



Pacific Conference of Churches

SEASON OF CREATION 2022

LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF CREATION

Exodus 3: 1-12



Season of Creation 2022

The season of creation is an ecumenical event that begins on September 1st with the Day of Prayer for Creation and finishes on October 4th with the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology venerated by many Christian churches around the world. Throughout the month-long celebration, the world's 2.4 billion Christians gathered to care for our shared land by prayer and action.

In this season of ecological celebration, we must “Listen to the Voices of Creation.” In the Pacific region our ancestors have been listening to the voices of creation and have been living harmoniously with creation for thousands of years. This season we celebrate those voices, the voices of our trees, the animals and birds, the small living organisms in our forests, our rivers and lakes, the skies that give us rain and replenish our water, our vast and beautiful blue ocean, and its marine ecosystem, and all of creation within our common home the Earth. We listen to the voices of the creation that sustains us on this earth and celebrate it. As we celebrate, we also hear and celebrate the voice of our Lord the creator whose voice brought us all into being and give HIM thanksgiving for the gift of life.

The Pacific Conference of Churches encourages all Christians and nonbelievers to celebrate and listen to the voices of creation. Because we are all called to live in harmony, to be responsible stewards of our shared home, which entails that we must all devote ourselves to caring for life in all its forms, knowing that caring includes loving, meditating, and feeling part of God's creative work.

Season of Creation aims to:

1. Renew our prophetic voices to action for creation.
2. Gather all religious and non-religious communities to share a common voice for our creation and take action.
3. To reflect on the importance of ecological conservation and its integrity by remembering that the voices of creation are the reflection of the voice of its creator.
4. To call out the damaging impact of our earthly development on God's creation and voice our cry for change as humans living together under one home.

Theme: Listen to the Voice of Creation

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” - Genesis 1:1-2

Have you ever wondered what the sound of the Spirit of GOD hovering over the waters sounds like? Do we sometimes take time to listen to the voice of Creation? Nature? The birds every morning? The sound of the winds in the movement of the coconut palms? The sounds of the waterfall or the waves coming in.

For those who are familiar with the new normal during the global pandemic, COVID19 times, one new mode of technology is the mode of virtually meeting, through platforms such as 'Zoom' and 'Google Meet' to name a few. One thing I have learnt when Hosting a Zoom session, is that as the host, have the power to allow or disallow others to listen to someone, and this is done simply by the muting and unmuting of a button.

In our world today, there are many voices. And each of us has the power to listen or to not listen to these voices. We sometimes refer to this as having 'selective hearing.' During this Season of Creation, this year's theme "Listen to the Voice of Creation" gives us the opportunity to listen or to not listen to the voice of Creation.

As Pacific Islanders, we are always proud of the history of our ancestors – of how they successfully navigated their way to this part of the world we now call home. I believe our ancestors found their way around to this part of the world by listening to the Voice of Creation – how so? It is known that some of the navigational techniques of our ancestors included bird observation, navigation by the stars, and the use of ocean swell formations to name a few. By listening to the Voice of Creation, our ancestors achieved great feats. The ultimate Voice of our Creator GOD, spoken through the voice of creation, helped guide and make a way for our ancestors to settle, live, appreciate, and be good stewards of His Gift of Creation.

What about the Voice today? What voice do we listen to today to help us leave the world a better place for generations to come who call us their ancestors? In our world today, we are faced with all kinds of challenges. One of the major challenges we face in Pasefika, is Climate Change and we continue to be

threatened by the effects of human induced pollution in our daily lives. While the voice of Creation once was heard and used to help our ancestors in the past, today the voice of Creation is crying a different tune – one of suffering and pleading for us to listen and respond to their cry and bitterness – a voice of vulnerability, a voice of fear, a voice of misery, a voice of doubt... God's creation moans ever louder and suffers more every day amidst the ongoing climate emergency and biodiversity crisis; and while our ancestors responded well to the voice of Creation they heard, using it as a tool to help them, we, many years later, today, have the opportunity to act on the voice of Creation we are listening to.

There are many actions we should be taking to respond. In the Genesis Creation story, when GOD created male and female, He created them in His image and likeness. And GOD gave humankind a responsibility – to be stewards of GOD's Creation. It is our prayer, as followers of CHRIST, that this Season of Creation, be a time of reflection on our responsibility, a time of repentance for all that we have done and all we have not done that has negatively affected our responsibility to listen to the voice of Creation, a time of re-motivating ourselves and renewing our role, our responsibility in this world.

Let us pray:

Creator of All,

From your communion of love your Word went forth to create a symphony of life that sings your praise.

By your Holy Wisdom you made the Earth to bring forth a diversity of creatures who praise you in their being.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationships with each creature so that we could listen to their voices and learn how to safeguard the conditions for life.

But we turn in on ourselves and away from our co-creatures.

We close our ears to the counsel of our fellow creatures. We fail to listen to the cries of the poor and the needs of the most vulnerable. We silence the voices of those who hold the traditions that teach us to care for the Earth. We close our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the Scriptures.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats that will never speak again. We grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished.

Creation cries out as forests crackle, and animals alike flee the fires of injustice that we have lit by our unwillingness to listen.

In this Season of Creation, we pray that you would call to us, as from the burning bush, with the sustaining fire of your Spirit.

Breathe upon us.

Open our ears and move our hearts.

Turn us from our inward gaze.

Teach us to contemplate your creation, and listen for the voice of each creature declaring your glory.

For “faith comes from hearing.”

Give us hearts to listen for the good news of your promise to renew the face of the Earth.

Enlighten us with the grace to follow the Way of Christ as we learn to walk lightly upon this holy ground.

Fill us with the hope to quench the fires of injustice with the light of your healing love that sustains our common home.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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*Liturgy and reflection by Reverend Sepiuta Hala’api’api - The Anglican Church –
Diocese of Polynesia*

Acknowledgements

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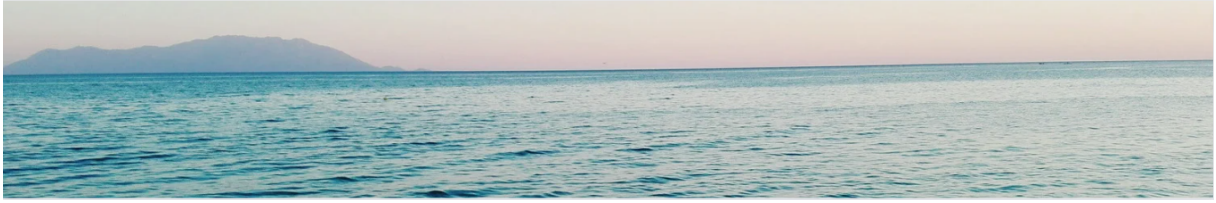
Aisake Casimira Varea - Institute for Mission Research, Pacific Theological College

We thank you for your contributions and pray that the word of God will bless our Pacific ecumenical family.

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September 1st - 4th | Introduction and Dedication of the Season of Creation: “Praying and Meditating with Intention for Creation”

The 4 days from the 1st - the 4th of September are dedicated to the introduction to the month-long season of creation celebration. These 4 days are focussed on prayers and meditating with the intention for creation.

I. Welcoming Remarks

II. Call to worship: I Love the Earth (Poem)

I Love the Earth (Poem)

I love the earth And everything that lives.

I love the plants And the beauty each one gives.

I love the animals And the fish at sea.

For I am part of Mother Earth, And it's a part of me.

By: Sharon Mattioli

III. Songs of Worship

IV. Prayer (Attributed – Sir Francis Drake – 1577)

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely

Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life.
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery.
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes.
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

V. Scripture Readings

Romans 8: 19-22

¹⁹For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice,
but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Psalms 24: 1-6

1. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
2. for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.
3. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
4. Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully
5. They will receive blessings from the Lord,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
6. Such is the company of those who seek him,
Who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

John 10: 7-12

7. So Jesus again said to them,
"Very, truly, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep.
8. All who came before me are thieves and robbers;
but the sheep did not heed them.
9. I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved,
and will go in and out and find pasture.
10. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
11. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his
life for the sheep.
12. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own
the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and
runs away- and the wolf snatches them and scatters them

VI. Affirmation of Faith (taken from the Accra Confession)

Today we come to take a decision of faith commitment.

