lessons of the day. It is spoken by the Presiding Minister after the welcome and notices, and before #4 and #5 or the hymn that might replace those sections.
#9 to #14	Act of Penitence	The Act of Penitence could be positioned here as part of the Preparation, or it could follow the sermon as a response to the proclamation. The form of the Act of Penitence could follow the set pattern of the APB, or it could be presented in the form set out in the Additional material, combining the Kyrie's (#8) and the Absolution (14)
# 15	Collect	The Collects for this set of Liturgical material have been written to carry the theme of the specific service. It should be noted that this is the final act of Preparation for the Proclamation, and it should be preceded by a period of silence to allow members of the congregation to pray their own final prayers of preparation. This could be introduced by this or a similar invitation: "Assured of our forgiveness and wholeness in Christ, let us allow the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word as we celebrate this sacrament together."
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD		
		The Lectons for the Season provide lessons from the Old and New Testaments, a Psalm and a Gospel passage. For good cause, either the Old Testament or the New Testament might be omitted. There are a number of alternate lessons provided on some of the Sundays. Where appropriate, the Scriptural text could be adapted to allow for a dramatised reading by a number of readers.
#17	The First Reading	From the Old Testament
#18	Psalm	The psalm can be read or sung in a number of ways. There are settings of the psalms for chanting, and the set texts in the APB can be read in different ways. There are also a number of metrical settings of psalms that allow them to be replaced by hymns. The choice of presentation here rests with the local congregation.
#19	The Second Reading	From the New Testament
#20	Canticle	Canticles 4, 6, 11, would seem particularly appropriate for this Season. These could be said or sung. Again there are metrical settings of appropriate psalms that could also be sung here.
#21	The Gospel	From the Gospels
#23	The Creed	The Affirmation of Faith is an essential part of the Proclamation. The APB (#25) allows for the use of the Apostles' Creed instead of the Nicene Creed, and for this Season it might be appropriate to use the Baptismal Creed as an alternative, especially in Week 3 with the theme of Water and the focus of the service on the Font.
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD		
#27	Intercessions	Any of the four forms of The Prayers might be used. A number of Litanies are included in the Additional Material and there is much scope for similar litanies to be prepared by individual Intercessors. Where a Versicle and Response form is used, it is best to use this at the start of the Intercessions and for the congregation to respond immediately before the start of the Intercessions.

#44	Peace Sentence	Again the use of a sentence from one of the readings for the day helps to locate and focus the texts and the theme for the day.
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE		
#47	Presentation of Gifts	The Additional Material gives some alternates for this prayer and others can be written that are appropriate to the focus for the specific service.
#50	The taking of the elements	Two alternate prayers have been suggested in the Notes Concerning the Celebration at the Table. These are specifically written for this Season.
#51	The Great Thanksgiving	Any of the five Eucharistic Prayers set out in the APB can be used in these services. In addition, this material includes two Eucharistic Prayers written specifically for the Season.
#55	Proper Preface	Again, the Proper Preface draws strongly from the scripture readings to the specific Sunday.
#79	The Breaking of the Bread	An alternate dialogue for this part of the service has been included in the Notes Concerning the Celebration at the Table. This can be used effectively where the congregation have the full text, or can be adapted so that the congregation can use the set response in APB
#82	Invitation	
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE		
	Post Communion Sentence	This sentence precedes #86, and again is a sentence from one of the readings of the day, ensuring that the scriptures permeate all that is done in worship.
#87	Post Communion Prayer	These prayers of thanksgiving are written to further locate the theme of the day in the minds of the congregation.
#89	Blessing	Specific to this Season, they reflect the theme of the service, and encourage the appropriate response
#90	Dismissal	The deacon or other minister dismissing the congregation can use a sentence of scripture from one of the readings before the formal words of dismissal.

NOTES CONCERNING THE CELEBRATION AT THE TABLE

The Elements used in the Services

Give thought to the kind of bread used in the celebration. Consider the possibility of using a single loaf or number of loaves that could be visibly broken and distributed in the service. A family or group within the parish could undertake to provide the elements for the service each week, including baking the bread for that celebration. If smaller bread rolls are used, these could be baked on the premises by the Junior Church or Sunday School who could then process it in. Where possible, a local wine should be used, and again a family or group could provide this. The Offertory Procession would then include those providing the elements.

Taking of Bread and Wine - 1

The following prayers could be used in place of those set in the APB. The prayers could be spoken by those presenting the elements.

The taking of the bread

You are blessed indeed, Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread which earth has given and which we have received from the silent soil. It is the bread of the earth, this silent earth bathed in morning light, this beautiful planet in the teeming galaxies of space: warm and well-lit for us, generous, faithful and surprising, bringing forth life in all its forms.

Blessed be God for ever

The taking of the wine

You are blessed too, Loving God, in the wine we have, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. In our earth of many blessing the vine was planted, its roots reaching down to that richness from which all nourishment, strength and health are drawn.

Blessed be God for ever

Taking of Bread and Wine - 2

*Some stones and some water in a small container are brought up with the alms, the bread and the wine
The following are said before the usual offering prayers...*

The taking of the bread

Blessed are you, Creator Spirit, Source of all life. The heaven and earth are yours, yet you have given us the task of cooperating in the care of all creation. Through your goodness we have these stones to offer, that come from the land and sea you have given as home for all your creatures.

Blessed be God for ever.

The taking of the wine

Blessed are you, Creator Spirit, Source of all life. Through your goodness we have this water to offer, which refreshes, cleanses, enlivens and invigorates all your creatures.

Blessed be God for ever.

Special Eucharistic Prayers

Two Special prayers have been written and are included with this material. The Prayers are presented here in English only, but the Sanctus, Benedictus and Acclamations can be in any language and, where these are to be sung, in any musical setting familiar to the local congregation. As these prayers will be new to those using them, it is felt that they should be prayed in a meditative and reflective way.

Proper Prefaces

Specific Proper Prefaces are provided for each Sunday of the Season. These Prefaces can also be used with any of the Eucharistic Prayers set in the Anglican Prayer Book 1989.

Invitation to Communion

Come, to receive life from the Source of all being.
Come, to share creation with the Creator of all things living.
Come, to be renewed by the Spirit who makes all things new.
Come, feast with God in faith and thanksgiving.



FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to God

Let us praise and magnify
the God of all of Creation
**We sing to the Creator
with songs of creation.**

Let us give thanks to God, Creator, Lover,
and Sustainer of the universe,
**Let us rejoice
in our Maker, Sustainer and Reconciler.**

or

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Lift up your hearts
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
**It is right to give you thanks and
praise**

God of power and might, you spoke the Word and all that is in heaven and on the earth, all things, came to be. Your Spirit hovered over the primal elements, and you brought forth life in forms innumerable, including this fragile earth, and us amongst its inhabitants.

As our past is in you, so our hope for the future rests with you.
As we have turned from your way, so we turn again to the warmth of your love.
Through you all things are brought to new life.

Specific Proper Preface to be inserted here

So with all creation, we raise our voices to proclaim your great and glorious name:

**Ungcwele, ungcwele, ungcwele,
Nkosi Nkulunkulu wamabandla
kugcwele izulu nomhlaba udumo lwakho.
Hosana kweliphezulu.
Makabongwe ozayo egameni leNkosi.
Hosana kweliphezulu.**

*The Sanctus and Benedictus
can be said or sung in any of
the languages normally used
to suit the congregation.*

In the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks and broke it to speak to us of the breaking of his body upon the cross. He gave the bread to his friends and said: "Take and eat, for this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Jesus then took the wine, gave thanks and poured it out to speak to us of the pouring out of his blood. He gave the wine to his friends saying: "This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you and for all creation for the forgiveness of sins. Every time you drink of the wine, do this in remembrance of me."

So we proclaim the mystery of faith

**Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

Therefore, remembering the reconciliation of all creation achieved by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we offer you this bread and this wine. Let his perfect sacrifice reconcile us with you, with one another and with all of creation. In the power of your grace make us ministers of your reconciling love.

In Christ life once broken, spilt and buried, sprang to life again. Now, as we wait with confidence for his coming again, keep alive in us the new life and reconciliation he won for us. Make one what is broken, restore what is spilled and renew all creation in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Send upon this bread and wine, upon us and all creation, the life-giving Spirit who first moved upon the waters of the deep. Stir up in us what is creative, redeem what is destructive.

Unite us with you in the body of your Son by whom, with whom and in whom, in the unity of your Creative Spirit, with all that has been, is, and will be in your universe, we stand before you and worship you, God of all, in songs of everlasting praise,

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

SECOND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR SEASON OF CREATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

We thank and praise you almighty Father. In wisdom you guide the course of the world and cherish us with tender care.

We thank you that we can come together around this table in the name of Jesus your Son, the first born of creation. In him all things, visible and invisible, were created and hold together.

We thank you that you have sent your Holy Spirit to make us a new community of faith to serve you within your creation.

Specific Proper Preface to be inserted here

And so with the wonders of creation and the songs of praise of all your creatures both in heaven and on earth we join in one great act of awe and adoration:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full of your glory:
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Sanctus and Benedictus
can be said or sung in any of
the languages normally used
to suit the congregation.*

God of all creation, send your Spirit upon the goodness of the earth, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that in them we may recognize and receive the fullness of the Risen Christ: bread broken and wine poured, Body given and Blood shed.

On the night before he offered himself, Jesus recalled with his disciples the wonder of your creation and the covenant you made with your chosen people. Then he took bread, gave you thanks, blessed it and broke it, saying: 'Take this all of you and eat it. This is my Body, which will be given up for you.'

In the same way he took the cup and giving you thanks and praise, he gave the cup to his disciples and said: 'Take this all of you and drink from it, this is the cup of my Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.'

So we proclaim the mystery of faith

**Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again**

As we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate the goodness of the earth, our companionship in this world and the sharing of all skills and arts that enrich our lives. We share the cup of our humanity matured over the unnumbered centuries of the struggle that has gone into making this world; our living and dying, fears and hopes, futility and fidelity.

Together with those who have drawn sustenance from this soil, those with whom we share it, and those to whom we pass it on, we share this bread and raise this cup in fulfilment of the Lord's command: through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever.

Amen.

ADDITIONAL LITURGICAL MATERIAL FOR THE SEASON

Act of Penitence

Based on Psalm 51 and the Kyrie Eleison

Minister: Have mercy on me O God in your enduring goodness:
according to the fullness of your compassion blot out my offences.
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness:
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my rebellion:
and my sin is ever before me
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

Minister: Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your eyes:
so you will be just in your sentence and blameless in your judging.
Surely in wickedness I was brought to birth:
and in sin my mother conceived me.
You that desire truth in the inward parts:
O teach me wisdom in the secret places of the heart.
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy

Minister: Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean:
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me hear of joy and gladness:
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins:
and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart O God
and renew a right spirit within me.
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

*Minister: As we remember who we are, what we are, and what we have done,
as we turn away from the forgetfulness and self-centredness of the past,
may God the loving Creator welcome us, forgive us, set us free from the past
and strengthen us to live a new life, to cooperate in a new creation.*

The breaking of the bread

We take this bread to show our unity in creation through Christ
and to share in the creativity of God.

**Though we are many, we are one creation,
because we all share in the love of the Creator.**

Invitation to Communion

Creator God, meet us in this bread and wine
and be with us on the journey which is the future,
that we and all creation may make anew the story of Life,
and all that is may live to praise and magnify your name forever.
People of God, draw near in faith and travel far in grace.

Post communion Thanksgiving Prayer

- Could be used during any week

God of all, we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your people shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LECTIONARY FOR THE SEASON

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Theme for week	God's Gift of Creation Biodiversity	Land	Water	Climate Change	Need not Greed	Stewardship
Old Testament	Job 28: 1 - 11	Genesis 12: 1 – 10	Ezekiel 47: 1 – 12	Genesis 6:11-14; 7:11-8:4; 9:8-15	Exodus 16: 13 – 21	Genesis 1: 24 – 31
Psalm	Psalm 148	Psalm 126	Psalm 65	Psalm 24: 1 – 6	Psalm 104: 26 – 35	Psalm 8
New Testament	1 Tim 4: 1 – 5	Acts 4: 32 – 37	Revelation 22: 1 – 5	Romans 8: 18 – 27	2 Corinthians 9: 6–15	1 Peter 4: 7 – 11
Canticle or hymn	Canticle 6 APB p 346	Canticle 4	Settings of Ps 42 As the deer pants As pants the hart for cooling streams	Canticle 6		
Gospel	Matthew 6: 25 – 33	Mark 4: 26 – 34	John 4: 4 – 15	Mark 16: 1-8	Luke 12: 13 – 21	Luke 12: 42 – 46
Alternate Readings	Colossians 1: 15-20	Jeremiah 12: 1 – 17 2 Corinthians 8: 8-15 Psalm 24 Matthew 13: 18 - 39	Exodus 17: 1 – 7 The people murmur, "Give us water to drink!" John 9: 1 – 11 Washing brings sight to the man born blind	Isaiah 24: 4 – 13 Ezekiel 12: 17 – 28 Amos 4: 6 – 13 John 6: 60 – 71	Jeremiah 12: 1 – 17	Colossians 1: 15 – 20 Luke 8: 8 – 15
Focal point for the service	Church decorations with indigenous plants or harvest motifs	Church display of photographs showing the change in the local environment	The Font			

APB Ref	1. BIODIVERSITY: Liturgical Text		Comment
GATHERING RITE			
Approach Sentence	For everything created by God is good; for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.		1 Tim 4:4,5
Act of Penitence	<i>Could use any of the set forms, or the form of Confession based on Psalm 51 and including the Kyrie, as noted in the general material included with this publication. Might also consider positioning the Act of Penitence to follow the Sermon.</i>		Psalm 51
Collect	<p>Creator God out of the overflowing of your love you created all things with rich variety and great beauty, and entrusted us with responsibility for them; grant that we might so value all that you have given into our care that we may strive to sustain its blessings for all people for all time; through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen</p>		
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD			
First Lesson	Job 28: 1 - 11	Considers the range of resources provided in creation for the benefit of humankind. It reflects on the opportunity of work for humanity giving dignity and a feeling of usefulness in working with God's manifold blessings.	
Psalm	Psalm 148	The song of all created things offering praise to God.	
Second Lesson	1 Tim 4: 1 – 5	Contrasts the hypocrisy that will be seen in the human response to God's generous provision for our needs and the truth that everything created by God is good.	
Canticle	Canticle 6	A Song of Creation - APB p 346	
Gospel	Matthew 6:25 – 33	The affirmation of the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount that all Creation is good and to be valued as such. It concludes with the call to seek first God's kingdom and to accept that the rest of our needs will be provided.	
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD			
Intercession	<i>If the service is to be printed or projected, the Intercessions could be in the form of Biddings followed by a Litany as set out in the general material; or by using a form of versicle and response throughout the Intercessions such as: Minister: Creator God People: We bring our prayer to you</i>		
Peace Sentence	For everything created by God is good, provided it is received with thanksgiving.		1 Timothy 4:4
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE			
	<i>See separate notes regarding the Elements to be used and their presentation.</i>		
	Eucharistic Prayer for the Season of Creation		
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks for the glories of your creation given into our care, and for the opportunities we have to share that richness with all your people.		
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE			
Post Communion Sentence	Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.		Matt 6:33
Post Communion Prayer Can replace #87	<p>Creator God you set the tree of life at the heart of the earthly paradise, and the bread of life at the heart of your Church; grant that we who have been nourished at this table may ever strive to work for the good of all creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen</p>		
Blessing	<p>Go out into the world rejoicing, meet your Creator who awaits you there; delight in the richness and diversity of the world Christ died to save; live in the power of the Spirit that renews all things; and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always. Amen</p>		



Biodiversity

God's gift of creation

'We who recognise that all good things come from the Divine Creator have taken too long to acknowledge that the living-out of our beliefs concerns most deeply the care and nurture of all living things and the environment on which they depend.'

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

Biodiversity* refers to *'living things and the environment on which they depend'*. Many people wonder why biodiversity is important. Do we really need to care for a blue butterfly, or even a rhinoceros, when there are children dying of hunger and parents jobless? Surely our priority is to bring about development and the eradication of poverty in our country? We have so many problems arising from poverty – homelessness, ill-health, education, hunger, crime and violence, sexual and drug abuse. We have to overcome these before we can begin to care for "the environment".

The reality is that "environment" is that which surrounds us and provides our life-support system. The environment includes the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil in which we grow our crops.

The first story of creation (Genesis 1:1 to 2:3) is presented in a form that suggests an association

with an act of worship. The story reveals that on successive days God created yet more wonders and at the end of most days there is a refrain, that **'God saw that it was good'** or **'God saw that it was very good'**. It is possible to imagine a priest reading the story in worship and the congregation responding with the refrain.

