

AAA Talk – Sunday 5th July 2021

God's Creation in our Hands

During this morning you will need a plain piece of paper and something to draw with like a pencil, crayon, or pen, you may want to go and find these now.

Intro – For a moment take a look at your hand, Look at both sides, your fingers, nails etc. Think about what you do with your hands? What hobbies or activities do you do with your hands that you enjoy? It could be a craft, it could be a sport, perhaps you like baking, writing, or playing a musical instrument. You may have a gift for drawing or writing fantastic poems or stories, you may have the gift of kindness and servanthood that you need the use of your hands to help others. You may enjoy playing games with others to cheer them up. Take a moment to reflect - what activity do you use your hands for that you enjoy?

Taking your piece of paper draw around your hand to create a handprint, write you gift, skill or whatever it is that you do with your hands that you enjoy. Your hand has a purpose, its useful, we as the owners of the hand has cared enough to create things, we've actioned ourselves to do something because we have enjoyed that activity or cared about the person or people who are on the receiving end. Our hands have a purpose, they are useful and today we are thinking about how we care, how we care enough to do something useful or kind with our hands, we action ourselves because we care.

Main Talk

In the book of Hebrews, we are told that animals and other creatures are valued in Gods eyes, they are not just there for our convenience or use. All creation is good and has a purpose in Gods eyes, there is a reason for it and there are numerous occasions in the bible where we are told about caring for God's creation, we are called into a relationship with God and his creation. God cares that we have healthy air to breath, enough clean water to drink and enough plant and animal life for the world to flourish but we must admit there are times when we see it only just surviving, let alone flourishing or thriving as God originally intended. In our reading from Genesis God is telling us to care for what he has created. He tells us early on we are allowed to use what we need from the earth to live. He has given us the authority to use His Creation for food, shelter, and other important aspects of life. But He also warns us about exploiting it or using too much of the gift of creation. In Jeremiah, God says, "I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable" (2:7). This is a warning to us to use the earth and its resources well, to respect, value and to treat it well as a valuable mark of God's Creation and provision, rather than as a thing to waste and destroy. Look back at your paper hand and what you have written, think about the items, the resources you need to do those things, where do you find those natural/raw materials that go into the things you use? Were they originally from the ground, earth or grown? A lot of what we use or have in our homes comes from the environment that surrounds us. God has given us everything we need here on earth to live as he originally intended.

The Revd David Pickering writes” God has created this astonishingly diverse world in love, and it reveals his character. He is not just creator, but also sustainer – something we desperately need in our search for sustainability – and so we are called to be his co-workers in protecting, conserving and enhancing creation’s flourishing. If we do so, then we too can begin to flourish in new ways as God’s Spirit fills us and as we find out more of God’s character revealed in creation’s flourishing.”

We are called to be his co-workers protecting and conserving and enhancing God’s creation to flourish and when we do we will also begin to flourish in new ways by God’s Holy Spirit. A few weeks back a few members of the congregation did the Churches Count on Nature. Each day a person volunteered to be in our garden of remembrance for an hour at lunchtime recording what different types of birds, butterflies and insects were seen. There were 29 different species seen in that week, that is 29 different types of butterflies, birds or insect. Isn’t it incredible that we have a very real part of God’s creation right beside our church. The report from this count is going to be considered at PCC in September and will consider how we can develop this further as an urban church.

This is one way in which we can actively care for God’s creation, making sure it is there for the future. Other ways that we might consider caring and making sure our earth has a future is to be involved in the various opportunities such as Letters for Creation from the National Church of England, this invites children and young people under 30 to write letters reflecting on what caring for creation means to them and how they want their voice to be heard in the climate justice conversation.

There are ways in which we can also care and take care of our world every day by the choices and decisions that we make. A couple of years ago we decided to reduce our plastic as a family, now we either refill or buy products not packaged in plastic if possible and buy blocks of soap and shampoo etc with most of our rubbish recyclable. It actually took longer to use everything up that had come in a single use plastic bottle than we expected!! It was a small change for us, but it has and will make a difference to God’s creation.

Let us return to our paper hands once more and turn over the hand to the blank side, making a difference and responding to God’s call for us to care, protect and sustain creation takes a personal response from us all. As God instructed us to do in Genesis, in our reading today – God created us in his own image to care to be part of his wonderful creation, to be care takers and people that look after and help his world to flourish. So, what can our personal responses look like? It could be not leaving a tap running longer than necessary, it could be to turn lights off when not in the room, it could be not to leave gadgets on charge when they are fully charged. You might want to build a bug hotel, a bee bath or plant flowers or seeds specifically for insects, bees and butterflies.

Take a moment to think about what your promise to God could be in caring for his world – when you have decided, write what your Creation promise is going to be on the blank side of your paper hand. Place somewhere prominent to remind you of your promise and your response over the coming days and weeks. Let us celebrate the wonderful world God created for us, let us care and nurture it so that it may flourish and thrive as God originally intended.

Amen.