- We have heard that creation continues to groan, in bondage, waiting for its liberation (Rom 8:22) We are challenged by the cries of the people who suffer and by the woundedness of creation itself.

- We see a dramatic convergence between the suffering of the people and the damage done to the rest of creation.
- We believe in God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, who calls us as partners in the creation and redemption of the world. We live under the promise that Jesus Christ came so that all might have life in fullness (Jn 10.10). Guided and upheld by the Holy Spirit, we open ourselves to the reality of our world.
- We believe that God is sovereign over all creation. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Ps 24.1).

VII. Reflection: An understanding of the current Epoch

Today’s climate crisis has been classified in terms of being a planetary emergency. A situation that requires immediate human-action, to prevent the further depletion of our planet in the hope to save lives.

The people of the “two-thirds-world”¹ have been the forerunners of a theological reform focused on the solving of problems caused by climate catastrophe; predominantly caused by those of the so called ‘developed world.’ The “two-thirds world” is a concept made popular by the Caribbean leader and scholar: Phillip Potter, describing how the people of the so-called lesser ‘third-world’ make up ‘two-thirds of the entire world.’ Thus, highlighting how important the voices of the non-western world are in the aid of equality.

Many social scientists of this era have described the climatic dangers as the anthropocentric epoch²; outlining that the negative human impact on the Earth, through our technological interventions and consumerism are changing the course of life and reality.

The suffering people of the pacific regions have been the pioneers of change for all of life on earth, even though islanders are perhaps the least on the spectrum

¹ The “two thirds world” is a concept made popular by Philip Alford Potter: Philip Potter was the first WCC general secretary from the global South (Caribbean) and his time in office from 1972 to 1984 marked the transition from the WCC being a largely European and North American endeavour to a genuinely global fellowship. *Why the life of Philip Potter is so relevant for the new generation-and how to find out more* World Council of Churches. (2021, August 19). Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/why-the-life-of-philip-potter-is-so-relevant-for-the-new-generation-and-how-to-find-out-more>

² The word Anthropocene is derived from the Greek words anthropo, for “man,” and cene for “new,” coined and made popular by biologist Eugene Stormer and chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000. Anthropocene. National Geographic Society. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/anthropocene>

to the cause of earth-degradation. It is a call for the joining together of hands to understand the reality facing all and be swift to act for justice of the Earth. Romans 8:22 reminds us that the earth yearns for us to act, that the earth suffers and can feel. Humans' carelessness towards the feeling of the earth has led to the depletion of our shared planet. On the other hand, if humanity had known the earth is able to feel pain and groans for our careful action, it may advertently lead to a change in attitude. Even more so, the call to action would be more of a conscious cry to each other for the saving of a known reality.

However, the idea of colonialism; to attain, conquer and dominate is the colonial poison ingrained in the source of a quest for happiness. A reality which inadvertently leads to the demise of trying to have more than one will ever need (greed). At the same time, the voice of God- whispers from creation; the blessing that we are called to give and more importantly, that we are found within a space of thieves and robbers. A group of people who are out with the intentions to distort the idea that we are called to be stewards of the Earth.

Therefore, the Praying and Meditating with the Intention for Creation underscores our responsibility to take care of what has been bestowed upon our care and reshape the future for Generations to come. Not in a way that continues to exploit and dominate, rather a step towards the unification of the ancestral powers of people and land.

VIII. Group Activity

- Play a game of werewolf; ³(based on the reading of John 10: 7-12) showing that the wolf can be disguised as a sheep and dwelling among the flock.
- Reflect in any form or art the scriptures above.

IX. Closing Song

X. Blessings

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Liturgy prepared by Wilfer Rigamoto, Ecumenical Enabler for Ecological Stewardship, The Pacific Conference of Churches

³ <https://playwerewolf.co/pages/rules>

Activities Suggested for the 4 Days of Introduction and Dedication

- Thursday, September 1

Activity: World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Gather with other ecumenical communities in praying and meditating with intent for the protection and care of God's creation.

- Friday, September 2 - Saturday, September 3

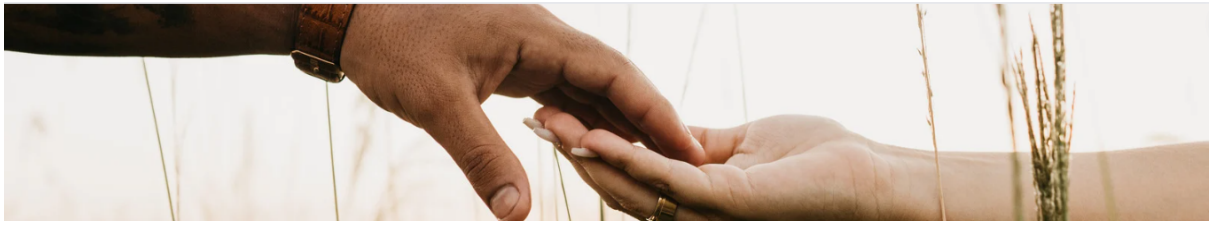
Activity: Prayer and Meditation

Prayer and Meditation – feel free to record and send it over and we'll post it on the PCC social media pages prayers and reflections by the ecumenical church leaders. (Videos, written etc.)

- Sunday, September 4, 2022

Activity: Season of Creation Service

Join the ecumenical community to officially dedicate, mark and celebrate the month-long season of creation in a church service



September 5th - 11th | Gender week: Women's and Men's voices for the dignity of creation and for all human life.

The first full week of the season of creation from the 5th -11th of September is dedicated to gender dignity and equity to celebrate and reflect on the influence of gender on the creation. It is focused on Genesis 1:27 - 28. After telling the story of God's creation, Genesis goes on to tell the story of human work. Everything is based on God's creation of humans in his image. God made humankind in His own image and gave them three responsibilities to rule over (be stewards of) his creation, to be fruitful, and to subdue (harness, till, and protect) the earth. Gender plays a significant role in this creation story because when God made man and female, he made them to be fruitful and to continue his legacy of creation. Due to the gender issues of our time, this has compromised our responsibilities towards God and his creation. Therefore, protecting the dignity of all humans is a step towards protecting the dignity of all creation.

I. Welcome

II. Prayer

III. Song of Praise

IV. Reflection

My grandfather was born well before missionaries brought Christianity to my particular locality in Solomon Islands. As such he had neither the opportunity nor the challenge to be schooled in the Western-styled education system which the missionaries also brought with them. My maternal grandfather and grandmother, and their contemporaries, were educated in the “school of life”. This “school of life” was one in which both knowledge and wisdom were

communicated and passed down through parents and tribal elders, and through daily

interactions with the immediate terrestrial and maritime surroundings – forests, rivers, hills and

mountains and valleys, estuaries, and reefs, and all the creatures therein. This “school of life”

also included the skies and heavens, especially the sun and stars and moon and the different

kinds of clouds, and how these were/are connected to the lives, rhythms, and events on the

land and in the sea. These great human teachers taught me so much which I later learnt a bit of, or did not learn at all, in my formal Western-styled education.

Amongst the wealth of knowledge that I acquired in the “school of life” there are two which I would like to highlight. The first is the interconnectedness of human life with other lives, and the second is the need to engage in deep listening. My maternal grandparents had several food gardens and they liked to plant all kinds of trees and fruit trees around their home. These trees provided shade from the sun’s heat and wind-breaks during strong winds. At the same time, however, they also provided excellent cover for mosquitoes, including the anopheles mosquito that could cause malaria if one was bitten by an infective female one. I complained to my grandfather about the mosquitoes and how the trees were providing cover for them and then he said something that is indelibly embedded in my head and heart: “The trees and us [human beings] breathe into each other.” WOW! Secondly, both my paternal and maternal grandparents stressed the need to listen and to hear, which was kind of strange because that was what we did every day. However, it became clear that they meant something so much more. They always said to me, “va talingi” which literally means “be ears” as if to say that the entire body was just an ear! In both my two mother tongues, talingi is the word for ear or ears. It is va that grounds the ears (talingi) to function in both listening and hearing. In other words, va makes the ear (talingi) both a noun and a verb at the same time!

