



Sunday 4th October 2026
Francis of Assisi Day



Hymn 685 Lord, I come to you

*Lord, I come to you:
 let my heart be changed, renewed,
 flowing from the grace
 that I found in you.
 And, Lord, I've come to know
 the weaknesses I see in me
 will be stripped away
 by the power of your love.*

Welcome

May the worship bless you

Acknowledgment

This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, traditional custodians of this land under God.
 We commit ourselves again to working for reconciliation in this land.

Call to Worship

In the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.
 And God called them good.

Come Holy Spirit and cleanse the waters.

The prophet saw a river flowing from the Temple,
 and wherever the river flowed, everything lived.

Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the Earth.

Jesus cried out,
 "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me... Out
 of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.

Come, Holy Spirit and heal your people.

Confession

Moment of quiet contemplation where we bring before God what's troubling our hearts

Silence

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us

"Your sins are forgiven"

Thanks be to God.

Saint Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures

(adapted from the original version) <https://franciscanfriarscresson.org/the-canticle-of-the-sun/>



NASA

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessings.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong



Praised be to You our Lord, with all your creatures;
especially Brother Sun, who is the day, and through whom You give us light.
He is beautiful and radiant with great splendor.



Praised be to You, our Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in heaven You formed them
clear and precious and beautiful.



Praised be You, our Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather that gives life to all creatures



Praised be to You our Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful, humble, precious and good.



Praised be You, our Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night;
for he is beautiful, playful, robust and strong.



Praised be You, our Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.



Praised be You, my Lord, through brother Earth,
who sustains and blesses all creatures.



Praised be You, our Lord,
for loving, caring for and blessing us



Praise and bless our Lord. Give thanks
and serve our Lord with great humility. Amen.



Hymn 143 Immortal invisible

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.*

Readings

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

- 20:1 Then God spoke all these words,
20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;
20:3 you shall have no other gods before me.
20:4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.
20:7 "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.
20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
20:9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work.
20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
20:13 "You shall not murder.
20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.
20:15 "You shall not steal.
20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, male or female slave, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."
20:18 When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance
20:19 and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."

20:20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."

Ezekiel 47:9,12

Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish once these waters reach there. It will become fresh, and everything will live where the river goes.

¹² On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing."

Discussion about the ten commandments

How does the Ten Commandments apply to God's creation?

Bowl of tears liturgy



The current water crisis from the perspective of the World Council of churches Seasons of creation materials.

1 in 4 people don't have access to clean water

There is "water bankruptcy" in many nations due to groundwater extraction which has led to irreversible loss of water.

Non-human life has no voice

Vulnerable communities living with poverty have no voice

Water borne diseases, industrial discharge of chemicals and pollutants into water threaten all life forms, including us.

There is poor governance and corruption by companies and governments

This impacts food security.

It leads to salination of the soil

Wars over water

Eco-refugees

Catastrophic declines in aquatic wildlife.

Freshwater populations have dropped by 85%. Look at the river at Anglesea. Its dead

Marine populations have dropped by 56% in 50 years

Theologically, this reflects broken relationships between humankind and God.

It has implications, concerning social justice and equity

Connecting with God and Creation

The earth is abandoned and mistreated as are all the poor, as she groans in pain. We remember Francis of Assisi who was deeply concerned for God's creation and for the poor

and outcast. He loved and was loved for his joy, his generous self-giving and open heartedness. He was a mystic and pilgrim who lived in simplicity and harmony with others, nature and himself. He revealed the inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, and commitment to society and interior peace.

We need to speak the language of awe and openness to the beauty of our relationship with nature, with God's creation, or risk our attitude becoming that of masters, consumers, and ruthless exploiters.

We need to discover our intimate connection with all that exists so moderation and care well up in our hearts, spontaneously. The austerity of Francis of Assisi was radical. He refused to turn creation into an object simply to be used and controlled. He was faithful to scripture and invites us to see nature as a magnificent book through which God speaks to us and offers us a glimpse of God's infinite beauty and goodness.

An extract from Pope Francis letter: On care for our common home (adapted)

The bowl of tears

This bowl of water represents our tears for the world. As we pass it around, we are invited to pray and later we will place the bowl on the Lord's Table and offer up our prayers to God

*Our hearts are moved by all we cannot save
So much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those who
Age after age, perversely,
With no extraordinary power,
Reconstitute the world*

From a liturgy by Joanna Macy and Molly Brown from Coming back to life, 2014

As we pass the bowl around, we are invited to dip our fingers in the water and allow it to trickle down our fingers as we pray: My tears are for

*Our hearts are moved by all we cannot save
So much has been destroyed
Lord hear our prayers
Empower us to be your voice in the world
Pleading for action to save your creation*

Sermon

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen



We 're certainly facing some stormy weather.

