



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

### **Genesis 1:29-31 'God Making Good Things'**

<sup>29</sup> God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

"Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start" sang Julie Andrews. Genesis is the very beginning of the biblical narrative, in which the writers, using poetry and picture language, declare God seeing all of creation as being "good". Genesis reminds us that we share our environment with the birds, insects, flora and fauna.

The various environmental challenges we face today can easily seem to be overwhelmingly big issues. This can easily tempt us to assume we ordinary folk can do little or nothing to effect positive change in these matters. Martin Luther King said this: "*Our lives end the day we become silent about things that matter.*" Thankfully, the young Swedish Greta Thunberg and the elderly English David Attenborough have not been silent on these issues. Indeed, they are contemporary prophets. Christian folk by definition are in the prophetic tradition. So speaking and acting prophetically out of a sense of social responsibility is part of our spirituality.



Some of you, like me, will have recently watched the David Attenborough documentary *Extinction – the Facts*. Like his *Blue Planet* series, it was profound, disturbing, prophetic and challenging. The sudden, shocking decline of the Earth's biodiversity, along with Climate Change and other aspects of human carelessness were highlighted, alongside some positive examples of carefulness. The linkage with human health (including pandemics) was also illustrated. As I write, the fires in California and Oregon are a reminder of how Climate Change is very much a 'burning issue'.

So, what about us? During lockdown, I have found myself feeling more creaturely and fragile. A spin-off of this has been a growing awareness of my 'one-ness' with nature and the immediate environment around me. I talk to the plants I am watering!

I find myself thinking about how easy it is to either waste or conserve water, energy, soil, vegetable peelings, petrol, habitats etc. Looking to the future I know I must support in any way possible movements that enhance positive change in the care of the environment. This may involve lobbying, voting, or demonstrating peacefully for change. This brings me back to Genesis. Genesis teaches us that our vocation as human beings is to be 'care-takers'/'stewards' for the world that has been given to us. This is a timeless message of real contemporary significance. 'Take care' has become a lockdown expression we use to convey our concern for each other. It must also apply to the big environmental issues of the day.

**A Prayer of Petition:** using words from StF 727 by Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

*Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it, ours, as God's stewards, to farm and defend.  
From its pollution, misuse, and destruction, good Lord, deliver us, world without end!*