



Called to Care

Lenten reflections



Anglican
Overseas
Aid





Introduction

I would like to invite you to grapple with a question. It's a big one.

What if we took God's call to care for people and our planet seriously?

As part of this, I would like to invite you into a journey of call and response to the generational challenge of caring for God's creation through these Lenten studies. Together we will walk through a Christian approach to care for creation, and for others, through one of the largest challenges of our age: climate change.

It comes as I publish my first book, *Called to Care: A Christian response to the climate challenge of our generation*. It is a discipleship resource and an opportunity to go deeper on this topic.

It may be new for you to hear Anglican Overseas Aid speaking about climate change. Isn't AOA's work about bringing abundant life to those in the developing world? Health, education, community development, livelihoods.

Yes. It is!

Care for creation and the poor is grounded in Scripture and integral to our discipleship. People in poverty are already most affected by cycles of disaster after disaster. Droughts, floods, heatwaves and rising sea-levels are already hurting our world's most vulnerable people.

Jesus warns us of the consequences of inaction as believers in Matthew 25:42, 45. What if someone's hunger or thirst was due to the climate crisis? What if the real 'least of these' in our time are those most affected by climate change?

As we explore changes to how we live act and pray in response to climate challenges, this may remind

you of a quieter, simpler time of life during childhood, or of the stories your parents or grandparents told. When we lived simply, it was out of habit. We re-used what we had, and lived within the means of our resources.

So, I encourage you to reflect with an open heart, seeking to discern God's call on you at this stage of your life.



About the author

Jo Knight, CEO of Anglican Overseas Aid, champions Christian responses to poverty and climate justice globally. Her new discipleship book, ***Called to Care*** (IVP), weaves together powerful global stories with theological reflection and practical wisdom. She lives in Melbourne with her husband, Peter Carolane of Merri Creek Anglican, and their two sons.



WEEK 1

God's call for all creation – including us

Scriptures: Genesis 1-3, Isaiah 41:19-20, Isaiah 42: 5-6, Romans 8:1-23

Let me start with a few truths.

One, God made the world and God loves it.

Two, we've been created and placed in this world to take care of the rest of what God has made.

Three, this world has gone wrong because of us.

Four, the good news is God has a plan for his whole creation.

These truths form the basis of the reflections to follow as we walk together this Lent. It is a framework developed by theologian Canon Dr Ruth Valerio, which highlights how God relates to his creation.

Through exploring this, we will uncover God's heart and vision for the world, and learn how we can align ourselves with these purposes. These have two key implications. One, Jesus comes to renew our world, ruling supreme over all creation. Let us consider the passage Luke 4:18. It reminds us that Jesus is active in our world today. It is now that God's kingdom on earth is taking shape. Now we work through his Holy Spirit and his Church. That's us! We are saved to play a part in Jesus' upside down kingdom. This is a great kingdom where his people live upside down to many of the values around them, practice radical generosity and serve people experiencing poverty. It is a kingdom

where his people practice release and reset in care for all creation.

Two, we are called to live justly, reflecting our humanity as intended by God. Grace inspires us to pursue justice as disciples of Jesus. This involves actions not just words. We follow Jesus, the man of sorrows familiar with suffering (Isaiah 53:3), who shared life and ministry with those who were poor and marginalised.

Tackling poverty and the breakdown of our natural world requires us to address root causes, not just alleviate suffering.

We have reached our first moment for reflection. Take time to pause. Step outside if you can.

What new connections might God be inviting you to make today?

How have you experienced a glimpse of God's revelations in nature's beauty?

What do you discern as you sit with God in creation?



*Loving God,
Thank you for this time in your
creation.*

*Help me to be a good gardener, tending to the
world with love and respect.*

*May I honour all that you have made and nurture it
with care.*

Amen.



Change is flowing through Sopheap's community

Cabbage, pumpkin, garlic, chilli. These may seem like mundane household items to you. But in Cambodia, they're sending five children to school!

As a young woman, Sopheap did not have the chance to study. Now at 68, she is extremely happy that she can afford to send her five grandchildren to school!

Thank you for your part in this! Your generous giving was a key part of the web of change acting in Sopheap's life.

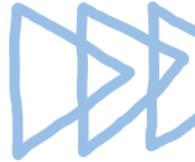
That change is flowing through generations, and through Sopheap's entire community.

In 2024, Sopheap attended vegetable farming training at the invite of Anglican Overseas Aid's Cambodian partner, PNKS.

The PNKS staff could see she was growing vegetables with dedication, but it was mainly just for her own household – she only sold a few.

