



God's Good Creation

A Lenten reflection

God's Good Creation

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.
Colossians 1: 15-16

Lent is a time to reflect on the loving sacrifice our Creator God made for us by giving the world his Son, Jesus. It is an opportunity to reflect on all that God is and has done to reconcile his creation.

Colossians 1:16 reminds us that all things have been created through him and for him. This includes his good creation, something he lovingly crafted.

Naturally we are quick to reflect on how God's sacrifice has impacted upon us as individuals, however we can often become

disconnected with what this means for the wider world, for the ecosystems, the trees, the animals, the oceans; all things that reflect the mystery and magnificence of our God.

This Lenten reflection will help you contemplate God's creation and our role in caring for it, a role we must accept as God's image-bearers.

We will spend the next six weeks reflecting on creation and how God calls us to be good stewards of all he has lovingly made.

We pray this resource will be a blessing to you this Lenten season.

Jo Knight

CEO Anglican Overseas Aid

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What is Lent?

Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit where he stayed 40 days. There he did not eat, but spent much of the time being tempted by the devil.

As followers of Christ, Lent is an opportunity to spend 40 days preparing for Easter in fasting, prayer and penitence.

We are then able to devote more time to God, being guided by him, reflecting on his great sacrifice for us and reassessing how we are living our lives for his glory.

God's love for all creation

Genesis 1:31

God gave us his wonderfully good world. He gave us soil to grow crops to nourish our bodies, trees that give us oxygen to breathe, shade to rest under and flowers that remind us how beautiful and fragile creation is.

Every good thing in creation is a generous gift from our Creator God. What an honour it is to be responsible for stewarding this gift!

Unfortunately, when human beings turned away from God the whole of creation was impacted. This has never been more apparent, as we now face climate shocks all over the world – preventable catastrophes that are impacting on some of the most marginalised of God's people as well as the natural world.

Not only did our Creator God bless us with this glorious world, God in the person of Jesus also entered the world and was rejected by it, paying the ultimate sacrifice by dying on the cross for all of creation. Christ's actions are the epitome of generosity.

This Lenten season, let us reflect on all that God has given us.

-  What are some of your favourite parts of God's creation?
-  How does God speak to you through creation?
-  How did Christ display generosity in his life and ministry?



Lord, thank you that you entrusted me with your creation and that I can see your love and creativity in the world.

I do not deserve your boundless generosity. Help me to accept and honour it.

Thank you that all good gifts come from you and that your ultimate gift, your Son, was a gift that would save us all.

*Help me to reflect on your love as my Creator this Lent.
Amen*

Sacrificial love

Colossians 1:19-20

When we think of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we usually link it to our own salvation, a big deal indeed! However, we don't usually reflect on how this is good news for the whole of creation, that God in Christ died to reconcile all things to himself.

Through Jesus' death for our sins, we are called into a reconciled relationship with God. As God's people we continue to grow in this restored relationship and respond on earth.

As part of our response to our Creator God, we are called to restore the earth now. We have a part to play as disciples of Christ to care for all creation, responding to people and God's planet.

Christ sacrificed his life for us on the cross, and in response, we too are called to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. Part of our sacrifice may be

time spent in prayer, our talents in practical response or our treasure in giving to causes that work towards restoring all creation.

-  What feelings or thoughts come to mind when you think about the renewal of all creation?
-  How is your relationship with creation broken?
-  How can you sacrificially give your time, talents or treasure this Lent?
-  Are there any practical ways you can give thanks for God's creation? For example: picking up litter, planting a tree, growing your own food, helping a neighbour with their gardening.

*Loving God, thank you that through
your death and resurrection not only am
I restored but so is your entire creation.*

*This Lent, reveal to me how I can work
with you to care for your creation so I
can honour your sacrifice and help to
bring renewal to your world. Amen*



I was thirsty

Matthew 25:35

It is so easy to look away from suffering, but when we do so we are unable to care for our neighbour and consequently we look away from our God.

While we cannot earn God's love our actions have an impact on his people and, therefore, they have an impact on God himself.

Did you know that global hunger is on the rise? The United Nations has confirmed that this is due to climate change.

The impacts of a changing climate are felt first and foremost by the world's poor. In the countries where AOA partners, there are many smallholder subsistence farmers who rely on the local environment to grow their food.