Whether it was in the forest, going up rivers, atop hills and mountains, along the coast, on the

lagoon, or whether it was observing the sun and clouds, the moon and its influences on the

currents and tides, my grandparents would tell me to va talingi or be ears! I realised as I was

growing up that va talingi commands all my other human senses into one beautiful

configuration that allowed me to be really present in and with and to my surroundings. I was

introduced to and inducted into the “school of life” from my childhood days and for this I am

forever filled with gratitude.

As I think about the Season of Creation, I reflect on what this “school of life” has taught me and how my journey through academia and practical ministry were also shaped by this “school of life”. I close this brief reflection with the following two poems for you to ponder:

V. Poetry Readings

"School of Life: Va Talingi"

Listen. Be Ears. Hear. Be Ears.
The hills and mountains that once laughed and sang
Now wail and mourn
The rivers that once whistled in joyful plenty
Now run red and brown in cloggy mud
The trees that once danced exuberantly with the wind
Now droop in dying canopy
The morning mists and dews that once rode the mountains
Now barely visible

Listen. Be Ears. Hear. Be Ears.
The estuaries and lagoon that once teemed with life and colour
Now choke with silt and mud
The currents and tides that once were in rhythm with the moon
Now disoriented and confused
The coral reefs that once were splendid beauty to behold
Now bleached into white deadness
The sea that once kissed the shoreline at their meeting place
Now gnawing the bond of love in nature
Listen. Be Ears. Hear. Be Ears.

Psalm 148 (ESV)

1. Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
2. Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts!
3. Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!
4. Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
5. Let them praise the name of the LORD!
For he commanded and they were created.
6. And he established them forever and ever;
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.
7. Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all deeps,
8. fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy wind fulfilling his word!
9. Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
10. Beasts and all livestock,
creeping things and flying birds!

VI. Closing Song

VII. Benediction

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Liturgy and reflection prepared by Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird – United Church in the Solomon Islands

Activities Suggested for Gender Week

- **Monday, September 5**

Activity: Reflection and Prayer for Dignity for All of Creation

- Feature a prayer by a woman or a man, praying for all of creation.
- Feature a theological reflection on human dignity in relation to creation.

- **Tuesday, September 6**

Activity: Storytelling

Feature a reflection/story of an Indigenous woman or a man in relation to creation.

- **Wednesday, September 7**

Activity: Talanoa: Impact of Climate Change on Women's and Men's Dignity and Well-being

A panel discussion and sharing of stories on how climate change has affected Pacific women, men, their families, and their homes. The challenges of women and men in the face of climate change.

- **Thursday, September 8 - Saturday, September 10**

Activity: Storytelling

Continue to feature stories, poems, prayers, reflections, etc of women and men in relation to listening to the voices of creation and human dignity.

Feature Gender justice for dignity of creation call to action.

- **Sunday, September 11**

Activity: Ecumenical Women and Men Fellowship

Fellowship celebrating stewardship of men and women's voices for creation.



September 12th - 18th | Children’s Week: *Children’s voices for the future of creation.*

The second week is dedicated to children because children play a huge role in continuing the stewardship responsibility. As part of the human responsibility to multiply they also have the responsibility to teach and pass on the knowledge, skills, and morals to their young to accept the responsibility and continue God’s legacy. Therefore, one person cannot accomplish Global change alone; everyone must participate. It is critical to involve younger generations in environmental efforts to involve more people in the effort. Christian parents can raise environmentally conscious children by instilling a concern for the environment and sustainable habits in their children from an early age. Though schools will teach some aspects of sustainability, the real work begins at home and in church (Sunday schools etc...).

BISLAMA	ENGLISH
<p>Singaot blong ol Pikinini from fiuja blong olgeta long wol ia, we God i mekem blon Olgeta</p> <p>Welkam Toktok: Mi welkam yumi evriwan long nem blong God Papa, we i mekem wol ia blong yumi wetem evri samting we i stap long hem, Jisas Kraes, Pikinini blong hem we i meke evri samting ia i kam</p>	<p>Theme: Children’s Voices for the Future of Creation</p> <p>Welcome: I welcome you all in the name of God the Father, creator of our world and of everything within it, God the Son, Jesus Christ, who gives new life to all who belief in</p>

niuwan bakegen, mo long nem blong Tapu Spirit we i stap tok wetem yumi, mo i stap lukaot gud yumi mo wol ia blong yumi blong yumi stap gud oltaem blong presem olgeta we oli tri be oli wan nomo.

Yumi kam tugeta blong mekem wosip long Hae God:

King Deved i talemaot long Sam 24:1 - 2 i se, "Wol ia wetem olgeta gudgudfala samting blong hem, oli blong Hae God. Graon ia wetem olgeta samting we i stap long hem, oli blong hem nomo. Hem i putum garon ia long medel solwora, i putum fandesen blong hem daon olgeta, aninit long dip solwora."

Him blong presem God:

NLB 4 # 4 - 'Hae God taem mi, mi luk olgeta samting'

1. Hae God, taem mi, mi luk olgeta samting

We yu yu mekem raonabaot long wol Mi luk ol sta, mi harem noes blong tanda,

Ol samting ia, i soemaot paoa blong yu.

Kores:

Nao mi mi sing, mi presem nem blong yu,
we yu yu God, yu sevem mi,

Him, and to God the Holy Spirit who lives within us in this world May we praise the three in one.

Call to Worship:

Psalm 24: 1- 2

"The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers."

The Hymn:

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder" - (How Great thou Art)

1. O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder

Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,

Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Chorus:

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,

How great Tho art, how great Thou art

<p>Nao mi mi sing, mi presem nem blong yu, we yu yu hae, yu gud tumas.</p>	<p>Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee, How great Tho art, how great Tho art!</p>
<p>2. Mo taem mi stap, wokbaot long evri aelan Mi luk ol ples, we oli gud tumas Mi luk ol hil, mi luk ol tri mo flaoa Mi luk solwora we i brok long rif.</p>	<p>2. When through the woods, and forest glades I wander, And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees. When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur</p>
<p>3. Mo taem mi stap tingbaot we yu gat sore Yu sanem Pi-kinini, hem i kam I bon long wol, i kasem plante trabol I ded long kros blong pemaot sin blong mi</p>	<p>And see the brook, and I feel the gentle breeze 3. And when I think of God, His Son not sparing; Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in; That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,</p>
<p>4. Bambae wan dei, Jisas i save kambak Blong tekemaot olgeta man blong hem Taem hem i kam, bae mi bodaon blong wosip Bae mi mi glad, mi presem hem oltaem.</p>	<p>He bled and died to take away my sin 4. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation And lead me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow with humble adoration, And then proclaim, 'My God, how great Thou art!'</p>
<p>Yumi kam bifo long God long Prea:</p>	<p>Let us come before God in prayer:</p>
<p>Papa God, Yu mekem mifala long pikja mo fasen blong yu stret. Yu blesem mifala wetem ol gudfala vois blong singsing, prea mo ridim tapu Tok blong Yu tede. Yu givim vois tu long olgeta samting we yu mekem – ol animol mo</p>	<p>Loving Father, You made us in your image and likeness. You blessed us with good voices to sing, pray and read your holy Word. You gave voice to everything that you created in this world – the animals, the birds, the earth or soil, the</p>

pijin long graon mo solwora, ol difren flaoa, ol tri, ol hil, solwora we i brok long rif, win, etkuek, ol volcano raonabaot long mifala mo olgeta antap long heven, mifala evriwan i joen tugeta blong wosipim yu. Tijim mifala blong harem save vois blong ol samting we yu mekem, mo givhan long olgeta mo tu, tijim mifala blong harem save vois blong yu long laef blong mifala. Long nem blong yu Jisas, mifala i talem prea ia, **Amen.**

Yumi harem Tok blong God: (*Yumi save mekem ol drama long ol riding ia*)

Genesis 2: 8-9

“Nao long saed i go long is, long wan ples we nem blong hem Iden, Hae God i mekemrere wan gudfala ples, mo i tekem man ia we i bin mekem, i putum hem i stap long hem. Mo hem i mekem we ol naranarafala tri oli stap gru olbaot long hem. Ol tri ia oli gud tumas blong luk, mo frut blong olgeta i gud tumas blong kakae. Mo long medel blong plesia, i gat tu narafala tri i stap, wan we frut blong hem i save givim laef, mo narawan we frut blong hem i save mekem man i save ol fasen we i nogud mo ol fasen we i gud (Jenesis 2:8-9)

Genesis 3: 8-11

Nao long sapa, taem we Hae God i kam wokbaot long plesia, tufala i harem noes blong hem, nao tufala i

sea, the different flowers, the trees, the hills and mountains, the ocean and waves that break on the reefs, the wind, the earthquake, the volcanoes that erupt around us and those in heaven that join with us to worship you today. Teach us to hear your voice through your creation, help us to discern the needs they have. Most of all, teach us to hear your voice in our lives, in Jesus’ name we pray, **Amen.**

Let us hear the Word of God (*or we can dramatize these readings*).