The refrain in Genesis reminds us that the whole of creation has value in God's eyes. Whilst it is a matter of human self-interest to care for the planet, there is a danger that the planet is viewed solely from a human perspective. For example, humanity might stop clearing tropical forests because they might contain a plant with cancer-curing properties. This is a 'what is in it for us' or an anthropocentric attitude. The refrain reminds worshippers that God values the whole of the created order, from aardvark to zebra, from dung beetle to blue whale, the land, the sea and the air. Caring for the whole of creation demonstrates our

*Bio- life: diversity - variety

love of God; destroying creation is akin to spitting in God's face. Professor Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel peace winner, implores us to reread Genesis, 'the book for environmentalists'. 'If we had been created on Tuesday,' she said, 'There would have been nowhere for us to stand! God, with infinite wisdom, waited until the last day!'

The second story of creation (Genesis 2:4-25) gives another perspective on the relationship that humanity is called to have with nature. The story opens with a garden into which the man, Adam, having been formed from the dust and given breath, was placed. The man was then commanded to **till and care for the soil**. We are reminded that we are a part of nature but with a particular responsibility for it. We have the privilege of sharing God's garden, but are to be responsible in our use of it. In the garden story there is a sense of God calling us to tend and care, till and cultivate a living and loving relationship with the earth from which we came, and to which we will return. We are not separate from creation, but an inter-connected part of it.*

God created a world with an amazing number and variety of living organisms, millions of plants, animals and micro-organisms. This wonderful variety of life, known as biodiversity, is God's gift to us, both to enjoy and to care for. Life is a miracle. It is a miracle that on this one planet in the universe which is our only home, there is just the right mix of gases to allow the correct atmosphere in which life can flourish. But life itself is sustained through a web of interdependence. All living things interact with the rest to maintain a balance. Humans are reducing and destroying this intricate and delicate balance. As we bring about the loss of biodiversity, we threaten the web of life and consequently, the sustainability of future life on the planet.

Biodiversity loss is like dismantling a brick wall. You can remove some bricks, but if too many are removed, the wall collapses. It is said that if all the bees on earth were to die, we humans would survive for only three or four years. So it is with the web of life, everything is dependent on the other. Christians can talk in stronger terms. It is not just biodiversity loss we are bringing about – but the extinction of God's creation. This is a sin¹⁶.

*"The wealth of life forms and the dynamic interplay between them found in diverse ecosystems, encodes over 100 million years of the story of the earth. It is sheer collective vandalism not to preserve these life-systems for the future"*¹⁷

"The present generation of mankind is the first one that can irreversibly transform our planet for the worse. It is also the last generation with

God writes the Gospel, not in the bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)



* Scottish eco-congregations.

the capacity to introduce the changes required to avert environmental disaster. South Africa is a microcosm of the challenges facing the world. Will we choose a path which provides a rich and sustainable heritage for our children or will we descend into a wasteland of lost opportunity?"¹⁶

We are already more than halfway through that 'last generation': It is now critical that we take caring for creation seriously.

Biodiversity in Southern Africa

South Africa ranks as the third most biologically diverse country in the world. The SADC countries have a wealth of plant and animal life. SA's rich biodiversity is largely a result of its mix of tropical and temperate climates. 80% of our plants grow in only one area and nowhere else in the country or the world! These 'endemic' species as they are called are therefore very vulnerable. There are six plant kingdoms in the world. SA is the only country to have an entire plant kingdom (the Cape Floral Kingdom) within its borders. While SA occupies less than 2% of the world's land surface it has a rich and spectacular array of land and marine species and is home to 10% of the planet's plant and 6% of its reptile, bird and mammal species. Estimates of the total number of species in SA vary from 250,000 to 1,000,000!! God truly saw that it was good!!

God's creation is under threat

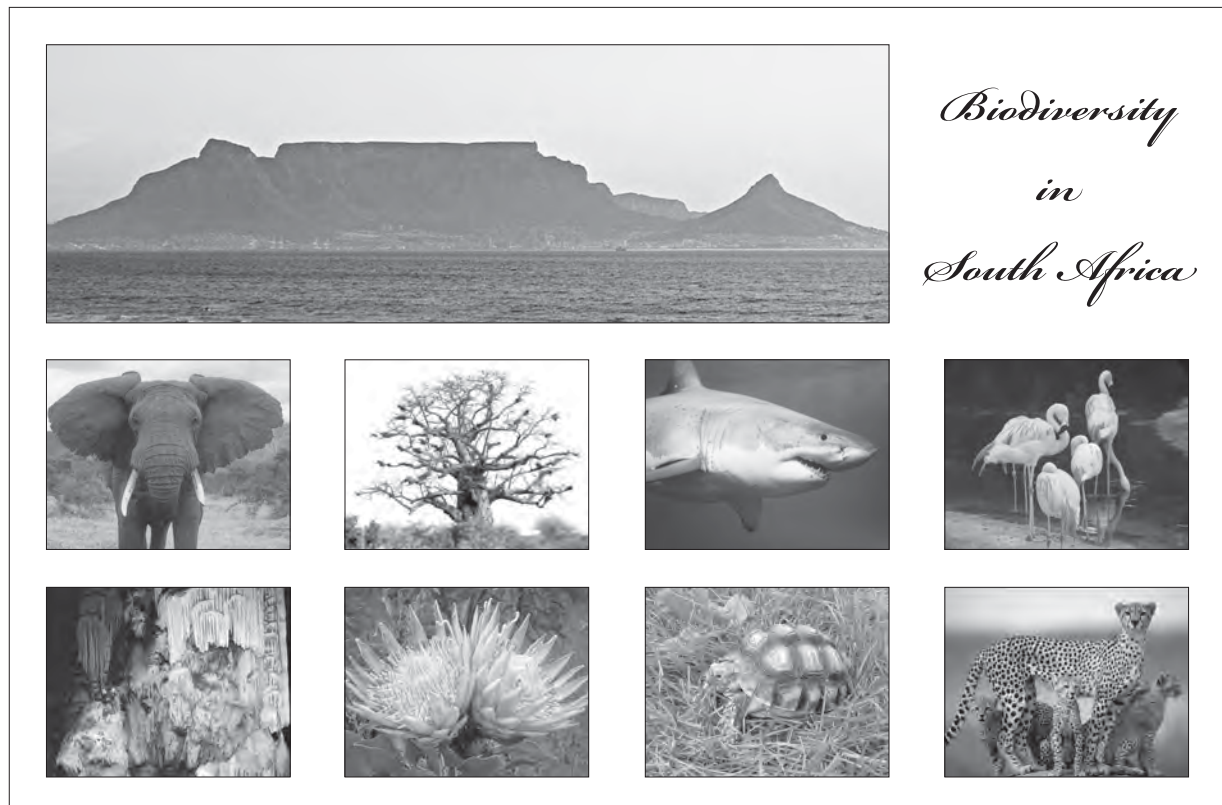
For hundreds of years human activities have changed ecosystems, but with the modern demands of agriculture and urban, recreational, min-

ing and industrial development, the pace and extent of change has got out of hand. Habitats, the living space which provide plants and animals with food, water and shelter are being destroyed.

Waste, litter, sewerage and industrial pollution choke our waterways, coastline, landscapes and atmosphere. Alien plant and animal species introduced from other parts of the world threaten and destroy local species because they have few natural enemies. Invasive alien plants (like wattle, port jackson, bug weed and water hyacinth) use up to 7% of our water resources, restrict and reduce the country's agricultural capacity; intensify floods and fires, cause erosion, dry up rivers, choke dams and estuaries and reduce water quality. Trade in wildlife (e.g. rhino, cycads and indigenous trees) and poaching and hunting (e.g. stock-farmers relentless hunting of the African wild dog, Africa's most threatened carnivore) also threaten our biodiversity.

Creation's Biodiversity is threatened - we need to care for it now!

Poverty and hunger are a stark reality for many southern Africans. Sustainable food production which depends on the wise management and availability of fertile land, water and a favourable climate is threatened by large scale industrial agriculture. It is critical that we develop a holistic and respectful relationship between ourselves and our natural life support systems, God's gift of creation.



*Biodiversity
in
South Africa*

Biodiversity Fact Sheet

Globally: There are 11046 species of plants and animals that we know of that are endangered. These include 1130 mammals and 1183 species of birds.

Southern Africa has some of the world's most diverse and critically threatened environments:

- The Cape Floral Kingdom, the Succulent Karoo and the Maputoland- Pondoland- Albany coastal thicket are recognised as 3 of the world's top 25 biodiversity hotspots.
- The Tugela Falls in Lesotho / KwaZulu-Natal is the 2nd highest waterfall in the world.
- The Cango Caves form the longest cave sequence in the world.
- The Okavango Swamps in Botswana is the world's largest inland delta.
- The Kalahari and Namib deserts spread out over 2,500,000 square kilometres, making them the greatest mantle of sand in the world.

South Africa covers less than 2% of the earth's land surface and is the home to almost 10% of the world's bird, fish and plant species and 6% of mammal and reptile species. SA has the **3rd highest level of biodiversity in the world** behind Brazil (8 times our size) and Indonesia. This is because of our tropical, temperate and mediterranean climates .

- There are more **mammals (almost 300)** than in Europe and Asia combined.
- We have over **1000 kinds of trees** while the whole of Europe has fewer than 70.
- S.A. **has 10%** of the world's flowering plants. (23,200!)
- With more than **800 recorded birds** we have 8% of the world's bird species
- **50,000 insect species** have been recorded in SA.
- We have **288 reptile species**: 4.6% of all reptiles on Earth
- **11,000 marine species are found in SA waters**: 25% of these are found nowhere else.

Under threat:

- **Water systems:** only 26% intact, 54% critically endangered, 50% of wetlands destroyed.

- **Marine and coastal systems:** fish stocks are being depleted and estuaries, the breeding ground of many fish, are being damaged, particularly around urban areas.
- **Land ecosystems:** 34% threatened (grasslands, fynbos, forests and succulent Karoo)
- **Endangered:** Plants 15% (3435), mammals 37%, birds 14%, reptiles 24%, and amphibians 18%.



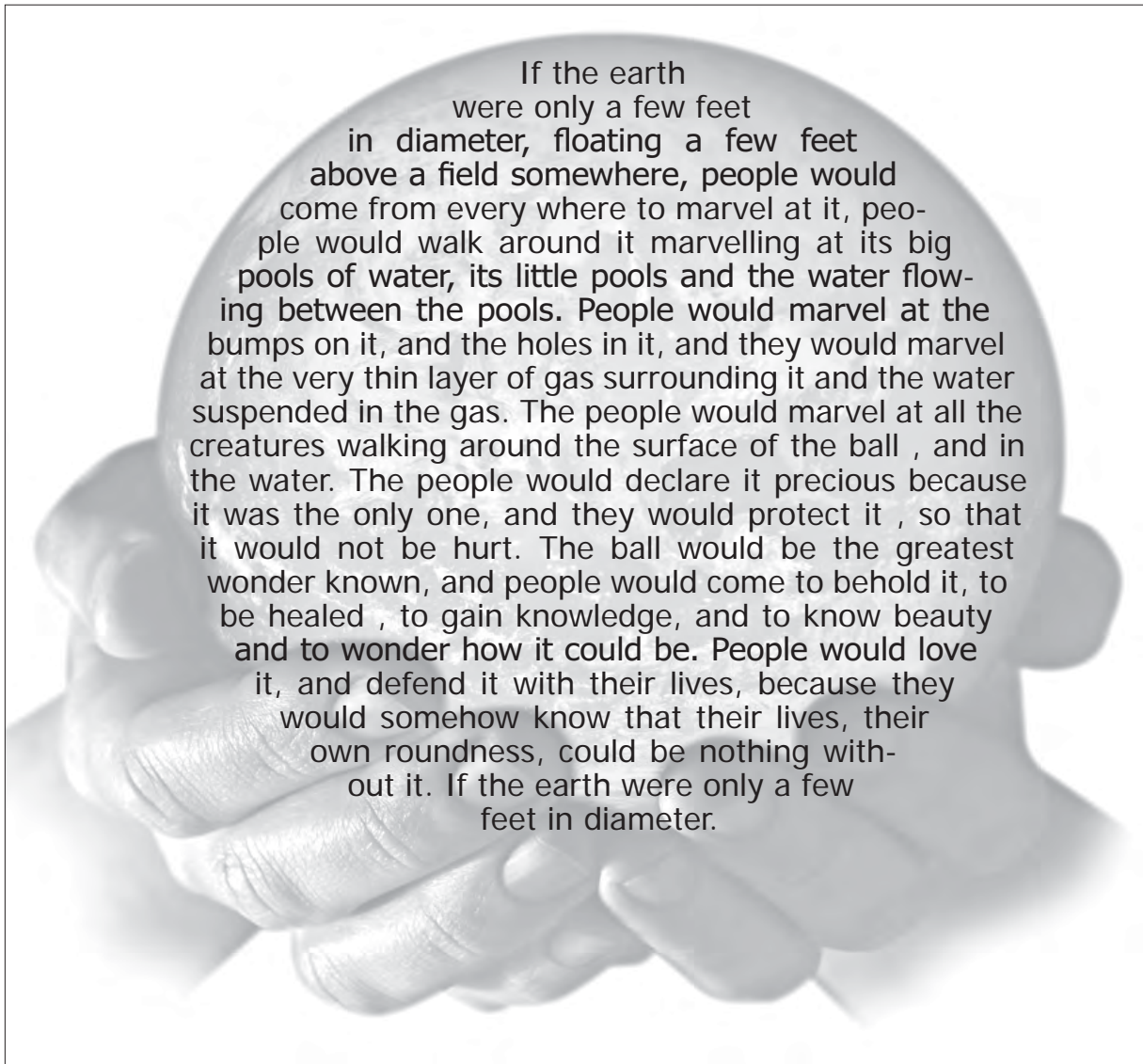
What you can do:

- **Don't start fires you can't stop.** Check the wind before you cook on outdoor fires in hot dry windy weather. Fires damage topsoil by removing plant cover.
- **Get involved in your community:** save wetlands, clean up rivers, promote water conservation, eliminate alien and water guzzling trees, grow water-wise indigenous plants and conserve forests
- **Report pollution or waste dumping** to the authorities
- **Use safe cleaning products** at home and church. Make sure the cleaning products minimize environmental pollution.
- **Grow your own vegetables:** consider permaculture
- **If you can choose, buy locally grown and organic vegetables:** they are fresher, healthier and reduce pollution from fertilizers and pesticides. They also 'travel' fewer miles and keep money circulating in the community
- **Improve your local environment:** Plant indigenous shrubs and trees in your street, church or communal land. Do this every time you have a celebration like a baptism or anniversary. Ask your municipality for seedlings and volunteers to plant them.
- **If new developments are planned** in your area, make sure they are not too destructive and get involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

SMALL GROUP MATERIAL

1. **Opening meditation:** Close your eyes and imagine you are holding a ball about half a metre in diameter. Now imagine you are holding the earth in your hands.

Listen to the following meditation entitled "Earth Ball" by Olaf Skarsholt*.



2. **Discussion starter questions.**
Read John 3:16. What difference does it make to the way you understand this verse if you realise that the Greek for 'world' is 'cosmos'?

3. **Prayer:**

God our creator,
you have made us one with this earth,
to tend it and to bring forth fruit:
may we so respect and cherish
all that has life from you,
that we may share in the labour of all creation
to give birth to your hidden glory,
through Jesus Christ, **Amen**

CREATIVE IDEAS

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Help the Sunday school children to make pictures of animals and plants which are under threat of extinction. For example: the black rhino, blue whale, mountain zebra, wild dog, cheetah and the king protea. Place them at the altar.

GARDEN MEDITATION: Light a candle. Read Psalm 96:11-12 "Let the heavens rejoice, let the sea roar and all that fills it, let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord." Each person goes outside and spends 10 minutes alone. Encourage them to notice everything around them, the leaves, the stones, the clouds, and to reflect on the truth that they are created by God, just as we are. Ask: what is our relationship with creation? At the end of the time, each participant is asked to bring back a small object that reflects their experience in the garden. Place these by the candle. (Make sure all these are represented: a leaf, a shell, some soil or a stone, a jar of air, fruit.)

The following prayers may be said as each object is placed by the candle:

Leaf:

Lord we praise you for the trees in the woods and forests. We recognise their beauty, their service to humankind and the positive influence they have on our health and the climate of each region. We light this candle as a prayer for the protection of the world's forests and all people, animals and insects.

Shell:

Lord we praise you for all the fish and plants that live in the seas, rivers and lakes. We light this candle as a prayer for protection of the earth's waters and all people, so dependent on water.

Soil / stone:

Lord we praise you for the soil in which all plants grow. We light this candle as a prayer for the soil of Africa which is often dried out by drought or erosion of top soil, and the peoples of Africa.

Jar of air:

Lord we praise you for the air we breathe. We light this candle as a prayer that the air will be kept clean for plants to absorb and for animals and people to breathe.

Fruit:

Lord we praise you for the fruits of the earth and all our food. We light this candle as a prayer that the world's food will be shared with all and for an end to hunger.¹²



ARBOR WEEK: Celebrate Arbor Week (first week in September) with a tree planting and blessing.

ST. FRANCIS DAY: Celebrate St. Francis day – October 4th with a service of blessing of pets and animals.

