

# Creation is Our Story

Bishop Jane Alexander

*Ash Wednesday to Saturday  
Friday March 4*

## Scripture

### **Psalm 19:1-6**

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the Firmament proclaims his handiwork.  
Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.  
There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;  
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In the heaven he has set a tent for the sun,  
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,  
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.  
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them;  
and nothing is hid from its heat.

## Reflection

Psalm 19 reminds us that all heavens declare the glory of God. God speaks to us through the wonders of the sunrise and sunset, through the glories of the sky and nature. It was common in the early church to talk of the “two books of God”: the Book of Nature and the Book of Scriptures. We need daily experience of both if we are to have a FULL sense of the awesomeness of God. Nature needs to do what it is created to do, human beings need to do what we were created to do, each full of the presence and glory of God. The heavens are not empty, the natural world was not empty until people showed up. And yet sometimes our lack of care for what surrounds us would seem to imply that only people declare the glory of God. Not so says the psalmist.

“Our present ecological crisis, the biggest single practical threat to our human existence in the middle to long term, has, religious people would say, a great deal to do with our failure to think of the world as existing in relation to the mystery of God, not just as a huge warehouse of stuff to be used for our convenience.” – Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury

So today, try stepping back and taking a long view. Human beings are in a symbiotic relationship with the whole world, to love and to be loved, to nourish and to be nourished. How has this happened in your life already? What have you seen that drew you to tears with natural beauty? Where did you take the deepest breath of mountain or sea air? Did you remember to say thank you to the one who created this?

That's what we can we do right now — notice, really notice. ink today on these words from e Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don’t harass them, don’t deprive them of their happiness, don’t work against God’s intent.”

### Prayer

*This world,  
Your creation,  
Rolled into a sphere,*

*Packaged in sunshine,  
Gift-wrapped in love,  
Given to us,  
Thank you.*

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### Living the fifth mark of mission

“...In this short video I want to share some of the ways that people across the whole world are being impacted by environmental problems and climate change. But I also want to share some of the ways Anglicans across the Communion are responding to some of those challenges and how they are living out the fifth Mark of Mission, and how all of us can ‘strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.’...”

“For example, in South Africa, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda, Anglican churches are engaged in reforestation initiatives which will help mitigate climate change. They’re taking action on pollution and waste. Churches are helping people adapt to a changing climate. In the Pacific, the Anglican Church of Melanesia is helping with food security and preparing people for relocation. People are greening their churches using renewable energy, adopting net zero targets, using their land for environmental projects and committing to green protocols, all of which will help prevent further climate change. They’re celebrating the Season of Creation; praying and fasting for the climate and bringing creation care into the worshipping life of the church. They’re speaking out and calling for change. Young people are often leading the way. Churches are divesting from fossil fuels and investing in solar projects and other renewable energy schemes. And of course, churches are always amongst the first responders when disasters hit and they’re active in long-term recovery...”

“As well as responding at the local level, Anglicans are also connecting and sharing across the Communion to respond to the impacts of climate change. They’re using the Pastors and Disasters toolkit to be equipped for disaster preparedness and response... There’s a climate resilience community of practice and there are things happening at Communion-wide level. A number of resolutions on the environment and climate change have been adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council and Lambeth conferences. There is an Anglican Communion Environmental Network which connects people across

the Communion. There are Eco-bishops who make ecological concerns a particular focus of their ministry. The Anglican Communion has a presence at the United Nations and is accredited to the UN Environment Assembly. And the Anglican Alliance itself provides a convening platform after disasters, coordinating responses across the Communion. There is a huge amount happening across the Communion...

“It seems to me that what we need more than anything is a heart, or mind level change; to change the way we see the world and relate to it in our deepest being. We need that ‘spiritual and cultural transformation’...

“There are other world views, including within the Anglican Communion. Indigenous Christians across the Communion, share a world view that is about relationship. So, Indigenous, Maori and Pacific peoples understand Creation as inherently unified, with a profound connection among all that exists with Creation... Human beings are positioned in Creation, not as supreme masters over the Earth community, but as interdependent members of the Earth community...”

–Dr. Elizabeth Perry, Programme and Communication Manager, Anglican Alliance

Watch this video at

<https://youtu.be/oSiFmLgZMqg>