Genesis 2: 8-9

8. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he formed.

9. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good and for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree pf the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3: 8-11

8. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and

go haed long ol tri long ples ia, blong hem i no luk tufala. Be hem i singaot long man ia se, 'Ei, yu stap wea?' Mo man ia i ansa se, 'Mi mi stap long ples ia! Mi harem yu yu stap wokbaot i kam, nao mi fraet, mi kam haed long ples ia, from we mi mi neked!' Nao Hae God i tok long hem, i talem se, 'Hu i talem long yu se yu neked? Ating yu kakae frut blong tri ia we mi putum tapu long hem?' (Jenesis 3:8-11)

Ol Sam 24:1,2

Wol ia wetem olgeta gudgudfala samting blong hem, oli blong Hae God. Graon ia wetem olgeta samting we i stap long hem oli blong hem nomo. Hem i putum graon ia long medel solwota, i putum fandesen blong hem daon olgeta aninit long dip solwota.

Romans 1:20

Yumi no save luk ol fasen ia blong hem stret long ae blong yumi. Hem i God. Hem i stap oltaem, mo paoa blong hem i no save finis. Be i stat long taem ia we hem i mekem wol ia fastaem, i kam kasem tede, hem i bin mekem ol fasen ia blong hem oli klia, blong yumi luk. Yumi save faenemaot long ol samting blong wol ia we hem i bin mekem. From samting ia, ol man oli no gat wan tok nating blong talem.

his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

10. He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

11. He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I command you not to eat?"

Psalm 24: 1, 2

1. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,

the world, and those who live in it;

2. for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

Romans 1:20

20. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;

Luke 2:8-20

Nao i gat sam man blong ples ia we oli stap afsaed long vilej, oli stap lukaot long ol sipsip blong olgeta, long naet. Nao wan enjel blong Hae God i kamtru long olgeta, mo bigfala laet we i soemaot we Hae God i stap, hem i saen long olgeta. Nao olgeta oli fraet tumas, be enjel ia i talem long olgeta se, 'Yufala i no fraet. Mi mi gat wan gud nius blong talem long yufala, we i save mekem olgeta man oli harem gud tumas. Long naet ia nomo, long vilej ia blong King Deved bifo, i gat wan pikinini i jes bon, we hem bambae i sevem yufala. Hemia man ia we God i promes finis blong sanem i kam. Hem i Mesaea ia we i Masta blong yumi. Mo saen blong samting ia i olsem. Bambae yufala i save faenem pikinini ia we oli kavremapt gud hem i stap slip long wan bokis we oltaem ol man oli stap putum gras long hem, blong ol anamol oli kakai.' Nao wantaem nomo, i gat fulap enjel blong heven oli kam joen wetem enjel ia, nao olgeta oli stap presema God, oli stap singsing se, 'Long heven antap we antap, olgeta oli stap leftemap nem blong God. Mo long wol ia, pis i stap wetem ol man we God i glad long olgeta.' Olgeta oli stap leftemap nem blong God. Nao ol enjel ia oli aot long man ia blong lukaot long sipsip, oli gobak long heven. Nao ol man ia oli stap taltalem long olgeta se, 'Ei, i gud yumi go long Betlehem blong luk samting ia we i jes happen, we Hae

Luke 2: 8-20

8. In that region there was shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10. But the angel said them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

11. to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

12. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger"

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God saying,

14. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

15. When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

16. So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

17. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

18. and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

God i talemaot long yumi.' Nao olgeta oli hareap oli go, nao oli faenem Meri mo Josef, mo oli luk pikinini ia we i stap slip long bokis ia we ol man oli stap putum kakae blong ol anamol long hem. Nao olgeta oli luk pikinini ia we enjel i talemoat long olgeta. Nao olgeta man we oli harem ol tok ia oli sapraes tumas long ol samting ia we olgeta oli talemaot. Be Meri, hem i no fogetem olgeta samting ia, hem i stap tingbaot olgeta oltaem nomo. Nao ol man ia oli gobak long ol sipsip blong olgeta bakegen. Mo oli stap leftemap nem blong God, oli stap presem hem from olgeta samting ia we oli harem, mo oli luk, from we olgeta samting ia i stret nomo long ol tok ia we enjel i talem long olgeta.

Yumi talemaot Bilif blong yumi long Hae God:

Lida: Yumi talemaot bilif blong yumi long God olsem Krieita blong yumi:

Tugeta: Yumi bilif long God we i mekem evri samting we i laef mo liv long wol ia (mo oli serem wol ia wetem yumi mo evriwan) i gat vois blong presem God!

Ol gel: Yumi bilif se God i mekem evri samting mo i givim laef we i niu oltaem, blong yumi presem hem wetem vois we i klia mo i laef wetem gladhat.

19. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

20. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Affirmation of Faith:

Leader: Let us affirm our faith in God, our Creator

Together: We believe in God, our Creator and the Creator of every living creature and creation around us, who share the world with us and have their own voice to praise God.

Girls: We believe that God made everything around us and renews life all the time for humans and all to praise him with a clear voice full of praise, thanksgiving, and grace.

Ol Boe: Yumi presem God wetem ol vois ia, mo yumi givhan tu long narafala blong leftemap nem blong God nomo oltaem.

Ol gel: Yumi bilif long vois blong God tru long ol Profet bifo mo tru long Tapu Tok blong hem, we i kam man blong sevem yumi from ol nogud blong yumi, mo ded.

Ol Boe: Yumi bilif long Jisas Kraes, we i kam tijim, mo soemaot rod blong laef long yumi, be, ol man nogud oli mekem hem i harem nogud tumas, be from gladhat blong hem, hem i singaot bigwan long Hae God blong fogivim olgeta, from we oli no save wanem oli stap mekem – Jisas ia, i ded long kros long Kalvari, be i girap bakegen long ded long namba tri dei blong hem tru long paoa mo gladhat blong God nomo.

Ol Gel: Yumi bilif se Jisas ia i givim niu laef long yumi, we i bilif long hem – blong yumi save serem laef ia, blong lukaot gud long ol narafala mo ples we yumi stap long hem.

Ol Boe: Yumi bilif se Tapu Spirit i stap wetem yumi mo i stap tok long yumi long smol vois blong hem blong givhan long waes mo paoa, blong mekem ol wok blong hem.

Boys: Let us praise God with our voices but also help others too to lift their voices to praise God all the time.

Girls: We believe in the voice of God through the Prophets from long ago, through His Holy Word in the Scriptures, which became a human saviour, to save us from our sins and death.

Boys: We believe in Jesus Christ, who came to teach and show us the way to live and the path to everlasting life. Even though his enemies made him suffer greatly and shamed him on the cross, however, because of his great love for humankind, he called in a loud voice to God to forgive them for they know not what they were doing. This Jesus died on the cross on Calvary, but through the power and grace of God was raised from the death to life on the third day.

Girls: We believe that Jesus gives new life to us and those who believe in Him – in order that we share that life in looking after others and the environment where we live.

Boys: We believe that the Holy Spirit is with us and talking with us in that still small voice with wisdom to help us discern and make good decisions and the strength to do the work set aside for us to do.

