**MACEDON RANGES PARTNERSHIP SERVICE – Proper 18B**

**3 - 5th September 2021**

You may like to follow our service on our video. You can find it on our Worship Services page on our website at <https://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/worship-services> or on YouTube at [https://youtu.be/18SySh5BTek](https://youtu.be/18SySh5BTek" \t "_blank)

Our service invites you to read the scriptures, pause, meditate and pray. Allow the stories told to lead you. We suggest reading the passages when suggested below. We are touching on several of the scripture readings in one way or another this week. If you would like to look at previous videos on our YouTube channel, go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb4hzdO-YgzmrIRVC-oby_w>

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY (Video Acknowledgement is from Common Grace)**

We acknowledge all the First Nations people who have cared for and nurtured the land on which we meet: the Wurundjeri; Woi Wurruung; Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung.

We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging

We commit ourselves to the work of justice and reconciliation with all people, and with God

**WELCOME and CALL TO WORSHIP**

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray, protect, and advocate for God’s creation. This year, the theme for the season is **A home for all? Renewing the *Oikos* of God**. Oikos is a Greek word that means ‘home’ or ‘household’. By grounding our theme in the concept of Oikos, we are celebrating the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth. We hope that this Season of Creation renews our baptismal call to care and sustain this ecological turning…so that life may flourish, and all creatures may find their place to flourish in our common home. As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common role as caretakers of God’s creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with its wellbeing. We rejoice in this opportunity to care for our common home and the sisters and brothers who share it.

Some churches will pitch an ‘Abraham’s tent’, the historic symbol of hospitality to signify their commitment to safeguard a place for all who share our common home, just as Abraham did in the Book of Genesis.

So join us, as we worship the God who calls us to remember that we are part of a web of relationships, who calls us to be at home on this planet, the Earth, who calls us to make a home for all, with God.

**SONG: Living Icon** by Malcolm Gordon

*Alternative suggestion: Let all Creation dance (TiS 187)*

**OPENING PRAYER: Abba Prayer** by Henry Horton

Our Mother,

whose body is the Earth,

Sacred is thy being.

Thy gardens grow.

Thy will be done in our cities,

as it is in nature.

Thanks be this day,

for food, air and water.

Forgive us our sins against Earth,

as we are learning

to forgive one another.

And surrender us

not unto extinction

but deliver us from our folly.

For thine is the beauty,

and the power,

and all life,

from birth to death,

from beginning to end.

Amen. So be it.

Forever. Blessed be.

**BIBLE READINGS:** Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23, Psalm 125, **James 2:1-17, Mark 7:24-37**

**REFLECTION** By Ps Annette Buckley

What does home mean to you? Perhaps it has something to do with safety and security, or it might be about familiarity and comfort. It might be the place that you are able to be your most relaxed, and be yourself. It could be the place where you are able to have everything just as you like it. It could be about blissful solitude or being surrounded by loved ones. It might be about being able to offer hospitality to others. It may be a particular building, but it might be more an environment you’re able to cultivate and create. If you have had many homes, they might each mean something special, or you may find it difficult to define where ‘home’ is.

I’ve read that an astronaut looked back at this blue drop in the middle of a dark sky and realised that everyone and everything he’d ever known was all on this fragile spinning orb. It’s the same for all of us; Earth, ultimately is our only home.

The Season of Creation calls us to reflect on whether we are being careful and loving house-keepers, or whether we are perhaps treating the Earth like bad tenants. As well, it asks us to think about who shares our home with us; the plants and animals, the oceans and rivers, the skies and landscapes and air that are our ‘housemates’. It also challenges us to question whether all our brothers and sisters have the freedom and capacity to enjoy our home as much as we do, and if the answer is ‘no’, to ask what we can do about it.

Our reading from James stirs us to action alongside prayer, if we are to have a living faith. Our reading from Mark prompts us to ask about the voices we need to listen to, and how we can join with Jesus to play our part in ‘opening up’ and giving voice to the voiceless. Let’s look for the Spirit’s leading as we commit ourselves anew to helping create a home for all.

**TEAM REFLECTION**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We offer our prayers for our home, planet Earth  
for our church,  
and for God’s beloved children

Let us pray,

Creator God, source of all life,

We pray for your created order, for your lands  
your waterways  
and your oceans.

We pray for your living organisms, your grasses and forests  
your vertebrates and invertebrates  
your pollinators and predators

We pray for all the ecosystems of your marvellous creation and for those whose passion it is to care for them.  
For park rangers and climate scientists  
For indigenous custodians and activists

We pray too for those who are deaf to the needs of creation,   
for poachers and climate change deniers  
for those who pursue profits ahead of sustainable practices

Word of life, heal your broken world, and give voice to the silent.

Jesus, light of life,

We pray for your church throughout the world and for the Uniting Church in Australia  
We pray for the President Sharon and for Denise the Moderator of the Synod of VicTas  
We pray for all the councils of your church and pray for all members whose voices remain silent.  
We pray for our Presbytery and for the Macedon Ranges Partnership   
Word of life, heal your broken world, and give voice to the silent.   
   
Spirit of truth,  
We pray for your people impacted by climate change  
for the people of Kiribati and other low lying regions displaced by rising sea levels  
for the people of the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Ida  
for your precious children recovering from the trauma of bushfire  
We pray for your people impacted by war and violence  
for the citizens of Afghanistan  
for people impacted by family violence and for their perpetrators  
We pray for your children who are suffering in silence  
for queer people who are forced to live in hiding of their full selves  
for differently abled people whose voices remain unheard  
for immigrants whose first language is not English  
for the many people living in isolation

God of love, heal your broken world, and give voice to the silent.

Jesus says Ephphatha, Be Opened,  
May our hearts and ears be opened to the cries of the world  
May our tongues be animated to speak love, justice and peace

In Jesus’ name we pray  
Amen.

**SONG: Enemy of Apathy (TiS 418)**

**SENDING OUT AND BLESSING:**

So go into your day, into your week, into your life

and be opened!

Let your ears be opened

to hear those who are usually silenced

Let your confidence be opened

to raise your voice for the voiceless

Let your heart be opened

to the new things that God is doing

in the world

in your community

in your life

And may you receive the blessing of God,

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer

of life in all its fullness.

Go in peace. Amen.

**OFFERING**

You may like to consider giving an offering to your congregation via direct deposit. Details for each are:

* Gisborne: Gisborne branch, Bendigo bank, B.S.B. 633 108, A/C: 1512 83736
* Romsey: Bendigo Bank, B.S.B. 633 000, A/C: 161501200, Account name: UCA Romsey Uniting Church
* Mia Mia – Kyneton: Commonwealth bank, B.S.B. 063 517, Account no.: 1002 1775