**New Kilpatrick**

**Sunday 24th October**

**Podcast**

**Job 38:1-18**

**Intro**

During my sleepless nights… or those nights I frequently waken at 3 or 4 in the morning… I turn to the world service… everyone should do so… not necessarily at 3am… but at some point… because it is the breadth of the world that fascinates… the wonder of humanity… and all the positive stories you don’t hear otherwise…

This week on Monday at 3am was a geochemical history of life on earth… It is on at other time and can be downloaded as a podcast… but O my… with the sound of Haydn’s Creation in the background, the story of life, of mass extinctions, of CO2, of snowball earth, of cyanobacteria, of the great chemical reaction called life that is constantly going on on this planet, it was a wonder…

A wonder we have been given to honour, to give worth. Our oldest poems of Psalm 8, and Genesis 1 and Job 38 speak in these terms… and we continue that ancient and honest tradition of giving worth to wonder today… let us worship.

**Reading Job 38:1-18**

**(The Message)**

And now, finally, God answered Job from the eye of a violent storm. He said:

“Why do you confuse the issue?
    Why do you talk without knowing what you’re talking about?
Pull yourself together, Job!
    Up on your feet! Stand tall!
I have some questions for you,
    and I want some straight answers.

Where were you when I created the earth?
    Tell me, since you know so much!
Who decided on its size? Certainly you’ll know that!
    Who came up with the blueprints and measurements?
How was its foundation poured,
    and who set the cornerstone,
While the morning stars sang in chorus
    and all the angels shouted praise?

And who took charge of the ocean
    when it gushed forth like a baby from the womb?
That was me! I wrapped it in soft clouds,
    and tucked it in safely at night.
Then I made a playpen for it,
    a strong playpen so it couldn’t run loose,
And said, ‘Stay here, this is your place.
    Your wild tantrums are confined to this place.’

“And have you ever ordered Morning, ‘Get up!’
    told Dawn, ‘Get to work!’
So you could seize Earth like a blanket
    and shake out the wicked like cockroaches?
As the sun brings everything to light,
    brings out all the colours and shapes,
The cover of darkness is snatched from the wicked—
    they’re caught in the very act!

“Have you ever gotten to the true bottom of things,
    explored the labyrinthine caves of deep ocean?
Do you know the first thing about death?
    Do you have one clue regarding death’s dark mysteries?

And do you have any idea how large this earth is?
    Speak up if you have even the beginning of an answer.

**Prayer**

Great Creator

Holy God

(Pause)

May we centre ourselves

In the truth

Of who we are in this universe

Uniquely alive

Yet infinitely small

Uniquely offering meaning

Infinitely loved

(Pause)

Yet we hardly understand

Or know who we are

In a universe of a quadrillion stars

So may we have new ears

For the poetry of faith

In the hymns of creation

That unfold meaning

Where we find a voice of love

And a song of grace

And a word of life

And a place that offers a connection

A relationship

With the heavens

A purpose in being here

A faith that values us

In an expanse that would be meaningless otherwise

(Pause)

And may we pause enough

To feel that purpose

And know the value of life

And live towards creation

With that same love that shaped us

That same worth that feeds us

That same sense that values us

That we might love creation back

In how we live and more and share

So may we be forgiven

The arrogance of our religion

And the selfishness of our economy

That places us higher than we are

In the web of life

And find a new place to be part of the whole

Rebalanced

And renewed

In your wonder

Your love

Your creation

Hear us in the creation prayer

Our Creator from heaven

May your name be hallowed

May your kingdom birth

May your will come to bloom

On the earth

As it does in heaven

May we receive today

Our share of the grain of the land

Untangle the knots within us

That we can mend our ties with others

May we not be deluded by the world

But freed to live more truly, justly, lovingly

It is you who spoke the opening words of creation

Out of you flows the first light of the cosmos

Then and now

And evermore

Amen

**Meditative Action**

You are invited to take a sheet of paper, preferably one that has already been used, scribbled on, newspaper, something from your recycling bag, and draw the outline of a leaf, or a flower, or something from nature. This is not to be a work of art. And pause with it, and for the next minute or so, with some images and music, write a word or phrase within the outline that speaks into creation, a joy, a worry, a concern, a promise.

This is a prayer to live with this week. A word to keep coming back to, and reflect on throughout this week and see where it takes you, what it stops you doing to invites you to do, what habits it stops or starts, how it changes how we think about being in the world. Let this word be your companion this week.

**Reflection**

Ours is to worship

To give God worth

To honour what we do not understand, let God be God

And to lay down our arrogance

Hearing God’s word not as some past event

But as a present voice in our present circumstances

This reflection uses quotes and phrases

From that World Service programme mentioned earlier

In the style of Job, listening to Job’s God in our today

Humanity

Pull yourself together!

Up on your feet! Stand tall!

Declare if you know all this

Did you sing the day life took its first breath

And still sing every day, with every cell of your body

As it transforms its environment into food and energy?

