

**WELCOME** The God of creation and re-creation welcomes us to church today as we welcome one another both here in the building and online. He is the God who from the beginning of time knew that renewal would be required. From the prophet Isaiah we get the promise (65.17) '*See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.*' And then from Jesus Himself in His risen and ascended power says this; (Revelation 21:5). *He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'*

The work of re-creation is God's, yet He invites those who believe in Him to work with Him to bring the restoration and renewal that will come to fruition when Jesus returns. This making all things new is an ongoing process. *Psalm 8* reminds us that at the beginning God appointed people to be rulers of creation – not through domination but through servant care, love and tenderness. *<sup>6</sup> You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their<sup>12d</sup> feet: <sup>7</sup> all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, <sup>8</sup> the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

We ponder this as we sing, How excellent in all the earth.

#### **HYMN 4 How excellent in all the earth**

1. How excellent in all the earth,  
Lord, our Lord, is thy name!  
Who hast thy glory far advanced  
Above the starry frame.
2. When I look up unto the heavens,  
Which thine own fingers framed,  
Unto the moon, and to the stars,  
Which were by thee ordained;
3. Then say I, What is man, that he,  
Remembered is by thee?  
Or what the son of man, that thou  
So kind to him should'st be?
4. For thou a little lower hast

Him than the angels made;  
With glory and with dignity  
Thou crowned hast his head.

Psalm 8, versus 1, 3-5

The Scottish Psalter, 1929

## **PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

Lord God Almighty we bring You the worship and praise of our hearts. You alone are God, the one from whom all good things come. You are our Creator and our sustainer. We see Your hand at work all around us in the creation of Your world. We marvel at how You have set everything in its place and for everything there is a time and a season. We look to green shoots of new life as the very dead looking bulbs in our gardens are now producing flowers, the aconites and snowdrops bravely peeking out from the brown earth. They help us to see that without Your help and provision no growth would take place. From a tiny seed that looks dead You bring forth much growth. We marvel at the picture that this gives us of You and what You do in our own lives. Without You we are nothing, but with Your power at work in our lives we are Your people.

Lord God we marvel at Your love for us. You take us, nurture us and stand by us even though so often we do not acknowledge You and indeed very often ignore You. Your love has brought us Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for His example here on earth. We praise You Lord Jesus for Your willingness to come down from Heaven, to live on earth dying on earth so that our sins might be forgiven in order that we might be re united with God through You. You are to be given all praise and glory.

Lord God Your Spirit remains in the world today, helping us, guiding us, comforting us, challenging us. We are amazed by Your continuing care for us. All we can do is to bow before You in wonder and praise.

When we look to You and then look back at ourselves we see how little of Your goodness is within us. We fail You at every turn. There are things which You have prompted us to do this week and we have ignored Your prompting. There have been times when we should have spoken up for You and for truth and we have stayed silent. There have been times where we have barged straight into situations without thinking what You would want us to do and the result has been disastrous. We long to live for You O God and yet we never manage to for very long. Our best intentions come to nothing. Forgive us we pray and as we ask for Your pardon we pray that we might be sensitive to Your Spirit's moving in our lives. Change us into the people You want us to be. We thank You that Your word tells us that when we confess our sins, turning away from them, then You do indeed forgive us and so we rejoice that we leave here new people. All honour and praise be to Your Name O God In Jesus' name we pray saying

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

**READING    Romans 8:15-25 (The Message Translation)                      Read by George Jack (E&Y)**

<sup>15-17</sup> This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

<sup>18-21</sup> That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

<sup>22-25</sup> All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

**REFLECTION                                      Marks of Mission 5 Treasure**

Hands up those of you who have ever taken a sneaky peak at the last chapter of a novel you've been reading in order to know the end before you've read all the twists and plots? Does that help you to make sense of all those twists and plots I wonder?

We come to the last Mark of Mission today which is **To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.**

What a huge ask if not task! The downfall of creation is happening before our very eyes. Our Eco Congregation group here in Selkirk has been helping each of the churches to think through implications for daily living and with COP 26 last November the issue has rarely been off the news. Rather than re-hash what has already been said I want us to go back to the real reason behind climate change, famines, wars, destruction of all kinds, to look at the spiritual implications and why if they are not addressed the rest will not be either.