When the rains come too much, too little or too late, or there are extreme weather events, people in poverty are hit hardest. This is why we are

seeing the rise of hunger as a result of climate shocks. According to a recent international development report:

One person is likely dying of hunger every 48 seconds in drought-ravaged Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

These statistics can be hard to comprehend, but behind them are real people and their stories. AOA partners with the Anglican Church of Kenya, and one such story is that of Abuya:

Abuya has participated in trainings with the Anglican Church of Kenya. She has found much benefit from leadership, child rights and farming training which has allowed her community to mobilise resources and develop new skills. However, Abuya and her community are now facing their third season of poor rainfall resulting in food insecurity.

'Drought is affecting our kitchen gardening, we only have two rivers which dry up most of the year,' she explains.

We must not ignore Abuya and those experiencing drought and food insecurity, people who work incredibly hard despite their setbacks – we must pour out our love in practical ways.

- Think about how you can pray and give generously to care for people who are hungry and thirsty.
- This Lent perhaps grow your own food, keeping it simple by starting with herbs. Each time you take care of them, remember Abuya and the kitchen garden she relies on to feed her family.

Lord, forgive me when I have turned away from those who are suffering. I pray for Abuya and all those experiencing drought and food insecurity.

Bring them rain, bring them food and comfort them through this challenging time. Amen



Above: Abuya from Kenya has participated in trainings with the Imarisha Maisha Program

Caring for God's good creation – an option for you to respond.

"Climate change is a threat multiplier with the potential to worsen some of humanity's greatest challenges, including health, poverty and hunger."

In its annual report measuring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations warned that the impacts of climate change are undermining progress on the sustainable development agenda, threatening to reverse many of the gains that have improved people's lives over the last decades.

The links between climate change and sustainable development are strong. Poor and developing countries, particularly those least developed, will be among those most adversely affected and least able to cope with the anticipated shocks to their social, economic and natural systems.

Many of AOA's partners have seen their programs impacted by changing weather patterns and disasters.

The Diocese of Mt Kenya West continues to face the worst drought in 40 years. As a result, AOA supporters provided funding to feed almost 50,000 people for many months.

Mozambique is one of Africa's most at-risk countries for climate change, experiencing floods, intense tropical cyclones and droughts. Here the Anglican Diocese of Nampula runs the Towards Abundant Life For All program, working to improve food security by training farmers to produce more sustainable crops.

Families living in the Pacific are increasingly experiencing the impacts and adversity of climate change, with cyclones and flooding becoming regular events.



AOA is supporting the Diocese of Polynesia in Fiji & Tonga in a Church & Community Resilience program. The damage to God's creation by humanity's lack of stewardship is evident in the loss of flora, fauna, and land and water degeneration.

There are many ways to respond to the call to care for creation. Anglican Overseas Aid focuses on the intersection of climate change and people living in poverty.

As good global neighbours, how should we respond to the impacts of climate change on people living in poverty? One option is to support the work of AOA's partners as they assist communities to build resilience to the effects of climate change and develop local solutions to care for creation.

To find out more you can scan the QR code below.





A participant in the Fiji program building resilience to natural disasters.

Love your neighbour

Matthew 22: 36-40

The Bible calls us to love God and our neighbour without limit or narrowing definitions. While it is easy to love a friend, it can be more difficult to relate to and therefore love a neighbour on the other side of the world.

Our impact on the environment is connected with our love for the poor and what it means to live a life that brings glory to God.

In Australia, we are living beyond our environmental limits and consuming more than our fair share. We can take steps in our own lives (and call on our leaders in business and government to do so) in areas such as food, travel, energy and waste. Thankfully we are becoming increasingly informed and better choices are easier than ever to make.

Let us now do all we can to love our global neighbour. Let us live simply, so that others can simply live.

-  What is the Spirit stirring in you today, making new connections?
-  What steps can you take to connect your faith and actions to respond sustainably through the food you eat, your travel, the energy you use or the waste you throw away?
-  Pray for our neighbours who are grieving for their land, struggling to find water and food or reeling from climate damage.
-  Pray that all nations and their leaders will do all in their power to work together and address the challenge of climate change.



