

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The image is dominated by a dense canopy of green trees. Scattered throughout the foliage are several houses with various roof colors, including red, grey, and white. A network of dirt roads or paths winds through the trees, with a few cars visible on one of the roads. The overall scene is peaceful and lush.

# Morning Worship

## Season of Creation

*"The Earth is the Lord's  
and all that fills it"*

Psalm 25:1

13 September 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Morning Worship here at the Parish churches of Coxley with Godney, Henton, and Wookey. Although we are once again meeting together physically in our church buildings we understand that some people might not be able to attend for any number of reasons. It is hoped that following this liturgy, knowing that others in the benefice will be doing so at the same time, might help provide a spiritual connection between us and bring about a sense of community between the followers of Jesus Christ.

It is suggested that alongside this liturgy you have a means to listen to the suggested hymns which have links to videos with lyrics within this document. There is a mixture of traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs. If you do not know the tune then why not listen to the hymn/song and worship through reading the words alone.

The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either one can lead with others joining in with the responses in **bold** OR everyone present may join in with all the words.

The sections in *red italics* are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.

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# MORNING WORSHIP

## GREETING

Praise God! For even though we are apart the Lord is in our midst!

**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord is here!

**His Spirit is with us!**

Though we find ourselves isolated  
in homes, apartments, and residential places,

**we look out our windows and remember,  
the heavens declare the glory of God,  
all creation rejoices in our creator.**

*Psalms 19:1*

Though we cannot be present with our church community,

**we rejoice that Christ is in our midst,  
he is with us always, until the end of the age!**

*Matthew 28:20*

Though we have to stand at a safe distance from others,  
giving space to those who pass us by,

**we recall we are all made in the image of God,  
connected to one another,  
connected to God.**

*Genesis 1:27*

## HYMN: CREATION SINGS

[Listen here](#)

## CONFESSION AND WORDS OF COMFORT

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world  
and knows our every word and deed.  
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord  
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.**

**We are not worthy to be called your children.**

**We turn to you again.**

**Have mercy on us,**

**bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead  
but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*A period of silent reflection follows*

Hear the words of comfort, our Saviour Christ says to all who truly  
turn to him:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish  
but have eternal life.*

*John 3:16*

## COLLECT

Let us pray.

*A period of silent prayer is kept.*

Almighty God  
you brought order out of chaos  
transforming and separating the raging ocean into earth, sky and seas,  
create in us a pool of peace, a deep well of healing  
that can transform our lives and bring balance to your creation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord  
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## HYMN: SATISFIED

[Listen here](#)

## THE WORD OF GOD

Hear what God is saying to his people according to the gospel of John.

**4** <sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), <sup>3</sup> he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. <sup>4</sup> And he had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

<sup>7</sup> A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." <sup>8</sup> (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

## THE SERMON

*By Revd Guy*

### THE 'SEASON OF CREATION'

Last week we launched the *Season of Creation* here in the benefice. For those of you who missed last week, the *Season of Creation* is an ecumenical celebration of God the creator and his creation that occurs every year from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to the feast day of St Francis of Assisi on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October.

Throughout this season we will be looking at various topics surrounding creation, what the Bible says about them, and what they mean for our lives today.

Last week we looked at the topic of the land and the misunderstanding of what it means for humans to have 'dominion' over creation. We discovered that due to our sin we have forgotten that creation is not ours to abuse, but is God's and so we are not rulers of this earth but stewards of it tending to it under God's rule. As faithful stewards, looking forward in expectation to the completion of God's kingdom, we should be those who look after creation so it becomes a sign of God's kingdom here on earth and the glory of God found in all creation. That is why for the *Season of Creation* I am inviting any and all of our congregation to join me in our churchyards on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings to tend to them and help them bring glory to God once more.

### WATER

This week we are looking at water. Just like the land last week, water is vital to our own existence. We use water every day, often without realising it. I wonder how much you have already used water this morning? A morning shower? That much needed cup of tea or coffee? Brushing your teeth? Washing up after breakfast? Putting on the laundry perhaps? And who can forget flushing the toilet?! Everyday we turn on taps expecting water without thinking too much about it.

