

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

22 November 2020—Christ the King

Internationally, air pollution leads to 118,000 early deaths in the U.S.A each year, proportionally more in many other countries; desertification and other impacts on food supplies can lead ultimately to famine; extreme heat leads to heat exhaustion and cardiovascular failure; and so on.

Isaiah warns: *'The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.'* (Isaiah 24:4-5)

In Response: The Lausanne Commitment (2015): 'The earth is created, sustained and redeemed by Christ. We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. We care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world, but for the Lord's sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says 'Jesus is Lord' is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ. ...We lament over the widespread abuse and destruction of the earth's resources, including its bio-diversity. Probably the

most serious and urgent challenge faced by the physical world now is the threat of climate change. This will disproportionately affect those in poorer countries, for it is there that climate extremes will be most severe and where there is little capability to adapt to them. World poverty and climate change need to be addressed together and with equal urgency.'

This is not just a problem for poor countries. We, as a country and as individuals, have a responsibility.

'Climate change is the greatest moral challenge of our time,' says Rev. Mitchell C. Hescoc

Please read the accompanying pdf document for a helpful presentation given at a recent OMF Zoom conference.

Also, details of the newly created **Baptist Union Environment Network** (BUEN—which means 'good' in Spanish) can be found by clicking [here](#).

SUGGESTED SONG

Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObqN9c9Jro0>

BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xy>

Dear Friends,

In most of the world's churches, today is recognised as the Feast of Christ the King. It is a great day to acknowledge that Jesus is seated on his heavenly throne and reigns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is the final Sunday before Advent, with its reminder that one day King Jesus will return in splendour and majesty even as we prepare to welcome and celebrate the birth of the Saviour at Christmas.

When Jesus returns, what will he expect to see? At its simplest, Jesus will expect us to have obeyed and to have put into practice all his commands and teaching. We are used to hearing, indeed we are possibly over-familiar with, the words of Jesus to his disciples at the end of his earthly ministry, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' (Matthew 28:18-20) I say 'over-familiar' because we tend to focus on where Jesus talks about making disciples and baptising them, not

that we are very good or efficient at doing that. We tend to focus less on where Jesus talks about obeying everything he has commanded us. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:36-40) encapsulates what Jesus will be expecting to see on his return, but there is lots more detailed teaching about what this looks like in practice.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory (Matthew 25:31-46) there is an expectation that he will find that we have looked after our fellow human beings and the world in which we live, as good stewards of God's creation.

There is debate about who the 'least of these brothers and sisters of mine' refers to. Jesus spent a lot of his time with those who were marginalised and outcast in his community, as well as forming the new community of God. So it is pointless distinguishing between our treatment of fellow disciples, brothers and sisters in Christ, and those who are our neighbours, even strangers, who we live among. God expects us to care for this planet and its population, the environment and all life in equal measure.

Zoom is the safest way for most people to meet at this time and will continue to be the main way that we will be able to meet for a little while yet. Our Zoom Sunday Service is at 10.30am today; our Zoom Prayer Meeting is at 7.00pm on Monday. We join with other Ryde Churches for Zoom prayer and worship this evening at 7pm. If you are able to join us, you will be very welcome. The Zoom links will be sent to those who have signed up to receive them. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs. There is lots more information on our website which you can find at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. (Psalm 95:6-7)

BIBLE READINGS

[Genesis 2:4-20](#)

[Job 12:7-10](#)

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

SUGGESTED SONGS

How Great Thou Art
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_dtbmVdQY4

My Jesus My Saviour, Shout To The Lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUjrUOdr1y0>

PRAYER

Lord God our Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Holy Spirit of God, we come before you today in praise and worship, honouring your name and bowing before you in our hearts and with our lives. We thank you for the planet you have made and upon which you have called us to live, with all your creatures and with each other. For the gifts of life, love, creativity and awe, we give you our thanks. Help us to turn our gratitude and praise into practical discipleship, caring for this world and our neighbours, as a foretaste of life in your eternal kingdom. Amen.

TO PONDER

I heard it said this week that spending time out in nature for just a few hours, whether gardening or going for a walk or even growing things on our doorstep or windowsills, contributes enormously to our well-being. What practical things can we do this week to appreciate God's creation, and look after the resources that God has given; how can we encourage one another in this essential task?

SUGGESTED SONG

O Lord The Clouds Are Gathering
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xfv9OI59_7o

We are grateful to **Martin Light** who has prepared the following thoughts and reflections for us this morning.

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

I want to reflect this morning on an issue that Sally has been drawing our attention to but which has dropped out of the headlines. We will look at what the Bible has to say and then apply this when we meet together.

Climate change. This should have been drawn to our attention by a large conference in Glasgow starting earlier this month, now postponed. What should be our Bible-based response? Our starting point must be that we live in a created world. 80 years ago Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw that the exploitation of the earth by technology was a result of the failure of many to see the earth as divine creation. That's where we must start.

Mankind was made in the image of God, but when Mankind tries to exploit the world instead of working with the Creator the result is disaster. God made us stewards, it does not say the animals and plants are there for us to exploit. The idea that we have a right to exploit natural resources because we are at the top of some sort of pyramid is a Greek one, supported by a neo-evolutionary theory.

The Bible clearly sees us and the natural world as part of God's creation, designed to bring him glory. Job tells us that the Creation speaks of God. *'But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell*

you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.'

Notice that the covenant God makes with Noah includes the living creatures: *'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you.'* (Gen. 9:12) Listen to the Psalmist: *'He gives to the animals their food and to the young ravens when they cry'*. (Psalm 147:9) Deuteronomy 22 has several examples of how creatures should be cared for.

So how are we getting on caring for God's creation? Take Australia. You have probably heard of the young people aged 13–17 taking the Australian government to court, arguing that further coal mining is ruining their future and should be stopped because of the impact on the climate. You will remember the terrible fires, caused in part by the replacement of mixed forest by the highly combustible eucalyptus trees (I saw this when visiting). Underground aquifers are being drained and the country is approaching its biological limits. Before we sneer for too long we too on the Isle of Wight have to import food and water. And until very recently the Australian government has refused to admit that climate change is happening.