

Moderator's Message

Season of Creation



1 Sept — 4 Oct

"Listen to creation: move from a theology of plunder, back to a theology of wonder."

Do you remember Climate Change protests many New Zealand school students participated in a couple of years ago? Students took Friday afternoon off school to march together. I was sitting on the veranda of Hagley Golf Club on one such Friday afternoon. Surrounded by my old golfing mates, we saw a huge group of school students coming towards us down the path through the park. They were carrying placards calling for action on climate change. They were chanting and singing. The first reaction amongst my group was 'let's go and tell them that they need to get back to school!' Some of us managed to change the mood to let's go out to them and applaud their passion for creation. And so we did, listening to these young voices as they spoke up for care for the planet.

This is a topic close to my heart as it is so in tune with my Moderator theme of, Empowering Generations. This cause is so important to the younger generations and we who are older need to listen to their voices and respond.

And this story fits so well with the theme and symbol of the Season of Creation 2022, the annual ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for our common home.

This year's theme is, "Listening to the Voice of Creation", and the symbol is the burning bush.

Season of Creation begins on 1 September, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi.

As I reflect on the theme in the context of the Exodus 3 passage where God captures the attention of Moses through a burning bush, I think of these things:



The Burning Bush
Ex 3:1-12

Listen to the
Voice of creation
SEASON OF CREATION 2022

- God called and Moses listened.
- God spoke of hearing the suffering voices of the people.
- Today the suffering voices of people continue to cry out... as I write this message the Leaders of the Pacific Forum lament rising sea levels, villagers in Bangladesh and citizens of Sydney weep over homes and livelihoods drowned under flood waters, residents in Spain, Portugal and France desperately call for more help to fight the fires that ravage their lands, and the United Kingdom experiences the highest temperatures ever recorded.
- And just as God used a part of creation to call Moses, are these rising sea levels, floods and fires, creation itself calling out for our attention?

Moses listened and at the grand age of 80 sprang into action.

In this *Season of Creation*, individuals and communities are invited to spring into action through prayer, sustainability projects and advocacy:

- Prayer: Host an ecumenical prayer gathering that unites all Christians for the care of our common home.
- Sustainability: Lead a clean-up project that helps all of creation thrive.
- Advocacy: Raise your voice for climate justice by participating in or leading an ongoing campaign, such as the fossil fuel divestment movement.

As a Church we can engage with the caring for creation actions that our Church at successive assemblies has committed to support including, most recently, Eco Church. See the Church website for details. Download the *2022 Season of Creation* resource.

The *Season of Creation* website is well worth a look. I was especially touched by a quote on this website from Rev Rachel Mash, Provincial Canon for the Environment in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa:

*"We are recovering the sense of wonder at how the world was made,
and we need to reclaim the theology of why it was made.
We need to listen to creation so that we can move from a theology of plunder
back to a theology of wonder."*

When the Rev Sikawu Makubalo of Methodist Church from Southern Africa revealed the burning bush logo of the *2022 Season of Creation* he said that the bush contrasts the fire of so many unnatural fires that aggravate the climate crisis, with the sign of fire as the light of the Holy Spirit that unites Christians. Rev Sikawu Makubalo asked those in attendance:

"Are we listening? What are we seeing? Are we moved?"

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