

# THE OLIVE BRANCH

Season of Creation 2019 Brunswick Uniting Church Congregation  
Worship - 9:30 am

## > Reflection

The Season of Creation, from 22nd September through to 20th October has been a wonderful vibrant opportunity to explore our relationship to and responsibility for the beautiful fragile planet that is our home. It is also an example of how our community of communities opens up and gives voice to so much more than each of us ever can as individuals.

The BUC Arts committee set us on this journey with the invitation to participate in and contribute to the biennial (occurs once every two years) exhibition with the evocative theme '**Let the earth speak**'. In a lovely coincidence the wider church offers an alternative set of readings at this time of the year called the '**Season of Creation**'. The worship committee has not always taken up this season but this year decided that it made sense to engage with the exhibition in this way.

The invitation to contribute in the exhibition was offered far and wide resulting in 50 artists contributing over 70 works of art. Contributors included members of the Olive Way and Olive Arts Collective communities, the congregation, asylum seekers friends and friends from the wider church and community.

The worship committee reflected on what we might offer through the season of creation. Rather than using one of the traditional sets of Season of Creation readings I turned instead to a sequence of readings from Job 28:12-27; 39:1-30 to shape our worship. Amelia Ware created the installation 'The Seven seasons of the Kulin nation' to give us insight into how the indigenous people of this area recognize the seasons through plants and weather and animals. On the two Sundays of the exhibition we engaged closely with the artworks in the worship space. And we concluded the season with Blessing of the Bikes.

The pages of this special edition of the Olive Branch offer stories, photos and recordings from



Before Creation, Brian Birch

- Opening Night
- The exhibition
- Performance night
- The Forest Prayed CD launch
- Worship
- Seven seasons of the Kulin nation
- Blessing of the Bikes



Nature's Design,  
Janet Alesich

The 'Season of Creation' and the exhibition 'Let the earth speak' has been the creative work of many hearts, hands, minds and voices and it seemed fitting to celebrate it in this way. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone.

**Saide Cameron**, Liturgist, BUC Arts Co-convenor - Administration, member of the Worship and Justice & Mission committees



Floating Wreath  
Frances Tapueluelu



Beyond the frame, Meg Orton



Sunday Morning Program Gr 3-6 group  
with Louise Marson

## > Let the earth speak

### The journey to 'Let the earth speak'

Nearly two years on from 'What is Creativity' the BUC Arts committee agreed that it was time to once again invite our community to celebrate our shared creativity in a new exhibition. So on 10th July, just 5 days after the Synod Opening Service, Ann, Leanne, Simone, Ian and I met in the Gathering Space. Inspired by the Synod's theme from Isaiah 43 'I am about to do a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.' we read Isaiah 43:16-21 and the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke's gospel. Ian invited us to select cards that evoked a response in us as we listened to the readings and shared our responses.

We sat in silence for a time, to listen together, to feel, to reflect. We wondered together how we might respond to the challenges offered to us in these readings. What was happening in the world around us, who are we called to respond to, what are we called to make a response to? What new thing is springing forth around us? Who is the neighbour we are called to care for? And it became clear quite quickly that in this time of climate crisis, of the vulnerabilities of communities, of species extinction that this time our exhibition could be an opportunity to explore how we might respond to these challenges.

The exhibition theme 'Let the earth speak' is an invitation to listen to the earth, to notice what you are hearing, to make a response to the vulnerable earth, people, creatures,

### Opening Night

The exhibition was joyfully launched on **Friday 27th September** with Alistair Hunter as our MC for the evening, keynote addresses from Frances Tapueluelu and Phil Kreveld, comments and thanks from BUC Arts Co-convenors Saide Cameron and Ann Soo and a delightful diversity of performances. You can listen to the audio recordings from the evening here: [first half](#) and [second half](#). And of course enjoy the photos in the next pages.



