

A dear friend of mine had a T-shirt which said “I thought growing old would take longer”. Anyone relate?

Lately I’ve been thinking “I thought Climate Change would take longer”.

But it is here and now. Just this week the United Nations Environment Program announced that the planet has already warmed roughly 1.4 degrees Celsius, mostly from the burning of fossil fuels. The last three years have been the hottest on record and since we continue to pour greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, we are overshooting the goal to keep global warming to within 1.5 degrees.

On top of that, we are warned that this winter we will experience a super-sized El Nino – the biggest in a thousand years. The disruption and devastation from both drought and flood that we are already seeing will increase and create more disasters across the planet.ⁱ The World Food Programme said in August that the El Niño was likely to push about 50 million people [into acute hunger](#).ⁱⁱ

This winter. Here and Now.

It is against that background that today we celebrate the Festival of Creation – the first Sunday in our month-long Season of Creation.

Even against the gathering darkness of extreme weather and possible famine, ours is a festival of hope and even of joy. Because just as climate change is here and now, so also is the reign of God. Here and now.

And we are citizens not just of this world but also of the reign of God, so while we see and experience the upheavals of our planet in crisis, we hold this in the context of our knowledge and hope that God is at work and that ultimately God is bringing all things into balance with one another and with Godself.

Today we celebrate Creation and the Creator who is still creating the ever-expanding universe. The Creator who made us part of this amazing ecosystem. In Genesis 2:15 we hear, “The LORD God took the man and put

him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” The word translated “till” also means to serve, even perhaps, to worship. The role of humanity in this interwoven creation is to serve – to serve the ground, to serve God and to serve our neighbors, the birds and the whales and the rabbits.

We can take that a step further; since God made humans in God’s image we are infinitely creative and we are called to be co-creators with God. To use our creativity in cooperation with the Holy Spirit to help create the reign of God here on earth – to make our prayer “Your kin-dom come on earth as in heaven” a reality.

Yet humanity got completely turned around and saw Creation as something separate from us, something for us to use rather than to serve. As Keith Nelson put it in our second reading, ‘we are crucifying the earth.’ The big theological word for that is sin.

Which is why we started this service of celebration with a confession. A confession of our sin, not only against God but against the Creation of which we are part because we have acted consciously and unconsciously in ways that have harmed the web of life. And our institutions continue to act on our behalf in ways which fail to serve the earth. We are caught up in a matrix of sin.

But the good news is always Forgiveness: God forgives us and God is always working in every moment to bring about the redemption not just of individuals, not just of groups of humans but the redemption of the whole of Creation – from the smallest tardigrade to the largest blue whale. Isn’t that amazing! God’s love encompasses us and sustains us and draws us forward to a future we can scarcely dare to imagine, a future when all of Creation is in harmony.

And that is happening. Here and Now.

The Christ event, Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, is not just for humans but for the whole of Creation. As we heard in the 2nd reading, “We believe God became a Creature in Jesus Christ and redeemed Creation from the

inside out...” In the incarnation God became flesh – God became animal – God entered Creation in a new way and is working from within the very atoms of physical matter to bring the new heaven and the new earth – the redeemed Creation. Which includes you and me.

It’s likely to be a stormy winter. The British government is telling people to stock up with canned food. For us here on the Central Coast, El Nino is more variable though we can for sure expect higher seas and coastal flooding. It’s a good time to check your gutters.

There are practical things we can do to prepare for a bad winter. There are practical and technological things we can do to reduce our contribution to global warming. Here at St Bens we have installed solar panels and replaced the old gas furnaces with heat pumps and we are careful with our waste – rarely using paper products and recycling whenever possible. The Abundance Shop provides an important resource for our friends and neighbors to reuse rather than buy new. Every doodad that someone gifts to the shop and someone else carries home reduces waste and blesses the planet.

But as the people of God we can do much, much more.

We can work on a spiritual level. We can work with the Holy Spirit to break the cycle of sin. Our collective failure to serve the earth is sin and that sin compounds so that our sin causes us to turn further away from right relationship with God and Creation. Yet as we allow ourselves to be renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit into the Christ-like beings we are intended to be, as we allow and cooperate in that process both personally and as a church, we are contributing to the redemption of the planet.

God is peace and God is love. God is not anxious. It seems that we often equate anxiety with caring. God is not anxious about climate change because God knows that ultimately all is well. But that does not mean that God does not care. Peacefulness is not the same as apathy.

The more we can look at the pain of the world, including our own suffering, with the soft, gentle eyes of God, without anxiety but with deep love, the more we bring real peace to the world. It's like that water that Jesus talked about, the water that doesn't depend on wells but comes up like a fountain full of never-ending life and grace. The more we tap into that inner stream and live in God's shalom of peace and love, the more we join in God's work of redemption.

My friends, we are called to follow Christ. We are called to serve and love the earth, to tread lightly on this beloved planet, to live frugally so we can share with those who are most affected by drought and flood and famine. We are called to use less, to recycle and to reuse. We are called to use our democratic power to hold our institutions accountable.

But we are called to more. As the children of God we are called to sit in the stillness and the spaciousness which is the presence of our amazing God and we are called to embody the peace and the love we find there and so contribute to the redemption of the planet as only the children of God can. The Apostle Paul said that the whole creation is waiting for the children of God to come into their own.

Creation is waiting for us, God is waiting for us.

The 13th century Sufi mystic, Rumi, put it like this:

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty and frightened.
Don't open the door to the study and begin reading.
Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

ⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/sep/03/el-nino-supersizing-before-our-eyes-united-nations>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/aug/05/el-nino-could-push-50m-people-acute-hunger-next-year>