A PRAYER:¹⁷

This needs to be said very thoughtfully:

We praise you, Our Lord and God, for the variety of your creation
And for the sanctity you have bestowed on all life through creation.

May we know the sanctity of life and foster the conservation
And preservation of the variety of God-given life

May we never- knowingly or otherwise – be responsible
For the extinction of a plant or an animal

God, may new life fill us all, through the gift of your Holy Spirit
To know your wonder, your love and the abundant life you give.

“All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. Humankind did not weave the web of life; but is merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.”

Chief Seattle

“God writes the Gospel, not in the bible alone, but also on trees and in the flowers and clouds and stars.” **Martin Luther (1483-1546)**

*Because
the Divine could not
express itself in any single being,
the Divine created the great multiplicity
of beings so that the perfection lacking to one
would be supplied by the others. Thus the whole
universe together participates in and manifests
the divine more than any single being
whatever.*

St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)

Ref	2. LAND: THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S: Liturgical Text:	
GATHERING RITE		
Approach Sentence	It was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."	
Act of Penitence	Any of the set forms could be used, or the form of Confession based on Psalm 51 and including the Kyrie, as noted in the general material included with this publication. <i>Might also consider positioning the Act of Penitence to follow the Sermon.</i>	
Collect	Almighty God you created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and you promised to your people a land of their own: give us all a reverence for all that you have created that we may respect the needs and desires of all people to find their place within your world; through Jesus Christ our Lord who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, now and for ever. Amen	
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD		
First Lesson	Genesis 12: 1 – 10	God's call to Abraham to leave his settled place and journey to a land that is promised to him.
Psalm	Psalm 126	The harvest of joy, that derives from proper use of the land given by God.
Second Lesson	Acts 4: 32 – 37	The generosity of Barnabas in the sale of the land and the donation of the proceeds for the benefit of the community. This is in contrast to the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.
Canticle	Canticle 4	Bless the Lord – The Song of the Three
Gospel	Mark 4: 26 - 34	The use of parables from nature are a feature of the gospels. Jesus points out to the people images that are so much part of their everyday life, that they might learn from them. The examples today are all around us, but are we too dull to see them?
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD		
Intercession		
Peace Sentence	The Lord said to Abram, "I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."	
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE		
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks because you have given the land into our care that we might enjoy security and the fruits of your creation in due season; and knowing that we cannot live by bread alone, your Son has given us in this sacrament his very self, the true bread that comes down from heaven.	
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE		
Post Communion Sentence	Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.	
Post Communion Prayer <i>Can replace #87</i>	Creator God we thank you for the earth and the bounty that it yields, and for this meal and the nourishment it gives to our souls; grant that we might be mindful of those who have no secure home and no means of earning their daily bread that we might serve you as we care for them; through Jesus Christ our Lord who gave himself for us. Amen	
Blessing	May God the Father bless you, who first sowed in your hearts the seed of eternal life; May God the Son bless you, who nurtures you with the rain and sunshine of love; May God the Holy Spirit bless you, who brings us all to the fullness of life; and may the blessing of the Triune God be with you always that you might be a blessing to others. Amen	



Land

The Earth is the Lord's

"... Each one of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country. Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal. We are moved by a sense of joy and exhilaration when the grass turns green and the flowers bloom. That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland."
Nelson Mandela

"When the last tree has been felled, and when the last river has been seized, only then will we finally realize that we cannot eat money."

Chief Seattle

"I brought you into a fertile land to enjoy its fruits and every good thing in it. But when you entered my land you defiled it and made loathsome the home I gave you."

(Jer 2:7)

LAND – A gift for all or a commodity for a few?

Land is a theme which is interwoven in the history of God's people. There are several key themes which emerge: ¹⁵

Land as a promise and gift

The Old Testament is a tapestry of stories in which land features as *an alternating promise and gift*. The

first five books describe the covenant relationship that unites God, the people of Israel and the land. The Bible begins with the gift of land in the Garden of Eden and then other gifts and promises of habitable land, often to the landless: Goshen, 'the best land', to Joseph and his clan in Egypt; the land flowing with milk and honey to the Israelites; and a chance for the exiles in Babylon to return to their origins in Zion.¹⁴ But the gift of land does not come without conditions and responsibilities! The landless people of Israel receive a promise of security and belonging in a covenant with God, but they lose this conditional gift when they abuse the land, making it an object to be bought, sold and accumulated.

The land belongs to God, and the people are called to rule with justice and mercy. The legal codes and Wisdom literature appeal for the equitable distribution and redistribution of land and wealth. The Prophets warn against mismanagement,

injustice and oppression but the land is exploited, polluted and defiled and the covenant with Yahweh is broken. As in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, people are punished for sin and banished. Samaria fell to the Assyrians, Jerusalem to the Babylonians, and the people are cast out of their land.

The Earth is the Lord's

While humans were given the often misinterpreted command to "subdue and have dominion over" the earth (Genesis 1:28), we were also instructed to "till and keep" it. (Genesis 2:15). The Earth is the Lord's; it has been given as a conditional gift to human beings. Land is held in covenant with God and conditional on right relations between God and people. No one may be deprived of their possession and use of land – not even by a king (see the account of Naboth's vineyard 1 Kings 21). The Biblical story of the people of God makes plain that the promise of God was also a promise of land to the landless. Accordingly, the Bible expresses strong moral condemnation of greed and the abuses of the rich who force the poor and small farmers to give up their land:

"Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field"
(Isaiah 5:8)



"They covet fields and seize them; and houses and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance".
(Micah 2:2)

There is thus no unconditional right to private property. Rights must be exercised to the benefit of others, to satisfy human needs and not human greed, and in ways that are not destructive of the land.¹⁵

Jubilee

In the biblical notion of the Jubilee, we see God's lordship in social, economic and ecological issues.

It is specified that during a Jubilee year:

- Land and houses must be returned to their original owners.
- People can return freely to their families and properties.
- Land must be allowed to rest.²

Already implied in the idea that 'the earth is the Lord's', Jubilee pronounces judgement on the accumulation of property and land since these deny a large part of humanity their just portion of the fruits of the earth. The basic underlying intention is clear: God destined the earth and all it contains for all people so that all created things would be shared fairly by all. Justice should go hand in hand with charity.

It is also significant that the Jubilee provisions include that the land too has 'rights' and must be left fallow in the Jubilee year. Not only does this contain an environmental component, but "during the period of recovery of the fruitfulness of cultivated land, its fruit is available to the poor and to the wild animals and birds."

Jesus' announcement of the Good News of the Kingdom – Jubilee and Shalom

Jesus is concerned with issues of land and rural justice. A Christian theology of land starts with an awareness of Christ's reconciling power and must take into account the inter-relatedness of human beings and soil, water, plants and animals and rediscover a reverence for the earth as God's creation.¹⁵

In doing so, we do not only look back to creation or a past 'golden age'. Christians look forward in hope and faith to the coming reign of God where the dominant vision is that of Shalom– a comprehensive Shalom of well-being, peace, justice and right relations.

So, as Christians, we are required to re-examine the ways in which we relate to the land and each other. Without sustaining the life *of* earth, sustaining life *on* earth is made impossible. If reconciliation is about right relations, then in Christ we see people reconciled with people, with God and with creation.

Land Use and Productivity

Much of South Africa's wealth has been built on rich mineral resources buried under the ground. The country itself is a dry land although the eastern and southern regions receive more rainfall than the Karoo and desert regions in the west. While 80% of the land is agricultural, only 11% is arable and used for growing crops. The rest is used for grazing.

There are seven biblical principles regarding the question of land:

- Land is a gift from God, to be justly shared for the benefit of all humanity.
- Land is the 'place of life', the place where life is lived and celebrated, the place that gives life and identity. Land has a social function.
- 'Ownership' of land is never absolute; we are stewards of God's land.
- We must recognise the present day tendency to turn land into a commodity for profit, leading to the exclusion of the poor and the denial of their rights to land. Our interventions must work to ensure there is fairness.
- The Jubilee tradition affirms God's commitment to the poor in seeking to ensure just and equitable access to land and resources.
- Human work on the land should express the dignity of human labour and the joy of participation and cooperation because it is a privilege to be co-creators with God in the unfolding story of creation.
- It is against God's will to strip the earth of its fertility and to rob future generations of its benefits.¹⁵

There appear to be vast open tracts of countryside in SA but a variety of human activities have reduced agricultural potential and productivity and threatened many of the indigenous plants and animals which make up our world renowned and life sustaining biodiversity. Soil erosion, overgrazing and overstocking, burning, alien plant invasion, intensive high-tech agriculture and mining have caused serious land degradation. Landscapes have been transformed by urban growth, the increase of golf courses and other recreational and development projects and the expansion of sugar cane and commercial timber plantations. In reality, nearly 20% of our land has been seriously degraded or lost to agriculture in some way.

The intensification of commercial agriculture is having severe long-term impacts on the environment. Pollution from mines and industry and run off from the 2 million tons of chemical fertilizer and pesticides applied to our soils and crops each year poison our limited water resources and threaten biodiversity. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane from hi-tech commercial agriculture, mining and industry are major contributors to

the greenhouse gases that are destabilising our atmosphere and fuelling climate change.

Although fires are part of the natural seasonal cycle of many of Africa's ecosystems, burning too frequently in order to open up farmland and maintain grazing is gravely destructive. Apart from contributing to an increase in climate changing CO₂, fires often encourage the expansion of deserts and the spread of alien invasive species. Desertification threatens more than half of SA's land surface and the annual soil loss from erosion is over 400 million tons.

The earth sustains us, it is our only home. Although total food production in SA has increased over the last 40 years, the production per capita in southern Africa has dropped. While increasing productivity and developing food self-sufficiency is essential if we are to maintain the health and well-being of our growing human population, it is often at the expense of the environment and is not sustainable in the long term.

Access to Land and Land Rights

Dispossession and forced removal of people from their land during the apartheid era and in past centuries has left a legacy of inequality, and insecurity amongst a large proportion of SA's population. Thirteen million people (28% of the population) were banished to former homelands (13% of the land) where land is communal and rights are still unclear. Severe overcrowding has had long-term socio-economic and environmental consequences. Workers on privately owned farms have also faced insecurity and inadequate basic services – an estimated 1 million people have been evicted from farms since 1994. Migration to overcrowded townships and informal settlements has resulted in gross overcrowding in urban centres where communities are dislocated and people face insecurity, poverty, ill-health, crime and lack of basic services.

Access to land is one of the region's most socially and politically sensitive issues. Land also has a spiritual value which has no measure. Land invasions in Zimbabwe, the 2005 RSA Land Summit, removal of farm land for restitution purposes and the debate around foreign ownership have raised the profile of this issue. The process of land reform and climate change are two major emerging challenges which need urgent attention. Socio-economic, political and ecological considerations will have to be addressed if long-term security and sustainability around land issues is to be achieved.

"As the soil leaves the countryside, so do the people"

Land Fact Sheet

The population of South Africa has grown from 5.2 million in 1904 to 12 million in 1954 to 46.9 million in 2004. It is increasing by 1 million a year. Our land is under pressure...

Human activities impact seriously on the productivity and sustainability of our land. This impacts on the cost of food prices. The legacy of Apartheid left us with vast areas of degraded land. There is a growing awareness that the cultural and spiritual value of this beautiful land we call 'home' is being threatened. We need to take responsibility for what is happening now and respond by practicing more sustainable land use.

- **Mining:** Mining companies are often more concerned about profits for share-holders than bearing the long term costs of damage to the environment. Sterile mine dumps are difficult and expensive to rehabilitate. Acid and heavy metal contamination of soil and underground water is seriously impacting the land and the health of its inhabitants.

- **Agriculture:** Excessive use of artificial fertilizers disturbs the natural balance in the soil. Pesticides destroy pests that damage crops, but they also wipe out living organisms that enrich soil. Deep ploughing and overgrazing damages soil structure and promotes erosion. Poisonous salts build up in the soil from excessive irrigation.

- **Fire, erosion and destruction of indigenous habitats:** Every year, fires destroy vast areas of natural habitat. They remove and endanger indigenous vegetation, expose topsoil to erosion from wind and rain and open land up to invasion by alien plants. Natural habitats can only survive fires that occur every 2 to 4 years (fynbos every 8 to 12 years) otherwise they suffer long term damage. A combination of overgrazing, burning, deforestation and soil erosion turns once fertile land into desert.

- **Development:** With a growing human population and rising affluence and aspirations for a better standard of living, people place increasing demands on the land. Only 13.5% of land in SA is suitable for growing crops. Use of farmland for the expansion of housing, informal settlements, roads, dams and industrial or recreational (e.g. golf course) development, is a growing threat to food security and our natural habitats.

- **Waste:** With growing mountains of domestic and industrial waste, many municipal landfill sites are reaching their capacity. Scrap metal, plastic, builders' rubble and discarded packaging pollute urban and rural land. Soaps, detergents, chemicals and other waste from our homes and factories poison the soil. Safe, long term disposal of radio-active and other hazardous wastes are another challenge.

What we can do:

- To avoid waste and litter polluting the soil: recycle and re-use as much as possible.
- Prevent soil erosion: place rocks and poles across steep paths. Try to leave as much plant cover as possible when building. Design paths to public areas to discourage people from destroying plant cover.
- Look at your church grounds: are they glorifying to God?
- Use water-wise and drought resistant plants and grasses for gardens and lawns.
- Plant indigenous trees in church grounds and other open spaces for special celebrations such as baptisms. Celebrate Arbor week in early September.
- Remove thirsty aliens like willows, gums, pines and poplars
- Protect natural habitats.
- Use natural fertilizers, compost & mulch. Avoid using pesticides, herbicides & poisons.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials at church and at home.

"I am concerned about the wounds and bleeding sores on the naked body of the earth. Have we not seen the long-term effects of these bleeding sores? The famine? The poverty? We are responsible, directly or indirectly. We are strangling the earth." Wangari Maathai (founder of the Kenyan Green Belt movement and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner)

CREATIVE IDEAS

Sunday school: Make a poster of a tree with the following title. 'The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations'. On each leaf draw or write something that needs to be healed in your community or land.

Congregational procession: Process around the streets around your church building, giving thanks for what is there (sun, plants etc) and praying about the problems you see (e.g. graffiti, litter, shebeens). Take along black bags to collect any rubbish you see.

Symbol: During church services put two pot plants on the altar: one healthy and one dying.

SMALL GROUP MATERIALS

Step One: Introduction

The first five books of the Bible are known as the Pentateuch. They contain teachings which encourage people to live according to God's will. We are going to explore some of the Biblical attitudes to land in the Pentateuch and rediscover some wisdom that can be applied to land use today.

We view and use land in many different ways. In small groups discuss why we value the different types of land listed below and what responsibility we have for their care. Then each group can feed back to the main group.

1. A garden at home
2. A communal vegetable plot
3. A play park
4. A national park
5. A forest



Step Two: Discussion

a. Land as a divine gift.

Read Deuteronomy 26:1-12. For the people of God, the Promised Land was the fulfilment of the process of salvation that began with the exodus from Egypt. In the wilderness they were given guidance as to how they should treat the land that they had been promised. Stories from the Bible and from current affairs reveal that this gift of God has been the subject of dispute and violence.

Discuss:

- What do you think the people of God gained from their wilderness experience?
- How might we develop relationships that respect land, people and God?

b. Resting the land

Read Leviticus 25:1-5 & 8-15. In these verses from Leviticus, we understand that God ordains that the land is given a time of rest, a 'Sabbath', a common practice in many traditional societies.

- What are the advantages of allowing land under production to rest?
- In our growth-orientated world, does the concept of Sabbath, or having limits on production have any thing to contribute to the way in which we view land today?
- What can we learn about our attitude to our work?

c. Whose land?

Leviticus informs us that land belongs to God, and we as tenants may only lease it.

- If God owns the land, and we are borrowing it from him, what difference should that make to our society and the way we use land?