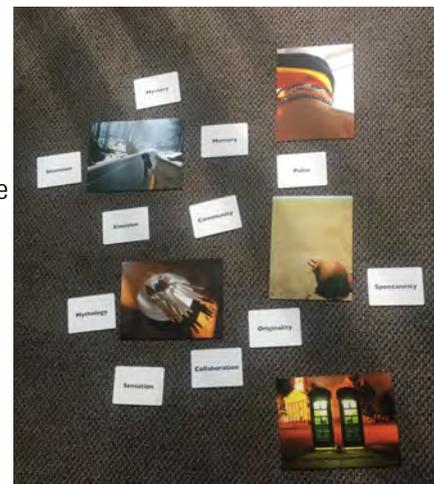
Alistair introduced Frances sharing the impressive details of the breadth of her work which includes hand printed textiles, wearable art, print media and spoken word. He explained that Frances draws inspiration for her work from nine years working as a social worker in remote outback communities. Blak Dot Gallery hosted Frances' exhibition '[Hard-Work Heartbreak Heritage](#)' in November 2018. Frances, a indigenous person of Tongan heritage, spoke passionately of indigenous peoples and their vital ancestral knowledge, their traditional commitment to safeguarding the land and their capacity to adapt to the lands needs, of their ingenuity in creating tools and artistic practices. She spoke of the abuse and destruction arising from colonisation, of the forced removal from country, and the unbearable pain and suffering of Mother Earth at the loss of her custodians. She offered us gifts and thanks.

communities. An invitation to reflect on what new thing you are being called to.

An opportunity to ask, in this time of climate crisis, Where do you see the love of the Creator, the hope of Christ and the new life of the Spirit?

We set ourselves an absurdly short timeline to make the exhibition a reality and trusted in the movement of the Holy Spirit to inspire people to make a response. Spread around our beautiful sacred space and the community spaces that surround us were more than 75 artworks of incredible diversity. The exhibition was open for 10 grace filled days. Over the opening night and the performance night we enjoyed 10 offerings including dance, song, music and spoken word. This was an exhibition that offered wonder, hope and delight as we 'Let the earth speak' to us through these works.

**Saide Cameron**, BUC Arts Co-convenor - Administration  
An edited version from the Opening Night event, 27th September





Maggie Somerville offered two songs from her CD *'The Forest Prayed'*, 16 poems from Mary Gilmore vast collection of 13,000 poems, set to music. The first *'Truganini'* is based on a 1932 poem written out of Mary's strong feelings about the plight of the aboriginal people. The second was Mary Gilmore's most famous poem *'No foe shall gather our harvest'* written in 1940 and 1942. Mary's friend Steven took on the persona of John Curtin to bring the address to the nation offered at that time to life.



Helen Burnham offered *'Somebody bigger than you and I'*. She explained that it was a solo that she used to sing in a choir years ago and that the song was later sung by Whitney Houston in the movie *'The Preacher's Wife'*.



Our second keynote speaker was Phil Kreveld. Phil is a regular at the Olive Arts Collective where he mentors, supports and encourages other artists. He also demonstrates his techniques. He is of Dutch descent and Jewish heritage having come to Australia many years ago. In his 50's he revived his passion for the arts with his medium being painting. Phil spoke about the appropriateness of our exhibition in the light of Greta Thunberg's prophetic words at the United Nations Climate Conference. He commented that the exhibition is *a voice of multiple chords—a voice open to many interpretations, but all are coloured by reverence for the miracle of her (the earth's) being. ... The richly varied works and contributions have opened our eyes and hearts and we are listening!* Phil's words and further reflection is [available here](#).



Shawn Whelan introduced the sound installation *'For all beings'* which was available throughout the exhibition. The poem was written by Julie Perrin and set to music by Shawn a few years back. The installation was shaped by sounds of the bush. [Listen here](#).



Tonya Beggs offered us a beautiful dance set to Gurrumul's recording of *'Amazing Grace'*.



In drawing the evening to a close Ann Soo, BUC Arts Co-convenor - Creative Leader, drew our attention to the words that shaped the thinking that led to the theme for our exhibition (see the photo on the top of the previous page).