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Back at the beginning God formed creation out of chaos, a place of safety, security, peace, growth, harvest and harmony for all parts of creation. Everything worked in order, each different part in its correct place, all good things abundant and enough for everyone. Sin came into the world when we people chose to put our needs, our desires above those of God's, above those of the rest of creation. We can manage on our own, we don't need help and so the downfall began and kept on a downwards spiral. The downfall which affected the whole of creation, not just the people within. From weather systems out of kilter, to fractures in and under the earth creating mayhem, to the animal kingdom at odds with one another, to disease of all kinds, the world is not what God intended.

He knew that having given humanity the choice of whether to follow His ways or not they would do the latter so He put in place a rescue plan. Firstly, Israel was to be God's special people living according to His laws, shining out like lights to other nations. And they did sometimes.

From then till now the story of God's people helping to change the world into a better place comes in fits and starts. It has never been sustained though, for all too often we try to do things on our own. The Bible's story is the story of God's healing, re-creating work bringing healing to creation, centred on communities of people who know God's love and share that love with other human beings.

Several Old Testament terms tell of this – *shalom* (peace, wholeness) *hesed*, (loving kindness) *mispat or tsdeqah* (righteousness justice), all terms associated with God's character.

The story of God's re-creation of the world and the people within continues into the New Testament where Jesus, God's Son, comes to live among us, die among us and rise ,breaking the power which death, spiritual death has over us bringing the promise of a new creation to come one where *shalom*, *hesed*, *tsdeqah* are present always and forever, where there will be no more discontinuity, disease, disaster of any description. Jesus the One who was part of the creating process in the beginning is the One who He tells us has been given all authority over heaven and *earth*. He is Lord of all.

We all know this story, many of us have lived within this story from being knee high to a grasshopper.

Yet the question is how does this story affect our living in today's world?

As Christians we have a duty not just to share this story but to live it. How can people understand if they have not been told and shown?

Until the underlying cause of discontinuity, disease and disaster is dealt with then all our efforts to bring in a new creation will be in vain. Put bluntly in order to save creation we need to allow God to save souls through us. Jesus' commandment to His disciples and to us is to ***go*** into all the world ***to people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.*** (Matthew 28:19,20) The teaching and making disciples comes first, for once hearts, minds and souls are attuned to God and His ways then His teaching about caring for creation will fall into place. As someone has said, "We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ. We as Christians care for the earth and

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responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world but for the Lord's sake.”

We do though know in hope and in faith that the downward spiral is not the end of the story. God's way will prevail. His promise is that He will do a new thing, bring in a new creation where all the earth and heavens will live in peace, where the lion will once again lie down with the lamb, where justice, mercy, right living will be restored for all creation.

People often rail at the verse in Romans which says ***Creation was condemned to lose its purpose because God willed it to be so.*** Why on earth would He do that? The age old question of why suffering, why decay is never far from folks' minds.

Professor William Barclay says this, “Paul was no pessimist...He saw man's sin, he saw the state of the world, and the state of the human situation; but he also saw God's redeeming power and the end of it all for Paul was HOPE. Because of that, Paul's life was not a despairing waiting for an inevitable end in a world encompassed by sin and death and decay; life was an eager anticipation, a liberation, a renovation and a re-creation wrought by the glory and power of God.”

Jesus' declaration, “Behold I make all things new,” affords the hope that one day we will be free from the consequences and effects of sin and will live with Him in a new heaven and earth. This truth makes us live with eager expectation, seeking to know Him more, become more like Him, and make Him known. Our hope for the future is what changes how we live as we await Jesus' making all things new.

Yes we live in a world that is groaning under the weight of sin and death, but like a mother accepts the pain of childbirth in the hope of new life to come from the pain so Paul is encouraging us to do the same. That doesn't mean we sit by doing nothing. Mothers the world over find ways of coping with the pain, inviting others to help them through it. The pain of childbirth is pain with a purpose and is temporary. The pains of childbirth are not death pangs but new life pangs. From out of the groans come the glory of new life to paraphrase Paul.

From spiritual new birth will come the way to bring re-creation to our world, physically mentally, morally.

God invites us to be a vital part of bringing that re-creation into being. We are part of history – HIS STORY of creation, saving, and re-creating. Morning has broken like the first morning, born of the one light – the light that came into our world at the beginning of time, the light which came into our world in Jesus, Light of the World, the light which shines into our lives then shines out from our lives as we wait in hopefulness, as we wait with eager anticipation working towards this new creation which God will bring in, in part through our actions. The word for eager anticipation is one which suggests us waiting on tiptoes, our whole bodies leaning forward looking towards the new day. It kind of reminds me of the crowds waiting at the Toll on Common Riding morning!

Christians are uniquely placed to share with the world the cause of the world's present groaning – sin – not living life God's way.