Tugeta: Yumi bilif se wetem Kraes, bae yumi save stanap mo singaot blong presem hem from gudfala fasen blong hem blong mekem laef blong yumi mo laef blong ples i niuwan bakegen oltaem. **Amen.**

**Tok blong God Stampa Tingting:
Vois Wanem ia tok ia 'vois?'**

Vois hem i wan saon we i kamaot long maot blong yumi, blong talemaot ol toktok or yumi singaot bigwan, or yumi singsing or toktok kwaet long narafala – (be samtaem i gat olgeta we oli no save toktok olsem yumi – ol smol pikinini we oli no save toktok gud yet, olgeta we oli disable, or olgeta we oli sick tumas oli no save toktok nating, mo tu i gat olgeta we oli narafala man I fosem olgeta blong stap kwaet mo no save toktok). Be yumi save talem tu se evri samting we Papa God i mekem raonabaot long yumi – ol tri, ol flaoa, ol hil, solwora, win, riva, fish, ol anamol, olgeta tu oli gat vois blong olgeta – maet yumi no save harem long sora blong yumi, be taem win i blo long sam tri olsem oak tri, yumi save harem vois blong hem, or taem solwora i stap brok long rif, yumi save harem vois blong hem, or taem volcano i faerap, yumi save harem vois blong hem – olgeta samting ia oli presem God tru long ol nois we oli mekem. Sam vois i laod gud, sam vois i no mekem nois tumas, sam vois – yumi no save harem nating, be taem

Together: We believe that with Christ, we can stand and praise him for his goodness and mercy in our renewed lives in each of us and within our environment. **Amen.**

Sermon Theme: The Voice

What does the word 'voice' mean?

'Voice' is a sound that comes out of our mouths to form words to pass on a message to others – it could also be in singing or shouting or in being quietly spoken. However, there are some people that can't talk, or we can't hear their voice like little babies who can't talk yet, those who are disable, or those who are so sick they can't talk, or those who are suppressed and forced to not talk. God, our creator created the place we live in, filling it with trees, flowers, mountains and hills, the ocean, rivers, fish, animals and they too have their own voice – which is sometimes hard to hear with our human ears, but when the wind blows on some particular trees, like the oak tree, we can hear its voice, or when the waves break on the shore, we can hear its voice, likewise the volcano when it erupts, we can hear its voice – all these creations praise God with whatever sound they make. Some have loud voices, for some we could hardly hear them, and for some, they are not heard at all, but their beauty shows God's grace and love for us and the place we live in.

yumi lukluk long fasen we Hae God i krieitem ol samting raon long yumi, oli stap presem God long fasen blong olgeta wetem vois we oli gat.

Wanem nao wok blong vois?

Wok blong vois hem i blong toktok blong narafala i save harem mo ansa i kambak long yumi – hemia i no wan rod ia nomo blong toktok i go long wan man. Yumi save singsing or soemaot ‘vois’ blong yumi long ol narafala rod we i klia gud (tru long neiya tu) or fasen blong dro or ak. Be nara haf blong wok ia hem i blong yumi yusum sora blong yumi blong lisen long narafala vois we i stap toktok long yumi – olsem vois blong papa mo mama taem oli stap toktok long yumi mo yumi i toktok i go long olgeta long taem blong kakai – olsem wan fasen we i stap happen oltaem.

I olsem Papa God i stap wokbaot long garen long Iden long sapa mo i singaotem Adam, be taem Adam i harem vois blong Hae God, hem i fraet i haed. From wanem hem i fraet? Hem i fraet from hem i no bin obei long God mo kakai frut blong tri ia we Papa God i talem long hem blong i no kakai. Adam mo Iv i harem wanem God i talem be tufala i no folem tok ia mo lisen long snek. Mekem se Papa God i ronemaot tufala long garen blong Iden mo putum tufala aotsaed, be hem i stil lavem tufala – hem i putum ol klos

What work does the voice do?

The human’s voice is used to talk to others as a way of communicating – either in words to talk or to sing or express in other creative ways as in art or through the environment to communicate. But normally we want an answer when we talk, especially when we ask questions (as in the classroom). However, the other half of making the voice heard is the art of listening – using our ears to ‘hear’ what the other is saying to us – for example, father or mother talking with us over dinner and we respond to them by answering – a normal family conversation.

It’s like God walking in the garden of Eden in the evening looking for Adam and calling for him, but when Adam heard God’s voice, he was afraid and hid himself. Why was he afraid? Well, Adam was afraid because he had disobeyed God and eaten fruit from the very tree God had told him not to eat. Adam and Eve heard what God had said but disobeyed him when they listened to the serpent. So, God took them out of Eden, yet because he still loved them so much, he clothed them and put them in a place where he had created

long tufala mo lukaot gud tufala wetem evri samting we hem i mekem raonabaot long wol, blong givhan long tufala blong stap gud long wol ia.

Narafala storian blong harem ol vois hem blong ol man blong lukaot sipsip long taem we Jisas i bon. Oli stap long tudak, long kolkol, taem oli sek, wan enjel i kamaot long olgeta we laet blong God i saen gud raon long olgeta mo i talemaot long olgeta se Mesaea or Sevia blong wol, i bon tunaet long Betlehem. Wan taem nomo, plante enjel oli kamaot long heaven oli stap singsing blong presem God. From samting ia, ol man blong lukaot sipsip, oli girap wan taem mo go lukaot ples we bebe ia i bon mo stap slip long hem. Oli faenem hem – from oli obei long vois blong enjel we i toktok long olgeta mo talemaot gud nius ia. Bebe ia, we oli kavremap gud hem, i stap slip long wan bokis we man i putuma kakai blong anamol long hem blong oli kakai. Masta, Sevia mo bigfala Jif blong yumi, we i stret pikinini blong God i stap slip long ples blong ol anamol. Hem i krieita blong wol ia – from tru long hem olsem “Tok blong God” hem i kam man blong sevem yumi from sin, fasen blong sem mo ded long wol ia.

Hao nao yumi save lukaot gud long vois blong yumi?

everything ready for them to live with and live in.

Another story about ‘hearing voices’ is the shepherds who looked after their sheep that night Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was a cold dark night, when suddenly an angel appeared to them with God’s light that shone around them. The angel told them that their Messiah or Saviour had been born in Bethlehem that very night. Then a lot of angels appeared singing and praising God. When they had gone, the shepherds at once, left their sheep and went to look for this precious child, and found him as they had been told, wrapped in clothes, and lying in a manger, at the stable as they had been told by the angel. The King and Creator of the Universe, our Lord and Saviour came to be a helpless baby, born in a stable, he who came of God’s grace to save humans from sin, shame, and death.

How do we look after our voices?

Plenty of great singers always look after their voices well by eating healthy

Plante taem ol man we oli singsing, oli lukaot gud long vois blong olgeta – mekem se oli kakai ol helti kakai, oli slip gud, oli praktis long singsing evridei, oli mekem ol wok we i no save spolem vois blong olgeta. Oli save helpem tu ol narafala – mi tingbaot long 1995 taem plante popula man mo woman blong singsing oli kam tugeta mo mekem singsing ia, ‘We are the World’ blong resemap mane blong helpem olgeta blong Itiopia, long Afrika we oli hangre tumas from i nogat kakai mo plante oli sik mo ded. Be yumi tu long Vanuatu, taem saeklon Pam i kilim yumi long 2015, evri popula singa – ol man mo woman Vanuatu, oli bin go wan ples mo singsing blong resemap sam vatu blong helpem yumi long Vanuatu.

1 Samuel 3:1 – 18 i talem storian blong Samuel taem hem i wan smol boe, hem i bin harem God i singaot hem wan eli wan moning, we ples i tudak yet, mo i bin go lukaotem Profet Ilae, from hem i ting se hem nao i bin singaot long hem. Be Profet i talemaot long hem afta namba tri taem se – taem vois ia i singaot bakegen, bae yu talem tok ia: “Yu toktok. Mi mi man blong wok blong yu, mi stap harem yu ya.”

Olsem ol storian we yumi jes harem, vois blong yumi i blong presem God mo obei long hem mo mekem wanem

food, sleep, and rest well, practice every day and do work that does not harm the voice. In 1995 we remember the world’s best singers coming together to perform ‘We are the World’ to raise funds to help people starving in Ethiopia in Africa. In some of our Pacific Island Nations have also done this, when disasters strike, people have always come together to perform to raise funds to help those in need, using their voices to sing beautiful songs.

