

The Earth – A Rich Tapestry

(Preached by Cheryl Williams at Footscray Baptist Church on September 5th, 2021 – Season of Creation: Earth Sunday)



The earth says Paul Collins is God's cathedral.

Of the earth says St. Francis – be praised, My Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Henry David Thoreau observed 'I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees'

Michelangelo said, 'My soul can find no staircase to heaven unless it be through Earth's loveliness.'

Alice Walker said, 'In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful.'

"... the universe, by definition, is a single gorgeous celebratory event" says Thomas Berry. He goes on to say 'Our relationship with the earth involves something more than pragmatic use, academic understanding or aesthetic appreciation. A truly human intimacy with the earth and with the entire natural world is needed. Our children should be properly introduced to the world in which they live.' (*The Dream of the Earth* p.5 & 12)

Lani when she was about six observed during a bush walk – 'Who'd have thought nature would be so beautiful'.

What do you think of when you think about the earth, how would you describe it?

- A chunk of stardust in the solar system
- Sustaining all of life
- Filled with God's presence
- Precious
- Diverse
- Fragile
- A sanctuary
- Vulnerable
- Sacred
- Wonder filled
- Full of beauty and terror
- Growing
- Home

This morning I invite you to join me in a short meditation focussing on the beauty of the earth.

If you are able to, look out your window. If you can't focus on the screen which has images from my garden. What do you see?

The Earth – A Rich Tapestry

(Preached by Cheryl Williams at Footscray Baptist Church on September 5th, 2021)

Savour its beauty and its fragility.



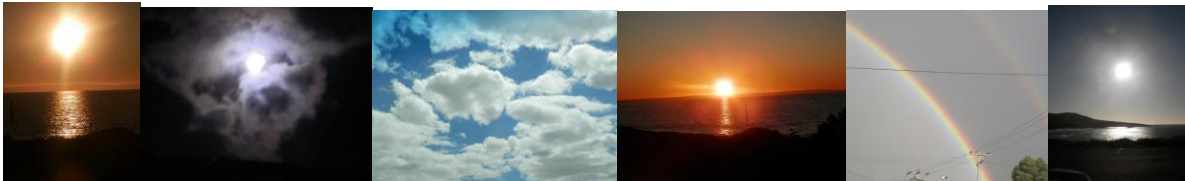
In your mind let's go a little further afield, take yourself through the great expanse of land that is Australia, or even to a place in another land known to you. Use the photos on the screen to help you imagine. Ponder its vastness, think about how ancient it is.



In your mind continue the journey. Take yourself to the ocean. Look at the photos on your screen. Think about the rhythm of the waves, the tides. Feel the sea spray on your face.



Now look upwards in your mind's eye to the sky. Again use the photos to help. Soak up its warmth.



Spend a couple of moments giving thanks to God for the earth in all its diversity and beauty.

However ...

The earth is groaning.

- forests are chopped down to make way for housing and farming
- the sea water is rising
- it is hard to breathe clean air in many places
- waterways are polluted
- more and more species are becoming endangered
- we continue to dig up the earth
- we dump our used clothing in the world's poorest places and it ends up in landfill
- temperatures are rising
- floods, fire, droughts, storms are increasing in intensity and frequency

Sobering thoughts

Let's take a moment or two to consider our complicity.



The Earth – A Rich Tapestry

(Preached by Cheryl Williams at Footscray Baptist Church on September 5th, 2021)

Again Thomas Berry says – “ we can no longer hear the voice of the rivers, the mountains or the sea. The trees and meadows are no longer intimate modes of spirit presence. The world about us has become an ‘it’ rather than a thou.” (*T Berry, ‘The Great Work’, p. 17*)

How might you respond today?

- Pray
- Plant a tree or some vegetables or flowers today
- Start composting
- Buy less so we throw out less
- Go vegetarian for some meals
- Get solar panels
- Put our heater or air con down a couple of notches
- Reuse and recycle
- Listen to our first nations people about how to care for the land

God called the earth into being and Jesus lived upon it.
God has given us this planet and it provides all we need to live.
God has called humankind to care for the earth.
God’s presence fills the land, the sea, the sky.
The earth is our home.