Now Sopheap's crops are her main source of income.

By applying the farming techniques she learnt, Sopheap's yields increased. She can sell her produce at a provincial market, earning about \$2000 per harvest.



She's even expanded her farmland, and taken on a wider range of income-generating activities, such as raising poultry and growing cashews!

The income has allowed her to buy food for her whole household, and pay for clothes and school expenses for her grandchildren.

‘That makes me extremely happy to provide an opportunity to them that I never got,’ Sopheap says.

Sopheap has been able to pass on practical knowledge to others in her community. In the past year, she's seen other farmers achieve better yields and income through applying new methods. This helps them to pay for their household expenses and children's school supplies.

Your support in prayer, and your gifts, make stories like Sopheap's possible.



This work is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Will you continue to equip people like Sopheap to bring change in their communities?
Give now.

Our response in word and deed

Scriptures: Matthew 13:31-32, Amos 5:23-24

Let me introduce a concept that may be new to you: 'holistic transformation'. This involves bringing the good news of the gospel to the world in word and deed. Justice, political action and structural change in our physical world belong together with spiritual, personal discipleship.

God has made us in his image to be his caretakers of the world – and when we live this out, the world flourishes.

As we strive to be beacons of justice, healing and reconciliation for all creation, we have the opportunity to rediscover the Church's potential. We are part of a living network of believers who share the same source of life and love.

As we discern how to live this out, we may need to reimagine what the Church could look like and draw inspiration from examples of faithful individuals who go before us.

I think of the example set in the Pacific by leader the Reverend James Bhagwan. In his island home in Fiji, he marvels at the beauty and diversity of God's creation and feels a responsibility to protect it.

The Church in the Pacific models an integrated response to the climate crisis, from helping people relocate to higher ground as sea levels rise, to lobbying at international climate negotiations. They are responding to God's call in holistic ways to transform society.

God calls the Church to be caring and loving in integrated ways, proclaiming the fullness of the gospel in word and deed. We can envision the work of the Church in fullness, alive and shaping people, sharing good news and seeking justice in our time.

As we confront the challenges of climate change, we do so with the expectation that the Holy Spirit will move in power. Let us embrace our roles as stewards of God's creation, fostering connections and cultivating a spirit of generosity and love.

Imagine standing in a barren, dry and lifeless landscape.

Consider how this represents areas of your faith or church life that feel dry and lifeless.

Now visualise a gentle rain beginning to fall, soaking into the parched earth, and bringing life.

Where can you imagine green shoots?

Lord Jesus,

*We marvel at the beauty of your world,
where nature transforms barren landscapes
into vibrant life.*

*May our churches be places that shape hearts,
share your word, and engage boldly with the world
around us.*

*Ignite our imaginations with visions of a Church
that reflects your justice and love.*

*Empower us to unite in this crucial mission
of healing and renewal.*

Amen.





Healing land, healing lives

In the middle of turmoil, Tigray farmers are seeing renewal. Your gifts to Anglican Overseas Aid have brought life in Ethiopia's northern region.

Farmer Alemnesh has seen her land transform. 'Before the project, our land was dry and lifeless,' Alemnesh says

'Now the hills are green, our bees produce more honey, and our cattle have grass and water. We can sell honey and milk, and our children see hope in the land again.'

AOA's partner the Ethiopian Anglican Church Social and Development Organisation has rehabilitated parts of Tigray's environment through reforestation, training on climate-smart agriculture, and construction of water infrastructure.

The changes have eased some strain on the region's people, who lost livelihoods during the recent war and present political instability. At the

same time drought made water harder and harder to find, and erosion decreased crop yields.

Now, new streams of water are flowing, soil erosion has decreased, water quality is better, and new wild animals have appeared. It's all thanks to the church's project, which your giving supports.

It means better yields of animal feed - a vital support to livelihoods. The cows, goats and sheep, farmers like Alemnesh own are producing more milk, and fetching higher prices at market.

The new streams of water ease the burden on women and children of walking long distances to collect family water. This gives them more time for other pursuits and keeps them safer, improving gender equality.

EACSDO director the Reverend Gidey says the transformation of the watershed is a living testimony that restoring the environment restores life.

'Through soil and water conservation, biodiversity has returned, water has revived, and livelihoods have diversified,' he says.

'The flourishing of bees, the greening of hills, and the health of livestock are now visible signs of hope and resilience - proof that when communities unite to heal the land, the land, in turn, heals the people.'

In God's kindness, your giving has brought this life to people like Alemnesh!
Thank you.



You can continue to change lives in Ethiopia.
Give here.