She acknowledged the 75 submissions from over 50 artists and performers affirming that, however large or small the contribution made, all of it makes a difference and is appreciated.

She said *'As this is a launch, I hope we continue the journey and*

*to draw from it what we need, to be fuelled and empowered as people in relationship with nature.'*

She offered special thanks to Frances and Phil. To Frances she offered thanks for the reminder to be warriors and to keep on fighting in spite of the dread of our times. And to Phil she offered thanks for reminding us of what it means to be part of a common humanity.

You can read [Ann's complete thanks here](#) and of course listen to the recording of the [second half](#) of the evening.

Alistair in his turn thanked members of the BUC Arts committee and the many other people who contributed to installing the works, providing supper and generally making the exhibition happen.

# Performance Night



We gathered again on 4th December for another wonderful evening of listening to the earth speak.

Ten performances of amazing diversity - dance, song, theatre stories and poems - offered us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the joy of creation.

Tim Hoffmann was our MC and once again we welcomed people from the abundance of our community of communities to share their gifts.

As on the Opening Night we enjoyed a delicious supper of sandwiches and sweet treats.

Recordings of the evening are available here: [Part 1](#), [Part 2a](#), [Part 2b](#)



Acknowledgement of Country offered by Ian Ferguson and Leanne Salau



A series of his poems, offered by Richard Phelan



'Me walking on and in the earth' A series of poems, offered by Janet Reus Smit



We joined SROC in the waiting room for 'Castaway'. Ed Lagzdin goes in search of his plaster cast and we're there to help him! A response to Alex's experience of waiting for the DSP to be granted. [Read more](#)



O Delmi Dolche Adore, offered by Steph Gesling  
Steph explained that this song gives her hope in grief and difficult times



Everywhere dance, offered by Ian Ferguson  
A dance of creation – 7x7

'How I overcame the Fear of sitting on a Bar Stool', a true tale offered by Samantha Carter of how she overcame vertigo and faced and conquered an anxiety that served no purpose.



A series of poems offered by Giovanni Dimase



Ann Soo, in conversation with Graeme Galloway, artist and Olive Way Arts mentor about the making of art for personal pleasure and on commission



Sundown on the hill



'A farmer's daughter' offered by Saide Cameron  
A story about learning how to listen to the earth.  
[Read the story here.](#)



Read 'As people of faith'

'As people of faith', offered by Jamie Thom  
Part of a recent multi-faith ritual blocking a roadway out of the workers living quarters at the Adani Carmichael coal mine site in Queensland.  
It reflects a shared concern for the environment by people of faith.

'She speaks', offered by Jenne Perlstein  
By deep listening, & seeing the Earth Mother as our Goddess through the eyes of many spiritual paths ancient & modern, we can experience the Divine & know the Earth as Sacred...



Read 'She speaks'

'Groundswell', offered by Beth Shelton, accompanied by Alex and Flossie



In dance you go up to the sky, down to earth  
– literally down - with gravity & touch.  
The dance will be a dance of going down to connect with the ground and coming up again – letting the movement emerge from this natural archetypal pattern.



We invited Christina Rowntree, Artfull Faith Co-ordinator at the Centre for Theology and Ministry to join to offer her reflections on the performances offered. Christina mentored us during 'What is Creativity?' our first exhibition in 2017. Christina commented 'we are perhaps the only generations to have seen the beautiful image of the earth in space'. She affirmed that the earth is speaking to us and wondered if we are listening, watching and observing, paying attention. She affirmed that our community is listening, observing, creating with brilliance, with magnificence through visual, dance, story, acting and activism. Christina offered beautiful words connecting the works in a common thread of blessing, hope, joy, loving creativity, delight in abundance. She concluded saying 'The Arts giving us hope ... thank God. Thank you'.