And yet, in spite of our large daily consumption of water, we do not realise how precious a commodity it is. Did you know, for example, that although approximately 71% of the world is covered in water only 3.5% of it is drinkable, and of that 68% is trapped in ice and glaciers? Or did you know that a person can live without food on average, for about three weeks but cannot go for longer than three days without water? This shows us just how precious water is and what a blessing it is for us to have fresh, clean drinking water available in such abundance.

Although we have drinking water readily available to us in our homes, 1 in 10 people live without safe water close to their homes - that is approximately 785 million people. To put that in perspective, that is the equivalent of all of Europe not being able to access clean water. This not only makes day-to-day tasks like washing clothes difficult, but also puts people's lives at risk from dehydration and water borne diseases. According to the 2006 UN Human Development Report "The water and sanitation crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns.' For these 785 million people they often must choose between risking diseases in dirty water or having no water at all. At this time, in the midst of the Coronavirus, it is these people who are most vulnerable. In our church buildings and on government websites, in fact in most places you look these days, we are told that the most effective way to prevent the spread of Coronavirus is to wash your hands regularly - who would have ever thought that being able to do that would be such a blessing?!

Water is a precious, life-giving gift from God and a vital part of his creation that we are blessed to have whilst others do not. We must give thanks to God everyday for such easy access to safe drinking water, for it is a gift that both sustains us and the land that provides our food and to pray for God to help those who are not so privileged. (My goodness when did it become acceptable for clean water to be a privilege rather than a basic right?!). To do anything less than pray is to take it for granted and to dismiss the generosity that God has bestowed upon us in such a humble form.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND WATER**

As God's stewards, just as we heard last week of our need to tend creation and oppose the exploitation of the land, we need to be doing likewise with water. Jesus himself reminds us of our calling to help of those in need. In Matthew's gospel Jesus says 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the worlds. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...' (Mt 25:34-35). We, as God's people should be doing our bit to help those in need both as stewards of God's creation and followers of Jesus Christ.

We can do this quite simply by caring for the water we do have. When we turn off the tap rather than leaving it running whilst we brush our teeth we show that we value water, that it is not a commodity to be wasted. If you already do this then great, but why stop there, we could have shorter showers, use the dishwasher less, use our garden hose less, all of these are small actions that show how we value what we have. You could also support charities such as [Water Aid](#), [Water.org](#), or [Charity:Water](#). Perhaps this year for your birthday, instead of asking for gifts, you could ask for donations to one of these charities? Safe, clean, drinking water is a gift from God that should be shared with the whole world and we are called to help do that.

## **WATER IN THE BIBLE**

Not only is water vital for humanity's survival, it also plays a prominent role within the Bible. We see water at the very start of the Bible with the separation of the water in creation; it is used for bringing about a fresh start with God in the story of Noah and the flood as well as in baptism; we see its role in redemption with the parting of the Red Sea by Moses as the Israelites escape from Egypt; it is a sign of God's provision with Moses drawing water from a stone when the Israelites were wandering the desert; we see it as a sign of God's power when a tempest blows across lake Galilee and Jesus calms the storm; and we see it as a sign of

eternal life in the story of the woman at the well as we heard in our reading today: “whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

I wonder when was the last time you felt thirsty? I often get thirsty when I am at the front of church, all that speaking can make my throat so dry that I get quite thirsty; add in all the robes and a hot summers day and I am desperate for a drink by the end of a service! And oh, when I get that glass of water - what bliss! There is nothing quite as satisfying as a drink when you are thirsty is there?

But it is never too long before we are thirsty again. Just like the woman coming each day to the well to draw water, we need to regularly re-hydrate ourselves. Living and finding purpose in this world is similar to being thirsty. Everyone is looking for ways to satisfy themselves, whether it is through accumulating as much wealth as possible hoping for happiness, or seeking the solution to life's problems through the latest must have gadget, or building as wide a friendship group as possible, or being in a perfect relationship - everyone tries a variety of different methods to be satisfied in their lives.

