



Dear All,

We are nearly halfway through our second lockdown. I hope you are coping well and able to find sometimes of rest and stillness in God as he is our rock and our salvation. This Sunday is the last Sunday of the church year, “Christ the King” Sunday, then the Advent season with all its significant meanings, music, and character. As we begin a new church year, we are ready again to enact Jesus’ life events, to own His story to be our story, may God through this year would deepen our awareness in The Story to receive all what he abundantly gave to us in Christ.

On the first page in the Bible (Genesis 1), it is very clear that God created the creation to be “The Temple” where a human being is a priest to lead all the creation to worship God and reflect God’s care and glory to the creation. Due to the present ecological challenges facing our world, the church developed a liturgical season called “*Creationtide*” running from September 1st to October 4th, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. Below you will read Lynne’s insightful reflection on this matter. I hope despite we are heading to the winter season, we will be encouraged to do outdoor worship more often, as different seasons of the year have different experiences to offer.

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*

(Psalm 19: 1-4)



Few things symbolise autumn and herald the coming of winter quite as well as the sight of the squirrels scampering around industriously burying their winter provisions. This week I have enjoyed watching the squirrels in both the garden and the churchyard. In the churchyard they've been collecting nuts and acorns and burying them in the grass along the wall. In the garden, they've been burying conkers and other goodies in the now empty summer pots, the borders and the lawn. They have clearly not heard or heeded the government's warnings about not panic-buying or hoarding in the current lock-down! They have just got on with gathering food to carry them through the winter months when food is harder to come by. As winter approaches, we need to provision ourselves spiritually as well as practically, for the season to come, as individuals, families and the church family.

I know that there are many of you who have not been able to worship in church since the beginning of the first lockdown in March. We miss singing together, praying together, sharing Communion, but the Bible is clear that humans are not the only part of creation able to praise God. As we can see from these words from Psalm 19, the very air around us, and the sky with its sunsets and magnificent clouds declare the goodness of God. What we already know from Scripture, scientists are discovering today. A recent study reported that 'a regular dose of childlike wonder, achieved by taking a weekly 'awe walk', can help maintain a healthy mind' (The Times, 22 September 2020).

What is awe and wonder if not worship? God's created world evokes that awe in us, moves us to wonder. As Paul tells us, 'since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made' (Romans 1:20).



In these strange times of Christians being scattered, gathering only online, could we rediscover the natural cathedral of God's creation? The choir has not been able to gather to sing for months, but perhaps we could 'listen' to the skies instead? At this time of year, despite the shorter days, we are often blessed with some amazing skies at both sunrise and sunset. Looking closer to the ground, maybe as we enjoy a walk or delight in watching the squirrels we can see so much of creation that declares the goodness of God, from the first signs of the new season's bulbs peeking through the soil, to the buds on the magnolia tree in the garden of Cell Farm and the beautiful colours of autumn that still remain. I wonder how you might encounter God through his creation this week.

*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 evermore. Amen*

Yours in Christ,
Revd Adel Shokralla
& Lynne Thorogood

Website: www.oldwindsorchurch.org.uk

Tel: 01753 865778