BUC Arts Committee: Simone Alesich, Saide Cameron, Ann Soo, Leanne Salau, Ian Ferguson

Ian concluded the evening thanking everyone who had made the exhibition happen including: the welcoming team, the hospitality team, the flowers, photography, our MCs for both events, the curating team, the hanging crew, advertising, signage, visitor guides, technical crew, speakers, the BUC Arts committee, co-ordinator of submissions, the artists, makers and creators and finally we made a fuss of our project manager - Ann Soo. See page 8 for details.

Recordings of the evening are available here:  
[Part 1](#), [Part 2a](#), [Part 2b](#)

# The Exhibition

These next two pages offers just a selection of the photos taken by Peter McKinnon.

My apologies for any errors in identifying works, if there are any - please let me know.

To view full collection - download from the [Let the earth speak Dropbox folder](#). The list of artist statements is [available here](#).



Storm on the island, Christina Berkman



Griefstricken, Priscilla Manthey



Cherries Ripe



Lemons fresh off the tree

Zia Tohki



Mirror & Clay Johnny Salama



Bull Banksias, Beverly Evans



Imaginative Garden,  
Glenice Cook, Natalie Papworth, Leanne Salau



She speaks, Jenne Perlstein



View of Shallow Inlet, Phil Kreveld



Where the mountain meets the sea,  
Simone Alesich



Fire, Greta Drimmel



When the earth speaks,  
Barbara Knowles



Great Glider, Annaki Rowlands



Olive Way Collection



Magical Murray, Leanne Salau



Tea by the Sea, Catherine Cowan



Iris Serie D, Michael Rigby



Jewellery, Helen Burnham



Nothing grows - no boats here, Naser Moradi



Listening to the earth, Liz Johnston



Shedding Bark, Joy Barrett



Five stone elements, Louise Marson



Happy in the key of yellow, Richard Phelan



Diversity is a blessing, Camilla Kasker

Please email [saide.cameron@bigpond.com](mailto:saide.cameron@bigpond.com) if you would like any of these photos in the original higher quality resolution



## Thank you

Ian Ferguson offered thanks on the night to everyone who supported and made the exhibition happen.

Here are their names ...

**Welcomers:** Val Remedios, Julie McKinnon, Camilla Kasker, Dani Chamberlin, Clare Keogh, Faye Findlay

**Hospitality:** Glenice Cook, Gwen Arnold, Tim & Meredith Budge, Julie & Peter McKinnon

**Flowers:** Valmain Brunlow, Liz Palazzi

**Photography:** Peter McKinnon, Simone Alesich, Michael Rigby

**MCs:** Alistair Hunter, Tim Hoffmann

**Curating team:** Ann Soo, Leanne Salau, Ian Ferguson

**Hanging crew:** Graham Lawrence, Jonhy Salama, Mal Rowe, Ann Soo

**Advertising:** Saide Cameron, Ann Soo

**Signage and Sandwich Board:** Amelia Ware

**Visitor Guides:** Faye Findlay, Janet Reus-Smit, Leanne Salau, Lucy Hardman, Ann Soo, Linda Wannan, Jamie Thom

**Technical Crew:** Al Hunter, Mal Rowe, Ray Cameron

**Guest speakers:** Frances Tapueluelu, Phil Kreveld, Christina Rowntree

**Receiving, collating and preparing Artist Statements and Powerpoint Slides**

(and coordinating with Ann) for over 80 submissions of art works and performance: Mal Rowe

**Hanging system:** Graham Lawrence

**BUC Arts Committee:** Ann Soo, Saide Cameron, Leanne Salau, Simone Alesich, Ian Ferguson

**Performers and Artists all**

**Project Manager and all round People Wrangler:** Ann Soo

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Other names to mention include:

**Olive Arts Collective Portfolios:** Leanne Salau

with John Puli, Marilyn Hall, Tessa Robb, Cathy Lim and Paul

**Demonstration on Performance Night:** Zia Tohki

**Sunday Morning Program contribution leaders and artists**

- SMP program all groups: Graeme Galloway and Ann Soo - River of Grace Mural
- SMP group K-2: Jill Moorhouse - Tree of Life
- SMP group 3-6: Simone Alesich - Winter Collage, Louise Marson - Mosaic Tiles
- SMP team (18/8): Jill & Andrew Moorhouse, Joanne van Ravenswaaij, Dave Hall - Fire series