1 Samuel 3:1 – 18 talks about the story of little boy Samuel, who heard God’s voice very early one morning, while it was still dark. He went looking for Prophet Eli, thinking it was him calling him, but when the Prophet realized after three times that it was God calling Samuel, he told Samuel to say these words when the voice next called him: “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

These different stories speak to us, telling us to praise God, obey God, and do what he wants us to do. This means learning to listen to him too, to know his will and purpose in our young lives.

hem i wantem yumi blong mekem. We i minim se yumi mas lan blong lisen long hem tu blong harem save ol toktok blong hem. Mo tu i minim se samtaem bae yumi nao i kam vois blong ol narafala man we i no save toktok blong difendem olgeta or mekem i gud long olgeta. Hem i minim tu se yumi mas lukaot gud mo lisen gud tu long evri samting we Papa God i mekem i gud i stap raon long yumi. Ol pijin oli singsing, ol dog i singaot, win i blo long ol tri, ren i stap foldaon, tanda i faerap, mo plante moa, from hem i wok blong yumi blong lukaot gud long ol tri, ol anamol, solwora, graon mo ol pijin from Hae God i jusumaot yumi blong lukaot gud envaeromen blong yumi blong i stap gud blong givhan long plante moa jeneresen we i stap kam.

Summary:

- a. Vois blong ol Pikinini – wanem nao pikinini i stap talemaot long papa mo mama?
- b. Vois blong ol Papa – wanem nao pikinini i harem long papa?
- c. Voice blong Mama – wanem nao pikinini i harem long mama?
- d. Voice blong Krieisen – wanem nao pikinini i save harem long Krieisen?

Sometimes this means that we, as children, become the voice for those who cannot speak, those who are silenced, those that need our help to become their voice, their eyes, their hands, their legs to help them. However, it is not only humans that we think of here – we also remember our environment – the place where we live (keeping it clean and safe) the bird’s voice, the dog’s voice, the wind’s voice on the trees, the rain’s voice as it falls, the thunder’s loud voice as it cracks across the sky and many other natural voices. It is our job as stewards to look after the trees, the animals, the ocean, the land, the birds and so on because God chose us and allowed us to live here on earth to take care and look after it well so that it could benefit us for many more years to come.

Summary:

- a. The Children’s voices – what is the child telling their father and mother?
- b. Father’s voice – What is the child hearing from their father or Guardian?
- c. Mother’s voice – What is the child hearing from their Mother or Guardian?
- d. The voice of Creation – What can the child hear and know about their environment?

Kwestin blong Tokbaot: (long grup)

- i. Long laef blong yumi tede, vois blong hu nao i strong we i strong?
- ii. Voice blong huia olgeta i smol we i smol?
- iii. Voice blong hu olgeta i nogat nomo - or man i no save harem nating?

**Las Him blong wosip: NLB 4 # 338
'Gudfala Aelan, Sanbij mo Rif'**

Gudfala aelan, sanbij mo rif
Tri we i flaoa, mun we i saen
Bigfala hil we wora i ron
Kantri blong mi ia, mi presem God

Bifo long hiten, ol man i fraet
Fraet long ol devel, fraet long ol man
Tudak i fasem tingting blong man
Kantri blong mi long taem ia bifo

Be God i tingbaot ples ia blong mi
I sanem laet blong ronem tudak
I sanem laef blong mekem mi fri
Kantri blong mi nao mi presem God

Nao mi mi wantem kantri blong mi
Oltaem i lesin long Tok blong God
Oltaem i folem ol plan blong hem
Kantri blong mi nao, Kantri blong
God

Questions to talk about in groups:

- i. In our lives today, whose voice is the strongest today?
- ii. Whose voice is heard but not loud at all?
- iii. Whose voice is silent even though it should be heard?

Use the song of 'Pasifika' could take the place of this hymn for others or Vanuatu if they want to sing 'Pasifika'
- using their local string band or instruments to praise God

Let all the islands rise and sing,
And to our God their praises bring:
On strings and drum God's might
proclaim,
Shout the glory of God's name

Pasifika, Pasifika
With throbbing reef and coral shore
For fish and shell and mighty whale
For all God's gifts our thanks we pour

And when we see the stars at night
The many worlds which cross the sky
The sun and moon which give us light,
We lift our hearts to God on high

The children playing on the shore
The sounds of laughter which we hear
Their love increasing more and more
Remind us that our God is near

<p>Benediction: Gladhat blong Yu, God we yu Papa mo Mama blong mifala, we yu mekem mifala mo evri samting long wol ia. Gudnes mo Sore blong Yu Jisas Kraes, Pikinini, we yu harem save vois blong mifala mo kam long wol ia blong sevem mifala, Fasen blong yu Tapu Spirit blong holem mo joenem mifala – ol pikinini blong yu mo aelan we mifala i stap long hem, i stap gud oltaem andanit long kea mo proteksen blong yu. Gladhat ia, i stap wetem mifala ol pikinini blong yu oltaem, gogo i no save finis samtaem, Amen.</p>	<p>The palms which bend toward the sky, The clouds which hurry to and fro, The birds which fly both low and high, Give joy to men and earth below</p> <p>To God the Father, God the Son, And God the Spirit, praise be done May Christ the Lord upon us pour The Spirit's gift for evermore</p> <p>Benediction: (Be creative and do in own language) The Grace of God the Father and Mother, maker of heaven and earth, The Goodness and Mercy of the Son, Jesus Christ, who heard our voices for help and came to save us. His gift to us of the Holy Spirit, our helper, who joins us all – people, islands, and ocean to become one under his care, protection, and love, with a voice to be heard. May God be with us his children today and always, forever, and ever, Amen.</p>
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Liturgy and reflection prepared by Rev. Leinamau Manrogoana – Presbyterian
Church of Vanuatu

Activities Suggested for Children's Week

- Monday, September 12

Activity: Children's Prayer and Reflection on Creation

Feature Prayers and reflections for creation by children.

- Tuesday, September 13

Activity: Theological Reflection

Feature a theological reflection on children and the future of creation.

- Wednesday, September 14 - Saturday, September 17

Activity: Story Telling

- Visit a school/community etc ...to read bible stories or stories about creation and stewardship to children.
- Arrange for each child to plant a tree either at home or in school and take a photo with a short message of why he or she chose to plant that tree!
- Feature children's artwork, poems, reflections, bible verses, and prayers about creation on social media
- Feature Children's call to action

- Sunday, September 18

Activity: Sunday School/ Children's Ecumenical Rally

Sunday School fellowship based on the theme of stewardship and listening to the voice of creation.



September 19th - 25th | Youth Advocacy Week: Youth voices to Action for Creation

This week focuses on youth advocacy because young people have become the biggest voices of change by calling out the tyranny in our world's leadership regarding environmental protection. Christian youths bring a lot of value to the cause of environmental protection and God's creation. As young people, they are sitting in between a line that sees the present and the future and can hold people accountable for their actions, that is why young people should be natured to become strong Christian leaders for change and to change.

I. Welcome

Leader: Welcome all you saints in Christ's name, as we participate together in acknowledging God, the creator of heaven and earth, in whom Jesus is called to redeem both humanity and the creation and with the power of God's Holy Spirit who commissions us to declare our responsibility over one human family and one earth community for the greater good with a common destiny.

People: Lord! Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

Leader: Help us O Lord in our quest to sustain the sacredness of your creation order and to bring forth a sustainable Pacific/Oceania Society that would give you glory in all means of life.

People: Holy is your name O God in all creation.

II. Call to Worship

Come all you saints, let us praise our God for the miracle He once created that there is a world. Let us shout for joy to the Lord for all that He has made both in the heavens and in planet earth that exists. Praise be to God for all His creation.

III. Hymn of Praise

IV. Prayer for the Day

God our Father, creator of heaven and earth, we affirm today in our faith that you created this earth including us in your likeness that we may uphold the dignity of the mutuality of life you predestined for the highest good of humanity.

We affirm as faith Christians that you called us to serve and not be served in this act of our worship to you O Most Holy God worthy of all praise. We believe dear Lord that you created us for a purpose to live for and we are fully obliged to serve your creation as stewards, managers, ecological advocates, and pastoral innovators in this love circle of the interdependence of life to the fullest.

Help us dear God, to discern new intrinsically aspirations and visions in our quest to mediate, manage, advocate and to create new innovations in all affairs of the creation for its ongoing sustenance.

We pray in Jesus name that there will be increased youth empowerment in every society so that they may come to fully comprehend their place in society and to learn and negotiate their interactions with an ever-wider circle of people and the ecology we depend on for our survival. May your Holy Spirit enrich our youths so that their voices are heard in every level of decision making as a pathway to accept and appreciate their existence in this global earth community enabling them to share their ideas, opinions and advice are transformative.