I do!

Were you there in the first eons of the universe

When the moon was ten times closer

And the earth spun faster

And the land was flexed and stretched by its lunar neighbour

Spilling seas of lava across earth’s surface?

Tell me if your were!

Do you remember when the chemicals life relied on then

Were startlingly different from the ones your life relies on now

When the atmosphere was rich with CO2 and nitrogen

And the earth was warm without oxygen

Did you sing the day cyanobacteria learned to photosynthesis

And watched for a billion years

As, breath by infinitesimal breath

It replaced Earth’s methane and carbon atmosphere

With their waste product, oxygen

And was it you who shook with excitement that day

Imagining new forms of life because of that marvel

Were you there at the dawn of this great oxidation event

And wept over the disaster it was for all life that breathed CO2

As earth cooled and carbon dioxide reduced

And did you then unfold and lay down the skirt of ice

Kilometres deep that turned this planet into a freezing snowball?

Did you hush a billion years into silence

When life slowed for all that time

And did you fill the silence of waiting with dreams and imagination?

Then did you dig up deep joy again as new species figured out

How to breathe this new energy called oxygen?

Were you there to hear the song of life burst into chorus

In the great Cambrian explosion

Lichen mining phosphorous out of rock

Rain flooding the oceans with this new found nutrient

Fertilising the great blossoming of life

Do you know what it is like to watch

what you have imagined for a million lifetimes,

Take its first breath?

And did you dance on the tectonic plates

To shake the earth with lava and carbon

And feel the planet warm again?

And was it you whose joy turned to lament in the great extinctions

Conceiving new words to describe the loss of five mass dyings

Feeling the pain of all that beauty and wonder

Lost to meteors and volcanic eruptions lasting 100’s of thousands of years?

Did you ever sing the long sad song?

I did

And did you ever wonder after each extinction

What the lottery of life would now produce?

Was it you who stood back and let life be life

And not play ‘God’,

Prepared to wait, 10s of millions of years

In the slow quickening of your rekindling love

Longing for creation to recover?

And are you able to feel that pain turn to joy

With each new species evolving after each extinction

Insects and fish

Vast forests

Crocodiles and dinosaurs

Mammals and humanity?

Tell me if you can!

Were you there when all these things happened

Watching, willing, imagining life rising again?

And yet, you think you can do much about it!

You pour carbon into the atmosphere

Heating it beyond levels safe for your own skin

Then create summits and talk about “saving the planet”

How arrogant you are.

The planet does not need saving

You do

The planet has been warmer and colder.

The planet is fine

Your place on it, is not

You are not the pinnacle you imagine creation reached when you were created

Your living has brought your demise

Your greed for power and wealth and its byproduct of carbon

Is already creating the space in which something else,

More suitable to this new climate, will grow

You are not here to save the planet

Let the planet save you

For she offers resource abundant enough to do so

Gird up your loins

Declare if you believe all this

Sing for justice

Sing for the planet

Sing for life

**News**

**Plastic (not so) Fantastic**

For a fortnight we have been asking people to collect all the plastic they use in that two week period and bring it to us. That in itself has hopefully been a salutary lesson about the way we live and the way we expect our food to look.

Saturday, a group of us took all that plastic and created a tunnel in the covered walkway. It is meant to be a challenge to us. We’ve taken something familiar to us, and covered it in our plastic rubbish - how does that make you feel? Have we desecrated it, have we ben disrespectful, contaminated, vandalised? These are quite emotional words we use towards things we feel are significant to us, bring us meaning.

It is not a great leap to transpose that to planet earth and our plastic waste. Have we desecrated it, been disrespectful, contaminated, vandalised…?

In among the plastic we’ve posted stories or pictures from our young people about plastic wasted story from them to us and worth reading.

**Prayers for the Planet**

Holy God

May we see like you

The sacredness of life

The depth of love this planet has

The unique beauty that life brings

In this cold and vast universe

The spot of light

Unique to the earth

That has created life

And might be the only one —

That humbles us

Frightens us

Angers us

And so we pray for politicians

Businesses

Multi nationalists

Who may not all see the sacred value of the planet

But we pray for a peaceable kingdom

Where all are granted life

And life in the fullness

With enough to share with future generations —

We pray for industry and economy

And our desire for more

And our habit of throwing away

Unable to find value in what we have —

We pray for our communities

Where the least are worst off in any plan

And where politics is used to gain power

And power is a byproduct of fear —

We pray that vaccinations become a right

That food becomes a prerequisite

That water becomes an obligation

That we value the earth’s resources

Not by holding on to them

But how they may be shared —

Loving Creator

May our prayer

Be beyond the words we use

But the intent in which they are formed

As we pray for our families and friends

For those who are unwell physically and mentally

Those worried about the future

And a lack of security in life

Hear us

Grant us the peace we need

And the hope that fuels the future

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**