**The Forest Prayed CD Launch:** Maggie Somerville

**Season of Creation Worship Team:**

Ian Ferguson, Julie Perrin, Jenne Perlstein, Amelia Ware, Saide Cameron, Dave Hall

## The Forest Prayed

Maggie Somervilled launched her CD 'The Forest Prayed' for the second time on **Saturday 5th October** as part of 'Let the earth speak'. On her [website post](#) about the CD Maggie says *'Despite being on our past and current \$10 note and being made a Dame for her services to Australian literature, Mary Gilmore has, I believe, been long overlooked. The works of both her contemporaries, Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson, are extremely famous and strongly promoted musically although neither was made a knight. Is this because they were men and Mary Gilmore a woman? I believe so, and feel that it is now time for the balance to be redressed and for Gilmore's literary talents to be more widely publicised and promoted just as Paterson's and Lawson's have been down the years by various musicians. I am proud to be the first person to put together a full album of this talented woman's works and to hopefully help to immortalize her poetry in Australia and beyond.'*

At the launch Maggie acknowledged the death of her son Julian in January this year, noting that as she sang she was standing on the very spot where his coffin had stood. Surrounded by colour together with much loved friends and musicians Maggie offered each of the songs accompanied by the story behind the poems assisted by her friend Steven. It was a lovely afternoon during with we enjoyed guitar, keyboard, the saw, cello, piano accordion, spoons, violin, didgeridoo, harp, tin whistle, harmonica and bagpipes and possibly more.

Maggie's CD is a delight to listen to. Contact Maggie, [maggies88@bigpond.com](mailto:maggies88@bigpond.com), to request a copy. The CD includes a download card.



## > Season of Creation

During our Season of Creation we built a picture of the seven annual seasons of our local area, identified by the people of the Kulin Nation by associating changes in the weather with the life cycles of indigenous plants and animals, and movements in the night sky.

### Season of Creation 1, 22nd September

#### Poorneet Tadpole Season

*(October and November)*

Temperatures are rising but the rain continues.

Pies Currawongs call loudly and often.

Flax-lillies are flowering.

Bulen-bulen (Superb Lyrebird) males have finished displaying.

The flowering of plants such as Myrnong (Yam Daisy) indicates the tubers are ready for eating.

Days and nights are of equal length.



### Season of Creation 2, 29th September

*November will bring*

#### Buath Gurru Grass Flowering Season

The weather is warm and it is often raining.

Kangaroo Grass is flowering.

Male common brown butterflies are flying.

Coranderrk, the Victorian Christmas Bush is coming into flower.

Buliyong Bats are catching insects in flight.

Balayang the ancestor being is also referred to as the bat.

Around sunrise, the Orion constellation is setting in the western sky. I am not sure how Aboriginal people from our area identify this constellation.

The Boorong clan of North West Victoria see Kulkunbulla (Kool-koon-boo-la) two young dancing men, in the belt and sword of Orion.

In December we will come to

### **Kangaroo Apple Season**

With changeable, thundery weather. Fruits appear on Kangaroo-apple bushes. Buliyong Bats are still catching insects in flight.

Dhuling Goannas are active. Bali Cherry Ballart is flowering. Bundjil Wedge-tailed Eagles are breeding. Bunjil the ancestor being is also referred to as the eaglehawk. Days are long and nights are short.



### **Season of Creation 3, 6th October**

January, February is

### **Biderap, Dry Season**

There is hot, dry weather. With high temperatures and low rainfall. The Southern Cross is high in the south at sunrise. Female Common Brown Butterflies are flying. Bowat Tussock-grass is long and dry



### **Season of Creation 4, 13th October**

Around March we will enter

### **Luk, Eel Season**

Hot winds cease and temperatures cool. Binap Manna Gum is flowering. Luk eels are fat and ready to harvest. Lo-An Tuka, the ancestor being, is the star Canopus, seen almost due south at sunset. Days and nights are of equal length.