Step Three: A task

Deuteronomy 26:5-10 reads as a creed recited by the people of God in worship. Write a creed telling the story of (or focusing on) a piece of land, or your country, or the whole earth, expressing our Christian beliefs and responsibilities regarding land and our use of land.*

Additional Resources:

This is a useful website:

www.churchland.co.za/default.asp?id=773

Ref	3. WATER: THE SOURCE OF LIFE: Liturgical Text	
GATHERING RITE		
Focus	<i>The Font should be a clear focal point for this service. The Greeting and Confession can be led from there, and the congregation be encouraged to pass the font on their way to or from communion and to make the sign of the cross over themselves with the blessed water. The approach will depend on local images of water, floods, droughts, pollution, or oceans.</i>	
Approach Sentence	The river of God is full of water.	
Act of Penitence	<i>It would seem appropriate to move the Act of Penitence to after the Sermon, and to lead it from the Font as part of a renewal of Baptismal Vows.</i>	
Collect	Gracious Father your Son is the source of living water: grant that the gift of his Spirit might inspire us all to value this gift you have provided for our benefit, to learn to use it efficiently so that it might be shared by all, and to strive to ensure that it is available to all your people, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen	
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD		
First Lesson	Exodus 17: 1 – 7	The people in the wilderness are thirsty and they turn to God to meet their needs. Moses strikes the rock and water pours forth for them, and the place is named Massah and Meribah to remind them of the murmuring and the question, "Is the Lord among us or not?"
Psalm	Psalm 65: 4 – 13	Water is at the heart of the thanksgiving for Earth's provision
Second Lesson	Revelation 22: 1– 5	The heavenly vision of water that brings life and growth and sustains human life. The vital need for all humanity is water that will encourage, and sustain life in all its fullness. This can easily become polluted and bring disease and death.
Canticle	Settings of Psalm 42	Either the Prayer Book psalm, <i>or</i> AMNS 226 As pants the hart for cooling streams SoF 27 As the deer pants for the water
Gospel	John 4: 4 – 15	Jesus offers "living water" to the woman at the well. Just as we need water to sustain human life, so the refreshment of the Spirit is essential to our well-being in the living of our faith.
Creed	Baptismal Creed	As part of the response set out below
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD		
Ritual	<i>Consider the renewal of Baptismal vows as a response to the Word of God.</i>	
Intercession		
Peace Sentence	Our Saviour Jesus Christ said, "The water I will give them will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."	
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE		
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks because you have promised that those who drink of the water that you give them will never thirst again.	
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE		
Post Communion sentence	What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.	
Post Communion Prayer <i>Can replace #87</i>	O Creator God, pour out on us the water of life that we might quench our thirst and draw strength from you. Help us to stand alongside those who struggle daily for clean water, so that all might be refreshed and renewed by your abundant love, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen	
Blessing	God, who is the source of all goodness and growth, pour his blessing upon all created things, and upon you, God's children, that you may use them to God's glory and the welfare of all peoples; and may God the Father, who spoke the waters of the earth into being, and God the Son, who gives living water to all who would receive it, and God the Holy Spirit, who refreshes our souls continually, bless you that you might be a blessing to others, today and always. Amen	



Water

The source of life

At the beginning, one river flows out of Eden, to become the watershed that cradles civilization (Gen 2:10-14). At the very end, a cosmic echo declares the invitation of the One who is called the Alpha and Omega, "Let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift." (Rev22:17)

From start to finish in Bible history fresh water bubbles, gushes, gurgles, flows, floods, rainbows the sky, or suddenly dries up. Then it pours out of God's upper chambers all over again, to nurture, sustain, wash, cleanse, baptize, heal or temper-toss the heroes and heroines of God's story, towards his good ending. Clean drinking water is closely linked to the mystery of the Bible's theme of mission.**

"To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost, from the spring of the water of life."
(Rev 21:6)

"And God said: 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky'. So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying 'be

*fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth"'.
(Gen1:20-22)*

We have been given universal laws. The Roman Catholic Church talks of 'The Natural Law'. Even for those who don't accept the concept of God, there are laws of the universe upon which life is dependent. These laws include living in harmony, in balance and respecting the rhythms of life.

Life on this planet is a self sustaining process: life and the diversity thereof, maintains life. Everything is inter-related. If one component of life is destroyed, the other parts come under increasing pressure. The more we destroy biodiversity, the more we threaten a sustainable future.

An essential part of life is, of course, water. Were it not for water, there would be no life on this planet as we know it. We hear it in the creation stories:

* Goddard. A. Inaugural conference of A Rocha.

"Now the earth was formless and void, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

(Genesis 1:2)

"Streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."

(Genesis 2:6)

Earth is the only planet in our solar system where water is found in all three states: solid, liquid and gas. In particular it is the only planet where water is found in a liquid state, the only planet with drinkable water. Water is essential to all forms of life on earth. The religions of the world recognise the sacredness of water. They see water as a gift from God. They know it is essential to life. They know that we, and all plants and animals are dependent on water. They know therefore that we and all living beings have a right to water.

"The river flowed into the sea and made its waters wholesome. Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live."

(Ezekiel 47: 8,9)

Water has a significant spiritual meaning. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: *"The water I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

(John 4:14)

The World Health Organization estimates that 1.1 billion people, (approximately 20% of the global communities) live without adequate access to water and more than 5 million people die each year of inadequate water or water borne diseases. As Christians therefore we should view with the utmost concern the commodification of water (treating water as a mere commodity to be sold at a profit). Nowhere should people be denied the right to adequate water because they cannot pay for it. Nowhere should people profit from water through denying others access to it. And there is the often neglected aspect that, for the rest of living creation, survival is being threatened not only by the loss of habitat but by being denied access to life-giving water. All of life must be taken into consideration because biodiversity is essential for the ongoing sustainability of life.

You might ask, "But how do we place a value on this all-important source of life?" This is important because without placing a value on it we continue to abuse, misuse, pollute and waste this essential of life. It is therefore fundamentally important that people have access to adequate clean water to meet their basic needs, and that industry and agri-business pay for the privilege of using large quantities. An example can be given from South

Africa: Every household is entitled to a free basic water allowance while the timber industry must pay for water that plantations consume.

All people have the right to water. An essential for all governments should be to ensure adequate quantity and quality for its people. Government is understood as being the people's representative at all levels. Every effort should be made to ensure that communities should participate in the management of their own resources. More power should be in the hands of the people if we are to find peace on this finite planet. Justice, democracy and equitable access to natural resources are prerequisites for peace – without them, we will not find peace. We cannot hand over to commercial interests or multi-national corporations what should be under the control of local communities, particularly at this critical time when climate change is undermining livelihoods and food security amongst small scale farmers in many parts of the developing world. Currently, our life support systems – our water, our air and our soil – are being threatened because of the domination of commercial interests.

The situation in South Africa

South Africa is one of the 20 driest countries in the world. Our annual rainfall is less than 500mm. 72% of our water is used for agriculture, 11% for industry and 17% for domestic use.

- 12% of South Africans do not yet have access to drinking water.
- 45% do not yet have access to adequate sanitation

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations".

(Rev 22:1-2)

'The Nile is running dry. Nature's water cycle is not failing, it is our demands that are increasing'³



Water Fact Sheet

"The crisis is deepest where the waters are shallowest."

Water in liquid form, is the essence of all life. Our planet is the only one that has it. 97% of earth's water is sea water. Two thirds of the remaining fresh water is locked up in polar and glacial ice. South Africa is a water scarce country. We get only half the world's average annual rainfall, 60% of which falls in 20% of the country. Climate change is causing more intense weather events like hurricanes, tornados, hail and super storms, droughts and floods. The growing unpredictability of rainfall patterns makes water management a challenge. While suburban dwellers in SA have reliable supplies of good quality water, this is not the norm for people living in townships, informal settlements & rural areas. (12% of South Africans do not have reasonable access to safe drinking water and 45% do not have adequate sanitation). Future water scarcity threatens our long term political, social, economic & ecological security and sustainability.

It is predicted that at our present rate of consumption, SA will run out of water between 2020 and 2040. We can attribute the reduction of water quantity and quality to timber plantations and unsustainable commercial agriculture, industry & mining, alien invasive plants, land degradation, climate change, pollution (especially of ground water by the mining industry), population growth and rising affluence.

There is however a deep underlying source of concern: the prevailing economic system is reducing public and community control over water to a commercial good. The growing global trend to privatize water is threatening to deprive the poor of access to what should be a basic human right. People of faith should seek to ensure that all people have access to clean water and sanitation, and that all life has access to water.

"When the well is dry – we know the worth of water"
Benjamin Franklin

What you can do to save water (if you have access to municipal water)

Simple water conservation measures can reduce consumption by 30 to 40% without discomfort:

- Repair leaking taps. Report water leaks and vandalism to the municipality.
- Save water – bathing uses 150 litres, showering 30 and washing in a basin only 10!
- Reduce toilet flush volume: put a brick in the cistern or install a 'dual-flush' system.
- Boil only as much water as you need.
- Install tap aerators to reduce the water flow.
- Don't rinse anything under running water - turn tap off when brushing teeth & washing dishes.
- Collect cold water while waiting for the hot to arrive from the geyser.
- Make sure washing machines and dishwashers are full before running a load.
- Install rainwater tanks - collect water from roof run-off.
- Plant water wise plants & mulch (cover with dry plant material or wood bark) to reduce evaporation. Avoid watering in wind or during the heat of the day, water plants deeply but less often & use 'grey water' from bathing.
- Cover swimming pools to reduce evaporation.
- Brush outside areas clean with a broom & wash cars with a bucket rather than using a hose.
- Don't throw oil, paint, medicines, chemicals & poisons into sewers & storm-water systems.
- Get your church involved in a river clean up scheme and wetland conservation.
- Bore-holes often tap water from ancient aquifers which may take thousands of years to be replenished. Bore-hole water should not be 'wasted' on suburban gardens. If it is to be utilized, this water should be kept for circumstances of dire need.
- If you see water being wasted – do something!!

SMALL GROUP MATERIAL

Theme: The gift of water – the most basic necessity of life

Step One: Opening prayer:

God our creator,
you have made us one with this earth, to tend it
and to bring forth fruit:
May we so respect and cherish all that has life from
you,
that we may share in the labour of all creation
to give birth to your hidden glory, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

Amen

Step Two: Icebreaker:

Divide into small groups. Invite people around the circle to share what their favourite drink is (non alcoholic!!). Then invite people to tell each other why water is important to life.

Step Three:

Invite different people to read these two extracts about water, which are related to climate change and to sanitation:

1] Water is becoming scarcer. Much of the country is arid or semi-arid and is constantly subjected to droughts and floods, which will only worsen. South Africa's weather service says it is a known fact that higher temperatures will influence rainfall.



"It could increase in some parts of the country, and decrease in other parts," the service says. Our water supplies are largely stored in dams and inter-basin water transfer schemes. "South Africa's rainfall is already highly variable in geographical distribution and unpredictable, both within and between years," the environmental department says in its climate change report, adding that a reduction in

the amount or reliability of rainfall, or an increase in evaporation, will worsen the lack of surface and ground water resources. Desertification, which is already a problem in South Africa, will be further worsened by climate change, scientists warn.

(Mail & Guardian 2007)

2] Access to clean water is acknowledged as basic to healthy living conditions. Yet many of our rivers and streams in South Africa are polluted by industry and by the fact that, without piped water, people in both rural and urban slums are forced to use their only water supply for drinking, cooking and washing, while lack of sanitation facilities means that rivers and streams become polluted by human waste. All these conditions lead to the threat of diseases such as cholera, and provide the conditions under which HIV/AIDS leads to premature death.

In attempts to get clean, piped water to increasing numbers of people more quickly and efficiently than the government can do itself; attempts are being made to privatize delivery of water by handing this to overseas companies. This however, means charging people for water. Poor people cannot afford this, and where this practice is being forced on them a backlash is developing. ¹²

Step Four: Invite people to share in pairs and then with the whole group:

- What has been my personal experience of water?
- How is this problem affecting me and people I know?
- How is it affecting others in the wider community around us?
- Who are most affected?

Step Five: Invite someone to read John 4:5-26.

Discuss:

- What strikes you most about this passage?
- Why do you think it is so significant that Jesus chose to ask a Samaritan woman for water?
- What does this passage say to you about today's water crisis?
- What is the significance of the phrase "living water"?

Invite someone to read the following reflection:

Water: the source of life – of health and refreshment and cleansing and fruitfulness and also of power and beauty, strength and making new. Water: deep desire and simple necessity. There is no mythology

in the world that does not tell stories about water, that does not see water as being at the heart of the divine as well as at the core of human life. Look at us – we baptise, we wash, we sprinkle, we bless, we even mix a few drops of water in the wine at Communion. Water is a blessing we all need.

Step Six: Invite the group to discuss one thing they could do, as individuals or as a group to save water.

Closing prayer:

Creator God, you brought order out of chaos transforming and separating the raging ocean into earth, sky and seas, filling them with living creatures; then you created human beings and put us in charge of your creation. Show us how to use your creativity today when the delicate balance of nature is under threat.

Lord Jesus, Living Water
create in each one of us a pool of peace, a deep well of healing that can transform
bitterness to love
impatience to patience
irritation to tolerance
rejection to acceptance
and inadequacy to confidence in our own ability.

Holy Spirit, powerful wind moving across the waters
enable us to recognize in ourselves;
our preoccupation with our own needs and desires;
our apathy and ignorance in acknowledging and understanding the needs and desires of others.
Empower us to transform this recognition into motivation
to seek equality, justice and peace
for all people throughout our world. **Amen.** ¹³

CREATIVE IDEAS

- Move the baptismal font to the centre of the church if possible, or a large bowl of water. Invite people to bring a container of water from their different communities and pour them into the bowl. Then say a prayer to bless our communities and the water in them.
- Rather than using incense on this particular Sunday, sprinkle the altar with holy water.



Ref	4. CLIMATE CHANGE : Liturgical Text	
GATHERING RITE		
Focus	There should be no great floral displays in church at the services today. Some dried arrangements, or a piece of driftwood would have a far greater impact.	
Approach Sentence	The earth dries up and withers ... the earth lies polluted under its inhabitants.	
Act of Penitence	Wherever the Act of Penitence is placed in the service, introductory sentences from Isaiah 24 could be used, and followed by a set form of Confession, the adaptation from Psalm 51 or an adaptation of We have forgotten who we are.	
Collect	Almighty God you created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and you created humankind in your own image, and it was very good: grant us the courage to recognise our failure to maintain your creation and by your grace do all that we can to halt the degradation of our environment; through Jesus Christ our Lord who came that we might have life in all its fullness. Amen	
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD		
First Lesson	Genesis 6:11-14; 7:11-8:4; 9:8-15	Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, their unnamed wives and an ark-full of creatures are rescued by God from the flood which destroyed life on the known world. Even though humankind had been so evil, a remnant is saved. And God made a covenant with these survivors that never again would the world be destroyed.
Psalm	Psalm 24: 1-6	The earth is the Lord's, and seeks those with clean hands and pure hearts to share that creation.
Second Lesson	Romans 8: 18 – 27	Creation itself waits on the coming of the children of God, inspired by the Spirit, to respond to that which is God's intention for the whole of creation.
Canticle	Canticle 6	A Song of Creation - APB p 346
Gospel	Mark 16: 1 - 8	The resurrection is a message of hope to all who will engage with the living God. Like the women at the empty tomb, the prospect can fill us with terror and amazement, but calls us to action.
Creed	O God, the source of our being ...	from Janet Morley, All Desires Known
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD		
Intercession	A versicle and response that reflects penitence for misuse and a desire to change. Lord, forgive our failures in abusing your creation And grant us the grace to change our ways.	
Peace Sentence	And God said, "I am establishing my covenant with you, with your descendants, and with every living creature that is with you."	
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE		
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks that even in the midst of despair, you speak words of hope to your people and can lead us from bondage to our past into a future where your Son will reign supreme over all things.	
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE		
Post Comm sentence	The Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.	
Post Communion Prayer Can replace #87	God our Creator, you feed your people with the bread from heaven: let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage that we may come to that place where your people hunger and thirst no more and your creation is restored to its full glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen	
Blessing	Go forth confident in the hope in which you have been saved; praise God in all creation; follow Christ through whom all things are made; in the power of the Spirit become a beacon of hope to the world; and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always. Amen	



Climate Change

The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt, therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled and few people are left. The wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. (Isaiah 24:4-7)

In the Psalms we hear of all creation praising God: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it." (Psalm 96:11-12).

We also hear that God establishes the bounds of the heavens and earth and waters on the earth. "In his hands are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands formed." (Psalm 95:3-7). In Psalm 104:9 we read: "You set a boundary that the waters may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth." In Job we read: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Who determined its measurements – or who stretched the line upon it? (Job 38 and 39).

Climate change is now making us realize that we are in danger of destroying the very foundations of God's creation. We have to see that we must care

for God's creation and that God commanded us to do so. The problem has been that until recently many people refused to recognize or did not realise we were damaging the world's ecosystems through our modern industrial systems. Now it is clear we are in an extremely critical situation.

This planet is the only home we have. Life on this planet is a miracle in itself, possible because of a thin layer of atmosphere that surrounds the earth. It has just the right mixture of gases to maintain a life-supporting temperature. If there was more oxygen or carbon dioxide, life as we know it would not be possible.

By burning fossil fuels we are upsetting this balance. Coal and oil combustion releases carbon dioxide (CO₂) which was trapped millions of years ago. We are using the resources of the past and threatening future life. The carbon dioxide level is now higher than in the last 650,000 years.

We have to reduce our burning of CO₂ dramatically. This does not mean we have to abandon our way of life. It does mean that we have to generate energy in ways that do not damage the atmosphere. We shall have to live in harmony with the laws of the universe. This will require using renewable energy sources. The sun provides 6000 times more energy than we need at any given time. There are varieties of ways of harnessing the natural sources of generating energy – such as the sun (solar), wind, tides, waves and waterfalls (hydro).