We confess to you dear God Almighty the sins we commit to others and the planet earth. We confess the sins of selfishness, pride, greed we imposed against our younger generation that deprived their voices and actions in this endeavour. We also confess the sins of exploitations done to the earth's resources for our own economic gains. Forgive and accept us as we humbly seek your forgiveness that we may serve you genuinely.

In the power of your Holy Spirit send us out into the world with the realisation that the earth is holy therefore, we ought to regard our relationship towards it as holy and to uphold this integrity of creation to provide hope, justice, and mutuality so invaluable for all in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

V. Scripture Readings/Reflections

Romans 8:18-21

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of one who subjected it, in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into freedom and glory of the children of God.”

Reflection: God’s Children called to action for creation

Paul encourages that our sufferings lead to our eternal glory. It is amazing how all creation awaits the children of God to be revealed at a time in future. At this point in time all believers will be revealed with Him in Glory and all creation will rejoice because now they can be restored. There will come a time when the creation will be fully restored to its desired perfection and glory. What a future it will be. In today’s modern world environmental agencies have subjected God’s creation to devastation which has taken away its sacredness enslaving it to the corruptible gains with which man receives as their end product. However, there is hope for recreation and new life to the creation which the children of God bound to make it happen and the creation then will retrieve its freedom and glory, once and for all. The truth here is that the children Paul refers to here, embraces all of us together regardless of our status. We are all children of God. The future glory and freedom of God’s creation rests entirely on us. All of us: children, youths, and adults alike, we have a common purpose and destiny to achieve. The future is already here. We are duty bound to action for God’s creation.

Romans 1:19-20

“...since what may be known about God is plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

Reflection: God’s revelation of His mighty presence in Nature.

“The general revelation speaks volume of God’s presence in nature. Nature in turn shows us a God of might, intelligence, and intricate detail; a God of beauty;

a God who controls powerful forces? Through special revelation (the Bible and the coming of Jesus), we learn about God's love and forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. God reveals His divine nature and personal qualities therefore the creation tells us that it was made by a powerful and intelligent God who designed everything."

Psalm 19:1

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands."

Reflection: The heavens declare the glory of God.

"We are surrounded by fantastic displays of God's craftsmanship –The heavens give dramatic evidence of His existence, His power, His love, and His care. To say that the universe happened by chance is unethical. Its design, intricacy, and orderliness point to a personally involved Creator. As we look at God's handiwork in nature and the heavens, thank Him for such a magnificent beauty and the truth it reveals about the Creator."

Revelation 11:18

"...The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

Reflection: Crucifixion.

The revelation articulates that God is ever present in creation. The book of Hebrews has it that Christ is crucified once. His second coming would not be to eradicate sins or to extricate people from their sinful natures. More so, he anticipates a revived creation. However, the ongoing destruction of nature by humans depicts that we keep crucifying God's revelation which precludes the recreation of life. On the outset, the creation of life was initiated by God. Now this revelation of the creation of life is then passed on to man and creation. This will power of the creation of life is bestowed upon man that in turn God creates other living beings. Similarly, the recreation of life affects other creations through God's powerful influence. When man uses his will power for his greed, he is crucifying God's creation.

Psalm 150:1

“Praise the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens.”

Reflection: Sacrament-Sacredness of Creation.

God’s creation praises Him everywhere in every way. That is sufficient to say that the creation is therefore sacred [holy] in every way. If that is the theological view here the creation is therefore Christological or having the mind of Christ. Creation characteristically implicates in sharing and caring for all, not just man. Christ transforms the mind as Romans 12:1 echo. Besides, creation celebrates God’s reign [Ps. 150].” In conclusion, thus, I can claim that the creation has the mind of God with regards to fecundity. The creation gives and re- creates life a divinely bestowed teleological purpose it serves to uphold to the glory of God the supreme creator.

VI. Benediction

Leader: May the true influence of the third person of the Godhead, be our springs of new life as we embark on redefining our interactions with Mother Earth. Go and serve others and our mother Earth with God’s love and divine diligence.

People: Send us out into the world as faithful witness to your love O God to serve Christ and Mother Earth.



Liturgy and reflection prepared by Rev. Dari Riqeo – United Church in the Solomon Islands

Activities Suggested for Youth and Advocacy Week

- Monday, September 19

Activity: Prayers and Reflection

Prayers and reflection by youths on their stand for action on protecting creation.

- Tuesday, September 20

Theological Reflection

Feature theological reflections by young people on stewardship and listening to the voice of creation amidst economic development.

- Wednesday, September 21

Activity: Talanoa

Feature a talanoa discussion with young people on their stand on ecological justice issues in the region.

- Thu. Sept 22 - Fri. Sept 23

Activity: Storytelling / Call to Action

Feature youth videos, poems, stories, artwork, etc... on call to action for creation

- Saturday, September 24

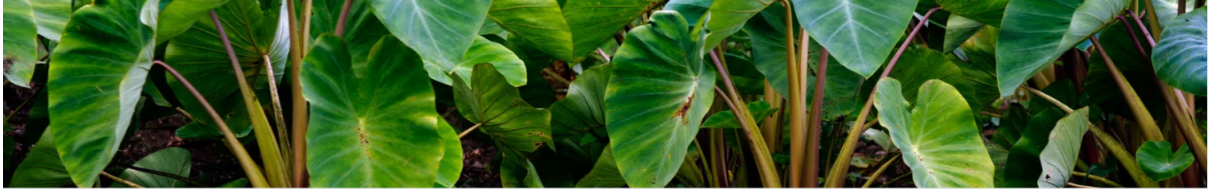
Activity: Clean-up campaign / Plant a tree

Organise a clean-up campaign or a tree planting activity inviting ecumenical youths, church communities, congregation, etc... to take part.

- Sunday, September 25

Activity: Youth Ecumenical Synergy

- Fellowship on the theme of the season of creation
- Re-emphasize young people's call to action



September 26th - October 2nd | Church Leaders Week: Leadership for Justice - Listening to God's voice in its creation

This week focuses on the church leaders because of the role church leaders play in the action for creation. Church leaders' participation and actions are important for change in the push for the protection of God's creation. Church leaders lead and live by example and are obligated to protect and uphold the dignity of all that is God's creation. Church leaders are also very influential in the change of church policies, frameworks, and theology.

I. Welcome

II. Call to Worship

Leader: The Steadfast love of the Lord never ceases

All: His mercies never come to an end.

Leader: They are new every morning

All: Great is thy faithfulness.

III. Hymn of Praise

IV. Prayer for the Day

God of creation, we thank you for the beauty of the earth and all creation. Help us to always hear the call to be good stewards of your gifts, the caretaker of all you have entrusted to us on earth.

Let us always recognize, cherish, and enjoy the goodness in all of creation. Teach us reverence for every person and all living things. O God, help us use your gifts wisely and share them generously. Whisper in my heart a reminder that I am but a guardian of your abundances, I am called to pass on to the next generation. Let all we do reflect your love and care Amen.

V. Scripture Reading

Hosea 4: 1-3

Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel.

For the Lord has a dispute, with the inhabitants of the land.

There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land.

Swearing, lying and murder, and stealing and adultery break out (upon the land); bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Therefore, the land mourns, and all who live in it languish together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, and even the fish of the sea are perishing.

Reflection

The text invites readers to look afresh and ask whether the voice of the earth and the members of the earth community can be heard in a way that views them as subjects in their own languages.

The text begins with an opening statement of God speaking to all Israel. Israel here refers to leaders and members of the Israelite community. This includes men, women, youths, and children. In other words, it is an invitation for the whole community to adhere and listen to the voice of God in creation. However, what is interesting in this invitation is how God reminded Israel that they are inhabitants of the earth. Israel belongs to the earth or owned by the earth. From an indigenous perspective, such invitation gives the earth a voice to be heard and not silent. Through the lens of leadership with justice, a leader is owned by the people because he or she is chosen by the people to serve the people and vice versa. There is an act of reciprocity between the earth and her people.