The Nakaruri Savings Group in Mozambique

Lord, I kneel before you. Forgive me for consuming too much and impacting negatively on the lives of others. Help me to see and care for all your people. Compel me in your love to respond as a good neighbour. Amen

Overcoming difficulties

Isaiah 40:29

Edward and Mekena live in Kenya and have been married for almost 30 years. Edward explains that when they married, they had no resources, they were 'just a simple couple with humble beginnings'.

When Edward was injured in an accident at work, it left him with no income. Mekena is often criticised for staying with Edward after the accident but, she says, 'because of the unity we have, I don't see his disability...I work diligently and ask for God's grace to continue the role of taking care of him'.

Through the AOA-supported Imarisha Maisha project in Kenya, Edward and Mekena were trained in mixed farming, allowing them to generate an income. From the project they heard that the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture program was looking to support smallholder farming, increasing agriculture productivity, and building resilience to climate change risks. Edward and Mekena are now members, Edward advising community members on how to become

self-reliant, and Mekena advising women on how to start small enterprises.

'Through Imarisha I feel I am someone in society. Through the trainings we're able to improve our lives and support other members of society,' states Edward.

Despite their obstacles, Edward and Mekena are making the most of what they have been given and are extending their knowledge to others so that many lives can be improved.

While the damage of climate change is challenging it requires our attention. Edward and Mekena did not give up, but together they persevered finding hope and strength in the Lord.

 What ways has God shown you his hope throughout your life?

 What difficulties did Jesus face as he approached the cross? How did he overcome these difficulties?



*Lord, thank you for
Mekena and Edward.*

*Thank you for their
ability to overcome
adversity and have
hope for a better
future.*

*When we struggle to
comprehend how we
can make a
difference when faced
with climate damage,
help us to find a way
forward in prayer
and action.*

*Renew our strength.
Amen*

Planting hope

Mark 4: 30-32

In the days following Jesus' death his disciples were downcast, struggling to understand why all they had hoped for hadn't come to pass. But soon they would meet the risen Jesus. Their hope would be restored as would the promise that through him humanity would be saved.

Jesus is the one who has brought us hope for restored relationship with him, other people and with creation. We can partner with him restoring his world, even if we feel our efforts are small.

Climate change and the devastation it has brought to God's people and the natural world is a big topic that can feel overwhelming. As Christians, it is hard to reconcile our hope of a better future with constant reminders that our world will continue to experience brokenness.

The shocks and groans of collapsing nature should awaken the responsibility God has given us to care for his creation.

The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, yet it becomes a large tree providing rest for birds and shade for people. Likewise, we have hope that if we partner with God our small acts, no matter how small, have eternal significance and contribute to a renewed creation, free of poverty.

We may not see the impact of these small acts – it may be future generations that reap the benefits, who bask in the shade of the tree planted by those who went before them. You can work with God now, bringing others hope.

-  Prayerfully reflect about what past generations have sacrificed so that we may have hope.
-  Think of some acts of love you could perform that show God your great love for all of creation.
-  Plant a tree as a symbol of your desire to see creation restored.



Creator God, thank you for the hope you gave us through your death and resurrection of Jesus.

Please plant hope within me so that I may act on this in large and small ways.

Help me to be guided by your understanding of creation and people so that I may live in a way that allows all of creation to flourish. Amen

At Anglican Overseas Aid we are connected by faith and committed to change. We long to see God's world as it should be.

Called to love our global neighbours, we connect Anglicans in Australia with partners around the world to work towards a renewed creation, together.

We prioritise long-term relationships with Anglican partners who are leading change in their local communities and working to alleviate poverty.

Our partners continue to alert us to how climate change is increasing poverty and instability in their communities. Our faith compels us to respond to our hurting, warming world and its myriad of disasters.

In the communities where we partner the Church is an excellent agent of change and has significant influence. This includes our Church partnerships that work towards equality for women and the elimination of gender-based violence.

We deliver strategic, sustainable development, underpinned by Australian government accreditation and good governance.

We collaborate through alliances and networks to ensure best practice development that delivers quality programs and multiplies impact.



Above: A member of the Green Anglicans movement in Kenya plants a tree in partnership with the Anglican Church of Kenya. Credit: Anglican Church of Kenya 2022