### **Season of Creation 5, 20th October**

From April to July is

### **Waring, Wombat Season**

The time of highest rainfall and lowest temperatures. Cool rainy days follow misty mornings. The constellation of Sagittarius rises in the southeast after sunset, indicating the mid point of cold weather. Bulen-Bulen Superb Lyrebird males perform their courtship displays. Hearts of Kombadik Soft Tree-ferns are the major food when no fruits are available. Waring wombats emerge to bask and graze in the sunshine. Days are short and nights are long.

Finally we reach

### **Guling Orchid Season**

Orchids are flowering. The star Arcturus is seen on the northwestern horizon soon after sunset. Gurrborra koalas begin mating and males bellow in the night. Ae-noke caterpillars of Common Brown Butterfly feed on grasses at night. Muyan Silver Wattles are flowering. Cold weather is coming to an end.

Amelia Ware curated this installation for the BUC Seasons of Creation. Source: seasons details are from Melbourne Museum



## **Worship**

### **Season of Creation 1, 22nd September**

The Season of Creation began on 22nd September. In the Meditation for the October Olive Branch (drawn from Ian's sermon for that Sunday) Ian wrote 'During our worship for the season of creation (22/9-20/10) we are hearing a sequence of readings from the book of Job. This book asks the great question of faith: if God is good, why do we suffer? The answer comes through absence and questions.'

This meditation invited us to consider Job's experience of the absence of God and his questions during a time of trial. Ian wondered if, like Job, 'perhaps we need to lose God too. Perhaps we need to lose the God we think we know in order to find the God who is beyond our knowing – the creator who gives life to the world.'

Ian then spoke of questions and concluded 'Christ's life is a question – a question that rises from the tomb leaving a dark absence – a questions that calls us to join him in new creation. God's being is a question, speaking from the whirlwind out of silent absence, calling for action and transformation. Can we live with that? Can we live in the questions and make our lives the answer?'

You can read the [Meditation here](#).

Through the season of creation we read prayers from Julie Perrin's 'Seven Collects'. You can read the collection which was also part of the exhibition [here](#).

## Season of Creation 2, 29th September, Job 38:1,22-38, Romans 8:18-25

On this fifth Sunday of the month, surrounded by the beautiful works from the exhibition Ian and Jenne invited us to use the artworks as part of our reflective worship.

Ian and Dave invited the children to look at some of the artworks around the Communion Table including Frances Tapueluelu's 'Floating Wreath, Glenice Cook, Natalie Papworth and Leanne Salau's Garden Bicycle Wheels and finally Simone's artwork which offered life and death together in bark and succulents.

Ian commented that all of the artworks are an invitation to focus on God's creation and to listen to the earth speaking to us.

He then invited us to create an artwork together with the children beginning by setting the Table with bread and wine for Holy Communion and decorating it with stones, leaves, feathers and shells. Later in the service everyone else had the opportunity to contribute to decoration.

Jenne and Ian read the Bible passages from different places in the exhibition, with



the idea that God is also speaking to us through the works of the artist. Jenne commented (from Romans) that *'in hope we are saved'* and that *'if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience'*. Ian, commenting on Job, said that God speaks in questions in response to Job's questions. He said God is saying, *"See yourself in the context of the wonders of creation. And know yourself before the Creator."* Today, our exhibition might help us to do that. Job learns that it is not all about him, but he re-finds and reframes himself in the mysterious light of the creator of all. May we do likewise. May we find the wisdom given by the creator.

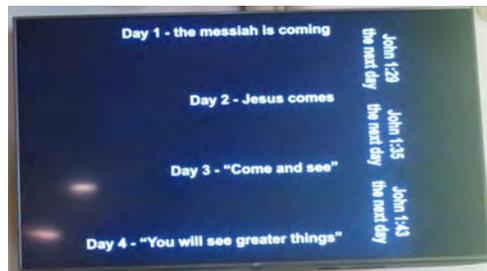


We spent time exploring the artworks in the worship space, added to the decorations on the Communion Table before returning to our seats to prepare for our celebration of Holy Communion.

