

DIVERSITY

Carlops Parish Church Eco Service, 2018

Hymns are Church Hymnary, Fourth edition (CH4)

Welcome

We'd like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone worshipping with us this morning. And we would like to thank you, the congregation, for giving us the opportunity to present this eco-service.

The theme of our service is diversity, and we will look at several aspects of that, as we reflect on the world around us and how best we can live in it. We are all different and complement each other.

First hymn – No 141: Oh the life of the world is a joy ...

Prayer

Let us pray; please repeat the phrase *We praise your name, Oh God* after each of the first five lines

The world around us is full of beauty
We praise your name, oh God

For the gift of life on earth
We praise your name, oh God

Open our eyes to see your artistry
We praise your name, oh God

Where our praise is short or silent
We praise your name, oh God

Here we join creation's song
We praise your name, oh God

God, our creator,
We come together to celebrate your creation, the bright beauty about us, the abundance of your providing.
Accept this offering of praise as we worship you, the maker of all.

And now, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever.

Amen

Second hymn – No 143: Who put the colours in the rainbow ...?

Children's Address

In my garden there are frogs and newts in the pond, bumblebees and honey bees on the cotoneaster and the comfrey, butterflies in the buddleia and the wildflowers, birds in the trees and visiting the bird feeders: goldfinches, great-tits, chaffinches, blue-tits and bramblings.

They are all living in my garden, in homes they have built themselves, using the materials to hand, also from my garden; the flowers attracting the insects and bugs, eaten by the frogs and small birds.

Without any one of these links in the chain, the garden would fall apart, and nothing would grow.

We have heard about the dangers to bees in the countryside and how their habitats are disappearing. We all need bees for pollination, and farmers desperately need them for successful crops.

Worms also serve an important purpose – helping to make the soil more fertile for better crops. In some parts of the UK, New Zealand flat worms have taken over the upper levels of soil in our gardens, chasing the fat working worms further down and away. When you dig in your garden, do you find worms? if you do, please nurture them, for they will help your garden and all that is in it to grow better.

Third hymn – No 245: It's a world of sunshine, a world of rain ...

Reading: *The Garden Lawn*, a poem by Bryan Owen

Blades of green grass, seed heads bursting
Dance and quiver in a sultry summer breeze –
A sprinkling of daisies and yellow-throated buttercups
Surrounded by flies and midges and bees.

A few dead leaves and some painted pink petals
Provide protective cover for red ants rummaging
In the jungled undergrowth crawling with food,
Spending their insect days searching and foraging.

A ground beetle bumps into a red-spotted ladybird
And goes on its way ignoring and ignorant
passing an earwig and many-footed millipede
Searching for manna in the age-old way.

A desiccating earthworm sadly took a wrong turn
And twists in the warmth of the life-denying sun.
A black and golden honeybee hovers there in front of me
Before flying on again to make more honey for tea.

Who would have thought it? Who could conceive it?
A whole city in the lawn and I didn't even know it.
Surely there's something there for a would-be minor poet?

Fourth hymn – No 243: Touch the earth lightly ...

Reading: Psalm 148 (as adapted by Nan C Merrill in *Psalms for praying*)

Praise the Blessed One!

Give praise from the heavens and from all ends of the earth.
Give praise all you angels, angels of earth and of heaven.
Give praise, sun and moon, give praise all you shining stars!
Give praise, all universes, the whole cosmos of creation!

Praise the Blessed One!

For through Love all was created and firmly fixed for ever and ever.
Yes, the pattern of creation was established.

Give praise to the Beloved, all the earth, all that swim in the deep, and all the winged ones of the air!

Give praise all mountains and hills, all trees and all minerals!

Give praise all four-leggeds and all that creep on the ground!

Leaders of the nations and all peoples, young and old – give praise! Unite together in all your diversity, that peace and harmony might flourish on earth!

Let all people praise the beloved, who is exalted in heaven and on earth; whose glory is above heaven and earth.

For all are called to be friends, companions to the true friend, giving their lives joyfully as co-creators and people of peace!

Praises be to the Blessed One, the very breath of our breath, the very heart of our heart!

Amen

Diversity

A world of diversity: of animals, birds and plants; people, races and languages; cultures and backgrounds. We are all different, yet all complement each other. Life would be very boring if we were all the same. We all gain so much from learning about other cultures.

In June 2018, our local High School in Peebles became the first school in the Scottish Borders to be awarded the Silver LGBT Charter Mark. This charter describes basic rights such as: to be yourself; to have a right to privacy; to be kept safe from harm; and to have a right to education. We should be proud of the work of the pupils in Peebles who have made a real difference in their school and we hope it will set an example to the wider community.

On World Environment Day on 5 June 2018, 100 members of the Scottish Parliament launched their *Species Champion 100 day challenge*, participating in a series of

actions raising awareness about their selected species and about wider biodiversity concerns in Scotland. From planning to agriculture, and from tourism to healthcare, the protection and enhancement of our biodiversity must be acknowledged as a key ingredient to our success as a nation – and all our policies and practices need to reflect that. If we don't, we will fall short on our 2020 global biodiversity commitments and our ambitions for a sustainable Scotland.

