

St Andrew's East Council Gathering: *Prayer Stations* **30th October 2021 at Saint Andrew's Church, St Andrews**

Saint Andrew's held a 24-hour Prayer Vigil for COP26 (**C**alling **O**ut in **P**rayers for the Planet) 23rd/24th October. This was an ecumenical undertaking along with other members of the St Andrews Churches Eco-Network. The prayer stations have remained in place as context for today's Gathering. Throughout the day, the stations will be highlighted and there will be opportunities for you to visit individual stations as part of grounding our engagement with climate change and pilgrimage in prayer.

Station 1: All Things New

You are invited to take a piece of sea glass and hold it in your hand as you journey through the day and the prayer stations set out around the church. These were setup for our 24-hour prayer vigil for COP26 last weekend and the stations and prayers are just as relevant for our Gathering today.

Our pilgrim will lead us collectively through these stations, as we encounter relevant portions in our programme throughout the day. During lunch and for up to an hour after the Gathering today, you are welcome to visit these stations on your own and participate in the activity or reflection presented at each.

Full booklets from last weekend's prayer vigil describing each station in detail are available.

The sea glass in your hand represents the ways in which we have contributed to the pain and suffering of our home, as we have carelessly discarded items into our seas that collectively have caused great harm. You are encouraged to consider how these and other actions or neglect have contributed to the state in which we currently find our delicate ecosystems, and how we each have participated in that.

As you encounter the stations and the sessions today, consider any prayers that come to mind that you would like to offer and any promises you would like to make.

Later on, during today's pilgrimage, you are invited back to the beginning for an **ACTIVITY** (at **Station 9**) in which your reflections and prayers can collectively be represented, through your piece of sea glass, as prayers for our planet and become a beacon of hope, rooted in God's re-newed creation.

Throughout the day, you may hear a 6-minute soundscape in which locally recorded birdsong is interwoven with Sibelius' *Finlandia*, created by Saint Andrew's choral director, Jane Pettegree. Titled **Sibelius and the Sparrows**, and originally designated as station 7, this soundscape invites us to reflect on how God's creation embraces all the senses and that humankind and all living things can join together in his praise.

Stations 2 and 5: Lamentation and Adoration

In our morning prayer today, we will hear:

- extracts from Joel 1 in lamenting the reckless destruction of God's creation.
- Psalm 104 which praises God as Creator.

As you hear and read these words from Joel, you are invited into a prayer of lament, praying as your imagination and the spirit leads.

As you hear and read Psalm 104, you are invited into a prayer of praise to God for the bounty of His creation.

[If you want to reflect on these passages at another time today, you are invited to consider them using a form of prayer known as 'lectio divina'.]

Station 3: Confession

Our Pilgrim leads us to examine our consciences and seek God's mercy.

Just as these tangled nets block us from the high altar, so too does sin obscure our vision and damage our right relationship to God, to each other, and to the world. By our misuse of creation, we have failed to appreciate it as a sign pointing us to God. What God created out of love, we have abused out of selfishness.

However, at the centre of that tangle stands the cross. Here Christ enters into the very midst of our sin and bears it himself. We cannot re-establish our right relationship to God on our own; God had to come to us. Let us cast our sins, then, on the cross, sorrowful for what we've done but confident in God's mercy.

[If you wish to visit this station at some point during the day, you are welcome to consider your own complicity in harming or misusing God's creation, and add to the net.]

Let us gaze at the image of Christ and take a moment to reflect on the following:

- *Lord, you died for this too. Please forgive me for all I have done and all I have failed to do, and please let your love for me transform the way I love and care for your creation.*

Station 4: Prayer for those attending COP26

As our Pilgrim arrives at station 4, we acknowledge that God, Creator of all that is, is our one true light who guides our way.

We are invited to pray for **heads of state** to have God-given courage to step up in this moment. Flags of some nations hang above the side aisles.

- *God of justice, grant heads of state the courage to step up, be transformed, and provide leadership that honours you and your Creation. Help them orient toward your will.*

We stand with and pray for **national delegates from around the world**.

- *God of all nations, grant these delegates courage, truth, and conviction of message as they negotiate on behalf of the nations and peoples they represent, especially those most vulnerable to climate change.*

We join in solidarity with **all those lobbying outside the conference centre in Glasgow**, outside the central talks.