In verses 2-3, God brings a dispute against the people of Israel, accusing Israel of crimes (attitudes/actions) and points out the mourning and languishing of the earth community as a result of those criminal behaviours. God reminded Israel that the earth is a living entity capable of raising its voice in celebration and against injustice. For example, the earth suffers due to human actions of violation and exploitation of resources. The earth's mourning in verse 3 is a visible sign of the inability of the earth to function in a normal way due to the awful human actions and attitudes upon it. The earth's mourning can also be termed as the loss of the normal way of speaking. In this case, the earth experiences a trauma that not only absorbs but destroys the voice of the earth.

The earth mourning is a traumatic way of voicing the unspeakable since mourning, screaming, or groaning is typical of a pre-language state disconnected from traditional ways of speaking. The word mourns as “to dry up” expresses the earth’s inability to cope with an overwhelming external force.

However, when “mourning” is paired with “languish,” such words express the vast sorrows affecting all elements of creation, including humans, animals, and fish. In other words, the verse raises the image of a severe drought, through which the word “mourn” becomes dry, and humans, animals, birds, and fish weaken and die. The expression “all the inhabitants” connotes that all the living beings are wounded. It implies the decrease of the normal life, entailing a breaking off of natural productivity and growth.

VI. Reflection Questions

- What is our indigenous understanding of the earth?
- Identify some of our human exploitations of the earth in our own contexts?
- How can we restore the voice of the earth in our own contexts?

VII. Closing Hymn

VIII. Benediction

May God who established the dance of creation

Instill in our minds, hearts, and hands God’s wisdom to love and care for all living things.

Amen.

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Liturgy and reflection prepared by Rev. Geraldine Williame – Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma

Activities Suggested for Church Leaders Week

- Monday, September 26

Activity: Prayer and Reflection on Creation

Feature Prayer or reflection from any church leader in Fiji, Tonga, or Federated States of Micronesia.

- Tuesday, September 27

Activity: Prayer and Reflection on Creation

Feature Prayer or reflection from any church leader in Samoa, Kanaki or Kiribati

- Wednesday, September 28

Activity: Talanoa / Webinar: Leadership for Justice – Listening to God’s Voice in its Creation

Host a talanoa or panel discussion/presentation on leadership for justice in the church: Listening to God’s voice speaking through its creation.

- Thursday, September 29

Activity: Prayer & Reflection on Creation

Feature prayer or reflection from any church leader in the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, or Solomon Islands.

- Friday, September 30

Activity: Prayer & Reflection on Creation

Feature prayer or reflection from any church leader from Maohi Nui, Nauru, PNG, or Aotearoa NZ.

- Saturday, October 1

Activity: Plant a Mangrove or Tree
Encourage the ecumenical community across the region to plant a tree

- Sunday, October 2

Activity: Ecumenical Mass

- Ecumenical fellowship to end the season of creation month.
- Re-emphasize the call to action for creation



October 3rd & 4th | Call to Action by the Pacific Churches

The last two days for the Season of Creation are dedicated to a Call to Action because of the desperate need for change to protect God's creation. Therefore, as a Christian community, we are obligated to call to Action all Christian leaders, people, government, and Pacific leaders to Act on the protection of our Pacific household.

Ecumenical commitments:

Together we commit to:

Hear and amplify the voices and solutions of those most affected by biodiversity loss and the climate crisis.

Acknowledge locally led ecosystem preservation and restoration at global events.

Protect people, the planet and all of nature, including natural ecosystems, as a priority over profit.

Ensure that human rights, social justice, and the integrity of creation are at the centre of the response to the current climate and biodiversity crises.

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Activities Suggested for the 2 Days of Call to Action by Pacific Churches

- Monday, October 3

Activity: PACIFIC CHURCHES CALL TO ACTION

Feature a call to action by all the church leaders, people, government, and Pacific leaders to Act on the protection of our Pacific household.

- Tuesday, October 4

Activity: Celebrate St. Francis of Assisi Day

A Theological Reflection on St. Francis of Assisi's Theology of Creation in the Context of the Pacific

“When God finished creating the universe, He said to the first human being: ‘Behold my works, how beautiful, how splendid they are. All that I have created, I created for you. Take care, therefore, that you do not destroy my world, for if you do, there will no one left to repair what you have destroyed.’” (an ancient Rabbinic counsel).

In March 2021, an article appeared in *deveX* titled “Balancing climate, culture, and community: Fiji’s relocation challenge”. In it, the writer quoted the headman of Korolevu village in Vanua Levu, Ratu Kavida Lalama, as saying: “The rising of sea levels and increased flooding due to climate change was damaging homes and our families’ lives.” This was the reason for their relocation. This was not the first nor will it be the last. And in the years to come, many families and villages will make the decision to move.

There is a migratory sense in all of us. Permanency is never written into our genes. We go on adventures, discover new knowledge, and uninhabited territories. We are both fascinated by the unknown and fearful of it. Yet we venture out with hope and courage. Marriage is one great example. But having stated this, we move and venture out for many reasons. Today, one of the reasons, especially for coastal communities, is the rise of sea level and the inundation of their homes with sea water. Voluntary movements coerced by factors beyond their control. Abuse of the environment, due largely to the disdain of the environment which was largely influenced by classical theology and by the 18th century development philosophy, has come to mark our development age today.

This season of creation, as with other seasons of creation, continues to remind us of this ancient Rabbinic counsel: “Creation has its own dignity as God’s masterpiece, and though we have the mandate to use it, we have none to destroy or despoil it.” There is sacredness in God’s creation. Just as humans are created in God’s image, creation is created in God’s image. Yet, there is a mandate for humans to use, but not abuse. St. Francis speaks to the first and reminds us of the sacredness of creation; that there is a shared sacredness in creation, of both humans and the environment. Indigenous communities

around the world speak to the proper use of creation, and the climate refugees and the relocation of villages like the Korolevu village in Fiji speaks to the abuse of creation.

But the biblical narrative is not bereft of hope and counsel. The Sabbath or the Sunday is a day that sets limits to our intervention in nature and the pursuit of economic activity. And remind ourselves that the earth is the Lord's. For 6 days it is handed over to us, but on the 7th day we symbolically abdicate that power. It is a weekly reminder of the integrity of nature and the boundaries and limitations of human striving. We become conscious of our being creations, not creators.

Empires and indeed civilisations (past or present) at the height of their powers have found it hard to maintain a sense of limits. Notes Jonathan Sacks: "Each in turn has been captivated by the idea that it alone was immune to the laws of growth and decline. That it could consume resources indefinitely, pursue present advantages without thought of future depletion." (2000:172). Adds Alexis de Tocqueville: "But in proportion as the light of faith grows dim, the range of man's sight is circumscribed... When men have once allowed themselves to think no more of what is to befall them after life, they lapse readily into that complete and brutal indifference to futurity..." (Quoted in Robert Nisbet, 1980:355)

The Biblical narrative teaches a different wisdom with regards to the natural environment and our stewardship responsibility towards it.

- Reverence in the face of creation
- Responsibility to future generations
- And restraint in the knowledge that not everything we can do, should we do

The simplest image, and surely the most sensible one, in thinking about our ecological responsibility is to see the earth as belonging to God and us as its trustees, charged with conserving and if possible, beautifying if for the sake of our grandchildren not yet born.

Woody Allen: "More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly." Well, that's how it seems

sometimes. Fifteen centuries ago, Judaism's sages said that when God made the first man, He took him to see all the trees in the Garden of Eden. He said to him: "See how beautiful My works are. All that I have created I have made for you. But be careful that you do not ruin My world, for if you do, there is no one else to put right what you have destroyed."

How fatefully those words echo now. We are today consuming our children's tomorrow. Before it is too late, we must learn environmental habits of reverence, responsibility and restraint. We will need to cultivate instincts of caution if we are to hold ourselves back from patterns of production and consumption that threaten the future of God's creation.

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*Reflection prepared by Aisake Casimira Varea - Institute for Mission Research,
Pacific Theological College*

Well Wishes

May this 2022 Season of Creation renew our ecumenical unity, renewing and uniting us by our bond of Peace in one Spirit, in our call to care for our common home. And may this season of prayer and action be a time to Listen to the Voice of Creation, so that our lives in words and deeds proclaim good news for all the Earth.

In God's grace,
The Pacific Conference of Churches



**Listen to the
Voice of creation**
SEASON OF CREATION 2022