WEEK 3

A sacred pause: Our call to be present in pain and in hope

Scripture: Luke 10:25–37, Psalm 104

It's easy to forget that we live in a world with God-given limits. We are now stretching beyond the earth's natural boundaries, with extreme poverty and inequality on the rise.

The past 200 years have seen significant human progress, but this period has also increased the impact of climate change. We now understand that the rapid rise of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, caused by human activity, is seriously affecting the natural world and causing global temperatures to rise.

Consequences include more extreme rainfall events, which damage homes and crops; longer and more intense droughts, causing water shortages and disease; increased threats to food production, leading to hunger; and raised sea levels flooding low-lying areas.

While God gifted humanity an abundant world, true abundance and our call to stewardship do not mean endlessly extracting and accumulating resources. Our global high-consumption economic systems are broken and not functioning as God intended.

Climate change places a heavy burden on our global community, making essential resources such as water, food and arable land increasingly scarce. This leads to heightened conflicts, displacement of people, deteriorating health and threats to social cohesion. It is a threat multiplier.



As the body of Christ, each of us has a role to play in addressing the harm caused by the climate crisis.

As we look towards the sacred pause of Easter Saturday, we look towards a pause in silence and mourning, caught between life and death. It is a space for our aching hearts to process grief and all that is lost, praying and waiting by the silent tomb.

This time of reflection reminds us that even as creation groans, we are called to be present in both the pain and hope. As Christians we understand that Easter Saturday represents the profound work of God in the depths of despair.

With this in mind, we can face the environmental crises of our time with a yearning for restoration, and use our God-given insight and wherewithal for collective efforts in the power of God's grace.

Imagine yourself sitting opposite the tomb where Jesus was laid. The world feels suspended between sorrow and hope.

How does it feel to be in this place of waiting and contemplation?

What is Jesus inviting you to explore or embrace?

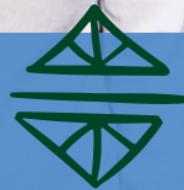
How can this sacred waiting transform your understanding of hope and action?

Merciful God,

We bring before you our fragile hearts, burdened by the weight of the climate crisis. We cry out to you, lamenting the damage done to your creation and the suffering it brings. How long, O Lord will your creation suffer and your people despair?

Grant us the strength to hold on to hope. Help us to see your hand at work, transforming our small efforts into seeds of renewal.

Amen.



Your generosity saved lives

When I met Felistar, it was in Laikipia, Kenya, in a landscape ravaged by climate change and drought. Nothing could have prepared me for what I witnessed, writes Jo Knight, CEO of Anglican Overseas Aid.

The riverbed was bone dry, cracked and dusty. Ahead of me, a group of Maasai women and children walked slowly, looking for a spot to dig – a place to coax water from the reluctant earth. Their faces were weary and resigned. The usual chatter of children was conspicuously absent; they were too quiet.

Each day's labour was a testament to hope, as small cups were used to scoop up the day's meagre water, reflecting the community's collective will.

The Felistar I met that day seemed a shadow of the woman I had seen photographs of just a few years earlier. The drought had taken so much

from her. Her animals had died or been sold at a loss. Her small crops had withered, and her husband was far away searching for work.

Felistar's children were surviving on one cup of porridge a day, provided by the Anglican Diocese of Mt Kenya West emergency feeding program, supported by AOA.

What I witnessed with Felistar that day was the very personal reality of our damaged world. How could this happen to her? How could this happen to anyone? How could we let this happen to God's world?

I knew I would never forget her face.

The generosity of AOA supporters like you saved the lives of children in Laikipia during the drought.

You helped Felistar and her children through the crisis.

When AOA staff visited Kenya in 2025, many people thanked them for the food which helped them survive the harsh drought. Their gratitude was so strong! On their behalf, I thank you deeply.

The drought in Laikipia has broken now. But the fractures it caused across society remain. Communities are still recovering lives and livelihoods.

It is only a matter of time until the next disaster hits.



Will you give today to help communities prepare themselves for the next disaster? Give now.

WEEK 4

Renew and repent

Scriptures: Proverbs 20:12, Psalm 78:1-3, Psalm 137:4

‘You cannot do theology with your backs to the suffering of people’. These are the words of Pacific church leader James Bhagwan. He asks, ‘What is our call as the church to those in pain? We cannot just say God is good all the time while they struggle for answers’.

James is witnessing the rising seas swallowing land, salting soil, and destroying freshwater sources. He sees warming waters threaten marine life, and, consequently, food security for communities. Extreme weather events devastate homes and infrastructure. It is similar in many other places Anglican Overseas Aid works in the world. One disaster after another leaves communities with little time to recover. Our partners around the world seek to enhance climate resilience as part of sustainable development. However, loss is inevitable for communities facing multiple crises.