## Season of Creation 3, 6th October, Job 38:1, 39-39:12, John 2:1-11

Amelia and Ian invited the children to look again at Frances' work 'Floating Wreath' and to notice the decay compared to the previous week. After installing the next section of the Seven Seasons installation. Amelia commented that God calls all of us to be part of his recreation and that Ian's dance helps to explore that. Ian taught us the movements from his Seven Days of Creation dance from the performance night the previous Friday. *Day 1 is day of light and day & night. Day 2 is the day of sky. Day 3 is the day of the earth, the plants, the trees, the fruit and the seas. Day 4 is the day of the stars and the moon and the sun. Day 5 is the day of the fish and birds. Day 6 is the day of the animals and humans and birth. Day 7 is the day of rest.*

Ian's sermon '[Is Jesus a greenie](#)' focussed on the first two chapters of John to help us reflect on what the gospels say about creation. Ian began by wondering what Jesus has to say about the challenges of our day and noting that Jesus' concerns then were different but still relevant to us now. Ian confirmed that *'explicit mentions of the goodness of creations and the need to honour and protect just aren't there in the gospels in the way we might hope. Not in the way we might hope, explicitly but they are there if we know how to look.'* He invited us then to engage with the Wedding in Cana and drew our attention to John's symbolic use of time, commenting that *'By his symbolic use of time John is saying here is a new beginning focussed on this human, Jesus, the Word of Wisdom made flesh, and focused on the community that he gathers around him. A community called to come and see things differently, to see creation in a new way. Through the structure of his gospel opening John is saying the extraordinary seven day wonders of creation are there in the gathering of Jesus with his family of followers.'*





Further he said *'The Gospel of John begins with the seven days of creation and it leads us through all that follows to a garden.'* Ian reminded us of Mary's encounter with Jesus in the garden and that by speaking her name *'She sees creation as she has never seen it before.'* This new beginning is why we worship on Sunday.

Concluding Ian proclaimed *'Creation is crying out for a new beginning from humankind. We need as human beings to put in place policies and practices that will literally reshape the world. Humankind needs to tend the garden for the sake of all beings. And as Christians, as followers of Christ the Word of Wisdom, the gardener of creation that is our calling, that is who we are. For these Words of Witness and for Christ the Word, thanks be to God. Amen.'*

Later we celebrated Holy Communion gathered in one circle of humanity around the table.



#### [Season of Creation 4, 13th September, Job 38:1, 39:13-30, John 19:17-30](#)

Ian invited us to pray with the voices of an eagle, a magpie and a dove, confessing the plummeting population numbers of birds in our world. He and Dave invited the children to come and watch a clip of an eagle flying as a way of engaging with the reading of Job - the eagle is a sign for Job for how awesome God is.. Then they showed us a clip of Bunjil symbol for the Wurundjeri people of the awesome creative power of God. Dave commented on the loss of birds in our area and that part of our response is to care for creation. The children took feathers to help remind them of the birds.



Ian's sermon *'Towards a theology of activism'* was an invitation to respond to the story of Jesus carrying his cross to the 'Place of the Skull'. He asked *'What is there in the story of Jesus, in particular in the story of his death that might inspire and inform our approach to activism as Christians?'* He explored this question with reference to American Hollywood actor Ashley Judd but first sharing the story of meeting Betty, the minister of the congregation Ashley worships at in Weepers Fork, Tennessee. Ian shared a little of her story including this quote, *'My Christian faith demands I work for social justice and human rights. Jesus has always been my favourite radical.'*