Live simply – so that others may simply live

As Christians, we are not only bound to respond to God's mandate to us to care for God's creation, but we should also set an example to the world by showing that we are prepared to live more simply so that others – of this and future generations – may simply live. We can do this by seeking to live in harmony with God's creation and one another. The economic injustices of our present-day world are destroying any prospects of a sustainable world in the future. Just as there could be no peace in South Africa until the injustices of apartheid were removed, so there will be no peace in the world until there is a more equitable sharing and caring for our natural resources. Climate Justice is a deeply moral issue. The fossil fuel industry controls vast wealth and power, but is driving us to destruction. We simply have to stop burning fossil fuels at our present levels.

Consider the following:

The Atmosphere:

"Until now you probably weren't thinking about the fact that what you are sitting in is mostly nitrogen. In fact, 78% of each breath you draw is nitrogen, diluting the 21% oxygen content that keeps you conscious and functioning, along with a smattering of water vapour, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, helium, argon, neon and a few other gases. If there were a fraction more oxygen in the gaseous cocktail, you would not be sitting so contentedly. If there were about 4% more oxygen, or a little less than the current fraction of methane, this page would spontaneously burst into flames! The world would be a fiery and volatile place. There is symmetry in the air around you that is beautiful, poetic, invisible and entirely underrated. If we did not have the fraction of CO₂ (0.037% of the total) wrapped around our planet like a shawl, life as we know it would not have stood a chance in a frozen wasteland." ¹⁰

Justice:

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has warned that our continued failure to protect the earth and to resolve economic injustices within and between societies will lead not only to environmental collapse but also to social collapse.

One of the Millennium Development Goals was to make poverty history by 2015, but unless we stop climate change, this great aim will be just an empty dream. Without action now, we will assuredly make poverty permanent.

Climate Change: Action is a Moral Imperative

The Bible declares that God created all things and that God's creation (i.e. the natural environment and its ecosystems) is very good. Humans are not separate from but are part of this creation, although humans alone are made in the image of God (Gen 1:1-2:2). The creation teaches us about God (Rom 1:20; Job 39:1-42:6). While all things belong to God, God has entrusted the care of creation to humans (Ps 24:1; Gen 1:28- 29; 2:15).

The relationship between humans and the rest of creation is therefore one of interdependence and stewardship. We are creatures shaped by the same processes and embedded in the same systems as those that sustain all other life.

Yet as God's stewards we bear an ethical responsibility for the care of the Earth and the welfare of all living things.

We bless God for his greatness and goodness, his mercy and grace, and his love and justice evident in the creation. We enjoy the beauty and pleasures of God's creation. We are sustained and satisfied by its provisions. We are amazed by what science reveals of its structure and systems. We are awed by the miracle of life that continues to unfold day by day. We also acknowledge that humans have often denied our interdependence with the creation and failed in our stewardship of creation. One major result of this is the global environmental degradation and climate change we now face.

Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that humans have caused much of the global warming occurring today. Climate change is one of the most significant threats to our economic and social life.

It is imperative that governments and corporations, as well as individuals and local communities, respond to the current global environmental crisis. Failure by national governments to respond to climate change in decisive ways may result in unmanageable cost blow-outs and irreversible devastation to ecosystems and biodiversity.

Further, failure to address climate change may ultimately contribute to the suffering and death of millions of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, and to the forced migration of millions more to cooler and less physically threatening regions.

Climate Change FACT SHEET

Greenhouse gases, which occur naturally in the atmosphere, trap heat from the sun and keep the earth warm. The level of some of these gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), is rising dramatically because of human activities. CO₂ is released when we burn non-renewable fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. These are used mainly for electricity generation and transport. Clearing trees for agriculture or human development also contributes to an increase in CO₂ levels. Scientists now have proof that the temperature of the atmosphere increases with rising CO₂ levels. This has been dramatic since the industrial revolution when people began to burn large quantities of coal. No-one will escape the effects of climate change but the poor will suffer most. Africa will be one of the hardest hit continents.



Effects of climate change

Global warming is a slow but measurable increase in the earth's temperature resulting from rising levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases. As a result, oceans are warming, polar ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising and extreme weather events like droughts, floods, cold spells and heat waves are occurring more often. Unless we start meaningful reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2015, global warming could become unstoppable.

Health: Malaria, bilharzia, tick born and other parasitic diseases will spread further and faster in a hotter world. Certain cities currently out of the present malaria distribution range will become vulnerable to it.

Water: Safe and reliable sources of water for growing human populations are threatened by floods, droughts and expanding deserts. One of the causes of the current conflict in Darfur is access to water.

Poverty: Reduced and unpredictable rainfall threatens production of maize, our staple crop,

and other produce. Globally we are already facing soaring food prices as demand outstrips production.

Biodiversity: Many indigenous plants and animals are threatened with extinction as they fail to adapt fast enough to rapidly changing climates.

Human development: Rising sea levels threaten low lying cities, coastal developments and farmlands.

What you can do if you live or work in town, use electricity or own a car:

- **Lights:** Switch off lights when not in use and replace bulbs with energy saving CLF ones.
- **Cooking:** Use a 'hot box' for slow cooking and to keep food warm.
- **Hot water:** turn your geyser down to 50-60 degrees and install a geyser blanket.
- **Appliances:** buy energy saving products and appliances; such as fridges.
- **Shut down appliances.** Enable the power saving mode on your computer.
- **Ask your municipality to promote** saving water, electricity and paper, and get your community newspaper to run a story.
- **Switch off heaters and air conditioners,** only use when necessary.
- **Reduce your petrol consumption:** keep your car serviced and the tyres properly inflated, drive under the speed limit. Consider a low emission car when you next buy one.
- **Try teleconferencing,** avoid travelling for business by using video and telephone conferencing.
- **Install motion sensor lights for security,** don't leave lights on all night.
- **Travel by public transport** if at all possible.
- **Form a lift club to school, work or church.**
- **Avoid plane trips unless absolutely necessary.**
- **If you have to travel by plane,** plant a tree to replace carbon emissions, visit www.trees.co.za for more information.

CREATIVE IDEAS

Creative suggestion for a small group or after church: Organise a showing of **An Inconvenient Truth** with discussion afterwards.

SMALL GROUP MATERIALS

Bible Study: Exploring inconvenient truths

The Bible is full of “inconvenient truths” in which God challenges individuals or groups of people regarding their perceptions and understandings of themselves.

Read **Luke 18: 18-29**. (The Rich Young Ruler)
Discuss the challenges and inconveniences faced by the rich ruler when Jesus suggested that he follow him.

An Inconvenient Truth is the title of both a documentary film and book by Al Gore highlighting the awkward reality of global warming and climate change. Climate change is awkward and inconvenient because humanity now has to face up to the consequences of its particular concept of progress and attitude to nature. Discovering the life-threatening damage that we have caused to our atmosphere and planet means coming face to face with our own nature and greed and making inconvenient changes to the way we live.

Consider this 19th century statement by Chicago businessman WP Rend:



Smoke is the incense burning on the altars of industry. It is beautiful to me. It shows that men are changing the forces of nature into articles of comfort for humanity.

Discuss: What attitude does this statement reveal? Do we still hold the same attitude to the use of resources from creation as Rend did?

Bible Study:

Read the following two passages from the book of Job and Matthew's gospel and talk through the questions offered.

Do you find food for lions to eat, and satisfy hungry young lions when they hide in their caves, or lie in wait in their dens?

Who is it that feeds the ravens when they wander about hungry, when their young cry to me for food?

Do you know when mountain goats are born?

Have you watched wild deer give birth?

Do you know how long they carry their young?

Do you know the time for their birth?

Do you know when they will crouch down and bring their young into the world?

In the wilds their young grow strong; they go away and don't come back.

Who gave the wild donkeys their freedom? Who turned them loose and let them roam?

I gave them the desert to be their home, and let them live on the salt plains.

They keep far away from the noisy cities, and no one can tame them and make them work.

The mountains are the pastures where they feed, where they search for anything green to eat.

(Job 38:39-39:8)



Jesus said, "And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass – grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have!"

(Matthew 6:28-30)

Questions for discussion:

- What do these verses tell us of God's attitude toward creation?
- How does the thought that God cares for creation as much as for human beings strike you? What is its spiritual significance?
- What might it say to our generation in terms of environmental attitude and responsibility?

If you have time:

Read **Romans 8: 18-23:**

I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with

the glory that is going to be revealed to us. All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children. For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free.

- What significance does salvation have for creation? How would you see this in practical terms? In the light of this passage how do you see the work of Christ?
- Discuss the "groaning" of creation. What is the relationship between earth stress and the human condition? How is this visible in your home communities and environments?

Ref	5. NEED NOT GREED: Liturgical Text		Comment
GATHERING RITE			
Focus	<i>A special collection of foodstuffs to be distributed to others in need might be a good focus for the Offertory at this service.</i>		
Approach Sentence	The people gathered the manna, and when they measured it, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as they needed.		Exodus 16:18
Act of Penitence	<i>Should preferably follow the sermon, and enable people to respond to their own shortcomings with regard to hoarding and not sharing.</i>		
Collect	Eternal God you crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen		Collect for a Harvest Festival APB p 329
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD			
First Lesson	Exodus 16: 13 – 21	God provides the people with quails in the evening and manna in the morning, and when they gathered enough for each household each day, and on the sixth day, sufficient for the Sabbath as well. Yet some of them gathered more, and kept it over for the next day, and it was spoiled.	
Psalm	Psalm 104: 26 – 35	Recognises that God has provided food for all creatures,	
Second Lesson	2 Corinthians 9: 6 – 15	A familiar passage emphasising the need to share out of the abundance God has given to us so that those that are suffering may be supported. It uses the natural image of sowing and reaping to stress this truth.	
Canticle	Canticle 4	The Song of Ezekiel – APB p 344	
Gospel	Luke 12: 13 – 21	The strong message of accountability for that which God has provided. The response of the man is concerned with what "I" have grown, what "I" have done, and how "I" can benefit from that. And God said, "You fool."	
Creed			
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD			
Intercession	Lord, help us to see the needs of others And to trust that you will provide for our needs.		
Peace Sentence	The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.		
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE			
Elements	<i>See separate notes regarding the Elements to be used and their presentation.</i>		
Great Thanksgiving	Eucharistic Prayer for the Season of Creation		
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks for the glories of your creation given into our care, and for the opportunities we have to share that richness with all your people.		
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE			
Post Comm sentence	Jesus said to the rich man, "Be on your guard against all kinds of greed."		Luke 12:15
Post Communion Prayer <i>Can replace #87</i>	Loving Father, your Son gave us this meal as an act of remembrance of him and then gave his very self for our salvation. We thank you for the nourishment we receive at your table and pray that the strength we receive here, might give us the courage to share our very selves with those in need; through the Lord who shared himself for our sake. Amen		
Blessing	God the Creator is the source of all you need: Christ the Saviour is fount of all your blessings; The Holy Spirit is the power that enlivens your witness; Go forth with courage to serve the world in God's name; and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always. Amen		



eed not Greed

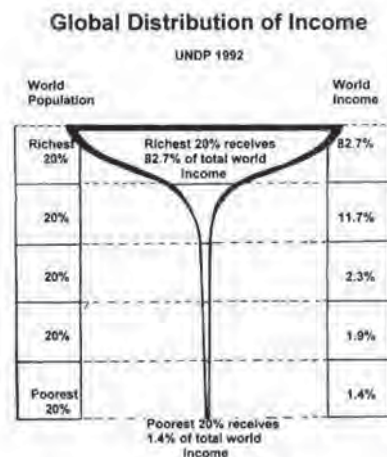
'Ah you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land'. (Isaiah 5:8)

Aristotle wrote that there were two basic economic systems we could follow – the need system or the greed system. It would be disastrous if we followed the greed system. This would produce inequalities that would result in unrest and conflict. Guess which system we have followed!

The Old Testament is filled with God’s call for righteousness, justice and equity, particularly economic justice.

The Old Testament prophets strongly condemned those who exploited their workers, failing to pay them their wages, or cheated people with the weights when buying their bread, or moved fence posts to cheat their neighbour. The Old Testament prophets’ call was for fairness, so that all might live together in harmony and peace. We believe that God provides for our need but not our greed. When God led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt and fed them with bread from heaven, he commanded the Israelites to “gather as much of it as each of you needs. ... They did so, some gathering more,

some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as they needed.” (Exodus 16 – 17). Moses told them not to hoard, but some people ignored his command. In their greed they gathered more than they needed. By the next morning what they had hoarded was full of maggots and beginning to smell.



The tenth commandment clearly warns us of the danger of covetousness: "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave or ox or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbour." (Exodus 20:17).

Our present economic system encourages us to break the tenth commandment, to covet our neighbour's car, house or flat-screen TV, to buy and consume what we don't need. Our present economic system is based on constant growth, which requires more and more production and consumption. We are now paying the price of breaking this commandment. We have greater poverty in the world than ever before, at a time when the world knows greater wealth than ever before. We have the greatest economic injustice, insecurity and unrest ever, at a time when we could position to provide for the needs of all.



Some people have benefited immensely from the capitalist system and have become hugely wealthy, but the price has been increasing economic injustice. While the rich get richer both the poor and the environment suffer and are increasingly exploited. Nature is hitting back because of our ruthless, selfish and greedy exploitation of nature and natural resources. Why is this happening?

Greed is one reason. We continue to exploit the natural resources of the world without regard to the future or the sustainability of renewable resources. Clean air, water and healthy soil provide for our life support systems. We cannot continue to pour poison and pollution into our air and water with the excuse that cleaning our emissions would reduce our profits. We cannot continue to destroy our topsoil through some of the practices of huge commercial farms. Topsoil remains South Africa's biggest export – into the sea! We have to start looking after our life support systems, even if this costs us more.

A second reason is that the poorest people have been forced to exploit their natural resources beyond capacity, having no option but to plough on inappropriate mountain sides, or cut down the

last tree and destroy the forests of the world, or use unsustainable fishing practices which destroy the fish stocks. Such poverty need not exist if we establish greater economic justice.



These inequalities exist between nations as well as within nations. The rich, developed northern nations are intent on protecting their access to natural resources, particularly oil, and fail to see that the economic gap between rich and poor is a major cause of global instability. The countries where there is the smallest gap between rich and poor are the countries that are the most stable and peaceful in the world. Are we surprised? There is no excuse for the rich nations to continue to hold the poor nations hostage to unrepayable debt, incurred when cheap oil gave rise to unrealistic "development" schemes. There is no excuse for the "developed" North to impose so-called "free trade" on the rest of the world, while at the same time subsidizing their own agricultural production. In some countries, cows are subsidized by more than \$3 a day, while a billion people in the world live on less than \$2 a day.



When we share the abundance of God's creation equally, we undercut the temptation to covetousness. God's plan is that we may have "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). God wants us to fulfil the potential he has given us. That means that in order to grow up as a healthy person, we need the essentials of nutritious food, a safe and secure home, clothing and education. With these we can begin to fulfil the potential God wishes for us. If we

don't know where our next meal is coming from or we have no drinking water, sewerage or sanitation, we struggle to reach our God given potential. All of these could be provided if we had a more sharing society and overcame the world's present economic injustices. Fulfilment in life comes from our relationships, with God and with one another – the people we love and with whom we are in daily contact. We need only the essentials of life. We will not find happiness or fulfilment in the excessive ownership of material possessions. Rather than looking for solutions through consuming more, we should use the resources God has provided to improve our education systems, health and hospital care, sanitation and water supplies, essential housing and public transport. Most important is that each one of us is able to receive education that will enable us to take responsibility for our lives, for one another, and for God's world.

Prof. Wangari Maathai, the first African woman and the first environmentalist to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, says that if we want peace we must have democracy, human rights and equitable access to carefully sustained natural resources – so that we may all take responsibility for our lives. While politicians squander natural resources and wealth, or while powerful nations try to control the natural resources of the world, we will not find peace. Peace will come from knowing God and sharing the abundance of resources with one another as we seek to establish justice and live in harmony with God's creation.

The world cannot continue with the present level of inequality, economic injustice and environmental destruction. That the world's richest should control more than 80% of the world's wealth is not only iniquitous, it is unsustainable and cannot lead to peace. That some CEOs earn ten thousand times more than their workers is immoral. Somewhere, somehow, the leaders of the world have to bring about greater economic justice, not only within nations, but between nations. A more human face has to be brought to the capitalist system, one that recognizes that people and their natural environment are more important than profits. A start needs to be made with what is called "Triple bottom line accounting" which considers not only the financial position, but also the social and the environmental costs. The value of our natural systems is worth billions of Rand, yet we take for granted clean water, air, soil and the natural cleansing processes of nature. These are now being overloaded so that we now have "dead" lakes and oceans and toxic lands.

Waste and pollution are among our most serious sins before our God who provides for our need, but not our greed.