We can learn a great deal from the faith of Pacific communities, who view creation as both a sacred gift and a responsibility. Similarly, there is much wisdom in the care shown by First Nations peoples for the lands, waters and all creation that we can learn from. In Psalm 78:1-3, we are reminded of God’s wisdom in hidden things from of old, in things our ancestors have told us that must be passed on to the next generation.

The Bible uses relational and surprisingly anthropomorphic language to speak of the earth, such as the trees rejoicing (Psalm 96:12); creatures,

ecosystems and humans together praising God (Psalm 148); the land weeping (Job 31:38); the rocks crying out (Luke 19:40); or creation groaning (Romans 8:22). God has created us and the natural world to live in a close mutual relationship.

Now is the time to embrace the wisdom of Indigenous peoples as we together respond to the challenges of climate change and the collapse of nature. Let's rethink our place in creation, and take forward a renewed sense of purpose and a broader perspective. It's time to repent and renew our commitment to Jesus, who brings good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.

Sit in prayer and invite God to soften your heart.

How might you respond to global insights with empathy and action that reflects Christ's love and justice?

In what ways can you rediscover the deep connection with and stewardship of creation seen in communities like those in the Pacific?

Our Father in heaven,

*Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.*

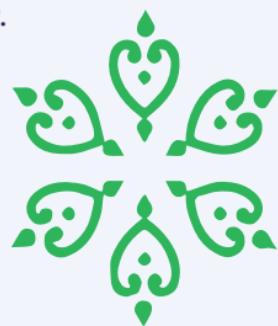
Give us today our daily bread.

*Forgive our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us.*

*Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours, now and for ever.*

Amen.





You were Celestino's lifeline

Celestino is deeply grateful. When Cyclone Chido hit his region, it destroyed all his possessions, including his home and his place of worship.

The generosity of Anglican Overseas Aid supporters supplied Celestino with food, sustaining his family for two months.

For Celestino and his wife Madalena, Cyclone Chido marked their second time starting again. With great effort, they had re-established themselves in the Nampula region of Mozambique after fleeing instability in the country's north in 2020.

When the cyclone hit, AOA's partner the Anglican Diocese of Nampula sprang into action. The diocese could act so quickly thanks to AOA's emergency rapid response fund, which supporters like you sustain.

Its staff distributed food and other relief to the most vulnerable community members, such as the elderly, widows, children, and people living with a disability.

Church members and local priests stepped up as first responders – helping with evacuations, receiving families, and setting up temporary shelters in their compound.

Celestino and his family were one of hundreds of families to receive support in the disaster's wake.

Food vouchers, cassava flour, sanitary kits, and tents and plastic bags all eased the burden on families who had lost so much.

For families like Celestino and Madalena, food and shelter has made so much difference.

Thank you for being part of their story.



‘The diocese could act so quickly thanks to AOA’s emergency rapid response fund, which supporters like you sustain.’



You can continue to change the story for families in Mozambique. Scan the QR code to give now.



WEEK 5

Listening for our own call: Start small

Scriptures: Micah 6:8, Romans 8:22-23, Psalm 104:30

Discovering our calling enables us to engage with God's plan and the part we might play.

When I reflect on my story, I am grateful for the faith I developed as a deep-feeling kid, which helped me cultivate a strong sense of compassion. Later, in India as a volunteer, I saw the face of poverty and a new dimension to the power of God's love. My awakening to the groans of creation came like labour pains when I became a mother.

Away from an office job, I could marvel at the depths of Creator God, that 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it'. As I walked my little boys along bush paths beside my local river, I thought a lot about what it meant to love this generation and future generations. God used this time to point me to his broader plans for restoring and renewing all things.

I am reminded of the journey of agronomist Tony Rinaudo AM, the 'forest maker'. Working in Niger in the 1980s, a devastating famine hit, and all attempts at tree-planting failed.

During a quiet time, Tony read the words in Psalm 104:30, 'When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground'. That day, Tony had his eureka moment, as he saw a tiny bush pushing through a crack in the ground. Tony remembered the psalm and a great weight lifted

from his shoulders. God was working through Tony and awakening the forest underground.

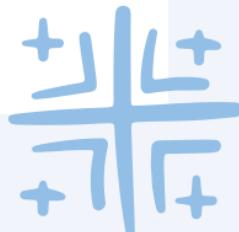
Tony realised that if living tree roots were under the ground and trying to grow, with pruning and management the trees could grow. This has become what is globally known as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). It has transformed millions of lives and hectares of land.

