



Divine Love, move me where you will,
Divine Love, move me where you will,
For I am a feather, on the breath of God,
I am a feather on the breath of God.
Hildegard of Bingen

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Season of Creation 3

19th September

As we continue to mark the Season of Creation this week, on 17th September, we remember Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). Hildegard, born in Germany to noble parents, became an Abbess, visionary mystic and composer. She wrote seventy-seven lyric poems, each with its own musical setting composed by her, in the collection *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*. Her numerous other writings included lives of saints; two treatises on medicine and natural history, reflecting a quality of scientific observation rare at that period; and extensive correspondence, in which are to be found further prophecies and allegorical treatises. She also, for amusement, contrived her own language. She travelled widely throughout Germany, evangelizing to large groups of people about her visions and religious insights. She was proclaimed a doctor of the church in 1212. Hildegard had a profound sense of the mystical presence of God in the Creation and this is expressed in her writings.

As we read of the “capable wife”, strong in her own power, from the Book of Proverbs today it is good to remember a strong woman in the life of the church who used her power to notice and nurture the life of God in profound ways and to share it with others.

“There is the music of Heaven in all things.”

“We cannot live in a world that is not our own,
in a world that is interpreted for us by others.

An interpreted world is not a home.

Part of the terror is to take back our own listening,
to use our own voice, to see our own light.”



Illumination from the *Liber Scivias* showing Hildegard receiving a vision and dictating to her scribe and secretary

WORSHIP AT HOME

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within and around us in all that is.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

Happy are those
whose ... delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.

Psalm 1

Prayer - A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.
Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature
in your risen glory.
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness

for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and wealth,
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

The Book of Proverbs 31. 10-31

Over three weeks we have heard of three women from the Book of Proverbs. Firstly, the feminine voice of Wisdom, there with God at the beginning of Creation, like a master-worker, sharing with God in the creation of the world. Secondly, last week, we heard the wise woman ask why her voice had not been heard and heeded. Calamity had befallen those who did not listen. Today, we hear of the capable wife, wise and strong in her own agency. We might ask: why, when this vision of the strong woman is in the pages of scripture, have women been so terribly oppressed in the life of the church? This is not about being a dutiful housewife but a woman living fully in her power. What a glorious image!

A capable wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from far away.
She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household
and tasks for her servant-girls.

She considers a field and buys it;

with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength,
and makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.

She opens her hand to the poor,
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid for her household when it snows,
for all her household are clothed in crimson.
She makes herself coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the city gates,
taking his seat among the elders of the land.
She makes linen garments and sells them;
she supplies the merchant with sashes.
Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

She looks well to the ways of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up and call her happy;
her husband too, and he praises her:
'Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.'
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

The letter of James 3. 13 – 4. 3, 7-8a

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.

You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

The Gospel according to Mark 9. 30- 37

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'



Reflecting

On the 1st September Pope Francis, Justin, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, leader of the Orthodox Church, released a joint statement entitled: *A Joint Message for the Protection of Creation*. This is unprecedented. I'm not sure that the leaders of these three churches have ever released a joint statement before. We are in interesting territory.

The language of the statement is restrained but clear – we are in a critical moment. They write: *All of us—whoever and wherever we are—can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation.*

This year the theme for the Season of Creation is: *A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God.* Oikos is the Greek word for home or household. It is also the word from which we get the word economy. The scriptures give us an image of the household of God. We know what the household of God is like because of the divine concern for the poor and images we see of the hospitality, inclusiveness and generosity of God, especially through the words of the prophets and the ministry of Jesus.

The Book of Proverbs gives us an image of the wise woman who oversees the running of the household. She is energetic, prudent, wise, generous and kind and she has great foresight, planning and acting for the good of her house. We might hold her as an image of the kind of leadership we need in the world at this time.

The joint message highlights the way in which the global household has come to be run: *We have maximised our own interest at the expense of future generations. By concentrating on our wealth, we find that long-term assets, including the bounty of nature, are depleted for short-term advantage.*

I noted last week that, in a recent Australian survey, 93% of Australians under 30 do not trust political and business leaders to do the right thing. Really this indicates that the economic and political systems we have lived and prospered under is failing our young people. What can be done? The church leaders write: *For their sake, we must choose to eat, travel, spend, invest and live differently, thinking not only of immediate interest and gains but also of future benefits. We repent of our generation's sins. We stand alongside our younger sisters and brothers throughout the world in committed prayer and dedicated action for a future which corresponds ever more to the promises of God.*

Not only do they alert us to the changes in the individual and local choices that we must make, in their statement they put world leaders of all kinds on notice: *To those with more far-reaching responsibilities—heading administrations, running companies, employing people or investing funds—we say: choose people-centred profits; make short-term sacrifices to safeguard all our futures; become leaders in the transition to just and sustainable economies.*

We are in a moment of significant transition in the global community. Justin, Bartholomew and Francis write of the imperative of cooperation. We must put aside our political, national, economic and commercial selfishness and find a new spirit of prudence and cooperation, acting for the good of all, not just a few.

The letter of James reminds of the spirit which is required in this time: *where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.*

Let us pray for peace, let us act justly and prudently, let us call out injustice where we see it, let us ask our children and grandchildren what we need to do to set things right and help prepare a better future for them. The leaders note that we can all play a part whoever and wherever we are. May it be so.

Prayers of the People

prepared by David Northwood

This is our prayer for ourselves and for others

Since there will be a last time when I will feel the warm spring rain and the cold winter wind on my face,
a last time when I will smell the perfume of the jacaranda,
a last time when I can embrace my lover,
a last time that makes life and everything that lives
so precious.

