

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 6th September – 13th Sunday after Trinity

Jubilee for the Earth

Did you know that we are now in the Season of Creationtide – it began on September 1st and lasts until October 4th which is the feast of St Francis. The World Council of Churches initiated this season following the lead of the Orthodox Church, so that the world's 2.2 billion Christians of every denomination can come together to pray and take action for our common home. It's a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration of the rich diversity and beauty God has given us, conversion away from our misuse and desecration of it, and commitment to protect and renew it together.



Respect for and protection of creation is central to our faith and last Tuesday, September 1st, was a special commemoration of how God created the earth. It's not too late to keep our own individual commemorations at home by reading the two creation stories at the beginning of Genesis. The first one was written by the priestly caste at a time when the Jews were in exile, and occupies chapter 1 and the first three verses of chapter 2. It unfolds day by day for six days until God has completed creation, including men and women set in charge of caring for all that God has made. And God sees that it is very good. Then he rests on the seventh day and ordains that it shall be a day of rest for all. The second, which follows straight after the first, is a much older tale like a legend and tells of how Adam and Eve were created and set by God in the midst of Eden, with all their needs provided for, to care for it for God. And immediately we read how human beings failed God's commission and repeatedly how God had to keep rescuing them from their disobedience and folly.

The theme of Jubilee which is the focus of this year's Creationtide comes from the Book of Leviticus chapter 25, in the Old Testament. In it God sets out how his people are to live with respect for the earth. The Jubilee year, every 50th one, was to be set aside as a year for all nature to rest and recover the natural cycle of life. It was also a time for slaves to be set free and debts wiped out. Now climate change is a result of greed, inequality and destruction of God's earth so Jubilee is a time to renounce over-consumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the earth and those who are poor. Jubilee is a time when those who have consumed the most must make restitution to those who have suffered the most. Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people.

The theme of Jubilee brings together the need for a prophetic voice on climate injustice and actions for the restoration of the earth. Jubilee affirms the need for equality, justice, and sustainability, and a move into sustainable economies. It honours the Jubilee 2000 campaign which successfully called for an amnesty on debt for Global South countries and redistribution of wealth. And 2020 marks 50 years since the first Earth Day, when the environmental movement was born.

Creator God of Love,
thank you for the gift of life which we share with all creation.
Call us again to safeguard everything you have made,
for the earth and all its fullness is yours.
Amen

Eileen Wetherell