- *God of peace, help these voices be united and peaceful; and we ask you to multiply them! As stated in the fourth goal of the summit, we can only rise to the challenges of the climate crisis by working together.*

Station 6: Understanding impacts of climate change for the most vulnerable

As our Pilgrim journeys to the next station, we are encouraged to be mindful of the impacts of climate change for the world's most vulnerable areas.

The presentation on the screen illustrates existing and projected impacts of climate change – most notably on vulnerable groups in the global south. The threats of drought and hunger, flooding and sea-level rise will be felt much more severely and sooner than here in Scotland. The Amazon rainforest is threatened with extinction should current trends continue.

We are invited to reflect on what this means for the future of individuals, families and, in some instances, the very existence of the nation they live in.

Creator God, we offer these prayers:

- *That their voices will be heard at the COP alongside the voices of those outside the conference centre.*
- *That the target of climate finance of \$100 billion a year for developing countries will be met.*
- *That funds for emergency relief as climate change takes its toll will be provided by the rich developed nations.*

[If you wish to visit this station at some point during the day, you are welcome to watch the 10-minute video and engage in the activity with the Amazonia wheel described there and in the station leaflet.]

Station 8: Intergenerational Seaside Memories

And now our Pilgrim journeys to the sea, which holds a special place in our lives. From the vastness of the oceans to the intricate microcosms of rockpool life, the sea is a beautiful and crucial part of God's earth. Even before any life entered the oceans, God cherished His waters:

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. God called the dry land 'earth', and the gathering of the waters He called 'seas'; and God saw that it was good.

—Genesis 1:9-10

[If you wish to visit this station at some point during the day, you are welcome to flip through an album composed of reflective memories of seaside trips and holidays from all generations; and to watch some of the 30-minute video, as described at the station and in the station leaflet]

As you see this video of a child's sandcastle being destroyed by the incoming tide, reflect on how the coastline of the world will be altered if we don't deliver on climate change. How might the terrain of coastal towns like St Andrews change over the next 50, 100, 200 years?

Also in this area, on the wood wall, is a wall hanging using recycled materials, titled ***I see No Fish*** by artist Sally Freedman from Edinburgh.

This hanging is a response to the state of our oceans. Description available next to the piece.

Station 9: All Things Re-Newed

We invite our pilgrim to return to station 1 **All things New** where we collected our pieces of sea glass.

The small wax pieces on the table are from candles used for prayers to God over some time. We are invited to join our own prayers for our planet to those that were lifted up through these previous candles. May the re-use of these candle remnants also serve as an encouraging reminder for each of us to renew, reuse and refresh items in our own daily lives.

Even in the climate and biodiversity emergencies we face, God is still at work in His world. His Kingdom is already here though not yet in its fullest form. Together we look forward to the New Creation where the shattered pieces will one day be made whole, and Creation restored.

We are invited into that hope.

We are called to participate in God's creation now and have an opportunity to encourage better stewardship of it by changing our own behaviours and encouraging others to do the same.

Before you leave today, return to this station to add your piece of sea glass to the globe, as you join your own prayers for our earth to those of others. More details are provided at the station.

Station 10: Set your course for a new or renewed voyage

As you continue your own pilgrimage, that of your community, and your own journey as part of the climate pilgrimage we are on together, consider the hopes you have and promises you wish to make.

Our pilgrim has made a sail, and you are invited to as well, to represent these hopes and promises, and then to craft a boat that you can launch as part of a new or renewed voyage. For many of us, this may represent a renewal of our baptismal vows.

Just as the popular fisher's prayer states:

Dear God, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small.

—Breton fisherman's prayer

our own seemingly small promises may feel insignificant against the tide of climate change. We may feel a bit lost at a very wide sea of issues. But God hears our prayers and can multiply our efforts for a far greater good. Even Saint Columba and monks used very small and simply crafted vessels, like coracles, to carry the good news of the Gospel to remote Scottish islands and beyond.

As you leave today, set your own sail on a renewed voyage representing your continued pilgrimage. Reflect on the promises and hopes you carry with you.

Follow the waterway to see the Climate Pilgrimage triptych, also by artist Sally Freedman, under the window, celebrating our journey together as pilgrims on the way! You are also invited to make a pledge by adding a leaf to the "Tree of Life"

Use this QR code to visit the St Andrews East Area Council web page and see information from today's gathering

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