I was walking on the beach at Fairhaven on Friday evening, and thousands of butterflies, moths and dragonflies must have been blown by the wind into the ocean, because thousands of them were dead, washed-up beach, for kilometres. I've never seen anything like it before.

Then I noticed on Saturday a large moth, with eyes on its wings, was sheltering in my home, on the curtains in the living area and another smaller one flew by later. My home had become a refuge.

On Saturday afternoon I dropped by at the bottom shops to have a coffee at the new café and meet the owners. A plover was outside holding her large chick to her heart, to keep it warm. When she saw me, she let go of her chick and began calling out at me, trying to distract me and protect her chick.

Storms are hard on our wildlife.



You may know about Francis of Assisi. He came from a wealthy family and fought in a war. One day God called him to rebuild his church and so he began and over time a new order of Franciscans followed him and devoted their lives to God. I visited Assisi in the 1990's and walked through the fern gully below the church and heard nuns from a nearby convent singing, their voices echoing down through the fern gully. It was so peaceful. A sanctuary.



The Surf Coast pilgrimages along the cliff tops at Aireys Inlet can help us reflect upon our lives and offer refuge, when soft breezes blow through the trees.



The Australian outback can be a place of wonder, with the red earth during the day and galaxies across the night sky. At night its freezing and campfires can offer warmth and refuge.

I have a book called: *The poetics of space* by Gaston Bachelard. I find his words a place of refuge, from time to time. He writes: *The wellbeing I feel, seated in front of my fire while bad weather rages out-of-doors, is entirely animal. A rat in the hole, a rabbit in the burrow, cows in the stable, must all feel the same contentment I feel.*

Perhaps, we have forgotten we're creatures.



Many of us may find refuge in nature. Walking along the beach at Sunset or sunrise.

The reading from Ezekeil reminds us water is a refuge. Rivers flowing through cities and towns are a source of life for all creatures and plants, a source of wellbeing.

So why do we allow a small group of people to destroy creation? Why do we freeze, instead of coming together to claim justice for creation?

Ezekiel speaks of a deeper reality. Water that flows from the sanctuary of God. Living water that heals our soul.

Perhaps at times our true sanctuary can leave us feeling alive, grateful, and empowered with awe. We can trust that God will deal with those who destroy creation. God is passionate about our wellbeing and creation.

The ten commandments may not name creation but it's fundamental to them.

God warns us not to make gods out of things, from the heavens, from the earth, from under the water and under the earth. That means anything from all the cosmos and the earth, from all of God's creation, even dark matter, which we are unable to see, so far.

That covers making things like technology, how we use the sun and the land, and all that comes from it. How we make it into gods, we worship and profit from and use, to gain power over others.

We all have the right to be safe and feel at peace.

When we ponder about it, six of the commandments are about how we relate to God and six are about how we relate to one another.

The people who gathered and watched Moses climb to the top of Mount Sinai and enter the cloud of unknowing, and saw the fire of God, were afraid of God.

I wonder why they feared God and dying?

Was this death about knowing God?

Perhaps they wandered in the desert for forty years until they knew a little about God and became God's people. The desert can symbolise a long spiritual journey of self-discovery.

Yet at the end of it all, we can find refuge in God.

Perhaps the living water Jesus offers us, heals our soul.

The Lord be with you

Offering

Lord, as your Spirit moved over the deep, we thank you for the gift of water. The waters on the Earth, and under the Earth, the waters above us, and within us. Make us mindful of the care of all the planet's waters, that it may richly sustain life for us and for those who come after us. Accept the first fruits we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation and church for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Prayers of the people

We pray for the world, the church, community, those suffering, the hungry, cold and homeless and those facing operations and medical treatment, mental health issues and for our own needs

Lord's prayer

Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

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those who sin against us.

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For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Hymn 681 Lord let me see

*Lord let me see, see more and more,
 see the beauty of a person, not the colour of the skin,
 see the faces of the homeless with no-one to take them in,
 see discouragement because she'll never win:
 see the face of our Lord in the pain:
 Lord let me see.*

Blessing

May the God who sprung water from a rock, quenching the thirst of those who wandered in fear, spare us from the drought of a senseless life. May the God who flows from the wells of salvation, and who is Living Water to the foreigner, the stranger, and the unknown, keep us in peace.

May the God who rolls on like a river, changing the course of the world with streams of righteousness that guide the Church's vessel in this world, empower us to work for transformation. And may the blessing of our merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, keep us and preserve us in eternal life.

Amen.

(Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil)

Song – As we leave

*As we leave now,
 may God walk with us.
 As we move from here,
 may Jesus bless us.
 As we leave this place,
 let the Spirit breathe through us.*