But ultimately none of these satisfy us, not wealth, nor beauty, nor technology, nor love. They are all idols that satisfy us for a time. Jesus however is a different prospect altogether. In Jesus we find the one who truly satisfies because through him we find our connection to our creator, we find out the reason we are here, and we discover the way we were always meant to be living! We no longer need to stumble around in the darkness searching for the best way to live because Jesus has revealed it to us. Living a life following Jesus, bringing ourselves closer to God and the way we were designed to live will bring true satisfaction.

Jesus promises us a gift that will truly satisfy, and once we are satisfied, truly satisfied, then we are in a position to accept the gift of eternal life that Jesus made possible through his death and

resurrection. Can you imagine anything worse than living forever but never finding satisfaction or contentment? That would be awful. That is why although the gift of eternal life, the symbolic gift of water Jesus offers to everyone, only those who take what Jesus offers will receive eternal life. It is only through faith in Christ, in accepting the gift he offers us, that we will live with God for eternity living an eternal life of meaning, purpose, and ultimately satisfaction.

### **SHARING THE WATER**

This is why as well as fighting to make the gift of clean drinking water accessible to all, sharing what God has provided for us, we must also share the life giving water of Jesus Christ. Across this country people are looking for this water that Jesus offers and as those who already have it we must go out and bring it to them.

Some people we share the story of Jesus with will be searching for him, searching for something to quench their thirst and bring them satisfaction in their life. These people may know you are a Christian and one day ask you about who Jesus is. When this happens we must, as Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15, be 'prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks us for a reason for the hope that is in you.' We need to be ready to take advantage of the opportunities to share Jesus when they present themselves.

Others though, may have forgotten that they are thirsty. I have this terrible habit of ignoring my body's signals for food and drink, I am so wrapped up with what I am doing I just ignore the call of my throat or stomach until I do not notice it anymore. People are like that with their whole lives, they are either distracted in their attempt at finding satisfaction in the things of this world, in money, or possessions or relationships, that they do not realise they are not being satisfied or they have been so dissatisfied with the things of this world that they have just given up. These are the people that we need to search out, these are the people who will not come into this church building until we first meet them where they are. That is why we must be people who share the gospel with the people we

see day in day out, be it the person at the check out in the supermarket, or someone from a club we are members of, or even your hairdresser (in fact the hairdresser is a good person to start with as they are can't walk away from you!)

There is a third group of people I want to mention before I finish. There are some who may have had the water Jesus offers for so long that they take it for granted, a bit like us with the drinking water we have available from our taps. Just as we forget those who physically thirst every day, there will be some here today who have forgotten that there are those who are still spiritually thirsty wanting what we can share with them. If that is you then I encourage you to be brave and to share the good news of Jesus Christ because there is nothing quite like seeing others satisfy their thirst to remind us of the gift that we have.

So let us be those who thank God for the gift of safe drinking water; let us be those who ask God to show us how we can bring that blessing of clean water to others; let us be those who dive deep into the teachings of Jesus finding meaning through him; and let us be those who share the gift of Jesus, the one who ultimately satisfies the desires of the heart, with others. Amen,

### **HYMN: THERE IS A RIVER**

[Listen here](#)

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## INTERCESSIONS

*Use the silence to bring before God your own concerns around that topic.*

Jesus, our exalted Lord, has been given all authority.  
Let us seek his intercession that our prayers may be perfected  
by his prayer.

Jesus Christ, great high priest,  
living for ever to intercede for us,  
pray for the Church and its leaders, your broken body in the world...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, King of righteousness,  
enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high,  
pray for the world and its leaders, and make it subject to your gentle rule...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Son of Man,  
drawing humanity into the life of God,  
pray for your sisters and brothers in need, distress, or sorrow...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus, pioneer of our salvation,  
bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection,  
surround with your saints and angels  
those who have died trusting your promises...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Lord over all creation,  
through whose blood all creation is redeemed,  
pray for us to be good stewards of your creation...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ,  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## **HYMN: TELL OUT MY SOUL**

[Listen here](#)

## DISMISSAL

God the Father,  
who first sowed in your hearts the seed of eternal life,  
bless you.

God the Son,  
who nurtures you with the rain and sunshine of love,  
bless you.

God the Holy Spirit,  
who brings us all to fullness of life,  
bless you.

The blessing of the one true God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you always  
and that you might be a blessing to others.

**Amen.**