Alison Johnstone, Lothians MSP, has championed the brown hare, publicising the threats and issues facing hares in Scotland, drawing attention particularly to recent mountain hare culling, and the need for conservation work for their protection.

Jenny Gilruth, MSP for mid-Fife and Glenrothes, is species champion for the rowan tree. She has been helping schools plant trees, learning about the threats to the rowan and what policies are needed to redress these.

Earlier in this service, we spoke about the diversity in our gardens and the threats to bees and earth worms, and the impact that that has upon us all.

There are other creatures threatened in the world; the International Union for the Conservation of Nature has listed more than 77,300 species on their Red List. This figure includes many of the best-known species of amphibians, birds and mammals: the Tasmanian wolf, the Holdridges toad, Iberian lynx, blue-throated macaw, angelfish, butterflyfish, crocodiles, freshwater crabs and crayfish, lobsters, marine turtles, parrotfish, reef-building corals, seasnakes, sharks and rays, tuna and billfishes, and wrasses. The results are disturbing, with several species groups facing a severe threat of extinction.

Specifically

- 41% of amphibian species are threatened
- 33% of reef-building Coral species are threatened
- 34% of conifer species are threatened
- 25% of mammal species are threatened
- 13% of bird species are threatened

In Scotland, we have our native wild cat. Scottish Wildcat Action is running a sustained campaign which will include events at the project's five priority areas in Scotland: northern Strathspey, the Angus glens, Strathpeffer, Morvern and Strathbogie. We are almost certainly the last generation which has a realistic chance of saving this iconic species from extinction in Scotland.

Wildcats here face three key threats: hybridisation with feral domestic cats; disease; and accidental killing. We can help tackle these threats by taking action, including reporting sightings of wildcat and un-neutered feral cats. There has been a recent suggestion that wild cats could be released in the Scottish Borders, hopefully, to establish a new population. The actions we take today through the Generation Wildcat movement will determine the future of Scotland's most endangered carnivore.

Let us celebrate what makes our planet special and commit ourselves to keeping it that way.

Humans are part of biodiversity too; we have the power to protect it, or to destroy it. Currently, our activities are destroying the biodiversity of the earth at an alarming rate. Statistics show that humanity is depleting nature's resources and producing CO2 at a rate 44% faster than nature can regenerate and reabsorb. In round figures, that means that it now takes 18 months for the Earth to regenerate what we use in one year.

If everyone lived like an average European it would require 2.5 planet Earths to produce the resources we consume; and 2.5 planets to absorb our CO2 emissions.

To reduce our carbon footprint, we must find new ways to live.

What can we do to try and protect our planet?

- Cut down on air travel
- Consider an electric car
- Support renewable energy suppliers
- Use public transport wherever possible
- Buy local produce wherever possible
- Don't buy more than you need
- Have a meat-free day each week
- Grow our own produce wherever possible
- Cut down our use of plastic
- Recycle

If we each try to do something, it all adds up and a small, but highly significant difference can be made.

Starting as a symbolic lights-out event in Sydney in 2007, the World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour has grown to become the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment, inspiring individuals, communities, businesses and organisations in more than 180 countries and territories to take tangible climate action. On 24 March this year, many of us here in Carlpos switched off our lights for an hour in the evening.

Here in Carlops, however small a community we may be, we can make a difference. Everyone, everywhere can make a difference.

Your own difference may be small, but taken together, everyone's difference means a great deal!

Offering

We will continue worshipping God with our offering

Prayer

Let us Pray ...

Heavenly Father, we bring our offerings to be used in your service and ask that the money is spent wisely, according to your will.

Amen

Let us pray for God's world. Please repeat *Lord hear us* after each sentence.

That its beauty may be preserved, its variety retained, its integrity respected.
Lord hear us

That pollution and cruel exploitation might cease so that rivers can clap their hands, waste places burst into flower, valleys laugh and sing, wild life live in safety.
Lord hear us

That the children of tomorrow may not need a museum to show them the wonders of nature today.
Lord hear us

That the poorest nations of the world may not harvest their fields only to fill foreign tables.
Lord hear us

That Christ who pointed to the birds, the flowers, the corn, the sunset, might not find their beauty lacking were he to return.
Lord hear us

Hear us, Creator of all, convert the hearts of those who ravage the earth and strengthen the resolve of those who respect it. And since the earth is your gift to us, prevent us from destroying by thoughtlessness that which is not ours to own.

Lord hear us

Amen

Fifth (closing) hymn – No 149: Let all creation dance ...

Blessing

O Christ there is no plant in the ground
But it is full of your virtue.
There is no form in the strand
But it is full of your blessing.
There is no life in the sea,
There is no creature in the ocean,
There is nothing in the heavens
But proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing,
There is no star in the sky,
There is nothing beneath the sun
But proclaims your goodness.

Sung triple amen