

**Reflections & Prayers for Sunday**  
**5<sup>th</sup> September 2021**  
**CREATION DAY**



Today we are thinking about Creation: God's action in creating the world and all that is in it, our lives within God's world, and our responsibility to care for God's world. For it is *God's* world – not ours. It is not ours to use, destroy or harm, but ours to care for, to love and to cherish so that all people, now and in the future, will also have a beautiful and productive world.

I chose the image above because it reminds me of New Zealand. Pre-pandemic I was very fortunate to travel to Australia and New Zealand. The very first day of our arrival, I was seeing birds and flowers and bushes and trees the like of which I had never seen before. I was entranced and amazed. I think England is full of amazing flora and fauna – and here was a whole new world of birds and life I had never imagined.

How amazing, how great, is our God who created all things. How huge, how important, is our calling to be stewards of God's world.



[www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)

## Contents

Reading for this Sunday	p.2
Reflection	p. 2-4
Prayers	p. 4-6
Parish Prayers	p. 7-8
Church Opening Times and Notices	p. 8

## Readings for this Sunday

***You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:***

Genesis 1: 24-end

Luke 4: 16-21

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So, God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

## Reflection

Once again I have turned to the poet and theologian Malcolm Guite for a reflection. Sometimes prose can't quite capture our thoughts and responses to scripture, but Guite's

poetry often finds new and creative ways into Bible passages, particularly if the passage is a very familiar one. Guite wrote a series of seven poems, "Roundels" for Genesis chapter one. Today I include the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> roundels. You can find the whole series in his book, *Parable and Paradox*, or on his website:

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/tag/creation/page/2/>

*Guite writes:* We come now to the Sixth Day in the Primal week of Genesis Chapter One, the day on which we are invited to contemplate the mystery of our own creation and of our being made in the image of God. Furthermore, because the Sixth Day is a Friday, we are moved as Christians to think of God's loving response to our fall, of how, as Newman put it, 'a second Adam to the fight, and to the rescue came'.

## VI

You made us new and beautiful today,  
Your Spirit softened us like morning dew,  
Your Image shining from us through the clay,  
You made us new.

You woke us and we knew ourselves in you,  
We walked together at the close of day,  
You trusted us and called us to be true.

When we forsook your love and turned away  
You came and sought us where we hid from you,  
And on the cross, in darkness, on this day  
You made us new.

Introducing part VII, Guite says, "Here is the last in my little round of seven Roundels for the primal week in Genesis Chapter One. Today we enter the Sabbath, the blessed rest in which God contemplates his own creation with delight and love and pronounces it good, a sabbath which he also graciously invites us to share with him. Sabbath is always a sheer gift whenever and wherever we keep it, a gift more and more need in our pressurised 24/7 world. So here is my roundel celebrating that blessing and rest.

## VII

Blessing and rest, delight in everything  
Sustained by your strong love and richly blest,

This is the the gift you give, the day you bring  
Blessing and rest.

This is indeed the 'gladness of the best',  
From first lines in the east where linnets sing,  
To where the last light lingers in the west,

You lift the cares to which I used to cling,  
As you yourself descend to be my guest  
And show me how to find in everything  
Blessing and rest.

## Prayers

### **Prayers for today:**

Lord of creation,  
whose glory is around and within us:  
open our eyes to your wonders,  
that we may serve you with reverence  
and know your peace at our lives' end,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God our Father,  
you never cease the work you have begun  
and prosper with your blessing all human labour:  
make us wise and faithful stewards of your gifts  
that we may serve the common good,  
maintain the fabric of our world  
and seek that justice where all may share  
the good things you pour upon us;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **Prayers for the world and for others**

Let us pray to God the Almighty, the King of creation.

God said, 'Let there be light.'  
Eternal God, we thank you for your light and your truth.  
We praise you for your loving care  
in creating a universe which proclaims your glory.  
Inspire us to worship you, the creator of all,  
and let your light shine upon our world.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the heavens.'  
We thank you for the vastness of the universe  
and the mysteries of space.  
We pray for all scientists and astronomers  
who extend the boundaries of our knowledge.  
As we contemplate the wonder of the heavens,  
confirm us in the truth that every human being is  
known and loved by you.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together,  
and let dry land appear.'  
We thank you for the beauty of the earth,  
for the diversity of land and sea, for the resources of the earth.  
Give us the will to cherish this planet  
and to use its riches for the good and welfare of all.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky  
to separate the day and the night.'  
We thank you for the warmth of the sun,  
the light of the moon, the glory of the stars.  
We praise you for the formations of clouds,  
the radiance of dawn and sunset.  
Save us from wasting or abusing the energy  
on which all life depends.  
Open our eyes to behold your beauty, and our lips to praise your name.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures,  
and let birds fly across the sky.'  
We thank you for the teeming life of the seas,  
and the flight of the birds.

Help us to protect the environment so that all life may flourish.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.'  
We rejoice in the variety of animal life.  
Grant us grace to treat all animals with respect and care;  
to protect endangered species,  
to preserve the variety of habitats,  
and to honour the delicate balance of nature.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let us create human beings in our own image.'  
We pray for the human family.  
We exult in its diversity and giftedness,  
we repent of its sins, divisions and violence.  
By the power of your Spirit, restore your image within us,  
through Christ who came to remake us by his death and resurrection.  
God of life: hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty:  
open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works;  
that, rejoicing in your whole creation,  
we may learn to serve you with gladness;  
for the sake of him through whom all things were made,  
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**A blessing for today:**

May God the Holy Spirit,  
who hovered over the waters of creation  
and formed the world from chaos,  
form us in the likeness of Christ and renew the face of the earth  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## Parish Prayers for the week ahead

### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer for:**

Sunday	Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan
Monday	The Diocese of Embu – The Anglican Church of Kenya
Tuesday	The Diocese of Enugu – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Wednesday	The Diocese of Enugu North – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Thursday	The Diocese of Esan – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Friday	The Diocese of Etche – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Saturday	The Diocese of Etsako – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

### **In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Parish of Luton, St Augustine, Limbury (Deanery of Luton)
Monday	Parish of Luton, St Francis (Deanery of Luton)
Tuesday	Parish of Luton, St Hugh, Lewsey (Deanery of Luton)
Wednesday	All exploring licensed and ordained ministry (Deanery of Luton)
Thursday	Parish of Luton, St Paul (Deanery of Luton)
Friday	Parish of Luton, St Saviour (Deanery of Luton)
Saturday	Parish of Marsh Farm (Deanery of Luton)

### **For the homes and families in:**

Sunday	Barrons Row, Beech Close
Monday	Beeson End Lane, Bewdley Close
Tuesday	Birch Way, Bowling Close
Wednesday	Broadstone Road, Burnsall Place
Thursday	Burywick, Camberley Place
Friday	Chaucer Close, The Chowns
Saturday	Churchfield, Coleswood Road

### **The Sick:**

Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris, and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

### **For the recently deceased:**

Beatrice Marsh, Enid Giles

## **On their year's mind:**

Sydney Kent, Mary Stevenson, James Ogborn, Norah Russell, Sarah Spells, Sheila Fisher, Brian Gander, John Grose.

## **Church Opening times**

### **Other services / in Church congregation**

- Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5.00pm
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist
- Short Family service on Sunday 19 September at 4.00 pm

## **Private Prayer**

- Saturday and Sunday 11.00am – 4.00pm
- Wednesday 9.00am – 5.30pm

## **A reminder... of this phone service:**

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

## **Church at home:**

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).

*Our prayers this week are from the Church of England's resources for Creationtide.*