Need not Greed FACT SHEET

Consumerism, poverty & environmental degradation

There is no way that the urgent & critical need for poverty alleviation & demand for a better standard of living by an escalating human population can be met by the limited resources of our planet. Nor can the planet cope with all our waste. More of the same 'business as usual' will not change anything because there is no longer enough to go round. We will have to find ways of sharing & distributing resources more equitably. People in the developed world must change & reduce their wasteful consumption habits. It is also imperative that we radically transform our discriminatory economic system which benefits those who already have enough & marginalises the poor & the environment. We cannot address poverty before we take care of creation - poverty alleviation & environmental care go hand in hand. We can all change the way we do things, locally & globally. Because we are people of faith, we have a moral obligation to do this.

Poverty is "a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights."

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2001.

"Human rights cannot be secured in a degraded environment. The fundamental right to life is threatened by soil degradation & deforestation & by exposure to toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes & contaminated drinking water. Environmental conditions clearly help to determine the extent to which people enjoy their basic rights to life, health, adequate food & housing, & traditional livelihood & culture. It is time to recognise that those who pollute or destroy the natural environment are not just committing a crime against nature, but are violating human rights as well."

Klaus Teopfer, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme 2001.

"Freedom alone is not enough without light to read at night, without time or access to water to irrigate your farm, without the ability to catch a fish to feed your family." Nelson Mandela.

- One child born in an industrialised country will consume and pollute more in his or her lifetime than 30 to 50 children born in a developing country.
- Almost half the people on earth (nearly 3 billion)

try to exist on the equivalent of R12 per day. 1.1 billion of the absolute poor in our world live on R6 per day.

- Approximately 18 million South Africans (45% of the population) live in poor households that earn less than R352 per adult per month. Power relations in poor households may be characterised by violence, fear, food insecurity, exploitative work & other pathologies. 3 of every 5 children in SA grow up in poor households.
- There are 8.4 million children in slavery - trafficking, debt bondage, forced labour, even though the slave trade was abolished 200 years ago.
- One third of the maize grown in the USA is now used for bio-fuels, to fill cars with fuel. The US bakes its bread with other people's maize.
- 1.7 million children die each year due to poverty.



What can we do?

- Buy things for their usefulness, not their status.
- Learn to share what we have.
- Develop a healthy scepticism for advertising - Live within your means; bless God for what you have.
- Think about the lifecycle of what we buy - where it comes from & where it will end up.
- Develop a habit of giving away.
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
- Learn to live without debt.
- Buy things that can be recycled.
- The Bible condemns usury - endorse a just economic system, ethical investments and fair trade. Pay fair wages.

Need not Greed FACT SHEET

Waste

In nature there is no waste, everything is recycled. Waste is a problem humans have created. Waste is something that must be disposed of because nobody wants it at a particular time.

But one person's waste is another's raw materials. If we are to live sustainably, products need to be designed in such a way that when they are no longer useful they can be dismantled so that the materials can be used again. We have the technology to do this but we don't have the will to do it because it does not generate profits for shareholders! We need to lobby for a policy in which 'the polluter pays.' We are addicted to our 'throw away, disposable, fast food' culture. This behaviour is contrary to the laws of nature – contrary to God's laws of creation.

- Greed and injustice are bound to lead to conflict and war. Military spending by the top 7 countries is \$805.9 billion (USA \$528.7 billion). The USA spends only one thirtieth of that (\$16 million) to address poverty. This is a gross misuse and waste of precious resources. If half military expenditure were directed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) & overcoming environmental degradation, we would meet our targets. Security won't be found in weapons but in seeking & establishing God's justice on earth. *"Administer true justice, show kindness & compassion to each other."* **(Zechariah 7:9-11)** *"A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength."* **(Psalm 33:16).**
- 20% of world citizens, who are the 'consumer class', eat 45% of all the meat & fish consumed, own 87% of all the cars and use 84% of all paper & 75% of all energy. In the process, they generate 75% of the global pollution.
- E-Waste from electronic & electrical appliances contains valuable materials like copper & silver as well as toxic (poisonous) substances like mercury & lead. Our 21st century infatuation with gadgets like cell phones, computers & batteries makes disposal a growing problem. Mountains of e-waste from 1st world countries have been shipped to dumps in developing countries where there is less strict legislation regarding the handling & stripping of hazardous waste.
- Ten times more oil reaches the seas from car owners pouring old engine oil down drains than from oil tanker disasters that pollute miles of coastline & kill thousands of seabirds.

- The average pregnant woman has at least eight pesticides in her placenta.
- There are approximately 46 000 pieces of plastic floating in each square mile of our oceans. Turtles, dolphins & killer whales can choke or starve by confusing plastic bags for jellyfish & squid. It is estimated that plastic kills 1 million sea birds, 100 000 sea mammals & countless fish each year.

What can you do?

- Become an informed consumer. When you buy something, think about the materials used in its manufacture, the environmental impact of the manufacturing process, the transport 'miles' used to get it to the marketplace, the impact of using it & the harmfulness of its disposal.
- Walk the talk – share with others how you are trying to reduce your impact on the earth.
- Participate in a recycling scheme or start a recycling depot at your church, school or in your community. Where possible recycle glass, tins cans, plastic, paper & cardboard. The energy saved by recycling an aluminium can is enough to run a TV set for three hours.
- If possible, compost all your bio-degradable materials (vegetable & fruit peelings).
- Take your own bag when shopping & refuse unnecessary packaging. Make it clear that you do not want polystyrene, extra plastic or clingwrap – these are made from non-renewable oil.
- Think twice before you buy new clothes or appliances. Do you really need them, or do you just want them?
- Find out where and how to dispose of e-waste safely.
- Buy local goods & support proudly SA. Where possible, shop locally to reduce transport costs, help sustain jobs in your area & keep money circulating in your community.
- Have regular 2nd hand sales at church to get rid of unused goods & to raise funds.
- Where possible, borrow & lend items you do not use often rather than buying them.
- When you go to the beach, bring home your own litter...and somebody else's too!
- In your parish or small group; Download and watch "The Story of Stuff". <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

SMALL GROUP WORK

1. Life-style

Cut out some adverts from newspapers or magazines. Make sure you include fashions, electronic goods etc. Divide into small groups and give each group a half dozen adverts.

Then discuss the following questions:

- What life-style are these adverts selling?
- What are the differences between the world teenagers are growing up in nowadays and the world you grew up in as a teenager? What is the 'modern lifestyle' that people aspire to?

Read the following passages:

Matthew: 6:19-21, 25-31; 7:7-12; 8:20; 10:29-31

How would you describe a 'Jesus lifestyle'?

2. Simple living

In your small groups discuss the following reading by Sean McDonagh:

Our faith calls today for simple living.

*'It is obvious that if future generations are to share in a planet as beautiful and fertile as the one this generation shares, we will have to live more simply. All religious traditions have encouraged their followers to live in a simple way and not to become attached to either power or money, because these have a way of diverting our hearts from what is most important in life. This call for moderation in our lifestyle is particularly significant today. It arises from the simple fact that the majority of people will not be able to meet their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter if a small segment of humans sequester the lion's share of the earth's resources. Furthermore, such a way of living is impairing the ability of the planet to sustain future generations at a level that they will need to meet their basic needs. So the Christian challenge to promote moderation today arises from concerns for social justice and the integrity of God's creation.'*¹

In your groups discuss:

- How can I as an individual live more simply so that others may simply live?
- How can we as a congregation live more simply?

3. Money

"The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10)

"You cannot serve both God and money" (Matt 6:24)

Consider this quotation from Resurgence Magazine:

'Money is not wealth. True wealth is good land, healthy animals, flourishing forests, clean water, honest work, abundant creativity and human imagination. Money was designed to oil the wheels of economic interaction and to ensure that the workings of the market place were smooth and simple.

The purpose of money was and should be to serve the human community as well as the earth community, but now people and planet are put into the service of money. Natural resources are converted into consumables to make money. Whether these consumer goods are necessary or not is irrelevant.

*Money favours power and power favours money. Modern 'democracy' in most countries, is the government of the rich, for the rich and by the rich. Money is not a God-given fixture: it was designed by us, therefore it can be changed by us. Unless we reform and redesign our money system the idea of sustainability, social justice and spiritual renewal will remain a mirage.'*⁸

- What challenges do these bible verses and this quote leave us with?

4. Causes of poverty



PICTURE

Consider this drawing. Which has the greatest impact on the natural environment – population growth or over-consumption, given that a child in the “developed west” will use 50 times more energy than a person in a developing country, but at the same time the world is running out of food, with the world’s population increasing by one billion people in 15 years?

CREATIVE IDEAS

Consider this prayer carefully as a group before you pray it.

A FRANCISCAN BLESSING

May you be blessed with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May you be blessed with anger
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May you be blessed with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. ⁹

Ref	6. STEWARDSHIP: Liturgical Text	
GATHERING RITE		
Focus	<i>This final service should be a celebration of all that God has given into our care, and an opportunity to commit ourselves to good stewardship of all creation.</i>	
Approach Sentence	God looked at everything that he had made, and it was very good.	
Act of Penitence	<i>Perhaps this should be one service where the Act of Penitence is included in the Preparation so that focus of the Response to the Proclamation can be on the commitment to be good stewards.</i>	
Collect	Almighty God, Creator and Lord of all things, you have provided the vast resources of earth and sea, and the hidden forces of nature: Teach us to recognise your hand in all your works and to use your gifts responsibly for the benefit of all people that we may rejoice in your goodness with reverence and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen	
PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD		
First Lesson	Genesis 1: 24 – 31	In the climax to God's act of Creation, God created humankind in his image, male and female God created them. And God gave them dominion over all that God had created; and it was so.
Psalm	Psalm 8	The Sovereign Lord has made mortals a little lower than the angels, crowned them with glory and honour, and given them dominion over all that God has made.
Second Lesson	1 Peter 4: 7 – 11	The reminder that Christians are called to be stewards of the grace of God, and that such a calling is one to serve all of creation. A call to holy living so that God might be glorified.
Canticle	Canticle 1	The Song of David – APB p 341
Gospel	Luke 12: 42 – 48	The reminder that with the privilege of stewardship over all God's creation, comes the reminder that we will all be called to account for the way in which we have collectively used or misused what God has given into our care.
RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD		
Intercession	<i>There should be an equal emphasis on Thanksgiving for God's Creation, and Commitment to serve as stewards of all that has been given into our care.</i>	
Peace Sentence	Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you have received.	
CELEBRATING AT THE TABLE		
Elements	<i>See notes regarding the elements. It would be good on this Sunday to have fresh bread baked by one or more members of the congregation to be offered for the Eucharist.</i>	
Great Thanksgiving	<i>One of the two special Eucharistic Prayers included in this material would be most appropriate for this celebration.</i>	
Proper Preface	And now we give you thanks because you have made us stewards of your creation to praise you day by day for the marvels of your wisdom and power.	
THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE		
Post Comm sentence	From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.	
Post Communion Prayer	Lord of all, as with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation, move our hearts to be generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy; through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all creation. Amen <i>Can replace #87</i>	
Blessing	God, whose glory is declared in the heavens, and who speaks through creation; revive your spirits by his word, make you wise by his laws, and give you joy through his commands; and the blessing of the Creator God, the Eternal Father, the Risen Son and the Promised Holy Spirit bless you that you might be a blessing to others today and always. Amen	



Stewardship

Caring for God's Creation

"For the Church of the 21st Century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is central to what it means to be a Christian."
The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High." (South African Prayer Book)

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good..." (Gen. 1:31)

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers." (Psalm 24:1-2)

"You stretch out the heavens like a tent... You set the earth on its foundations, You make springs gush forth in the valleys... Giving drink to every wild animal... The earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work..." (Psalm 104)

The world about us, our environment, involves not only nature and natural resources but all human interactions with the planet, which is our

home. How we regard our life support system is strongly influenced by our history, culture and present circumstances. Eco-justice is therefore not limited to the preservation of rare plants and animals; it is concerned with ecological and economic justice. It will define the kind of world we will be leaving to our children and future generations.

By exchanging the term 'environment' for 'creation', we come to perceive the 'more than human world' quite differently. The concept of creation evokes a deep and value laden spiritual meaning.

While governments, business corporations and the media have adopted the language of 'sustainable development' it is time for us, the people of faith, to make 'creation care' part of our core business.

In the Anglican Communion, the 5th mark of Mission formulated at the 1998 Lambeth Conference calls upon us to:

“Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation; to sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

If we are to live sustainably, we need to nurture and respect creation, the natural world which supplies all our needs, to look after people and strive to achieve economic justice and welfare for all people.



From the perspective of our faith we have for long misinterpreted and misused God's directive to us to have “dominion” over creation. (Gen. 1:27, 28) We have viewed the world from an anthropocentric – that is human-centred – perspective. Although people appeared on the scene in the image of God at the climax of God's creative act and we have been given “dominion” over the earth and told to “rule over and subdue it”, this does not make us superior to the rest of creation nor does it give us the power, authority or mandate to exploit, conquer and abuse God's creation. All creatures are an equally valuable and valued part of the covenant that God made with Noah after the flood. (Gen 9:9-11)

The concept of ‘stewardship’ has been adopted by many Christians as a gentler and more sensitive way of interpreting the charge for us ‘to have dominion.’ A good steward will preserve, sustain, nurture, care for and use wisely, the resources of the earth. As good stewards we need to be accountable and responsible to ‘our employer’ both in the present and into the future, down the generations. How do we interpret stewardship?

Many Christians are not comfortable with this idea. We have to approach it with humility if we think we can be stewards of God's creation with its hundreds of thousands or even millions of species. We cannot begin to care for the intricacy of all of creation. But let us respond to the call to care for creation and see ourselves as ‘earth-keepers’ (Gen 2:15). There are so many ways that we can live out our role as ‘keepers of God's garden’ more effectively:

Through liturgy and worship, we have the opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for the bounty of creation and the many gifts we are given. Liturgy also gives us space to share our needs and concerns within the context of our own community.

Eco-Theology is a new term for many of us. ‘Eco’ stems from the Greek word, *oikos* meaning the household. It has come to refer to the wise ‘economic’ and ‘eco-logical’ management of our ‘home’. On a small scale, our ‘home’ is our local environment. In global terms, it refers to our planet, earth. Theology concerns our beliefs, teachings and readings around matters of faith. It is based on the Bible, history, ethics and tradition in our own particular faith context. In the 21st Century, ‘eco-theology’ is becoming an important aspect of the searchings of our faith.

We are called to “till the earth and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). To be stewards of creation means to manage it wisely. Our ever increasing demand for natural resources like fresh water, land, oil, minerals, fish and forests is outstripping the earth's capacity to provide and sustain them. The earth can no longer cope with our waste and pollution.

Human activities are changing climates and landscapes and poisoning the air, soil and water. We are also causing the extinction of many of God's plants and animals which were entrusted to our care. Faith communities often own land. Open spaces provide us with wonderful opportunities to be stewards of creation and participate in “keeping God's garden”.

The financial and ecological cost of secure energy supplies has been much in the news recently. Most of South African industry and urban society is dependent on electricity and liquid fuel energy from non-renewable fossil fuels, coal and oil.



There is growing evidence that carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are largely responsible for our changing weather patterns and are driving global climate change. We are also facing escalating costs and insecurity over international oil supplies.



A number of governments are beginning to consider expanding their use of nuclear power in order to meet growing energy needs. Concerns over nuclear safety and the secure disposal of radio-active waste for thousands of years leave many people ambivalent about the sustainability of this option.

The slow pace of innovative research into renewable energy and the high cost of installation are making the availability of energy from renewable sources to the public frustratingly slow. The ethics and practice of energy (and cost) saving can be promoted and encouraged through our faith communities.

Climate change is largely driven by waste products from burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, petrol and diesel).

Global warming and extreme weather occurrences like droughts and floods are becoming a growing threat to life on earth as we know it. We cannot wait for 'government' to 'do' something – we all need to find ways of 'living more lightly'. Air travel is environmentally expensive and although private motor vehicles are efficient and convenient, they are a major contributor to the greenhouse gases that are driving climate change.

If caring for creation is one of the commitments we make in the profession of our faith, we need to find ways to live this out in our daily lives. As individuals and as community, we can share ideas and set an example by living more co-operatively and considerately and by 'greening' our lifestyles.

Faith congregations consist essentially of members of local communities who have come together to worship God. They are in a unique position to work in, with and for the community because they have a deep contextual understanding of local knowledge and history as well as a wide network

of expertise and experience which is embedded in the neighbourhood.

If we are to engage with ideas of sustainable living, which is after all what living out our faith in the real world should be about, the most logical and effective place to start is the promotion of conservation and regeneration in the places and amongst the people we are most familiar with – our own neighbourhoods.

Too often we have remained silent on issues of national and global significance. We cannot afford to leave the task of ethical decision-making to politicians, scientists and large corporations.

The united voice of people of faith has the potential to be a powerful lobby for change for the greater good because we define ourselves and our communities by our morals and values, and by the way we demonstrate them in our lifestyles.



We, the people of faith, as individuals and as small worshipping communities, are a sleeping giant, a powerhouse for change. We could start a groundswell and alter the course of history as we hold God's amazing creation in our hands, heads and hearts.