Tony reminds us to start small, do what we can and go as far as we can see, and that we will always be able to see further when we get there. We know what the Lord asks of us. He asks us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with him.

Consider the storylines of your life. Imagine Jesus looking at you, with his power and love, the same Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples and willingly died on the cross.

Do you have a sense of your response as a disciple of Jesus?

How might that connect to something in your story or that you are passionate about?



Lord Jesus,

Help me reflect on my life and see how you have shaped me.

As I respond to the call of creation justice, may your powerful love carry me forward.

Let me see you looking at me with love and humility, filling me with peace.

Guide me as I recognise my gifts and passions, and strengthen my resolve to contribute to your call.

Amen.



‘This has never happened before’

Nathaniel is witnessing something entirely new. The Solomon Islands resident is seeing his own community work with its neighbour, for the good of both.

Working together, the two communities can protect each other from ever more-frequent disasters, driven by climate change.

The two villages don’t even share a language. But they share a desire to help each other. In a way it’s simple. Together they will produce staple food, cassava flour.



But it’s not that simple. It’s groundbreaking.

‘This has never happened before,’ Nathaniel says. ‘But now, we see how good it is to share what we know.’

Neighbouring village leader James echoes Nathaniel's thoughts. For him, the partnership will make life easier, especially when disasters come.

'They will grow the cassava, and we will share our skills to turn it into flour,' he says. 'This way, we help each other and meet our needs.'

One village has fertile soil perfect for cassava growing. But previously it lacked the equipment and knowledge to process the cassava into flour.

The other low-lying village struggles to grow cassava in its soil that is often flooded by saltwater. Its contribution to the partnership is to supply the equipment and knowledge.

This joint effort protects the food security of both villages, preparing them for future disasters.

It's a direct result of AOA's partners' generosity, funding on-the-ground initiatives to strengthen communities.

It's one small step to fight the global crisis that is climate change.

And it's the sum of small steps that will allow us to make a difference.



Disaster READY is supported by the Australian Government and implemented by AOA and its partners.

AHP

Disaster READY



Will you join us? Give now to support AOA's work making change throughout the world.



Our power in collective response

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:17, James 1:22-25, Hebrews 10:24-25

Spiritual sickness and extractive mindsets have brought humanity to the brink of ecological disaster. However, our urgent and hopeful responses demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit. There is hope in addressing climate change if we take action. We do not act alone; we are supported by the collective strength of a community that encourages one another, and by the power of the Spirit. As God works in our world and through the Church, a movement emerges that renews and spreads goodness.

In short, do change your lifestyle. It does matter. It gains power as part of a collective effort.

When we work together as the Church, we are a powerful force for change.

Our climate response is holistic, taking place through every aspect of our lives. It encompasses how we live, act and pray. While we reduce the environmental impact of our lifestyle, the larger challenge lies with the extensive actions of corporations and governments, who bear greater responsibility.

Through small, consistent efforts, each of us contributes to the momentum needed to overcome the steep challenge of climate change. Take your everyday acts of how you live, vote, give financially, speak up and pray as an act of worship and response to God's call. I also encourage you

to explore sustainable and ethical food choices, your energy use and transport, and ways you can reduce single-use plastic.

As you seek to live more simply and dampen the influence of consumer desires to buy and want ever more, your discipline of generous giving may have a chance to grow. Be a generous steward of money entrusted to you as part of your climate response for this generation and the next.

As we are reminded of the importance of mutual encouragement in Hebrews 10:24–25, may we spur one another on towards love and good deeds. May you be blessed in every step you take towards growth under the guidance and love of God.

Visualise yourself standing at the beginning of a path. This path represents your journey towards a healthy environment. You can see only a short distance ahead.

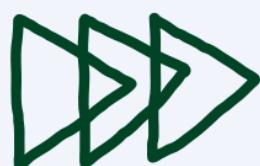
Reflect on how your choices and actions will influence larger changes. Trust in the gifts God has given you as you take steps forward and spread God's justice and compassion. Recall 'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.'

Dear Father,

*We lift up our planet in heartfelt prayer.
We seek your powerful presence to inspire
humanity to end harmful habits
that damage our earth.*

*Guide us towards a safer climate future.
Help us adapt to ongoing changes
and build resilience for the future,
trusting in your infinite wisdom
and strength.*

Amen.





Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!



When we work together as the Church, we are a powerful force for change. I encourage you to join in!



Find out more about how you can respond to God's call on our lives.





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