Ian went on to share the story of how Ashley Judd came to be the actress who said to Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey *'I'm prepared to be a named source in your investigation'*. The journalists' story, with Ashley Judd's name, *'broke the Harvey Weinstein story and helped ignite the 'Me Too' movement'*. Ian shared extracts from the book *'She Said'* written by the journalists including Judd's decision to withdraw to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park just before publication of the investigative report. He said *'She's like Jesus'* in Luke 5:15 in which he goes away to pray. In the book *'She Said'* Judd is quoted as saying to a group of gathered women *'I have to know the hill on which I'm willing to die. ... The equality of the sexes is that hill for me.'*

Ian asked us *'So where is your hill, your Golgotha? Perhaps you are not called to be the kind of leader and activist that Ashley Judd is, few are. Perhaps you are not called to be arrested in the middle of the road or perhaps you are. But all of us are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus as part of his movement, along his way of radical self-giving love. Where is that movement carrying you? Where is your hill?'*

#### [Season of Creation 5, 20th September, Job 40:1-14, 42:1-6, Luke 18:1-8](#)

We concluded our Season of Creation with the Blessing of the Bikes after worship. To help us prepare Ian and Dave, riding bicycles around the table, talked about circles, the circles everywhere in the worship space - sitting in a circle, the circle of seasons around the cross, the garden bicycle wheels. They invited the children to join them on their bicycles. They also mentioned the song Ezekiel that we were soon to sing *'Ezekiel saw the wheel'*. The deeper point to this fun was acknowledging the circle of God's love with no beginning and no end. They also noted the circle of the baptism font and the whirlwind circle from where God spoke to Job. [Have a listen here.](#) It's fun!!



Ian began his sermon saying *'Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not lose heart, not lose heart. And that sounds to me like a good parable for today as we conclude our Season of Creation with the Blessing of the Bikes.* Commenting on the recent discovery in the Netherlands of the six young adults locked away waiting for the end of the world Ian reminded us of *the movement in Christian theology of nihilistic apocalyptic world denial and the influence this has for on governments in relation to climate change.* He wondered if even in the face of these serious challenges we can laugh at it and thus introduced us to the Netflix series *'The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt'*. Ian explained that *'the parable Jesus tells us today is supposed to be funny'*. That by telling the parable Jesus is addressing the predicament of losing heart to teach *'his followers how to live in the place where love is yet to fulfil all hope and the injustices of the world seem insurmountable.'* Ian retold the encounter between the corrupt judge and the widow in graphic detail pointing out that *'Jesus is subverting social expectations here. It's the great reversal in action, the powerless woman intimidates the powerful judge into action.'* Ian affirmed that if this corrupt judge will *'give justice under the onslaught of unbridled hope and faith then we have every reason to trust that God's reign on earth with its transformational healing, peace and justice is coming, is rising up with Christ who is wisdom and love incarnate.'* Ian encouraged us, with Jesus, to pray like the widow having confidence in and *openness to the goodness of God.* He concluded *'So when our world gives us reason to lose heart may our faith in the ever present loving healing creativity of our God give us reason to persevere in hope. Amen'*



## Blessing of the Bikes

After worship we moved out onto the steps with our bikes and other wheels and even our bikes in absentia. Ian said:

Brunswick Cyclists, ride out and know that God rides with you!  
 May your wheels turn for life, in peace, on the journey of renewal.  
 May you meet the Christ of humility and compassion on the road.  
 And may the Spirit of creation abundantly bless  
 your going out and your coming in  
 from this time on and forevermore.

Ian and Saide water over the crowd and then moved among the cyclists and other riders offering the blessing:  
 Ride in joy, peace and safety. In the name of Christ. Amen



This edition of the Olive Branch contains lots of links to various recordings and documents. It will be available on the home page of the website in the 'Let the earth speak' blog. The link will also be published in the Olive Press. If you would like it in advance of this please email [saide.cameron@bigpond.com](mailto:saide.cameron@bigpond.com).



# Let the earth speak

*Through the prophet Isaiah, God says:  
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? 43:19a*

**What new thing are you being called to?**

**Listening and responding through the Arts**

**A Visual Arts Exhibition and  
program of events at Brunswick UC  
27 September to 7 October 2019**

<https://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au>  
<https://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/event/let-the-earth-speak/>