"Look at the animals roaming the forest: God's spirit dwells within them. Look at the birds flying across the sky: God's spirit dwells within them. Look at the tiny insects crawling in the grass: God's spirit dwells within them. There is no creature on earth in which God is not present. When God pronounced that his creation was good, it was not only that his hand had fashioned every creature: it was that his breath had brought every creature to life. The presence of God's spirit in all living things is what makes them beautiful: and if we look with God's eyes, nothing on earth is ugly."

If God is present in all creation, then the boundaries of the Great Commandment to love God and our neighbour extend beyond the human community to include all creation.

"Love everything into which God has put life, and God has made nothing dead. There is only less life in a stone than in a bud, and both have a life of their own, and both took their life from God..... We ought to love one another much better than we do and that's what I always have in mind when I pray that God's Kingdom may come and His will be done on earth; that on earth there may come a time when love governs everybody's actions, just as we believe it will in heaven when we get there..... I believe all this so well myself that I wish I could make everyone else believe it too, and see what it all leads to, as clearly as I see it myself." (Edward Wilson, a member of Scott's Antarctic expedition)

The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter, compiled by people from more than 78 countries over 12 years, provides us with guidelines for implementing our Christian values. It outlines a system of global ethics that incorporates contemporary science, international law & the insights of philosophy & religion).

It reminds us of both our rights & responsibilities. In essence the charter calls us to:

- Respect and care for the community of life.
- Protect and restore the earth's ecological integrity.
- Uphold social and economic justice.
- Pursue democracy, non-violence and peace.

Study it and try to make it a living document.

(The full charter can be found on www.earthcharter.com)



Stewardship FACT SHEET

As people of God, 'keeping' God's earth whole should be at the centre of how we live our lives. We are moving into a new 'ecological age' – a time for people of faith to unite, show moral leadership in our divided and broken world and speak and act prophetically about caring for all of creation – not just the human part of it. Essential is a life of voluntary simplicity which values caring and sharing relationships, service, creativity and co-operation over those that emphasize consumption, material possessions and wealth, self gratification, status and competition. If the diversity of creation is to flourish, the voice of people of faith must offer a powerful alternative language to the one we are hearing in today's world. If we don't speak out against the wastefulness and destruction of modern lifestyles and live out a new value system, there will be no planet left to pass on to future generations.

What can we do? Many of us feel powerless and overwhelmed but numerous small actions and changes in behaviour can start a groundswell of change. We can become ethical consumers and investors, we can save water, energy and resources in our homes, churches and workplaces, we can 'wise up on waste', we can change our transport, travel and holiday habits. Problems always provide opportunities for change, but with the extent and urgency of the crisis facing our planet, acting locally is not going to be enough.

The environmental crisis of the 21st century offers a new and urgent challenge for people of our globalised world to unite and work together for peace and stability. Who better to lead the response than people of faith, since 'keeping' God's creation is a moral issue? But, where is the prophetic, visionary and united voice of faith? It is time for our churches and other faiths to give new and courageous leadership with regard to the threats facing the planet. We can't afford to continue to leave the business of saving the world to politicians and economists. We must now demand eco-justice – economic and ecological - for all the inhabitants of the earth – both human and 'other than human'.

What we can do

- Inform ourselves about global economic, ecological and social issues.
- Speak out, write about, and demand moral and ethical responses to environmental injustices within our communities, nationally and internationally. The 'silent majority' of civil society must rediscover its voice.
- Set an example and be prepared to take on leadership roles in the ethical response to the environmental crisis.
- Re-establish the value of communities & empower them to strive to create a co-operative culture that is based on democratic principles & human rights. In a world where there is rampant poverty & a scorched earth: Multi-national corporations have no right to 'own' & dictate how resources are used; Economists & businesses have no right to control a money system that disadvantages the environment & the poor; Military powers have no right to squander the earth's resources on arms & weapons of war; Politicians & people in power have no right to be leaders if they do not lead by example.
- Shrink our individual and collective ecological footprint (See appendix).
- Support the rights of women: their security and education is the key to development and family planning
- Create literacy
- Support self-help housing
- Campaign for the lifting of third world debt.
- Look at the Earth Charter and use it in your faith community.



SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Opening prayer

Ever living God, you created the Earth and all that is in it and found it very good
Forgive us all that we have done to harm the Earth and one another

God of life and love you created all that exists to sustain life here on Earth, human life and all forms of life

Forgive us all that we have done to harm the Earth and one another

God of mercy and hope forgive us our apathy and arrogance, short sightedness and greed. Guide us now in the study of your Holy word.

Read the following passages:

And Jesus said to them "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."
(Mark 16:15)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month: and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.'

(Revelation 22:1-2)

- What is the good news that we are called to bring to the whole creation?
- What do you understand by "the healing of the nations"?
- How can we celebrate creation in new, more meaningful and imaginative ways in our congregation?
- Where can we make space for new ideas in order to infuse the ideas of creation care into the thinking, teachings and learning of our faith?

Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture but you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet?

(Ezekiel 34:18)

- 'Stewardship' can be applied to the wise management of money, material and human resources. As members of our church, how do we respond to the urgent call to live more sustainably, more lightly on the earth?
- What kind of stewards have we been? How wisely have we 'managed' the earth's fruitfulness?

Wherever the river goes every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh and everything will live where the river goes.

(Ezekiel 47:9)

- What can we change or improve so that we are less wasteful and more careful to sustain the fruits of the earth?
- What can we change or improve to make our office more eco-friendly?
- What can we do to manage and conserve water more effectively?
- How can we raise awareness about the problems of energy use and climate change?
- What ideas can we implement to manage our energy use more efficiently and effectively?
- What can we do to reduce and manage our waste in our faith community, our homes and our community more effectively?
- How can we become better 'earth keepers' with our land?

CREATIVE IDEAS

- Celebrate 'green Sunday', when you turn off electrical goods such as TVs, to spend time the family. Walk, cycle or lift share to church, and rather have friends over in the after noon rather than using petrol to go somewhere.
- Celebrate the Eucharist with home made bread made by one of the congregation.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

1. Now that you have participated in six weeks of the Season of Creation, **DEVELOP an ENVIRONMENTAL or CREATION CARE POLICY or STATEMENT of INTENT** for your church.

It could be something like this:

"Our parish of St..... will do all we can to be good stewards of God's creation. We will 'strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation to sustain and renew the life of the earth' (Anglican Communion 5th Mark of Mission) and endeavour to walk more lightly and live more simply so that others may simply live."

This could be displayed on a notice board. You could use this space to put up creation care readings or news about topical environmental issues and parish and community activities.

2. Decide to become an **ECO-CONGREGATION**.

This is a programme for local churches of all denominations which aims to:

- encourage faith communities to raise the profile of local and global environmental issues
- support them in finding positive and practical ways of responding to the crisis
- provide resources to support their activities
- offer an award scheme for congregations that show evidence of their commitment to respond to the environmental crisis through a range of actions and activities.

This is a new initiative coordinated by SAFCEI, the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (www.safcei.org.za)

To find out more about the programme, please contact:

kated@safcei.org.za or secretary@safcei.org.za

or telephone the SAFCEI office in Cape Town on 021- 701-8145

A useful starter resource book, 'Creation Care' and the 'Eco-congregation programme handbook' can be ordered from SAFCEI.



Worship Resources

1. SONG OF THE SANCTUARY

1. You who watch the highest heavens
Wond'ring where God's mansions are;
You who hope to spot an angel
Spinning like a falling star;
Earth is calling, Earth is calling,
Come back home and rest in me.
Come back home and rest in me.

2. You who build exotic buildings
Taller than the forest tree,
Don't you know that all foundations
Deep, deep down reside in me.
Earth is calling, Earth is calling,
Come back home and live in me.
Come back home and live in me.

3. You who travel Earth as pilgrims,
Dreaming where you'd rather be;
God's own glory fills my body,
I am God's own sanctuary.
Earth is calling, Earth is calling,
Come back home to God in me.
Come back home to God in me

4. You who hope for joys in heaven,
Do you know the joys of Earth?
Ancient forests filled with singing,
Seas that shout when whales give birth?
Earth is calling, Earth is calling,
Come back home and sing with me.
Come back home and sing with me.

5. You who long for bread like manna
Falling from the hand of God?
Know that Earth provides your water,
Precious breath and daily food.
Earth is calling, Earth is calling,
Come back home and dine with me.
Come back home and dine with me.

Words: © Norman Habel 2000
Melody: Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah

2. SONG OF SKY

1. Lord of suns and star exploding
Galaxies and swirling skies,
Where you chose to show your glory
Took the heavens by surprise.
Lord of solar winds and wisdom,
Super stars that blow our mind,
Choosing such a fragile planet
Hardly seems a grand design.

2. On this piece of stardust swirling,
On this spinning spot in space,
Life itself was born like music,
When you showed your hidden face.
What an honour to be chosen,
Silent planet blue and green,
Filled with glory, grace and gardens,
Where the breath of God is seen.

3. What is even more amazing
We have poisoned Earth like fools.
Help us change our way of living,
Love the Earth and love her rules.
Help us stem the tide of traders

Leaving Earth an empty store;
Join us now Creator Spirit,
Come renew your Earth once more.

Words: © Norman Habel 1999
Melody: Glorious Things of Thee are spoken

3. SONG OF EARTH

1. Hail the Earth that first appeared. Alleluia!
When a word from God was heard. Alleluia!
Let the Earth arise and be. Alleluia!
Filled with living mystery. Alleluia!

2. Hail the rainbow flying high. Alleluia!
Spun by God across the sky. Alleluia!
Giving Earth a solemn word. Alleluia!
Never to unleash a flood. Alleluia!

3. Hail the planet blue and green. Alleluia!
Where the face of God is seen. Alleluia!
Glory filling all the Earth. Alleluia!
Celebrating every birth. Alleluia!

4. Hail our body made with clay. Alleluia!
Given breath to praise and pray. Alleluia!
Clay God honoured by God's birth. Alleluia!
As a human life on Earth. Alleluia!

5. Hail the groans of Earth in pain. Alleluia!
From the weight of human sin. Alleluia!
Longing for the Christ who died. Alleluia!
All creation to revive. Alleluia!

Words: © Norman Habel 1999
Melody: Jesus Christ is Risen Today

4. SONG OF THE WATERS

1. Watch once more the windswept storm clouds;
Suddenly the sky has wings!
God has come to rain among us,
Giving hope to all dry things.

Sing a song of splashing waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

2. Taste the moisture of the morning,
Smoother than the best red wine;
Toast the lifeblood of the planet:
Here's to God's wild wet design!
Sing a song of flowing waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

3. View anew the dark blue ocean,
Whales cavorting, spraying foam;
God at play with deep sea monsters,
Feeling very much at home.
Sing a song of laughing waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

4. Feel the breath of God move softly,
Gentle mists that brush the skin;
Earth is breathing God's own spirit,
Life renewed from deep within.
Sing a song of living waters,
Pulsing through the veins of Earth.

Words: © Norman Habel 2001
Melody: Praise my Soul the King of Heaven

5. MOTHER EARTH, OUR MOTHER BIRTHING

1. Mother Earth, our mother birthing
Ev'ry creature from the ground.
Jesus too was flesh and breathing,
Kin to all that's green and brown.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

2. Sister Air, our sister lifting
Ev'ry creature born with wing;
Jesus shared the breath of forests,
Breath that makes our spirits sing.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

3. Brother Water, brother pulsing
Deep through ev'ry vein and sea,
Jesus drank the very raindrops
For our wine and in our tea.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

4. Father Fire, our father burning
With the sacred urge to live.
Jesus' death completes the cycle,
Bringing life beyond the grave.
Celebrate with all creation:
God has joined the web of life.

Words: © Norman Habel 1999
Melody: Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven

6. BE STILL AND FEEL THE PRESENCE

1. Be still and feel the presence of God,
The presence pulsing, pulsing through Earth,
Be still and feel the pulse of God.

2. Be still and hear the Spirit of God,
The Spirit breathing, breathing through Earth,
Be still and hear the breath of God.

3. Be still, behold the glory of God,
The glory filling, filling this Earth.
Be still, behold the face of God.

Words: C Norman Habel 2004
Melody: Be Still and Know that I am God

7. HEAR THIS EARTH MOURNING

1. Hear this Earth mourning deep in pollution,
Hear this Earth mourning, death in her lungs:
"How I keep longing for that first morning,
When all creation broke forth in songs".

2. Hear the trees falling deep in the forest,
Hear the trees calling, tortured by chain:
"Where are the song birds, thousands of voices,
Rising in one symphonic refrain".

3. Hear the blood crying, crying for justice;
Hear the blood crying, deep in the ground:
"Massacres, murders, species forgotten!
Where is the healing? Where is it found"?

4. Hear the land wailing deep in the darkness,
Hear the land wailing, crying in pain:
"Where are my children, torn from their homelands?
Children, my children, come home again"!

5. Hear that man crying, crucified dying;
Hear that man crying, gasping for breath:

I'll share your suffering! I'll stop your bleeding!
I'll bring you healing, even in death"!

Words: © Norman Habel 2000
Melody: Morning has Broken

8. SONG OF HEALING

1. Healing is flowing, deep in the waters,
Flowing from Eden, flowing from old.
All through creation, God sends forth waters,
Oceans of healing, for all the world.

2. Healing is rising, fresh with the morning,
Healing is rising, bursting with grace.
Christ, our rich healing, deep in creation,
Heal Earth's deep wounds and rise in this place.

3. Healing is offered, leaves from the life tree,
Healing is offered nations at war.
Come, wounded Healer, torn by the violence,
Rise from the grave, bring peace to our shore.

4. Healing is given, flows from forgiveness,
Healing is given, flows from our faith.
Christ, give us heart to love your deep healing,
Living forgiveness, even in death.

5. Healing is rising, free in Christ's body,
Healing is flowing, free with Christ's blood.
May this deep healing pulse through our bodies,
Heal the world's wounds still bleeding and red.

Words: © Norman Habel 2000
Melody: Morning has Broken

9. RISE CREATOR SPIRIT RISE

1. Rise Creator Spirit, rise,
From this land across the skies.
Rise from deep within this land,
Move across the desert sand.
Rise, create this land anew,
Make your Dreaming song come true.
Fill this land with life again,
Make the desert bloom with rain.
Fill this land with life again,
Make the desert bloom with rain.

2. Rise, Creator Spirit, rise,
From this land across the skies.
Rise from deep in mystery,
Rise to set your people free.
Hear the land cry out in pain,
Hear her people call your name.
Let your rainbow span this Earth
Giving hope and giving birth.
Let your rainbow span this Earth
Giving hope and giving birth.

3. Rise, Creator Spirit, rise,
From this land across the skies.
Rise from deep within the tomb,
Making Jesus' grave a womb.
Plunging back into your cave,
Bringing life to ev'ry grave,
Life that rose with Jesus Christ,
Rose to fill our hearts and eyes.
Life that rose with Jesus Christ,
Rose to fill our hearts and eyes.

Words: © Norman Habel 1996
Melody: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

10. THE COSMIC CHRIST

1. Amazing is the Christ who died
To void all sin and curse,
Just as amazing is his life
That fills the universe.

2. The risen Christ is more than one
Who waits on some far shore;
In, with and under ev'ry thing
Christ is the living core.

3. The hidden Christ sustains for us
The blueprint of the skies,
The wisdom in each fragile form,
The soul that lights the eyes.

4. The cosmic Christ moves deep below
To heal the wounds within,
When all creation groans in pain
Because of human sin.

5. The cosmos hails the Christ, the One
Who reconciles all things,
'Til all creation rises new
With healing in her wings.

6. As Christ unites the universe,
Restores this Earth once more,
A cosmic song reverberates,
A rich symphonic score.

Words: © Norman Habel 2004
Melody: Amazing Grace

11. NOW THANK WE ALL

1. Now thank we all our God
In whom this Earth rejoices,
For creatures great and small
Who now have lost their voices;
And species calling us
Before they disappear,
To love this fragile Earth
That God would have us share.

2. O may this bounteous God
In ev'ry tree be near us
To help us feel the pain
Of barren lands so cheerless,
Where once like Eden fresh,
Wild birds in freedom flew
To celebrate a land,
Where life rose crystal new.

3. All praise and thanks to God
Our Father now be given,
Who kept alive on Earth,
This tribe of greedy humans,
Who sent an only son
To suffer earthly pain,
That cosmic ill and death
Should never rule again.

4. O Spirit from the land
Rise up like sacred leaven
To free us from the ills
Polluting Earth and heaven;
Inspire us with the drive
To be like healing rain,
Renewing life on Earth
And praising God again.

Words: © Norman Habel 1991
Melody: Now Thank We All Our God

12. FOR THIS GREAT SUNKISSED LAND

1. For this great sun kissed land
We join in celebration,
With all its native life,
The joy of God's creation:
Fresh lakes and baobab
Who raise their voice on high,
Blue Cranes that sweep with grace
Across the morning sky.

2. Now thank we, God, this day
For pioneers with vision,
Who found this heritage
A gift from God's deep passion.
O God of this wide land,
Grant us the faith to see,
You filled its soul with song,
A sacred mystery.