Since there will be a last time,
let me live daily life with open senses,
clear thinking and a careful presence.

Since there will be a last time,
let me be aware that I am woven into the eternal becoming and being of life,
in which God holds everyone and everything in his and her hands.

Since there will be a last time,
I would like the beauty and preciousness of life which is given to me
to be preserved for those who will live after me.

Take these prayers of ours,
these prayers of fragile humanity
and make them into a peace which overcomes.

For these are the fragile bonds we make and break with human abandon

And before my body dies
I pray That the river I was born to
May again wash over me

By god's touch I pray
That I may move from this consecrated earth
Into the next season

A dark season
Beyond the dying religions that seduce us

Where my soul will surrender
And give in to grace. Amen

Blessing

O you eternal wisdom – whom we partly know and partly do not know
O you eternal justice – whom we partly acknowledge and never fully obey
O you eternal love – whom we love a little but fear to love too much:
open our minds that we may understand
work in our wills that we may obey
kindle our hearts that we may love you.
Come, Lord Jesus!

Cover image: Photo by [Gary Ellis](#) on [Unsplash](#)
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Blessing: T. R. Milford. Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2006.

Rev. Andrew Boyle
Office: 0411 958 127; Mobile 0409 869 009; Email: ajmboyle@outlook.com

Rev. Deacon Pam White
Mobile 0434 378 099; Email: pamdwhite@optusnet.com.au

Music Director: Mr Peter Hurley

Administrator: Mrs Cathy O'Connor
Tuesdays & Fridays, 9am-3.30pm – 0411 958 127
office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

Website: www.ormondunitingchurch.org

NEWS AND NOTICES

AFTER WORSHIP CHAT – ZOOM LINK emailed

For those wishing to catch up after this Sunday's worship service, there will be an opportunity to stay online to chat afterwards on **Sunday 19th September 11.00am to 12.00pm**. Zoom Link is being emailed to the congregation and you can phone in on:

Phone: 7018 2005

Meeting ID: 884 8960 1778

Passcode: 442778

Update on Halls and Sharing Our Memories.....

The latest news is that works to remove the halls may commence in late October so it is very unlikely we'll be able to remember and celebrate on site. So we can have an extended "remember and celebrate" over several months.

Last night I was looking at photos from the Centenary Celebration – amazing how many people we fitted in the North Road Hall for that lunch!

We are currently making lists of people and groups who've used the hall in the past to let them know what's happening and hope to start getting the word out in the next week. If you've been involved in "non-church" groups that have used the hall and have contact details (ideally an email address) please email or phone this through to the Church Office (remember the new Church Office no. is 0411 958 127).

Start thinking about stories, photos, memories you would like to share. We are planning several ways we can collect this including talking with you on the phone, online contributions including videos, mailing or delivering photos and written material to the office or we may be able to collect them from your house. More details about this, and how we'll share our memories, next week.

In the meantime, if you have ideas please contact Dianne Richter (0413 750 089) or Elizabeth Inglis (0407515499). We need help to make this happen.

Join Bayside, Glen Eira, and the City of Kingston for a FREE screening of Beyond the Burning, and Q&A with an expert panel.

For those interested, see link below re free screening of the film “Beyond the Burning” together with a Q&A session re the Gippsland bushfires exploring the underlying causes and some local Gippsland solutions with an interesting panel for discussion. It’s a free event but participants will need to register (see link for more details below).

When: Wed, 29 September 2021 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM AEST (online event)

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/beyond-the-burning-film-screening-and-expert-panel-qa-online-event-tickets-167698680267>

FRONTIER SERVICES BBQ

As noted in the September edition of Pathfinder we plan to hold our annual Frontier Services BBQ on Saturday 2nd October. Given the continued COVID restrictions this will need to be an online event, though. But we are arranging a Frontier Services chaplain to come online with us and talk about their work in the early part of the afternoon so we hope you will be able to join us.



The demand for the work of Frontier Services continues to grow. The stress on people in remote Australia, particularly farmers, continues to be felt. Parts of Australia have been facing the longest drought since European settlement, some areas have been overrun with colossal mouse plagues and the effects of the 2019-2020 bushfires continue to be felt. While government and agency supports are often provided promptly for people affected by these circumstances, the traumatic impact of these events continues to be felt for years, if not decades. It is with people in these circumstances that Frontier Services chaplains work. This year they plan to recruit a further six chaplains to meet the needs of remote Australians. This is an opportunity to support and value this ongoing work founded by the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

Look out for more details in next week’s newssheet and by email for joining the lunch and to be able make donations.

AFGHANISTAN EMERGENCY (ACT FOR PEACE)

By now, you will have seen the heartbreaking scenes unfolding in Afghanistan.

In the recent days and weeks, Taliban forces have taken control of all Afghanistan's major cities, including Kabul, after rapid advances. Almost 390,000 people have been displaced, and tens of thousands now need urgent humanitarian assistance. They are in crisis.

Families hurriedly left their homes, without time to bring essential items with them. They're now in cramped, unsanitary camps that lack even the most basic medical and water facilities.

Click here for [Donation page if wishing to help](#) (Ctrl key plus click link)

ROSTER for Sunday 26 September 2021 (online by Zoom)

READING	Lorraine Denniston	
PRAYERS	Heather Baxter	
EARLY WORD	Ron Townsend	
MUSIC	Peter Hurley	
RESOURCES DELIVERY (24 Sept).	Warwick& Anne /Brad	