We are uniquely placed to share God's way of sorting the problem – accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour and

we are uniquely placed to provide the world with the hope that this is not the end – God's plan will come to fruition in His time and He uses the people of His creation to care for it in tenderness, love and compassion.

The questions for today start at the very beginning, acknowledging that our spiritual needs, need to be addressed in order that God would graciously work through us to bring His healing, His wholeness to bear throughout creation.

*1. What are you doing to promote spiritual healing within your life, your family's life, our community life?*

*2. What are we as churches doing to promote spiritual healing? What should we be doing?*

*3. How do we as individuals hold onto the hope of new life to come?*

*4. How do we share that hope with others in our community and world?*

*5. How do we affirm God's sovereignty over all creation and His willingness to make all things new, a place where He, His creation and His people will live in harmony once more?*

*6. How does that affect our practical living in the here and now?*

### **HYMN   Creation sings the Father's song**

Creation sings the Father's song;  
He calls the sun to wake the dawn  
And run the course of day  
Till evening falls in crimson rays.  
His fingerprints in flakes of snow,  
His breath upon this spinning globe,  
He charts the eagle's flight;  
Commands the newborn baby's cry.

Hallelujah! Let all creation stand and sing,  
"Hallelujah!" Fill the earth with songs of worship;

Tell the wonders of creation's King.

Creation gazed upon His face;  
The ageless One in time's embrace  
Unveiled the Father's plan  
Of reconciling God and man.  
A second Adam walked the earth,  
Whose blameless life would break the curse,  
Whose death would set us free  
To live with Him eternally.

Creation longs for His return,  
When Christ shall reign upon the earth;  
The bitter wars that rage  
Are birth pains of a coming age.  
When He renews the land and sky,  
All heav'n will sing and earth reply  
With one resplendent theme: The glories of our God and King!

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## **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

**Margaret Johnstone (Selkirk)**

Father Your Kingdom come  
Father Your will be done.

Gracious God and loving Father, we thank you that you have called us to be part of Your new creation offering us healing, hope and forgiveness. You have set before us a great hope that Your Kingdom will come on earth and have encouraged us to pray for its coming. Make us ever ready to thank You for signs of its dawning. We pray for the global effort of prayer and ask Your blessings on what has been planned. Enable us to give the Lord Jesus Christ His rightful place as head of His church, His body which we are all members.

Father Your Kingdom come  
Father Your will be done.

Lord we remember the world in which we live in. Its suffering and conflict, its hunger and sorrow, the nation we belong to, in its tension and striving, the town where we live. We pray for our leaders, and our fellow citizens, the congregation of which we are a part with, its heritage and its future. We look to a time when Your Kingdom shall come and there will be an end to suffering, sorrow, evil and injustice. You call us to work for Your Kingdom here and now. Help us to make love more real in the daily round of life.

Father Your Kingdom come

Father Your will be done.

Father we give You thanks for the witness of the apostle Paul and for his obedience to spread the good news of the gospel to the Gentiles. We read in the book of Romans that Paul believe that any sufferings we experience are not worth comparing them with the glory still to be revealed. The creation and we ourselves wait with eager expectation when eventually all our tears will be wiped away.

Only one person can bring peace Our Lord Jesus Himself.

In His name we pray. AMEN

### **HYMN 500 Lord of creation**

Lord of creation to Thee be all praise

Most mighty Thy working most wondrous Thy ways

Who reignest in glory no tongue can e're tell

Yet deign'st in the heart of the humble to dwell

Lord of all power I give thee my will

In joyful obedience Thy tasks to fulfil

Thy bondage is freedom Thy service is song

And held in thy keeping my weakness is strong

Lord of all wisdom I give Thee my mind

Rich truth that surpasseth man's knowledge to find

What eye hath not seen and what ear hath not heard

Is taught by Thy spirit and shines from Thy Word

Lord of all bounty I give Thee my heart

I praise and adore Thee for all that Thou art

Thy love to inflame me Thy counsel to guide  
Thy presence to shield me whate'er may betide

Lord of all being I give Thee my all  
If e'er I disown Thee I stumble and fall  
But sworn in glad service Thy word to obey  
I walk in Thy freedom to the end of the way.

John Copley Winslow (1882-1974)

### **BENEDICTION**

**God the creator guide you in all that you do**

**Christ the Saviour protect you in every journey**

**The Spirit of God give you strength for each day.**

**Go, knowing the blessing of God's Presence at work in your life and through your life today and everyday. Amen**