3. With this great sun kissed land
We join in celebration,
With rhinos ,buffalos
People from ev'ry nation;
Custodians God chose
For bush and rivers long
We join with grateful voice
To sing this country strong.

Words: © Norman Habel 1991
Melody: Now Thank We All Our God

13. O FOR A THOUSAND TREES

O for a thousand trees to sing
And join with us this day,
With ferns and frogs and butterflies:
A forest hymn of praise.

Come celebrate with all the land,
Let species rare begin,
With geese and owls and cockatoo:
A choir of country kin.

How can we hear creation groan,
The earth cries out in pain?
With elephants we rejoice
When Earth is born again.

Let ev'ry stream and river flow
In song toward the sea;
With whale, and seal and albatross
We thank God we are free!

O for a thousand trees to sing
And join with us this day,
With ferns and frogs and butterflies:
A forest hymn of praise.

Words: © Norman Habel 2004
Melody: O For a Thousand To Sing

**These hymns are used with the generous
permission of Norman Habel**

Hymns for a Season of Creation

Responsory:

Care for the World (no 1)
– *John Harper*
Care for the World (no 2)
– *John Harper*
Care for the World (no 3)
– *John Harper*

Introit Hymns:

All Creatures of our God and King
– *AMNS 105*
All things bright and beautiful
– *AMNS 116*
How great thou art
– *Living Praise 173*
Alleluia, Alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices
raise
– *AMNS 80*
Eternal father strong to save
– *AMNS 292*
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty the King of
creation
– *AMNS 207*

Gradual Hymns:

For the fruits of all creation
– *AMNS 457*
As the deer pants
– *Mission Praise 2 (303)*
Let all the world in every corner sing
– *AMNS 202*
God is our strength and refuge
– *Praise the Lord 75 (SU)*
Thou art worthy
– *(Living praise 242)*

Offertory hymns:

'Lord bring the day to pass'
– *from Care for the World (tune Gopsal)*
Father Lord of all creation
– *AMNS 356*
For the beauty of the earth
– *AMNS 104*
Hills of the north rejoice
– *AMNS 470*
Thou whose almighty word
– *AMNS 180*
The King of love my shepherd is
– *AMNS 126*

Communion hymns:

For the beauty of the earth
– *AMNS 104*
I the Lord of sea and sky
– *New Mission Praise 59*
Beauty for brokenness
– *Songs of fellowship 2 (664)*

Recessional hymns:

Christ triumphant, ever reigning
– *Praise the Lord 28*
Praise the Lord ye heavens adore him
– *AMNS 195*
Fill your hearts with joy and gladness
– *'Care for the World'*
The earth belongs to God
– *Songs of Praise p68*
O Worship the kings
– *AMNS 101*
Crown him with many crowns
– *AMNS 147*

Anthems:

All things bright and beautiful
– *John Rutter*
Look at the World
– *John Rutter*
For the beauty of the earth
– *John Rutter*

How big is my footprint on God's earth?

Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI)
secretary@safcei.org.za; 021-7023622

Ecological footprinting is a way of 'measuring' the amount of natural resources required to provide the products that we consume and absorb the waste we produce. It is not a 'true' measurement but it does give us an indication of how sustainable our lifestyles are and draws our attention to the inequalities in different sectors of our society. There are 13 questions, each of which presents lifestyle choices.

Answer the questions and add up the score on the table at the end of the booklet. This will give us an idea of our impact on the planet we call home.

1. Water use:

The amount of water used often depends on whether you have running water in your home, a tap in your yard, or whether you carry water from a river or a dam. The way you use water at home can sometimes be very wasteful especially when that water is readily available on tap!

When you wash do you use:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----|
| <input type="radio"/> | A bucket | 10 |
| <input type="radio"/> | A shower | 15 |
| <input type="radio"/> | A bath | 30 |

2. Re-using water:

South Africa is a water scarce country. It is believed that by the year 2025 we will have insufficient water for use in our homes, for agriculture and for industry. By using water carefully, you can help conserve our water sources.

When you have finished washing at home:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----|
| <input type="radio"/> | Does your water run straight down the drain? | 30 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Do you use the water on your plants? | 0 |

3. Energy use:

Whether you use electricity, coal, or paraffin for energy in your home, you are polluting the air – which causes acid rain, global warming and health problems. You can conserve energy by using energy-saving devices (such as a hot box for cooking, solar powered energy systems and energy saving light bulbs.)

In your home do you have at least one energy saving method?

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|----|
| <input type="radio"/> | Yes | 0 |
| <input type="radio"/> | No | 20 |

4. Indigenous plants;

By growing indigenous plants in your garden, you can contribute to biodiversity because you will attract indigenous insects, birds and other animals. Indigenous plants have many advantages over alien plants, for example, they require less water.

Excluding your home grown fruit and vegetables, in your garden at home are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----|
| <input type="radio"/> | Most of the plants indigenous? | 0 |
| <input type="radio"/> | More than half of the plants indigenous? | 10 |
| <input type="radio"/> | Less than half of the plants indigenous? | 20 |
| <input type="radio"/> | None of the plants indigenous? | 30 |

5. Animal based products:

Producing animal products (beef, chicken, pork, eggs, fish, dairy etc.) puts much more pressure on the environment than producing vegetables. Many people eat more meat than their bodies need. People who eat a lot of meat have a greater impact on the environment than those who eat less meat or no meat at all.

How often do you eat animal products?	
<input type="radio"/> Never	0
<input type="radio"/> A few times a week	10
<input type="radio"/> Once a day	15
<input type="radio"/> Small amounts at every meal	20
<input type="radio"/> A large part of every meal	30

6. Locally grown food:

Much of the energy costs of food production is spent transporting food from harvest to market and for processing, packaging and storage. Growing food yourself or buying locally grown, in season, unprocessed food can therefore reduce energy consumption. Buying food from local farmers can greatly reduce your ecological footprint.

How much of the food that you eat is locally grown, unprocessed & in-season?	
<input type="radio"/> Most	0
<input type="radio"/> About three quarters	10
<input type="radio"/> About half	15
<input type="radio"/> About a quarter	20
<input type="radio"/> Very little	30

7. Living space:

An unnecessarily large home uses more materials from the environment (for building & maintenance) and takes up more space (which could be used for agriculture or nature reserves).

In your home do you have:	
<input type="radio"/> More people than bedrooms	0
<input type="radio"/> The same number of people & bedrooms	15
<input type="radio"/> More bedrooms than people	30

8. Poisons in the home garden:

Poisons – more correctly called 'BIOCIDES' – are often used to kill rats, insects, weeds etc. Many of the ingredients of biocides cause allergies, trigger cancer growth & cause genetic defects. Frequently we don't actually need to kill in the first place! The flat spider on the wall won't hurt you at all. If we really do need to kill, we need to decide which option of removal is the most environmentally friendly.

In your home when you have a problem do you:	
<input type="radio"/> Use the strongest insecticide or other poison & use it until the problem is solved	30
<input type="radio"/> Buy special environmentally friendly products	10
<input type="radio"/> First attempt to solve the problem with a less destructive alternative	0

9. Re-using

Re-use of some of your waste helps to reduce our impact on the environment; reduces the amount of waste that goes to landfill sites (rubbish dumps) & reduces the amount of raw materials required.

At home do you re-use:		Never	Sometimes	Often
<input type="radio"/>	Paper	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Glass	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Tins	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Plastics	30	15	0

10. Recycling:

Re-use of some of your waste helps to reduce your impact on the environment; reduces the amount of waste that goes to landfill sites (rubbish dumps) & reduces the amount of raw materials required.

At home do you recycle:		Never	Sometimes	Often
<input type="radio"/>	Paper	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Glass	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Tins	30	15	0
<input type="radio"/>	Plastics	30	15	0

11. Reducing:

You can reduce your eco-footprint by shopping carefully. Buy in bulk to reduce packaging; buy refills (e.g. deodorants); choose well-made articles that will last well & those with recycled content; avoid over-packaged products.

When you shop do you:		
<input type="radio"/>	Always think of the amount you will throw away	0
<input type="radio"/>	Often try but take into consideration price & brand.	10
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes – depending on the price and brand.	20
<input type="radio"/>	Never think of how goods are packaged or how long they will last.	30

12. Consumer choices

Some goods in supermarkets pollute the environment more than others – a roll-on deodorant is better than an aerosol spray containing CFC's (which break down the ozone layer); brightly coloured toilet cleaning liquid is not necessary as the colour does not clean the toilet!

When you shop do you choose the least polluting product?		
<input type="radio"/>	Always	0
<input type="radio"/>	Often, depending on price, brand or what you have seen on TV.	10
<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes, depending on price, brand or what you have seen on TV.	20
<input type="radio"/>	Never think about such things	30

13. Travel:

Poisonous gases & substances released by cars & other motor vehicles include carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons & lead which contribute to acid rain, smog, health problems & global warming. If you travel by aeroplane, your ecological footprint goes off this scale!

How do you get to work, school or college?		
<input type="radio"/>	On foot	0
<input type="radio"/>	Bicycle	10
<input type="radio"/>	Taxi or bus	15
<input type="radio"/>	Lift in car	20
<input type="radio"/>	Car	30

ADD UP YOUR SCORE:

Interpreting your final ecological footprint score:

- Less than 70 You live lightly on the earth and have a tiny, GREEN ecological FOOTPRINT - Well done!
- From 71 – 155 You have a small ecological footprint. Keep it up!
- From 156 – 250 You have a medium ecological footprint – You could try harder to live more lightly.
- From 251 – 400 You have a large ecological footprint – which is not sustainable if everyone in the world lived the way you do!
- From 401 – 560 You have a HUGE ecological footprint – you are using more than your fair share of the earth's resources!

Special days calendar 2008

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T		
JAN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
FEB				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
MARCH																																
APRIL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
MAY																																
JUNE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
JULY																																
AUG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
SEPT																																
OCT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
NOV																																
DEC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

There are four International Years being celebrated in 2008. They are International Year of the Potato, International Year of Planet Earth, International Year of Sanitation and international Year of Languages.

The Earth Charter

Protection of our Earth is imperative if we are to preserve it for future generations. This Charter highlights our rights as human beings, but also our responsibility to care for each other and to be in right relations with our environment and the people who inhabit it. It is primarily concerned with the well being of the environment, practices in the environment and the people who make their homes in that environment. It is a holistic approach as to how we should treat, protect and manage the vitality, diversity and beauty of all life that has been entrusted into the care of human beings. It is also the realisation that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. The urgent need for a shared vision of basic values for the provision of a sound ethical foundation for the emerging world community has led to the formation of the Earth Charter. Together in hope, the many participants who partook in producing this Earth Charter, affirmed the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions are to be guided and assessed. It focuses on and strives to promote the following principles:

- I. Respect and care for the community of life
- II. Ecological integrity
- III. Social and economic justice
- IV. Democracy, non-violence and peace

The Earth Charter was created by the independent Earth Charter Commission, which was convened as a follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit in order to produce a global consensus statement of values and principles for a sustainable future. The document was developed over nearly a decade through an extensive process of international consultation, to which over five thousand people contributed. Please see the entire Earth Charter to experience the richness thereof. For more information, please visit www.EarthCharter.org.

Resources

Books

Creation Care

Practical Ways of exploring and responding to environmental issues through faith communities
Kate Davies, Safcei

Saving our World - Approaches to Ecology

No 36B – Social Awareness Series.
Lumko Institute. 2002

Sharing God's Planet

A Christian Vision for a Sustainable Future
Church House Publishing, 2005

The Land Is Crying For Justice

A discussion document on Christianity and Environmental Justice in South Africa
Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa 2002

The Care for the Earth

A call to a new Theology
Sean McDonagh
Claretan Publications 1986

The Greening of the Church

Sean McDonagh
Orbis Books / Geoffrey Chapman 1990

Water Wars

Privatization, Pollution and Profit
Vandana Shiva
South End Press 2000

Uranium Road

Questioning South Africa's Nuclear Direction
David Fig
Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd 2005

A Rainbow Over The Land

Ernst Conradie and David Field
Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches 2000

The New Energy Book for urban development in South Africa

Sarah Ward
Sustainable Energy Africa 2002

Dying for Water

Sean McDonagh
Veritas Publications 2003

Global Warming

A Straightforward Guide To The Most Important Issue In Our Age
Jessica Wilson and Stephen Law
Constable and Robinson Ltd 2007

Resources

It doesn't have to be Like This

A new Economy for South Africa and the World

Margaret Legum

& Ampersand Press 2002

Patenting Life? Stop!

Is corporate greed forcing us to eat genetically engineered food?

Sean McDonagh

Dominican Publications 2003

Heat

How To Stop The Planet Burning

George Monbiot

Alan Lane (Penguin) 2006

The Death Of Life

The Horror of Extinction

Sean Mcdonagh SSC

The Columba Press 2004

Climate Change

The Challenge to all of us

Sean Mcdonagh

The Columba Press 2006

The Meaning of the 21st Century

A vital Blue print for Ensuring our Future

James Martin

Transworld Publishers, edenproject books 2007

The Age of Consent

A Manifesto For A New World Order

George Monbiot

Harper Perennial 2003

Scorched

South Africa's changing climate

Leonie S Joubert

Wits University Press 2006

Six Degrees

Our Future on a hotter Planet

Mark Lynas

Fourth estate (div of Harper Collins) 2007

Climate Change

Why should I as a person of faith be concerned?

SAFCEI

The Oikos Journey

A theological Reflection on the Economic Crisis in South

The Diakonia Council of Churches 2006

God's Gift : The Earth Our Home

Bible Studies and liturgies for a social Justice Season linking faith with issues of the environment

Social Justice Season 2003

Diakonia Council of Churches

St Andrews Tide

A Call to Prayer and Response for our Survival in Southern Africa

Resources

Websites

www.seasonofcreation.com
Liturgies and resources

www.acen.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm
Offers resources and links through the Anglican communion.

www.ifaw.org
International fund for animal welfare. Information and how to get involved

www.wessa-africa.co.za
Wildlife and environment society of South Africa: Materials and resources

www.botanicalsociety.org.za
The botanical society of South Africa website.

www.neccsa.org.za
Network of Earthkeeping Christian Communities in South Africa

www.ecocongregation.org/scotland
Resources: bible studies and liturgies

www.enviropaedia.com
Short factual descriptions and articles

www.biowatch.org.za
Publicizes and monitors issues of genetic modification and biological diversity

www.projectearth.com
Recognises how we have damaged the environment and points a way forward

www.arcworld.org
Site of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation

www.climateark.org
Comprehensive source of information on Climate Change

www.panda.org
Site of the World Wide Fund for Nature

www.earthobservatory.nasa.gov
Outstanding photography

References

- (1) McDonagh S. *The Death of Life*. 2004 The Columba Press, Blackrock, Ireland.
- (2) Berry T. *The dream of the earth*. San Francisco: Sierra books; 1998.
- (3) Edwards M. *Hard Rain: our headlong collision with nature*. London: Still Pictures Moving Words Ltd.; 2006.
- (4) UNDP. *Human Development Report for South Africa*. 2000. Geneva, Switzerland, UNDP.
- (5) Gibbs D. : Personal Communication
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- (8) Kumar S. *Resurgence*. Resurgence [2006 :www.resurgence.org
- (9) Yancey P. *Prayer: does it make any difference?* London: Hodder and Stoughton; 2006.
- (10) Joubert L. *Scorched: South Africa's changing climate*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; 2006.
- (11) *A river runs through: Water in God's purpose of creation*. Inaugural conference of A Rocha in South Africa; Stellenbosch: 2006.
- (12) *Diakonia Council of Churches. God's Gift: The Earth, Our Home*. Bishopsgate, South Africa: 2003.
- (13) Atkins M. *A New Earth: reflection on the scripture readings for Lent*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd/CAFOD; 1998.
- (14) Conradie E, Field D. *A rainbow over the land*. Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches; 200.
- (15) Philpott G, Butler M. *Land in South Africa: Gift for all or commodity for a few?* Occasional paper no. 1. 2004. Pietermaritzburg, Church Land Programme.
- (16) Sunter C, Huntly B, Siegfied R. *South African environments in the 21st Century*. 1989.
- (17) Davies G. *Save our Future*. Cape Town: Southern African Anglican Theological Commission; 2000.

We worship a creator God. The more we learn about the natural world, the more wonderful we discover it to be. There is a real danger that with all our modern technical discoveries we lose sight of the magnificence and intricacy of creation. We are discovering that creation is seriously under threat.

That there is life on this planet is a miracle in itself. It is the most serious of sins that we humans are threatening this life. For too long we have selfishly misused and abused God's mandate to "have dominion over" creation (Genesis 1:28). Now is the time to recognize that we have a responsibility to God to care for this intricate web of life, acknowledging that "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Psalm 24).

I pray that these resources on creation themes will help us to worship God the Father more adequately, and to become more aware of God the creator and more responsible in caring for God's creation.

**The Most Reverend Thabo Makgoba,
Archbishop of Cape Town**